

SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

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May 2023 - Issue 372

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Tamar Toll Action Group Update

It's been a busy few months for the Tamar Toll Action Group (TTAG) Committee as we tour the parish and town councils of SE Cornwall asking for support for our campaign to abolish the Tamar tolls. We have presented our case to Saltash, Torpoint and Liskeard town councils, Pillaton and Calstock parish councils, and the Cornwall Gateway and Caradon Community Network Panels. All have given their support and various offers of help. Next stop is St Mellion parish council in June.

Letters of support have been coming in from the length and breadth of Cornwall – Launceston, Hayle and St Just to name just a few – who recognise that this issue is not just one that affects SE Cornwall, and that it's time to unite our voices to bring about change.

We have been in contact with all of our local MPs, and have had productive meetings with both Luke Pollard and Sheryll Murray. We are pleased to report that Sheryll Murray has invited us to work with her and other relevant MPs and Councillors to produce a business case regarding the Tamar Bridge Act to take to Government, so we have been working hard on this. Progress is happening, slowly but surely!

We need this groundswell of support to keep on growing throughout Cornwall and Plymouth until all Councillors and MPs are with us. So if you'd like to get involved with our campaign please join our Facebook group (Tamar Toll Action Group) or contact us via our website: www.tamartollactiongroup.org

Dr. Mel Priston Chair, Tamar Toll Action Group (TTAG)

Local Charity Wins National Social Justice Award Storybook Dads

Every year in the UK, over 310,000 children suffer the trauma of parental imprisonment. Many of those children experience feelings of isolation, abandonment and shame, often resulting in low self-esteem and poor performance in school. "We believe that incarcerating a parent should not involve punishing their child," says Sharon Berry, Saltash resident who set up the charity Storybook Dads to help prisoners record bedtime stories to send to their children at home.

Storybook Dads began at Dartmoor prison in 2002. The editing and production service is still based in HMP Dartmoor, and every year supports over 5,000 prisoners in about 100 prisons across the UK to record

bedtime stories for their children. For many families, Storybook Dads is a lifeline, helping to heal rifts and enable imprisoned parents to maintain or build vital relationships with their children. "Maintaining family ties and reducing reoffending are inextricably linked," said Sharon. "Over half of prisoners lose contact with their families but those who maintain contact are up to six times less likely to reoffend."

In 2010, Sharon was awarded an OBE for her inspirational dedication in setting up and running Storybook Dads. Now the charity itself has received a prestigious award from The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), recognising its unique family-centred approach that responds to nurturing both parent and child at a vul-



Pictured Iain Duncan Smith left & Sharon right at the CSJ Award ceremony

nerable stage in their lives.

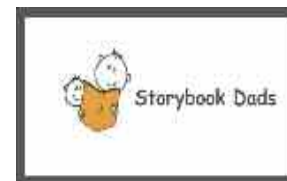
The CSJ Foundation exists to build an infrastructure for grassroots charities across the UK. Their vision is to empower charities to drive policy change that will address the root causes of poverty and social breakdown, and at the same time, put these charities on a more sustainable and impactful footing.

Presented by the Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith, MP, Chair of

the CSJ, the award will raise the profile of Storybook Dads amongst national decision makers and connect it to philanthropists across the country, which should hopefully result in more financial support and technical expertise to enable the charity to continue to provide this invaluable service to prisoners and their families.

Storybook Dads receives no statutory funding and relies

upon charitable donations. Visit their website to find out more about this incredible local charity that is garnering nationwide acclaim and giving vital support to families in need. www.storybookdads.org.uk



Give us a Fiver!

"If every Saltash family chipped in £5, we would smash our Crowdfunder target and keep Saltash festivals going," say the volunteer organisers of May Fair, Regatta and Christmas.

All three events rely on volunteers, who give many hours of their time to deliver these days of entertainment, all of which are free to attend. Every band that is booked, every lantern that is made, and every Fun Run that is marshalled is organised by a volunteer resident. As if sorting out the logistics is not a big enough headache

the volunteer organisers are also responsible for raising every penny of the £50,000 it costs to host the three events.

Grant funders including Saltash Town Council and local businesses give generous financial support, but against a backdrop of increasing costs and decreasing sponsorship levels the festivals are facing a financial black hole. So organisers of the three major events have come together to launch a Crowdfunder appeal giving the general public the chance to donate online.

Aiming to raise a target of £15,000, organisers were thrilled to see the total amount of pledges rising above £3,000 in the first few days of the appeal. The funding will only be paid out, however, if the target of £15,000 is reached before

16th June. The organisers are in a race against time and are urging families to go online or use this QR code to visit the Crowdfunder website and donate a fiver to keep these community events going: www.crowdfunder.co.uk

Anyone not able to make online donations, is urged to buy a Coronation May Fair raffle ticket, on sale in Eclectic Interiors, Nicky's Glow Beads, Saphira Jewellers, Scrapstore and The Bookshelf.



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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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Telephone: 0300 1234 101
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Housing Department
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Social Services Department
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Email: children@cornwall.gov.uk

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Highways Department
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Town Messenger news is supplied by the Town Council

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Saltash Tamar ED
Cllr Sheila Lennox-Boyd
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Saltash Trematon & Landrake ED
Cllr Martin Worth
cldr.martin.worth@cornwall.gov.uk

Cornwall Councillors Cover such services as:
Housing – Education
Social Services
Highways
Waste & Recycling
Tamar Bridge

From the Mayor of Saltash

Over the Easter weekend, Sarah and I had the pleasure of opening the 2023 exhibition at the Saltash Heritage Museum. The exhibition is well worth a visit, along with the Local History Centre which is based above the museum. Saltash Town Council own the whole building and are pleased to help secure a home for Saltash Heritage to provide these excellent facilities, please try and visit.

We also took the opportunity to visit the two properties run by the Tamar Protection Society, Elliott's Shop and Mary Newman's Cottage. Both properties preserve fascinating parts of Saltash life in the years gone by. These two properties, like the museum are free to enter, to encourage as many people to have access as possible. I would like to offer a huge 'thank you' to the teams of volunteers who keep them going, either stewarding, maintaining, or archiving new artifacts. If anyone wants to help in any way, please just ask, volunteers are always needed.

I must give a mention to the RWindband who put on an exceptional performance in the wonderfully modernised Burraton Community Centre. Many thanks to Ruth Banatyne for bringing together such a talented set of musicians and leading such a challenging performance, and Mike Nottage, for his musical ability and the many hours of work he and the team have put in at the BCC.

I am very pleased that the Town Council have now approved a Playpark Funding scheme, whereby community groups who raise money for a playpark can seek matched funding from the Town Council for up to £10,000. I really hope this leads to significant improvements in our play park provision across the town. Please contact the Town Council for more information.

Public Transport improvements

On the buses, we now have a new 'Round Town' bus service that calls at a number of places that other services fail to reach, including the station, Waterside and into Pillmere. The 450 service is a partnership between Saltash Red Bus and Plymouth City Bus and it is hoped that it will establish itself over time as an important link. It is a regular service that should show in any bus tracking app, and on real time screens. Concessionary Bus Passes are accepted. At the same time several other services



from outlying Parishes has been launched with the intention of bringing people into Saltash for shopping and leisure. I would like to pass on my thanks to Mike Finch and all involved in bringing these services to life.

