

SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

Your only truly "local" newspaper ...

October 2023 - Issue 377

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SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2023
DON'T MISS THE STREET MARKET FROM 1^{PM}
OR THE SANTAS ON BIKES AND ON FOOT
AND REMEMBER TO SHOP LOCAL THIS CHRISTMAS

TTAG Public Meeting to Highlight Further Potential Toll Increase

Following the recent September meeting of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee a public consultation on a proposed increase for the Tamar Toll was agreed. Councillors received a 200+ page report from Tamar Crossings management, which included a 74-page consultant review; the last few pages explained the urgent need for a toll increase on the two Tamar crossings.

The Tamar Toll Action Group (TTAG) will be holding a public meeting at 7pm on the 18 October at Saltash Football Club with key speakers to discuss the various options within the upcoming public consultation, giving residents and business owners

a chance to share their views.

Five options have been provided for consideration in the consultation - each illustrating a different tolling philosophy in terms of how the cost is to be shared between users, but according to TTAG committee member Saltash

Town Councillor Steve Miller, the outcome of the consultation seems pre-determined.

Steve explains: "Rules for raising toll revenue state that the forecast amounts should be sufficient to finance the operation, otherwise the two councils - Plymouth City

Council and Cornwall Council - would have to fund the deficit. However, although in reality there is a range of choices for the way the forecast is set by varying the costs, two of the five proposed options presented resulted in either too little or too much income, effectively leaving councillors with just three options to choose from."

Chair of TTAG, Mel Priston continued: "Rather than addressing issues identified in the consultant's report, for example the current level of subsidy of the ferry from bridge tolls being unsustainable, or providing a workable choice of alternative toll variations, the end result of the consultation is forcing the Joint Committee into the Tamar Crossing Management's preferred choice of maintaining the status quo. We think this is short-sighted and an unacceptable way of working from what is effectively a publicly funded body."

With papers being handed out/emailed to users of the crossings for just two days, the group want to make sure as many people as possible can express their views using the online link before the end date of 29 October.

TTAG is encouraging users to come along to their meeting which will be promoted widely on Facebook, and urges local users to participate in the consultation.

Green light for Average Speed Cameras on A38

Since its inception in 2018, Safe38 has been campaigning hard to win some serious safety measures for the A38 from Carkeel to Trerulefoot and it seems that patience and commitment has paid off. A letter from Roads Minister Richard Holden MP to Southeast Cornwall MP Sheryll Murray has confirmed that average speed cameras will indeed be rolled out on this section according to Safe38 Chair James Millidge who is now eagerly awaiting confirmation from National Highways and the local MP.

The average speed cameras mean that the Department of Transport delay on the RIS3 safety package, pushing it back until at least 2030, which had been a major disappointment earlier in the year would be easier to swallow.

James explained: "The announced delaying of A38 Carkeel to Trerulefoot Safety Package by at least 7 years was a major frustration for us as a group. It's a decision, we feared, would cost many lives and serious injuries and leaves Southeast Cornwall woefully far from having a safe strategic road corridor. This news from the Department of Transport, on the back of lobbying by our MP and local Cornwall Councillors, would be a major milestone in getting some meaningful action to improve the road.

He continues: "The safety package which was being considered as part of that RIS 3 scheme was only ever a small selection of safety measures, and it's hard to comprehend the logic in delaying what is essen-

tially a cheap list of measures designed to reduce death and serious injury, which would also have a positive economic impact due to less unplanned road closures."

The news comes at a time when the safety of the A38 is being pushed up the agenda as it is included as one of three top priorities for the newly formed Southeast Cornwall Community Area Partnership (a community of local parish and town councils and County Councillors).

James Millidge said: "We are

especially thankful to Councillors Armand Toms, Colin Martin, Jane Pascoe and Kate Ewert for their relentless pursuit of investment and prioritisation for safety on the A38. As a campaign group we deeply value their support and we will continue to do all it can to see these safety measures delivered while also campaigning for larger improvements which will give Southeast Cornwall a road that is fit for purpose, and that will save lives and secure livelihoods for generations to come."



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Town Messenger news is supplied by the Town Council

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Saltash Tamar ED
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Saltash Trematon & Landrake ED
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Highways
Waste & Recycling
Tamar Bridge

From the Mayor of Saltash

September has gone in a flash and as we move into October the Town Council starts its annual process of setting budgets for various committees, in order to

Meet Your Councillor Cllr. Matt Griffiths Essa Ward

In August I was really pleased to be elected as Chair of the Town Vision Sub-Committee. The primary purpose of this group is to support Sinead, our Town Clerk, to lead the business planning process for Saltash Town Council and oversee its effective implementation.

We're currently working on putting together the business plan for the three-year period from April 2024 to March 2027. This is important work to establish an overarching and unified business plan for Saltash Town Council, increase engagement with residents and provide a solid foundation to secure investment to achieve our strategic priorities.

Our strategic priorities for the next three years are:

1. Boosting Jobs and Economic Prosperity
To ensure Saltash benefits from higher income, reduced poverty, improved facilities and quality of life. Promote Saltash as a vibrant and welcoming visitor destination.

2. Health and Wellbeing
To support the Saltash Healthcare Action Group in improving our local NHS provision. Support improvement to mental health, fitness facilities, educational wellbeing of children and young people together with opportunities to access a high level of quality learning.

League of Friends St Barnabas Hospital AGM

To be held at St Barnabas Hospital Day Care Centre
Mon 20th Nov at 2.30 pm
All welcome

pay for the services the Town Council delivers for you all. As ever, it is a careful balance of affordability and what our staff can manage.

All our budgets, meeting agendas and minutes are available for public scrutiny, and meetings are open to the public, you can, given enough notice ask questions at most meetings too. If you have an interest, please have a look. You can also contact your



3. Housing

To ensure Saltash has a balanced range of high quality and affordable housing by working in partnership with Cornwall Council.

4. Travel and Transport

To work with key stakeholders to support access to affordable, accessible and sustainable transport in Saltash and the rural and urban areas and promote walking and cycling.

5. Climate Emergency

To continue to acknowledge a climate emergency and to bring forward a local climate change strategy.

6. Recreation and Leisure

To continue to provide, improve, and support play parks, open green spaces, the library service, cultural activity, leisure and sport facilities, and to acknowledge our unique position on the Tamar and Lynher rivers.

This process is going well and our aim is to have the business plan completed by Christmas.

It's great to see the commitment in the Town to support young people, the future generation, who are an energetic and creative asset. They are increasingly, and rightly, raising important issues regarding the barriers and inequalities they face and it is important that we respond both positively and strategically to these concerns.

To that end, I'm really impressed with the work of both Livewire and The Core who provide creative, warm and safe spaces day in day out, giving young people opportunities to express themselves and get validation when its often missing from other parts of their lives. As a Town Council, we have increased the budget for the delivery of professional youth work over the last few years to ensure that support is



ward councillor, you'll find contact details on our website, or feel free to give the Guildhall staff a call on

01752 844846 and they will be able to put you in touch with your elected representative.

I am keeping my section short this month, but would really appreciate it if you would read the meet your councillor section below. Councillor Matt Griffiths is leading on some important business planning work which will give better direction to the Town Council and should help us deliver on some of the strategic priorities we have agreed.

Much of this is not new, and in part brings forward ideas from our agreed Neighbourhood Plan, but in a

Town Council Business Plan designed to enable delivery of some of those ideas that we can control. As with the budget setting process outlined above, you can feedback on our Strategic Priorities and plans through your ward councillor.

You will hear more of our Business Planning in future months, and I am grateful to Matt, Sinead, our town clerk, and the team for bringing this long overdue piece of work together.

I would like to finish with a big congratulations to the Friends of Summerfield Playpark, who have fought for and raised significant

amounts of money to breathe new life into the Summerfields Playpark. The first phase of new equipment is being installed as I write. Well done to Councillor Lisa Mortimore and all those who have played a part in this. The Town Council are pleased to have utilised a new Playparks Match Funding scheme. We would love to hear from other community groups who are interested in their local playparks and the Town Council will match fund pound for pound anything raised up to £10,000.

Councillor Richard Bickford Mayor of Saltash 2023-24

Your Town Council & Wards

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Cllr Julia Peggs

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Brad is Honoured with a Memorial Plaque and Tree



On Sunday October 1st a large gathering of family and friends assembled at the Saltash Memorial Peace Garden to celebrate the life of the late Brad Hine, who passed away untimely in 2021.

The occasion was to unveil a memorial Hawthorn tree, and plaque in Brad's honour.

In recognition of Brad's unstinting work on the Peace garden in its creation, design, architecture and care - Saltash Town Council and Cornwall Council gave permission for the two projects to be installed in his honour.