I am a keen fan of rail travel, as you may know, and I am pleased to let everyone know of a few improvements coming our way at the end of May. After many years of lobbying, Great Western Railway have found a way to reintroduce an early morning weekday 'Dockyard' service that will call at all stations to Plymouth, leaving Saltash at 07.06. There is even a connection to the long distance CrossCountry service at Plymouth. I have also managed to negotiate two additional Saturday Saltash calls that help to fill out our timetable, both towards Penzance at 05.24 and 21.30, the later being the last train from London Paddington heading towards Penzance.

Whilst on the subject of trains, it was great to see so many people visiting the model railway exhibition at Isambard House. Although it was much more than just a model train there was an art exhibition, heritage talks and a ride on train from the Plymouth Valley Railway. Many thanks to the Saltash Rotary Club, supported by the Town Council in putting on the event.

The Town Council have also just been awarded a grant to look at connectivity solutions such as proving a more regular and sustainable link to the Waterside, and look at a possible local cross-river ferry service operated by an electric ferry. The grant is through the Community Levelling Up scheme and is for £74,500. It should compliment the Town Centre Vitality work and the Coastal Communities Team who are looking at Waterside improvements.

Finally, a thank you to all that attended the Mayors Bash last month, a fabulous night was had by all, with some great live entertainment from local band, Cornish Jam.

*Councillor Richard Bickford
Mayor of Saltash 2022-23*

Licence to Occupy Victoria Gardens

Saltash Town Council have signed a Licence to Occupy Victoria Gardens for a period of five months to carry out grounds maintenance and planting works. Thank you to Cornwall Council for working in partnership with us.

Saltash Environment Action Group have offered their help and support along with a number of volunteers.

We will be meeting on Saturday mornings at The Maurice Huggins Room at



10am. All organisations, schools and youth groups are welcome to join us and help tidy the area.

We also need donations of

bedding plants, herbs, tubs of flowers - anything that will make the gardens enjoyable over the summer months.

If you want to enjoy the fresh air, meet new people, and

have fun, please join us on a Saturday or email Cllr. Julia Peggs for further information: j.peggs@saltash.gov.uk. We look forward to welcoming everyone.

Your Town Council & Wards

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1. Cllr Richard Bickford
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3. Cllr Brian Stoyel
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4. Cllr Yates
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Cllr Richard Bickford

Deputy Mayor:

Cllr Julia Peggs

Town Clerk:

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Councillors' Telephone Numbers can be obtained at The Guildhall.

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Council Successful in Community Levelling Up Application

Saltash Town Council are delighted to announce they have been successful in securing an approval in principle for grant funding. The Town Council applied for funding to improve the connectivity of the town. Proposals include utilising water transport to access villages and areas on the River Tamar and Lynher. A transport system between the Waterside and town centre is being explored with innovative options such as Electric tuk tuks or electric buses. The Town Council has formed a working group with support from Cornwall Councillors to take the project forward.

Annual Report 2022-23

Saltash Town Council has published its Annual Report 2022-23. The report details the events, services and grant recipients over the year 2022-23. It provides residents information about the portion of their Council Tax that is spent by Saltash Town Council working hard to ensure best value for money across all its services and facilities. Copies of the Annual Report 2022-23 can be found on the Saltash Town Council website and social media sites. If you require an email or printed copy please contact the Guildhall or Saltash Library Hub.

Waterside Flood Prevention Options to be Shared

The Saltash Waterside Coastal Communities Team have been working hard over the last couple of years to develop potential plans to combat flooding around the Waterside. Flooding generally occurs around High Water during Spring Tides, but with sea levels predicted to rise in the coming decades, we need to plan now, to protect homes and businesses in the future. The Saltash Waterside Coastal Communities Team, are a group of Town and Cornwall Councillors working alongside local stakeholders such as Saltash Sailing Club, Livewire, Just Be and Ashtorre Rock. The team were successful in bidding for money through a government funded Coastal

Revival Fund and appointed consultants, the John Grimes Partnership, to undertake planning work and bring forward possible options.

These options are now ready to be shared, and we hope people will engage with a genuine consultation process that is looking to understand what the community want for the area and present a number of options that range from simpler boundary height improvements to potentially wider ranging solutions that generates exciting community spaces and opportunities. None of the options are set in stone, and the team understand that any final plans will likely look different to those being presented, as the engagement process will influence the final design options that could be taken forward for more detailed work.

The plans will be available for viewing in the first instance at Isambard House (at Saltash Railway Station) on Saturday the 20th May between 10 and 4. Members of the team will be on hand to answer questions, and a questionnaire will seek to understand everyone's view.

Lisa Mortimore Elected as Town Councillor

Independent candidate Lisa Mortimore has won the recent town council by-election with 365 votes, establishing a gap of just over 100 votes over Independent candidate Karen Writer (260 votes) and Saltash Taxpayers Alliance candidate Stephen Hobbs (227 votes) to secure a place representing the people of Tamar ward.

Lisa has been active in the local community for several years setting up the 'Friends of Summerfields Park' and leading fundraising activities to restore the run-down facilities in the St Stephens area of Saltash.

In her manifesto, Lisa expressed her hope of seeing all Saltash parks improved and supporting Saltash people as they help each other out. Speaking to the Observer, Lisa said: "I want to thank everyone who took the time to vote, and I'm really looking forward to working with the community and Town Council."

Chamber Chairman Peter Ryland Keeping us Updated ...

At our monthly meeting on 3rd April, we welcomed guest speaker Councillor Martin Worth, who gave us a valuable insight into his motivation for becoming a Cornwall Councillor and into the role he plays on the Economic Growth and Development scrutiny committee for Cornwall Council and as Joint Chairman of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee.

He explained that bridge tolls have had to be increased due to the need and cost of ongoing maintenance. It was obvious that the bridge heavily subsidises the ferry, but Cllr. Worth explained that in his view it is unlikely that the bridge could be taken into government control in the near future and become free to use, as has been the case for the Severn crossing to Wales.

Councillor Worth also talked about Cornwall Council's involvement in ensuring pedestrian access through the new housing estate at Treledan, and about how it will be linked across the A38 to the rest of Saltash. In a wide-ranging talk, he went on to explain the new local bus routes and clarified the situation regarding the potential re-opening of the front desk at Saltash police station. He also spoke about proposals to extend the usage of Beryl Bikes in Plymouth into Saltash.

Moving on through our meeting, we were given an update on fundraising activities for the local festivals. In recent years, Saltash Chamber has been the organiser of the Christmas Festival, led by Hilary Frank in her role as a Chamber member. Hilary is also a volunteer with the team that

organises May Fair, and she explained that the two events were joining forces with the volunteers delivering Saltash Regatta to prepare a joint sponsorship leaflet which would be delivered to local businesses. The three festivals need to find over £50,000 each year to keep them going and keep them free to the public, so alongside the sponsorship options, the May Fair will be running two raffles - one for cash prizes and another for a hamper and individual prizes donated by Fore Street retailers.

With the future of the camera control room at Tolvaddon in doubt, we also discussed the present situation regarding CCTV for the town centre, with some members expressing reservations about whether the current proposal was the most effective way to give town centre coverage. It was suggested that individual systems with police access when necessary might be preferable. Preventing shoplifting and anti-social behaviour in our town centre remains a priority for the Chamber, and we will continue to liaise with the Town Council on the matter.