The tree was grown and

Speed Reductions Around Saltash

The dual carriageway Saltash bypass between its emergence from the tunnel to Carkeel roundabout, has had no speed limitation other than 70 mph, the national limit, since it opened in 1988.

Now National Highways have decided to reduce this to 50mph in order, they say, to improve air quality as well as road safety.

This is more compatible with the limit of 40mph for the 'Gateway' zone, west of the roundabout.

In addition limits are to be strictly enforced in the 30 mph zone of the three lane Saltash tunnel, through the installation of average speed cameras. These cameras are also to be placed on North Road, used as a diversionary route for A38 traffic during tunnel closures.

Meanwhile a total upgrade of the tunnel to the tune of £20m has started with cabling in particular being replaced, this involving overnight closures which will continue through the remainder of the

year with diversions along North Road.

donated by Dawn Morris of Tartendown Nurseries of Landrake, and planted by Dawn and Brad's brother Darren.

Brad's widow, Lorraine Hine unveiled the memorial plaque.

The ceremony was attended by over 30 family members and friends of Brad. The guests later congregated at the Ploughboy Inn for light refreshments.

Coronation Tree for Carkeel Roundabout?

The Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Colonel Edward Bolitho, has written to Saltash Town Council asking for its support in planting a tree to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III on Carkeel Roundabout.

Cornwall, along with other counties, is being given a tree to mark the coronation, and after wide consultation the Lord Lieutenant's favoured location is in the middle of Carkeel Roundabout as a welcome and farewell to Cornwall to locals and visitors. The roundabout, though, is owned by National Highways, so the Lord Lieutenant sought the Town Council's support in obtaining their permission. Town Councillors agreed to lend their voice in support of the request, and will write a letter together with Saltash Cornwall Councillors to National Highways.

Chamber Chairman Peter Ryland Keeping us Updated ...

Those of you who remember my report of last year's Chamber AGM will know that this is to be my last report as Chairman – but, no it isn't! Members at this year's AGM voted for me to stay on for another year. It has been a busy year so I'm hoping 2023/24 will be a little quieter.

Members at our meeting on the 2nd October were very vocal about the queues on the Tamar Bridge, which have become even longer and more regular. They are having a dramatic impact, causing delays for deliveries and leading to static traffic on Fore Street. It was suggested that some of the cause was due to the slowness of card transactions, and I was tasked with writing to the Tamar Crossings to see if there was a way to speed up this form of payment.

Chamber members are busy organising the Christmas Festival to be held on the 2nd December, and we were told that the official switch on of the Fore Street Christmas lights would be brought back as part of the Christmas Festival. Although this was welcomed, I was also asked to write to the Town Council to ask if some of the lights could be switched on earlier to give

a Christmas feel to the town from mid-November. It was also noted, with thanks, that Scrapstore is not only donating funding to cover the costs associated with the Lantern Parade at the Festival but will also be opening a Pop-Up Christmas Shop in the Courtyard at the top of Fore Street to help fund entertainment at the Festival. Scrapstore needs volunteers to take on a few shifts each week to make this work. So, I am asking through this column for volunteers to let Rosie know in Scrapstore (next to the Brunel Inn) if they can help.

Other issues of concern included the closure of Lloyds Bank, although there is a hope that a banking hub could be set up. Concerns were also expressed about the use of community buses which is taking business away from private operators.

An update was given to members about the project to create a green event space in the town centre, helping to improve the shopping experience. The final report is now in the public domain on the Town Council's website, and contains exciting proposals. Perhaps the forthcoming year won't be so quiet!

Pete's Point of View...

As we are now aware, the Northern leg of HS2 has been cancelled, with a potential saving of £36 billion, which is to be spent on alternative infrastructure in the North, to assist with the policy of levelling-up.

Whilst I might feel just a little sorry for those good folk travelling between Birmingham and Manchester, possibly further, who will not now have their commutes shortened by several minutes, I also ponder about just a little bit of levelling-up, or the lack of it, in the South West and especially in Cornwall.

Cornwall relies on a single but vital rail link to the Capital, which in turn is reliant on the weather, the line at Dawlish having been closed variously for between a few hours and several weeks, in recent years. We have a section of the A38 that is regarded as one of the most dangerous in the country with way above average injury and fatality statistics. We in South East Cornwall either have to pay to cross into England, or to take a rather torturous and uneconomical route to avoid the Tamar Bridge.