Every year The Community

Saltash Community Shop Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Saltash's Community Shop reaches a landmark achievement as it celebrates its 10th anniversary since first opening its doors at No.4 Fore Street.

The Community Shop has become one of Saltash's favourite shops over the years due to its fabulous range of local goods, most of which are made by hand by members of the local community in Cornwall.

The Community Shop, part of the Community Enterprise PL12 (CEPL12), first opened its doors in 2013. As a Community Interest Company (CIC), CEPL12 is a special type of limited company which exists to benefit the community rather than private shareholders.

"Our Community Shop is so much more than a shop," adds Melanie Cowie-Smith CEPL12 Marketing Director. "It's the heart of the CEPL12 organisation and our administrative HQ. Here we provide information and advice about CEPL12. Our aim is always to help and give information to members of the local community; we're often the unofficial tourist information centre for Saltash!"

Every year The Community



Lynda Burden, Sue Bishop, Operation Manager Alan Marks & volunteer Lisa Hambly

Shop supports local people through giving small artists and designers a place to promote themselves and a platform to sell their products. In addition to the Shop, they also provide many services to the Community Enterprise PL12 including supporting the Community Transport and event bookings, a What's On area and a space for their popular Eco-Crafters club.

All the profits from the shop are put towards supporting our other Community Enterprises, so if you buy an item from the shop, you are also helping to support the Community Fridge & Larder, Dementia Voice or Community Kitchen.

"The Community Shop and Hub is led and staffed by a wonderful team of volunteers, who all work together and give their time freely to achieve a

better environment centred around Fore Street," adds Melanie. "We are always looking for volunteers to work with us and urge anyone to contact us for more information and how to join our friendly teams. We give a lot back to our volunteers including training, events and support."

The team recently said thank you to Sue Bishop and Lynda Burden (pictured) who have both been volunteering for the Community Shop since it opened in 2013.

"As the team celebrates its landmark birthday, we say a big thank you to Lynda, Sue and all of the volunteers and to all the many wonderful businesses that have, and continue to support us. Together we all help make the area such a special place to live, shop and visit.

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Beginning of a New Era

After many years of being based in River Court on the Tamar View Industrial Estate, local business floorsite.uk, together with associated businesses loveflooring.uk and Airluxe trade flooring supplies, have moved to brand new warehousing that is situated just off the Pillmere roundabout, adjacent to the proposed Majestic Wine warehouse and pretty much next door to Lidl.

The new premises are situated in Burley Court, which is just a short distance along Pillmere Drive, after leaving the roundabout. Director and co-owner Pete Samuels comments "We have been considering moving premises and when the new warehouse became available, it was obvious to us that the time had arrived to make the move, to spacious warehousing that is eminently suitable for the products we sell.

The company is very much a family run concern, with Pete and wife Brenda, together with the 'next generation' of Brenda's son Chris, all involved in the day to day running of the business, which has celebrated more than forty years of trading, having been founded by Pete, way back in 1982.

Originally based in Hampshire, the business started under the name of Spectrum Carpets, the name being changed around twenty years later to Spectrum floor-

site, reflecting the move to online selling. Nowadays, the business not only looks after a growing number of local customers, but supplies to

clients across the whole of mainland UK.

The company offers a wide range of carpets, vinyl floorings, luxury vinyl tiles, carpet underlay and accessories, with brands such as Manx Tomkinson, Gaskell Woolrich, Hugh Mackay, Abingdon, Wilton Royal, Tredaire, Duralay and many others.

Pete adds "The new warehouse begins a new era for the company and we look to the future with optimism and exciting plans to further expand the family business"



Why Not Volunteer?

Saltash has a strong sense of community, bound together by the many charities and voluntary organisations that serve the people here. But a lot of these are currently desperate for more help. Why not give a little of your time to help the community in which you live?

If you want to help minimise the amount that gets sent to landfill while supporting arts and crafts in the town, you might find yourself drawn to helping out at Scrapstore at 89 Fore Street. If you want to help give girls adventures and the space to discover their potential then get in touch with Girlguiding Saltash. Perhaps food is more your thing? Or volunteering to drive a minibus? Then get in touch with Community Enterprises at 4 Fore Street.

You may only have an hour or so every now and then. But every little helps. As Mother Teresa said: "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."

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Essa Voices

Earth Week for One and All

On 18th April, Cornwall Council passed a motion supporting the Climate and Ecology Bill. It was right in the middle of Earth Week 2023. How appropriate, perhaps.

The CE Bill was previously known as the Climate, Ecological and Emergency Bill, and is a plan for a new UK law that has been drafted by eminent scientists, legal experts, ecological economists and environmentalists. It is designed to reverse the climate and ecological

breakdown we are facing, and makes various requirements of Government, including the obligation to ensure that the UK makes a fair contribution towards keeping global heating to within 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels.

Although the timing of a debate in Earth Week may be appropriate, you might also be sitting there wondering whether it is appropriate for Cornwall Council to be debating a motion that relates to a law which is actually the responsibility of MPs. I was one of the 33 councillors who voted in favour of the motion, so let me share a little of my reasoning.

First: the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, and



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

shockingly, we don't have the laws in place to reverse this trend. Even across our Cornish countryside and coastal landscape beloved species are in danger. The very first line of Cornwall Wildlife Trust's State of Nature Report roars out that 'Nature in Cornwall is under threat'. Published in 2020, the report draws worrying conclusions, stating that nature in Cornwall is 'largely in decline', with 12% of species of principal importance threatened with local extinction or complete loss from this Cornwall of ours.

This level of emergency needs to be highlighted at both local and national levels. It also requires early, resolute action. The CE Bill seeks to ensure that biodiversity actions are considered early in policy development, and that these actions are embedded in the Government's thinking, an approach that mirrors the climate change decision making wheel we developed in Cornwall Council.

I recognise, too, that it often takes a national campaign and a loud clamour to pass new legislation, and a national campaign has to involve not just individuals and businesses but also councils. In fact, around 200 councils across the country have passed similar motions in support of the CE Bill.

Line-Up Announced for Music Festival



Femmes de la Mer

Saltash Songs & Shanties Festival is back in town on 18-25 June. The programme features superb professional performers alongside fantastic local musicians from the region's rich amateur music scene. From shanties at the station to live music in the swimming pool there is a wealth of music for the whole family to enjoy.

Events kick off on 18 June with a day celebrating women who rock, led by Cornish 4-piece female garage rock band The Eyelids. The band will run a workshop open to female rockers aged 13-21 at Livewire Youth Music, followed by an evening

I also feel that as councillors we need to lead the local conversation and deliver change to make our area the best place it can be. But change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time.

Principally, though: I feel we should all be acting as if every week were Earth Week. After all, the environment is where we all meet. It is the one thing we all share, and the one thing we all pass on to future generations.

performance for everyone. Inspired by The Cramps, PJ Harvey and The Slits, The Eyelids have performed with Imelda May, Stiff Little Fingers and Pussy Riot, and are queens of the Cornish rock scene.