Transport 'improvements' in our area are sometimes almost comical, a bus route that serves villages for one afternoon per week as a typical example. Fine if you want to leave home one week and return the next! Or perhaps a trolley dash at a Saltash supermarket, with just enough time to get the return bus? Try telling your doctor's surgery that you want an appointment but can only manage Wednesday afternoon between 2.00 and 2.45!

Of that £36 billion saving, what use we could make of

just £1 billion of that, to improve transport and connectivity in the South West. It would go some way towards levelling-up in our area.

We are, of course, fortunate to live in an area of outstanding beauty, from the rugged and breathtaking coastline of North Cornwall to the picturesque villages on the South coast, with much green, fertile and attractive land in between. On a recent trip into deepest Cornwall, well Falmouth and beyond that is, I noticed how well kept even the simplest of roundabouts are, often well planted with stunning shows of flowers and shrubs to impress both locals and visitors alike.

I wonder how impressed visitors to Cornwall are, when they see our very first roundabout at Carkeel? Members and former Members of the Town Council have individually long campaigned for this disgrace to be smartened-up, but thus far without success. I'm sure that somebody will tell me that the roundabout is a haven for insects and flora, but does it really have to look that way? There might however just be changes afoot, watch this space, as they say.

I recall a former Town Councillor complaining to a third party, that as I am not really a local, I shouldn't be commenting on local matters.

Barrett's Privateers Musicians Marry

Having already been singing in harmony together for many years, Gideon Barrett and Penny Anne have now tied the knot at a wedding ceremony, followed, not surprisingly, by an evening of music and fun for their family and friends from their home village of Landulph and across the country.

Penny Anne arrived in style at Landulph Church, which was packed with guests, wearing a midnight-blue chiffon dress with peacock design and carried in a classic car. The reception was held in Landulph Memorial Hall, where the bride and groom led the Ceilidh with other members of the well known and popular folk band Barrett's Privateers.

The couple met at Falmouth Shanty Festival and have been performing together with fellow Privateers since then, including playing a major and greatly enjoyed role in the Saltash Songs and Shanty festival. Following the Landulph Music Festival, the Privateers will be appearing at



the Mevagissey Festival and Cotehele Christmas Festival. Next year's highlights will include a concert in Carnglaze Caverns and of course the 2024 Saltash Songs and Shanty Festival.

The couple asked that instead of wedding presents donations be made to the Alzheimer's Society, and wish to thank all who helped raise a magnificent £2000 for the cause.

BRYONY HINE

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Santa Fun Run Saturday 2nd December 2023

Entries for the 2023 Saltash Santa Fun Run are now open! The 3km run, through the Christmas Market on Fore Street, across the Tamar Bridge and back, is being organised by the Tamar Trotters Running Club working with the Saltash Chamber of Commerce, organisers of the Christmas Festival. After the Santas have safely returned and darkness falls, the town centre's Christmas lights will be switched on, and the night skies will be lit up with magical lanterns and fireworks. Fun Run entries cost £10, which includes a Santa suit and finisher's medal. Just 200 slots available, so book early through the Tamar Trotters website.

True to say that I have only lived in Saltash for a dozen or so years, but first visited Cornwall very many years ago. I can actually claim to have some Cornish blood in my veins, thanks to an ancestor. (I also have some French blood, but tend to keep that a bit quieter). But I do love Cornwall and am passionate about the area in which I now live.

I'll be back next month, in the meantime take care and stay safe.

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.

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by the new pizza place*

Saltash Bowls Club

One Hundred Years Old and Still Growing

There's a small patch of very green grass in the heart of Saltash which hosts one of the larger sports clubs in the town. You may have passed it by and not given it a second glance, or stopped to watch when play is underway. This year it's been a hive of activity as Saltash Bowling Club (SBC) turned 100 years old.



Deputy Mayor Julia Peggs rolls the first wood to open the bowling 2023 season.

Born in the same year as the Disney Corporation, SBC was formed as a men's club in August 1923 at the green on the edge of Longstone Park, where it has remained ever since. A Ladies section was launched in 1964, and eventually the two were merged.

Today the sports club has over 100 playing members, hosts a wintertime short mat (inside) club and has a strong social programme. The green and clubhouse are fully self maintained, free coaching is available and visiting players are welcome.

Many SBC players have

become county champions and gone on to the annual Bowls England National Finals at Leamington Spa, and some regularly play for Cornwall against other counties. Both the men and ladies' teams compete in local and county leagues; this year the Ladies topped the Border League and won promotion in the Plymouth and District League while the men's A team won their 'Group 2 East' League.

For the past two years youngsters from local primary schools have benefitted from a weekly coaching programme, with some success in the County School Games. It is hoped an after-school club can be established next season.

Each year the Club President nominates a local charity as a focus for fundraising; recent beneficiaries include Livewire, Eva's Little Stars and the Core, which this

summer received £650 towards its youth skills workshop project.

SBC Birthday Celebrations
One hundred years deserves some celebrating, and so 2023 has been a busy year for the Club.

Five special events were held, beginning with a visit from a Bowls England squad in May. Then came teams from Bowls Cornwall, Friends of English Bowling and Group 2 (our Cornish area), all culminating in a re-run of the first competitive match to be played on the green back in 1923.

One hundred years ago the gentlemen bowlers of Devonport Park arrived by train and were paraded up Fore Street accompanied by the Saltash Mayor and the Town Band - this year they arrived by car, with the Town Band playing beside the clubhouse and Mayor of Saltash Richard Bickford



meeting them at the Club. Ladies from Plymouth CityBus came too to make up the mixed squad.

Each celebratory game was followed by a meal in the clubhouse, provided by the in-house catering team.

A fly-past by two Spitfires from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight was sadly cancelled at short notice as high winds made their planned landing further into Cornwall too difficult.

Another 100 years?

While being immensely proud of its history, SBC members are keen to ensure the Club continues to thrive in the decades ahead. Across the sport, changes are being made to widen the appeal of what was traditionally seen as 'an old man's game': shoes, bowls and kit bags are now available in a wide range of colours, and Saltash players have colourful new sports shirts specially designed to celebrate the centenary year.

Plans are ongoing to start up a summer after-school club, and next year SBC coaches and players will again welcome primary school students in preparation for the County Games. Young players are increasingly finding success at County and National level - maybe there are some future stars in Saltash waiting to be discovered?

Young or old - or somewhere in between - lawn bowls is an extremely accessible sport, with a very friendly heart. If you'd like to

find out more, contact Saltash Bowling Club via their website or Facebook page, and keep an eye out at Longstone Park for details of the free try-out and coaching sessions beginning next Spring.

(L to r) Life Members Christine Johnstone, John Payne and Audrey Quick soak up the sunshine. At 95, Audrey is the club's oldest and longest serving member. She joined in 1978 and finally laid down her woods three years ago.

Hurting not Helping says Colin Martin



Over the past month, we've heard the Prime Minister claim that there is a "war on motorists", and that the Government is "proudly pro car". But do their actions match this claim?

The Prime Minister frequently reminds us that he cut fuel duty by 5p per litre, but that is little consolation when the two petrol stations in Saltash routinely charge 10-11p per litre more than those in Callington! That's nothing compared to the price difference experienced by EV drivers: those lucky enough to have a driveway at home can fill up for as little as 10p per kWh (equivalent to 3p per mile), but those who rely on public chargers pay up to 79p/kWh which, at approximately 26p per mile, is twice the cost of diesel!

Saltash has a very high proportion of residents who don't have any off-street parking. This should make the town a priority for the installation of huge numbers of public EV charging points, but almost five years after Cornwall Council declared a Climate Emergency, there is just one "rapid" and three "fast" chargers in the Culver Road car park, with a couple more up at the China Fleet Club.

And of course while you're charging your EV in the Council car park, you have to pay for a parking ticket too. In May, Cornwall Council significantly increased parking charges across Cornwall, and this month we have heard that they are set to rise again!

Earlier this year Cornwall Council increased the tolls on the Tamar crossings by 30%, and the latest news is that this is set to rise again soon! When I asked

Cornwall Council's new cabinet member for Transport about the Tamar Crossings, he told me they should be seen as "a business, not a service". He said that if the numbers using the Torpoint Ferry don't cover the costs, he'd seriously consider closing it overnight, forcing residents of Torpoint to take a 20+ mile detour via the Tamar Bridge to reach work or get to hospital!

I realise that sometimes expensive car parking can be an effective tool for persuading people to use public transport, but this comes at a time when multiple bus routes have been cut across Cornwall. Meanwhile, the Government's stubborn refusal to negotiate with train drivers has led to fifteen months of strikes. If buses and trains aren't there when we need them, it is inevitable that most of us will choose to stick with our cars.

The Government is also giving very mixed messages about safety measures on the A38: in August, the Transport Secretary told us that funding for speed cameras along the length of the route had been approved, but then in September, National Highways told us that no funding would be available before 2030!

So, whether you travel by car, bus or train, it feels like Cornwall Council and the Government are hurting, not helping.