Events move to Saltash Railway station on 21 June where the award winning Saltash Town Band will host a session where you can have a go on a brass instrument. This free event is followed by a screening of the documentary Son of Cornwall, which tells the story of John Treleven, who started his music career in a Cornish town band, before becoming an international opera star.

On 22 June the Festival teams up with Saltash Leisure Centre to host a special evening where swimmers are invited to take a relaxing dip in the pool, accompanied by lovely handpan music performed by Lydon Forster on the poolside.

Little musicians are invited to join in with family band Tipil at the Library on 23 June. This morning concert for pre-schoolers features Cornish traditional and contemporary tunes, with opportunities

for mini-musicians to sing, dance and join in. In the evening Festival favourite Claire Ingleheart invites everyone to take part in a shanty singing workshop at the station.

Saturday 24 June is the busiest Festival day with Temps Clar Ensemble



bringing Medieval music to Mary Newman's Cottage. Local shanty stars Barrett's Privateers present a lunch-time concert at The Church of St Nicholas & St Faith followed by the Town Band giving a free performance in Victoria Gardens.

In the evening Sirinu return

to the church with Songs for Saltash, written in the 60s and 70s and celebrating the old stories and traditions of local landmarks and characters. This is followed by the nationally acclaimed Abbey Brass Quintet with local musicians, performing music inspired by the night sky and written by local composer Judy Whitlock. After the concerts there is an invitation to hit the town, where local pubs will be hosting a range of live gigs.

The afternoon of 25 June will see the Festival street piano take centre stage as local pianists line up to tinkle the ivories on the waterfront.

The Festival Finale on 25 June at Saltash Social Club features Femmes de la Mer, a 15 strong group of women+ hailing from across Cornwall, who are passionate about keeping traditional shanties and folk songs about the sea alive. They are followed by up-and-coming local band Windjammer, a trio who blend self-penned songs and instrumentals with original versions of music drawn from the best traditions of British folk. With musicians based in Plymouth and Saltash, Windjammer has a rapidly-growing fan base and are building a strong reputation on the Festival circuit, including performances at Cambridge Folk Festival, Latitude and Hartlepool Folk Festival and supporting Seth Lakeman this year.

More information and tickets are available at www.songsandshanties.co.uk

Tickets will once again be sold with pay-what-you-feel options, helping to make events accessible to all. The Festival has been made possible thanks to funding from Arts Council England through its open access National Lottery Project Grants, FEAST Cornwall, Cornwall County Council and Saltash Town Council and is produced by Salt Arts CIC.

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Birds and Bees at Saltash Library Hub

Although England has sadly become one of the most wildlife deficient countries in the world, there is still hope for its future thanks to the many professionals and committed volunteers working to boost its ecology.

This message was the golden thread running through the events held at Saltash Library Hub during their Environment Month in April. It was also the main message promoted by Mervyn Orchard of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), who gave a presentation at the Library Hub on 'Together We Can Save Our Wild'.

The RSPB was set up by Emily Williamson, a philanthropist and bird lover. It was 1889 and a fashion craze that involved adorning hats with not just feathers but wings and whole birds was showing no signs of slowing down and driving some bird species towards extinction. Appalled by the slaughter, Emily Williamson invited a group of women to discuss how to put a stop to the plumage trade. Not only did her efforts lead to a ban on the import of exotic feathers, saving many species from extinction, but they also led to the formation of the RSPB - proof that one person can make a difference.

Mervyn spoke warmly and with great insight of the work of the RSPB locally, nationally and beyond. Cornwall, which is a staging post for most migrant birds, is an area of focus for the RSPB, and home to one of the Society's greatest achievements: the revival of the Cornish 'national bird', the chough. Once abundant along our coastline, modern farming methods had driven the chough out of Cornwall by the 1970s. But since the sighting of an Irish pair on the Lizard in 2006, the RSPB has worked closely with farmers to encourage the charcoal birds with red bills to breed in Cornwall again. Now the population has risen to 220 birds, who are spreading their wings gradually eastward along the coast with 72 chicks hatched last season.

Locally and nationally, the much-loved puffin is the focus of another RSPB project. These quirky birds are sadly in decline due to overfishing and climate changes that are affecting sand eels, the puffin's favourite food. In a landmark

project on Lundy Island, the RSPB has succeeded in reversing the decline, and is now seeking to repeat this success elsewhere.

The incredible social structure of the bee and the vital role it plays in our planet's ecosystem was the subject of a talk by Dale Wood of Tamar Landscape Partnership. An experienced beekeeper, Dale regaled the audience with information about the honey bee, saying that it is in fact just one of 270 bee species in Britain.

Dale outlined the social life and the roles played by the queen bee, who he described as 'an egg laying machine', the drones who 'do little but fertilise the eggs', and the workers who produce the honey. He described the worker bee's incredible waggle dance and how it is used to show fellow bees the direction, distance and quality of the nearest food source.

Most importantly perhaps, the fascinated audience were told how to be 'bee friendly' by abandoning pesticides and welcoming aphid eating insects. Options include making a bee bath, letting at least some of the lawn grow unmown and planting a variety of bee friendly plants to flower all year. The efforts of one person can make a difference. Together, we can change the world.

Sowing Environmental Seeds

Taking inspiration from the Coronation emblem reflecting King Charles' love of nature, May Fair organisers are using the event as a platform to encourage residents to help safeguard the diversity of life on Earth, its ecosystems and its finite resources.

Initiatives include drinks bottles for volunteers to help reduce single-use plastics, tree planting and giving out packets of wildflower seeds to help save the bee and butterfly population. These initiatives have been made possible thanks to funding from Cornwall Community Foundation.



Shoplifting Harm to Retailers

A surge of shoplifting was reported in Fore Street during February and March with several hundred pounds of goods stolen from two major stores, and others suffering to a lesser extent. It is understood that while police have identified suspects they have been unable to recover any of the stolen items.

As a result, Cornwall Councillor Sheila Lennox-Boyd has suggested promoting a local 'shopwatch' similar to the 'pubwatch' scheme that she set up when she was a local licensee. A new support group called 'Saltash Traders Against Retail Theft' (START) has launched with the aim of alerting town centre businesses of any suspect activity in a shop as soon as it occurs. Police will be contacted instantly and it is hoped that suspects will be identified or apprehended while they are still in the area. START has already formed a Facebook page and a WhatsApp group to carry out alerts.

Civic Parade at Saltash Regatta

Saltash Town Council is pleased to be holding a Civic Parade at this year's Saltash Regatta. The event is taking place on 29 - 30 July with the parade being held on Saturday 29th July leaving Victoria Gardens at 10:30am.

Following the Civic Parade the Mayor of Saltash will hand out prizes to the best dressed organisation and officially open the weekend of events.

Flotsam and Jetsam of Town's Treasures



Take a trip to the Saltash Heritage Museum and you'll be travelling down Memory Lane to discover how families used to cook, clean and light their homes without the electric power that we take so for granted nowadays. Based on the theme of 'sustainability', the Heritage Museum's 2023 exhibition is called 'Flotsam and Jetsam', and includes a fascinating selection of exhibits and photographs from their vast store of memorabilia.

You'll see the key role the River Tamar played in local commerce in the days when around more than 200 sailing barges would jostle for position at the town's quays while local families fished for salmon and crowds packed the early steamers for day trips up the river.