Colin Martin
Leader of the Lib Dems

ADVANCE WARNING

Roads closed for: Saltash Christmas Festival

A38 Sliproad (south lane) (Full Length)
Fore Street (Full Length)
Wesley Road (Full Length)
Victoria Road (King Edward Road TO Wesley Road) Eastbound Only
Belle Vue Road (Junction Car Parks TO Fore Street)
King Edward Road (Essa Road TO Victoria Road) Northbound Only
Callington Road (Fore Street Roundabout) 14:15 14:30 (For Fun Run)
St Stephens Road (Fore Street Roundabout) 14:15 14:30 (For Fun Run)
King Edward Road (Fore Street Roundabout) 14:15 14:30 (For Fun Run)
Lower Fore Street (Fore Street TO Tamar Bridge Entrance) 14:30 15:30 (For Fun Run)
Ellwell Road (Tavy Road TO 2 Lockyer Terrace) 17:00 18:30 (For Parade Lineup)
North Road (Tavy Road TO Lower Fore Street) 18:30 18:45 (For Parade)
Tavy Road (Elwell Road TO North Road) 18:30 18:45 (For Parade)
Callington Road (Fore Street TO Glebe Avenue) 18:45 19:15 (For Fireworks)
St Stephens Road (Fore Street Roundabout TO Essa Road) 18:45 19:15 (For Fireworks)

2ND DECEMBER 2023 10:00 - 22:00

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November & December 2023

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Friday 10th November 1030 - 1700
Visit Dartington Cider Press/Totnes
Travel cost: £9 - Free entry.

Sunday 19th November 1030 - 1700
Cornish Winter Fair, Wadebridge
Travel cost: £11- Free entry

Friday 24th November 1030 - 1600
Tour Princetown Prison Museum
Travel cost £8: - Entry £4

Sunday 26th November 1030 - 1600
Lunch at Carbeile Inn, Torpoint
Travel cost: £7

Friday 1st December 1600 - 2100
Tavistock Dickensian Evening
Travel cost: £7 - Free entry

Friday 8th December 1030 - 1630
Cornwall Gold & Tolgus Mill
Travel cost: £15

Monday 11th December 1030 - 1630
Exeter Cathedral Christmas Market
Travel cost: £13 - Free entry

Contact Community Enterprises PL12
01752 848348 – for more information.

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07971484872 or 01579 345699

E:maryecrawford@hotmail.com

Essa Voices

Homelessness is the canary in the mine. It's the prophetic call to all of us that there's something radically wrong in our society if anybody is living on our streets. In a meeting of Cornwall Councillors in

November last year, we were told that the number of households in emergency accommodation in Cornwall had increased by over 30 in the previous month, bringing the total to 737. This represented about 1,400 people and was an



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

increase of 450 households compared to pre-Covid times. And shockingly, 8% of the population of Cornwall was on the social housing waiting list.

Cornwall Council is seeking to respond to this crisis, setting up Rough Sleeper Resettlement Teams, for example, to provide place-based, personalised support, and opening Chough House, a 9-bed assessment hub. Locally, we are fortunate to have Saltash Hope, the social action arm of Saltash Baptist Church, but the housing crisis continues to be acute, exacerbated by the worrying number of landlords selling their properties or converting them to holiday lets.

Homelessness is complex as well as pressing. It's a condition that is often misunderstood, often seen as a failing of the homeless person themselves rather than a systemic problem in our society. Someone who had a deep understanding of the individual issues as well as the whole picture was Steve Ellis, who worked tirelessly for over 20 years as Chief Executive of St Petros, the charity campaigning to end homelessness in Cornwall. St Petros was my chosen charity between 2019 and 2021, when I was Chair of Cornwall Council. Collaborating with St Petros gave me opportunities to raise funds for them, but also gave me the privilege of spending precious time with Steve, relishing the compassion and insight of the stories he told so masterfully.

Steve passed away at the end of September. I joined the throng of mourners in an achingly beautiful memorial service for him in Truro Cathedral, held on World Homeless Day, 10th October. Many were wearing 'canary yellow', the colour of St Petros. Suspended high in the nave above us was a giant globe of the Earth, internally lit and gently spinning. The artist who created the globe said he wanted

Bishop Cornish Card for Bishop Philip



As the Bishop of Truro leaves his role in Cornwall to serve as the 98th Bishop of Winchester, the children of Bishop Cornish School made a giant card for the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen and his wife, Ruth. Containing a prayer the children wrote for Bishop Philip, the card thanked him for the care and guidance he has shown the school community and Diocese, and expressed the hope that he and his wife would find a 'kind and loving community' in Winchester.

Christmas Pops Up in The Courtyard

to give a sense of the Overview Effect experienced by astronauts when they see Earth from space, inspiring visitors to think of ways to look after 'our only home'.

Steve believed, passionately but with deep humility, that homelessness is not inevitable - that with collective action and political will it can be eradicated. I'm sure I wasn't the only person in Truro Cathedral who felt a renewed urge to heed Steve's call and redouble my efforts to look after our home and our homeless.

If you, too, want to support St Petros or donate in memory of Steve visit the St Petros website. To get support for someone who is sleeping rough contact Cornwall Council on 0300 1234 161 or roughsleeperaccessservice@cornwall.gov.uk. Contact Saltash Hope by ringing 01752 717650.

Achieving to the Best of Their Ability

After an excellent set of results at A level, Jake Otter, former Head Student at Saltash Community School, has moved on to the University of Exeter to study English and Communications. "Freshers' Week was chaos, but now I'm settling into university life," said Jake. "I'm a few weeks in to my course, and I'm starting to familiarise myself with the campus. I'm looking forward to finding out what the next three years have in store."

Jake, who in his younger years was a valued member of the Saltash and District Observer delivery team, secured A grades in Sociology and Media, as well as a B grade in English Literature. "I was pleasantly surprised at my A-level results. The teachers, staff and especially the sixth form team at Saltash Community School really helped me achieve to the best of my ability," he said.

Jake's achievement is all the more impressive in a year when the number of top grades awarded to A level students plummeted after exam boards returned to pre-pandemic grading standards. The percentage of students in the United Kingdom achieving an A grade at A level fell to 17.7% this year, compared to 21.8% in 2022 and 25.7% in 2021.

It was a similar picture of falling outcomes in GCSE results. Ahead of the 2017 exams, GCSE grades were changed to a numerical system of 9 to 1, with 9 being the equivalent of a high A* and 4 the equivalent of a



'standard' pass. This year, the number of GCSE students in the United Kingdom achieving a pass rate of 4 or higher fell to 68.2%, down from 73.2% in 2022 and 76.3% in 2021.

Students at Saltash Community School, though, managed to achieve an impressive set of results, with many performing at the highest level, including Mia Thompson-Pranauskas who achieved A*, A*, A in her A levels, and Evie Slaughter with an outstanding seven grade 9s, one grade 8 and one grade 6 in her GCSEs.

Commenting on the GCSE results, Headteacher, Kate Littleldyke, said: "Our students should be proud of so much more than just their results: they have been an incredible group of young people that have spent the last five years growing as individuals and supporting each other as a team. I wish them all the greatest success as they continue their learning journey."

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Sustainable Saltash

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

As I penned my previous contribution to this column way back in early May, my Gorgeous Husband was hard at work installing extra water butts at the back of our house. That was in the hope of protecting us against what we fully expected might prove to be another long and scorchingly hot summer.

So much for my ability to predict the Cornish weather then! Even so, as September fades into October, Gorgeous Husband and I are looking beyond Autumn (Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness? Don't you just wish!) towards the inevitable chill of Winter and its equally inevitable accompanying hike in energy bills.

True that the Energy Price Cap will be reduced from 1st October, down from £2,074 in July to a mere £1,923 for a 'typical household' (three bedrooms using both gas and electricity; expect to pay considerably more if you're relying on electricity for heating). An even more encouraging comparison would

be to recall Liz Truss' Energy Price Guarantee restricting costs for the same 'typical household' to an £2,500 per annum. From £2,500 in October 2022 all the way to £1,923 by October 2023 must surely represent a huge improvement for most of us then, right?

Well... Yes and no. For all that October 2022 might feel like a lot more than a year ago by now, astute readers may recall that in his then role as Chancellor, Rishi Sunak had promised that every household in the UK would receive a £400 energy bill discount.

Looking forward to the forthcoming winter then, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to work out that the difference

Amateur Radio in Saltash

We are used to instantaneous communication in our modern world. We accept that we can send a message in a heartbeat to another person on the far side of the planet. Few of us know how this is achieved, fewer still could replicate it on their own.

between last year's typical bill of £2,500 - £400 energy bill discount (£2,100) and this year's £1,923 - £0 (still £1,923) continues to represent a potentially eye-watering burden for many of us.