Mashford Brothers was a notable firm of boatbuilders on that bustling waterside from the 1920's, and a central feature of the exhibition is the object that won Saltash Heritage the Object of the Year Award from Cornwall Heritage: a baby's cradle made by Sam Mashford in 1926 in the shape of a clinker built boat, later converted to a metre-long boat suitable for a small child to sail in.

The incredible boat was donated to Saltash Heritage by Mike Mashford, who was a guest of honour at the opening of the exhibition, when Heritage Chair Mrs Jean Dent welcomed Mayor and Mayoress Richard and Sarah Bickford. Referring to the museum building in Lower Fore Street, almost opposite the Guildhall, which is owned by

Saltash Town Council, the Mayor confirmed that the council was pleased and proud to be providing the long-term home for Saltash Heritage to preserve and display the town's rich history. "Long may it continue," he declared.

Exhibits include the domestic life of past generations shown off in the 'housemaid's cupboard', and childhood items which older visitors will remember and younger ones will wonder at. Toys and games of a pre-electrical age stand proud alongside souvenirs of 1950's schooldays. Nearby, is a much-admired recent acquisition from New Zealand of a large array of historic chinaware, all bearing pictures of a Saltash long gone and the 'newly opened' Royal Albert Bridge.

The museum will now be open through to October on Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 4pm, and on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, as well as on bank holidays and Fridays in the summer. Entry is free, though donations to help support this volunteer-maintained museum are welcomed.

Saltash Town Council Awards Festival Funding

Saltash Town Council has funding for festivals and events being held in the town that are free events for the community to attend.

Saltash Town Council has awarded £900 to the Saltash Songs and Shanties Festival for the pop up piano project. The project will see a piano sighted in the town for two weeks to encourage people to play and enjoy!

For an application form, guidelines on how and when to apply and support to apply email enquiries@saltash.gov.uk or visit the Town Council website https://www.saltash.gov.uk/edit/stuploads/8193_435536206.pdf or call 01752 844846.

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Saltash Town Council Supports Saltash May Fair

Saltash Town Council awarded a grant of £3000 to Saltash Fair Committee to support the running of Saltash May Fair 2023.

Saltash Town Council would like to thank the volunteer committee for organising May Fair for the community and are proud to support the event.

The funding was awarded through the Saltash Town Council grants scheme which awards funding through two strands. Community Chest supports small scale community projects intended to improve the town environment to strengthen the community fabric or the common economy of the town. The maximum amount that can be awarded is £1000

Festival Fund supports larger events that are free, 6 to 7 hour long events likely to attract several thousand people. The maximum that can be awarded is £1500 per day to a maximum of two days per event

Further details on the scheme, application form and examples of past funding awarded can be found on the Saltash Town Council website - <https://www.saltash.gov.uk/grants.php>

Dementia Awareness at Library Hub

Anyone living with dementia or supporting someone with dementia is invited to call in any time from 11am on Monday 15th May to the 'Business as Usual' event at Saltash Library Hub to learn more about the support available in Saltash.

The event is co-hosted by Dementia Voice and DECAF (MHA Communities). MHA was founded 80 years ago by a group of Methodists who wanted to improve the quality of life of older people in the time before the creation of the Welfare State. It aims to enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible, helping them to live later life well in their local communities MHA is open to providing care and support to people of all faiths and none, but continues to have strong support from Methodists as well as other Christians to this day.

Marking the beginning of National Dementia Week, the library will resound with songs from Dementia Voice Singers, and there will be the opportunity to leave a memory, comment or question on The Big Cardboard Recycle Tree for all to see. What is this tree? Call into the Library and find out.



HOPPER TRIPS - May 2023

Friday 12th May

Trago Mills & Newton Abbot

Always a great day out and popular Trago Mills for a day shopping lunch in one of many cafes on site or travel onto Newton Abbot for a look around shopping and enjoy a relaxing lunch
Leave Saltash 10.30 Return 16.00 - Travel only £11

Sunday 14th May

Sunday Lunch Boringdon Golf Club/Saltram

Excellent venue for Sunday lunch offering stunning views a warm welcome from staff and excellent quality and choice then onto the wonderful Saltram for a cream tea or a walk around the grounds
Leave Saltash 11.30 return 16.30 - Travel Only £5

Tuesday 23rd May

National Trust Lanhydrock House & Gardens

19th century Victorian country house with gardens full of all year round colour riverside walks and enjoy your lunch in the park cafe
Leave Saltash 10.30 return 16.00 - Travel Only £8

Friday 26th May

Buckfastleigh Steam Railway
Butterfly Farm/Otter Sanctuary

Enjoy a ride on the steam train to Totnes and back visit the interesting Butterfly farm Otter sanctuary lunch on site or those who prefer we will take you to Buckfast Abbey for your lunch.
Leave Saltash 10.30 return 16.30 - Travel Only £9

Sunday 28th May - Sunday Lunch
at The Dartmoor Lodge Ashburton

Have lunch at this very popular venue great atmosphere and value for money Sunday lunch we will then visit Dartmeet across the moor for afternoon tea or a gentle walk by the river
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FREE ENTRY

Saltash at War in Library

From the enforcement of Norman rule at Trematon castle through to the town being on the front line during the English Civil War, and right up to the Blitz of World War II, Saltash has seemingly always been at the forefront of wars and rumours about wars.

So as part of the 'Community History Month' this May, several members of the Saltash Great War Commemoration Committee have gathered a large array of pictures and photographs, some not exhibited publicly before, and put together a presentation entitled 'Saltash at War' to be hosted at Saltash Library Hub on Thursday 25th May at 2pm. As well as the major wars, the presentation will cover the town's involvement in other conflicts, including the privateering of Drake and other Elizabethans, and a local supposedly bomb proof shelter in the Cold War. All are welcome to attend.

Contact the Observer
01579 345699
07971 484872



Photo John Hooper

Mayor Aids the Rails at Model Exhibition

As trains rumbled though Saltash Station and over the iconic Royal Albert Bridge, trains of a lesser size travelled around within the adjacent former station building, to the delight of an audience of all ages attending the Saltash Model Railway club's first exhibition.

Following the official opening by the Mayor Counsellor Richard Bickford, there was a steady stream of visitors to view the range of railway layouts on display. Some of them were a reproduction steam power and included Yelverton on the GWR 'Primrose Line.' The Plym Valley Railway group had also bought the miniature of Marsh Mills station, from whence their actual railway operates. They also had their own 'ride on' railway on the station platform for younger

visitors and the Mayor to ride.

Railways in miniature attract the young as much as ever they did, judging by the wrapt attention of the youngsters standing alongside the older visitors, who would have recalled the end of the steam era which the exhibition celebrated.

The newly formed Saltash Model Railway club, who organised the weekend long event with Saltash Rotary, had their own newly built layout on display. Though the station is named Wearde it is intended just as a reproduction of a typical rural station of its era and is intended to be extended as the society develops. Members are welcomed and a permanent home for the club is being sought.

There was also a display of models on sale as well as railway books including well thumbed Ian Allen ABC list of locomotives which were once essential to true train spotters as the anorak and the packet of sandwiches - Happy Days!

Sustainable Saltash

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

End of usable life is the most environmentally sound time to change a car. We reached this point 2 years ago. We avoid driving wherever possible, but like many people we still need a car sometimes. We found a mid-range replacement second hand which was full electric and decided to go for it.

It is simple and fun to drive. There are very few moving parts compared to an internal combustion engine. No complex gearing, the motor just runs faster or slower. No need for a clutch, so starting up or accelerating is much swifter.

We were nervous about our first long journey. We don't do many by road, but occasionally have to. In 2021 the infrastructure was shaky at best. Visiting family in East Anglia and a trip with 4 passengers to Glasgow and back was a good test. Range worries simply evaporated, on a modern electric car it's no issue. I can't go 250 miles without a break and nor can the car, so we are well matched. We had a few frustrating stops, waiting for a turn on the charger. Since then, the network has expanded and with ultra-fast charging banks at Exeter and Rugby, we can get to Lincolnshire and back with 2 predictable stops. I can charge right up from near empty in the time it takes to stretch my legs and have a cuppa. Things aren't perfect but they are improving.

99 times out of 100 we're not going so far. The car sits plugged in and is always ready.

It's a change in mindset not to run it down and refill, but it's not an inconvenience.

The most unexpected benefit is servicing. Motors are simple and reliable. That leaves the wheels, brakes, a few filters and fluids. I'm told simplicity makes these cars very long lived. 15+ years without serious issue is a reasonable expectation. Tyres last as long as they always did. We have never changed a brake pad and won't for some time- the car brakes by charging the battery, a bit like a bicycle dynamo.

In parting, I would say don't be put off. The infrastructure is getting there and the vehicle is a real improvement. You'll also become more aware of the energy demand of driving. It is so much easier to comprehend when it is part of your electricity bill and sits alongside things like lighting and heating. Like us, you might find that this awareness makes you drive less, even though the fuel is a fraction of the cost. Moving a car takes vast amounts of energy. Seeing that plainly has been the most enlightening thing of all, and has kept us off the road all the more.

Marc Bramham

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

Five Ways to Improve Your Mental Wellbeing in 2023

With the cost of living crisis, rising food prices and energy bills shooting up, we all need a little help to stay positive and look after our mental health right now. And as we approach Mental Health Awareness Week next month (15-21 May), it's a great time to rethink how we can all look after ourselves and each other.

Have a chat and a brew

As the saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved, and it's true. Take a few minutes away from the rush and open up to a trusted friend or family member about how you're feeling. It can be a great way to relieve stress, get a fresh perspective and find clarity. Brew optional.

Reflect on the good stuff

Everyone has moments when it feels like everything is falling apart, and when you're in that place it's really tough to be thankful for anything. Taking the time to identify the good things in our lives, no matter how small, can provide us with a greater sense of perspective and help us develop a longer term view about our current situation.

Why not take some time

each day to write down a few things you're grateful for?

Set small mental health goals
In our busy, chaotic lives, mental wellbeing often drops down the priority list, and it can end up becoming a bigger problem as a result. We all know that fresh air, exercise, healthy eating, budgeting your money well, laughing, dancing, getting creative or joking with friends are wonderful ways to improve our mental wellbeing, but unless we allocate specific time to do these things, they often don't happen, so aim to make it a part of your regular routine.

Ask for help

Asking for help can be really tough. Many of us want to feel like we can handle things on our own, but there's no shame in seeking support, and it can make a massive difference. Whether you're asking for support with your mental health, advice on completing a practical task or guidance around your finances, there's plenty of help available.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) offers free support to people struggling financially. Visit capuk.org to find out more about the help we offer.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity working with over 580 churches to deliver debt help, budgeting guidance, support to find work, life skills groups and more. Visit capuk.org to find out more.

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Tamar Reflections

Bygones

There are so many interesting and historic reflections that I could write about that would fill our amazing Saltash Observer; so this month Tamar Reflections, I will reflect upon numerous bygones that I feel will interest the discerning readers once again!

These in part, are taken from one of my handbooks of times past, which I have found intriguing reading over many decades.

There is so much to delve through of enormous interest, that I shall share this information over two issues, as there would be far too much in just this issue.

Having been a Saltash Town Councillor for over thirty years (now retired) and indeed a former Mayor of this wonderful town of Saltash on four occasions; I thought I would look at interesting history of past Councillors, Freeman, Aldermen and Mayors, and their notable Committees and responsibilities. What was also intriguing was on 'their watch' some of the initiatives that are still acknowledged and celebrated today. Of course some are long gone but never forgotten as they feature in our history books and periodicals and indeed an enormous amount at our wonderful local Saltash Heritage Centre.

In the mid-20th Century the Saltash Borough had a working 'Ferry' Committee – also a 'Works, Water and Allotment' Committee – a 'Housing' Committee – a 'Sanitary and Highways' Committee – a

'Finance' Committee – and a 'Rating and Valuation' Committee. All Committees had various numbers on the panel. Therefore the Councillors, like today, also worked extremely hard in their elected roles as Councillors and guardians of the Public Purse and the Borough betterment with its smooth running, and for posterity a n d longevity.

There were other important offices and officers that were vital to Saltash Borough – The Town Clerk to the Rating Authority – the Rating and Valuation Officer – the Borough Treasurers – Medical and Deputy Medical Officers of Health – Borough Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector – Clerk to the Surveyor – Rate and Rent Collectors – Ferry Superintendent – Shops' Act Inspector – Town Sergeant and Caretaker to Victoria Gardens and Elective Auditor. Names of those officers or Freeman at that time are still uttered today, such as Dr. H. G. Robinson, Dr. N.G.Harry, S.W.M. Pryor, Roderick Porter S.S.C. Fred Rawling and Lieutenant-Colonel Drury, C.B.E.

The Fire Brigade whose Honorary Chief Officer was Councillor J.A. Venn and the Honorary Second Officer was Mr R. Hosking had notable members, such as ... H. Oliver, B. Jasper Jnr. A.Wall, H.Deacon, H. Foster, S. Taylor, W. J. Johnston, C.A. Fuge, B. Jasper Snr. (these were of course before the

WW2 Auxiliary Firefighters joined the voluntary ranks). The Police were stationed at Chapel Road.

There were other representatives and officers of other local Government bodies – such as – Clerk to the Justices, representatives on Public Assistance Committee, Relieving Officer,



Superintendent and Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, representatives on Guardians' Committee, Old Age Pensions Committee (hmmm!) – Resident Magistrates, Food Executive Officer and National Registration Officer.

Moreover, there were Officials for Property – such as Brunel Green, Pier, and Town Quay; Housing Estates and Elective Auditor. Names of those officers or Freeman at that time are still uttered today, such as Dr. H. G. Robinson, Dr. N.G.Harry, S.W.M. Pryor, Roderick Porter S.S.C. Fred Rawling and Lieutenant-Colonel Drury, C.B.E.

The population of Saltash Borough before the extension of 260 acres to 6,257 acres was in 1911 (4,130) 1921 (3,631) 1931 (3,600) and in 1937 (6,528) (some surprising figures with a notable decrease).

Inhabited houses in 1911 (814) 1921 (815) 1933 (936) 1934 (1,825) 1935 (1,886) 1939 (2020) (again some surprising figures!)

With Elected Mayors of the Saltash Borough (new Charter 1886) firstly under the Mayoralty of Alderman W.Gilbert I deemed information of enormous changes and

vital new initiatives during the various Mayoralties, with the incumbents often taking leading roles, such as Mayor Councillor G.Adams 1886/7 Victoria Gardens Jubilee and Scheme for Water Supply considered – Alderman W. Shaddick 1888 ongoing Water Supply Scheme – Alderman W.Dusting 1889 commencement of the Mayoral Gold Chain with the first central Gold Pendant; plus new Ferry Bridge built – Alderman W.Shaddick 1891 new Ferry Bridge corporate control completed – Alderman P.E.B. Porter 1892 Adit Water Supply completed – Alderman G.Adams 1893 Street improvements – Alderman R.C.Revell 1894 Agreement for Plymouth Water Supply to the Saltash Borough (Alderman Revell died whilst in office 1895) – Alderman W. Dusting 1896 oversaw a loan of £2,000 for laying water pipes in the Borough and under the River Tamar (I am not sure what happened with the River Tamar scheme, as everyone I speak to cannot confirm this project) – Alderman W. Dusting 1896 Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee – Councillor R.T. Meadows 1898 last beating of the bounds of the Liberty of the Water Tamar, and opening of Victoria Gardens and entertaining Cornish Regiment – Councillor F.A. Rawlings 1899 Volunteers to South Africa War: Plus successful defence of Ferry Rights in Parliament – Councillor R. Porter S.S.C. 1900 Proclamation of Accession of King Edward VII: Plus unveiling of Memorial to Sir Wm Penn Symons Esq. Recorder of Saltash – Alderman T.R. Meadows M.D. 1901 Coronation of King Edward VII and purchase of Recreation Field – Councillor J Prior 1902/3/4 County Petty Sessions first sitting at Saltash Guildhall, plus Ferry waiting room opening (Devon side), also Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Show and very importantly Agreement with Plymouth for 30 years' Water Supply to Saltash Borough.

These astonishing facts I am delighted to share with the readers in our wonderful Saltash Observer, and next time I will follow on from 1905/6 with Councillor W.P. Trood.

Interestingly, in last month's issue of the Saltash Observer I concentrated on Ancient Saltash Water supplies and schemes and mentioned the Wells that Saltash folk had to use to fetch water before and during the Victorian times; and this issue we can read how our leading Forefathers made drastic changes for the betterment of Saltash residents.

The image within this feature reflects one lady's journey down lower Fore Street with her earthenware pitcher to collect water from the Well Conduit during those Victorian times! How pleasing then, that we had such talented photographers during those times to capture such ways of life!

I'll drink to that!!

Sue Hooper MBE
Tele 01752 843073
Email: suehcf@msn.com

Tennis Club AGM

"At the recent Annual General Meeting of Saltash Tennis Club Chairman Chris Cansfield gave a detailed summation of the Club's progress. The Club is financially secure and Membership continues to hold up year on year. With the onset of lighter evenings and play being resumed on the two grass courts the forthcoming season is keenly anticipated. The Club is again entering two Men's Teams, this year in Div 4 and Div 6 with the Ladies competing in Div 5 of the Plymouth & District League which commences on May 1st. Our Head Coach Tom Wyman has been joined by Dylan Rundle a recently qualified LTA Class 2 with merit and with Coaching Assistant Holly Davis is well placed to cater for our many children who attend Mini Tennis on Saturday mornings and Juniors competing in competitions. Enquiries are

being made with a view to resurface the two hard courts and put in floodlights but this is dependent on successful tendering for grants and other finance. Thanks was expressed to the family of Angela Bond (Late Member) who kindly donated the proceeds of a retiring collection in her commemoration and Liskeard Snooker Club who also donated money to the same end. Discussions took place as to the best way the funds could be utilized in her memory. So as the season

begins to get underway if you or your family wish to give tennis a try Wednesday afternoons and Evenings are classed as Club events and anyone can come along and have a go. Give us a ring; there is no initial cost to these taster sessions. The Chairman concluded by thanking the Committee and the catering crew and all who contribute to making the Club the friendly place that it is. Thanks finally were expressed to their hosts Saltash Football Club for the use of their function room."

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Announcement PUBLIC NOTICE

Proposed relocation of Headstones at Saltash Baptist Church

The church has deemed 4 of their headstones and any memorial stones within its boundary to be in need of repair. These graves include the top names as:

**Pryor
Cookburn
Hodge
Parkin**

The Church proposes to do this by removing the memorial stones and placing them on the boundary which is in keeping with historic actions.

If this stone is part of your family and you would like to take on ownership for the stone and its repairs please contact info@saltashbaptist.co.uk by the 1st June 2023

Or by writing to
**Rev Tim Parkman
Saltash Baptist Church
Culver Road
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Saltash Ladies Choir Closes after 75 years

Saltash Town has been overwhelmingly saddened to learn of the closure of the Saltash Ladies Choir, which has been established since 1948.

The closure came about at the scheduled AGM on Wednesday 29 March, where unfortunately the choir could not fill the two vacancies of Secretary and Treasurer.

Mrs Sheila Smith, who had been Chairman for several years, had also been covering the Secretary's role as a temporary stop gap. Sheila informed the meeting that the Committee had previously agreed that if there were no volunteers to fill those roles, then the Choir in accordance with the Constitution would have no option but to disband.

President of Saltash Ladies Choir for the past 35 years, Mrs Sue Hooper, who is also Freeman of Saltash and former Town Mayor expressed her sorrow about the closure and speaking of the choir's long history and achievements, said: "The Saltash ladies choir formed a

few years after WW2 by a local teacher, Mrs Betty Pawley, to cushion the effects of the scourge of War, and over the past 75 years has been a well-respected and much loved choir, locally, Regionally and Nationally.

"I have been honoured to have been President of the choir for almost 35 years under the musical directorship of the late Sylvia Screech and for the past 25 years Linda Eastlake.

"The choir has been steadfast in its aims to sing together, and to promote awareness and appreciation of ladies choir singing, arranging and performing in hundreds of concerts to benefit local and worthy charities; and in doing so, raising and distributing over £70,000.

"Some of the highlights of the choir have been to sing at the Royal Albert Hall in London as part of the 'Festivals of Brass and Voice', raising money for Cancer Research, of which I was humbled to have

attended on those occasions.

"On a personal note, I have been honoured to have performed the choir at the Sue Hooper Charitable Foundation concerts featuring HM Royal Marines Band, Cornwall Police Choir, Plymouth Area Police Choir and the Radio Light Orchestra which was staged at Trematon Hall.

"Furthermore, the ladies choir has performed with the Band of the US Air Force and the Central Band of the Russian White Army, in addition, the Tokyo Mandolin Orchestra at St Andrew's Church in Plymouth, of which I was so proud to have compered in 1992.

"In addition, the ladies choir has brought many choirs to Saltash giving the community such enjoyment and appreciation of music at its best – such as Liskerret Male Voice Choir, Plymouth Area Police Choir, City of Truro Male Voice Choir, Clarion Male Voice Choir and the Wantage Choir to name but a few.

"Moreover, the choir has won several trophies in various Music Festivals in Devon and Cornwall, also taken part in Saltash Mayfairs Saltash Christmas Festivals, Christmas Tree Festivals and the Saltash VE/VJ commemorations in 2005.

"Saltash Ladies Choir were the first choir to sing 'When the World is Free' written by the late BBC organist, Dudley Savage, who lived in Saltash".

Sue went on to praise the choir and its Director of

Thank You

Mary and Gary Ashton along with family would like to thank everyone for all the countless cards and help especially for attending Bill's funeral.

Thank you to David Fowell and Pengelly Funeral Service, for their professionalism.

A total of £225.00 was collected for Cancer Research.

Mary Ashton & Family

Music, Linda Eastlake. In addition, Sue praised the Committee officers and members, highlighting all their individual tasks. Sue went on to say, that it is with such commitment over the past 75 years that has kept the wonderful Saltash Ladies Choir afloat, and thanked them most passionately, one and all.

A spokesperson for the Choir said: "It is with a heavy heart and soul, that after three quarters of Century that our wonderful ladies choir is closing.

"The Saltash ladies Choir has been pivotal to musicality at its best in Saltash and further afield; and has been a great ambassador to charitable and worthy causes throughout seven and a half decades.

"This has to be one of the saddest days for Saltash, but we can reflect upon the amazing music that we have championed, all in a marvellous cause of bringing music and song to Saltash and surrounding areas".

Police Enquiry Office Reopening

Public-facing reception desks in police stations began closing in Cornwall more than a decade ago, and in South East Cornwall no station is currently open to the public. The Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez, has set about reversing this in order to deal with the overloading of the 101 enquiry line, and set up a public survey earlier this year to gauge public opinion.

Results show there is local demand to have the enquiry office at the Saltash police station reopened, but it was reported at a meeting of Saltash Town Council that this is not likely to be happening in the near future as the station's former front office was repurposed in a recent refurbishment, necessitating structural changes to the building if the front office is to be reopened. It was advised that the public can still visit the station by appointment to discuss issues of concern.

Safe38 Tidford Play Park

Tidford celebrated the long-awaited opening of the revamped children's play park. Local road safety campaign group Safe38 is using the opening to renew its calls for a pelican crossing across this busy section of the A38 which forms part of an important part of the strategic road network in SE Cornwall. The crossing isn't currently included within the proposed package of safety works for the Saltash to Trerulefoot section of the A38 as part of RIS3 road improvement scheme to be delivered post 2025.

James Millidge Safe38 Chairperson says, "The A38 divides this community completely in half with no safe means of pedestrians crossing the road along the entire stretch through the village. In all honesty Safe38 was shocked and utterly dismayed to find that a safe signalised crossing for Tidford was not included by National Highways within the proposed scheme of works.

"Not only do the residents of Tidford have to endure toxic air quality caused by the various pollutants coming from road traffic - they are hit with a double whammy of also having to dice with death to cross the road to access the play park. The reality is that many simply won't be able to access it easily which is heartbreaking for this community."

Hannah Jenkins, a young Mum and member of the Tidford play park organising committee is equally appalled. She said: "It beggars belief, that not only do we have to put up with living with poor air quality and have our children's health put at risk each time they step outside their front door. Now we have invested in a play park for them that is not safe to walk to if you happen to live on the wrong side of the village.

"My daughter goes to the Montessori nursery and trying to cross the road to get there is a nightmare. Cars let you cross one side but then you get stuck in the middle. It's unnerving standing there clinging onto her and two more children under the age of

4 waiting for a car to stop. I have on occasion even resorted to taking the car in order to keep the girls safe. The road is also a barrier for her nursery taking children to the park. The risk for them of crossing the road with children in their care is just too high."

James Millidge doesn't understand the apathy of the Department of Transport when residents continue to be faced with such difficult circumstances. He continues: "RIS 3 proposals do include a reduction in the speed limit through the village from 40mph to 30mph which is welcomed and we hope that will help mitigate some of the issues, but there is a total lack of urgency on behalf of the Department of Transport in regards to what are relatively cheap safety interventions."

In stark contrast, Landrake - a village also separated by the A38 just minutes away from Tidford - was provided with a footbridge following a tragic and unfortunately fatal road traffic incident in the 1990s. Residents of Tidford should not have to wait for tragedy to strike before something is done according to Safe38.

With the A38 in Devon rated one of the best routes to drive in a recent poll by Retailer A0 of its 700 drivers and the general public, why are National Highways and the Department of Transport dragging their heels on safeguarding the lives of children and all other residents of Tidford? The answer is clear to James.

"South East Cornwall continually misses out on funding for key infrastructure projects and we find ourselves fighting tooth and nail for minimal safety improvements while other parts of Cornwall, closer to Truro, see massive investment. These improvements are critical for all of Cornwall's residents and visitors and we call upon those in power to hear our call for action.

"Safe38 ultimate goal for this section of the A38 is a new bypass to rid Tidford of the traffic and reunite this severed community, but in the meantime we desperately need these safety interventions including a pelican crossing delivered sooner than 2025. We are appealing directly to Cornwall Council, National Highways, our local MP and the Department of Transport to push this up their agenda as a matter of urgency for all our sakes but most importantly for the sake of our children."

"It's a no brainer really isn't it", concludes James.

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Just Thinking Aloud

I reckon that other contributions to May's issue will refer to May Fair Merriment and to Carolean Coronation Capers, so I happily resist the temptation to add to them, though I shall certainly be on Fore St with my family over the weekend, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if I was to bump into the subject of this month's offering, who remains a genuine "Saltash maid".


At some point in my Saltash life – I forget precisely when – I spotted a piece in a well esteemed local newspaper from an organisation called StoryBook Dads, which was looking for volunteer helpers. The 'phone number given was a Saltash one, so I called it. StoryBook Dads is a charity which – amongst other things – attempts to keep prisoners and their families together and to offer selected prisoners job training in audio and visual recording and editing. It turned out that the 'phone number was that of the charity's founder and CEO – Sharon Berry. She had been a pupil at Saltash Comprehensive, who left school at 15 when I first went there as one of the Deputy Heads in nineteen seventy something or other.

Anyway, the result of that call was that I felt persuaded to sign on. I can't say that driving up to Dartmoor Prison early in the morning in the depths of winter was enjoyable, but being part of the scheme was a fantastic experience, and I made what is currently termed a "shedload" of friends, prisoners and fellow volunteers. I began as just a simple volunteer, inputting data into a computer – data which helped us to gain financial support from various bodies – and I finally retired at 75 as chair of the trustees. Our

patron when I was there (and still is!) was Terry Waite – a real hands on guy who goes down a storm with prisoners when they learn of his years of isolation in prison in the Lebanon. He was (and remains) very persuasive when seeking sources of funding for StoryBook Dads, and seems not to understand the concept of retirement. Want to find out more about this charity? Look up its website, especially "About Us", which will lead you to "Our Story" and to "Sharon's Story".

You don't have to share my obvious enthusiasm. Indeed, you may belong to the "lock 'em up and throw away the key" mob, but hopefully not, if you have not already screwed up this page and chucked it away in disgust.

If you don't have access to the internet, you may be interested to learn that Sharon set up StoryBook Dads in 2003, and was awarded an OBE in 2010. This year we are having a celebration of the last twenty years and I am looking forward to meeting lots of old friends in HMP Dartmoor again, including the indefatigable Terry and the ever enthusiastic Sharon. And the Saltash Connection remains. My successor as Chairman is Saltash personality Arthur Hearl. *Bob Munro*



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