With an eye both on costs and on sustainability then, Gorgeous Husband and I have decided to reinvest a portion of our own projected 'savings' in the following:

1. Forget about Jenny Joseph's 'When I am old...', when I am old I fully intend to don a marvellous purple hat that cost me just £2.99 in B&M last year. A woolly hat and a decent pair of cosy slippers can make a world of difference as the mercury falls. Gorgeous husband has something similar but less purple. More comfortable for us, more cost effective for our household and better for the planet too.

2. An electric blanket costs mere pennies per hour to run before climbing into bed. Best of all, you're actually better off running one of the cheaper ones through a simple mechanical socket timer than struggling to make sense of multiple timing options on the more sophisticated offerings. One upgrade I would definitely recommend is separate controls for each side of a shared bed though.

Of course, these kinds of calculation are never really that easy for anyone. Thankfully we do have some fantastic additional resources here in Saltash; our Community Kitchen, our Scrap Stores, our Repair Shop, our charity shops and more.

Even as the weather gets colder, let's make sure our hearts remain warm then.

And here's wishing you all a very happy Autumn meanwhile.

Elizabeth Gay

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

Amateur radio is a hobby which allows anyone interested to learn to do just that. With a simple (often home-made) aerial, a basic radio and a little knowledge, the world opens up like a book. It becomes possible to have conversations direct with others, with no reliance on networks, software or applications. This link is strong and durable. Its simplicity means it is resilient in times of conflict or natural disaster and has often been used for emergency communication. Amateur radio stations have been vital links in the current conflict in Ukraine.

As a hobby it is fascinating. My interest in it has taught me physics and electronics, expanded my understanding of geography, and taught me about cultures I would never otherwise have encountered. It is a growing hobby. There are digital modes, satellite communication, amateur television, contests, education and opportunities to build your own equipment. There are even amateur radio operators on the International Space Station, and you can contact them from your own back garden!

Yet amateur radio is not just about radio communication. Nearly every area will have a club. Its members share knowledge and experience, help new starters and offer friendship. In Saltash, we have a very supportive club who helped to get me on the air early this year.

One of the hundreds of radio events in the calendar is Churches on the Air. Our club chairman, Mark Chanter (callsign MOWMB), has operated a station for the event for 9 years now. This year for the first time it took place at St Ive Parish Church, as the former venue, St Ive Methodist Chapel, is no longer in use. On an incredibly hot September Saturday, a small group of us assembled at the church with a wire aerial and a radio. With the wire strung from the top of the church tower (a stunning setting

offering very distracting views), we settled in the cool at the back of the church. Between then and teatime, contact was made with 100 other operators and stations around the globe. That thin piece of wire reached Brazil, Croatia and the USA. This in addition to a constant stream of enjoyable conversations all over the UK and Western Europe, including a large and cheery group of scout leaders in Ireland. All of us learned about the beautiful building we were working from and its fascinating past, fielding questions and queries from other stations. As a new licensee I learned so much and had such fun working with other club members, who have become friends.

If any of this sounds interesting, I would heartily encourage you to find out more. The Radio Society of Great Britain is the UK's member organisation and deals with new starters and licensing. Their website is an invaluable resource. You can also contact your nearest club.

They will always be pleased to hear from you. The Saltash and District Amateur Radio Club has a growing membership from all license levels and we would love to have you with us. You can find us via a google search, or send enquiries to secretary@sadarc.co.uk

Marc Bramham

Ten Ways to Save Money on Your Food Shop

With the cooler autumn weather setting in, saving money on our food bills is more important than ever – but how?

Use the Community Fridge and Larder

Saving food from going to landfill for a donation, this amazing local resource at the bottom of Fore Street is open to everyone, Tuesdays 2.30-4 and 10-12 on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Plan your meals

Avoid spending money on things you don't need or already have. First, check your cupboard for anything you could use to pull together a meal. Then, plan your meals for the next week.

Check expiry dates

Get into the habit of checking the expiry dates on any items that don't have a long shelf life - make sure they get used.

Study the yellow labels

Head to the reduced section first to see if you can pick up anything that's on your list. Yellow labels can be bargains, but make sure it's good value for money – check for cheaper alternatives and only buy in bulk if you'll definitely use the items before they go out of date.

Make the most of loyalty benefits

Some supermarkets offer free loyalty cards or benefits that can save you money. Find out what yours offers and get signed up.

Don't shop when you're hungry

Shopping when you're peckish increases the likelihood of impulse buying, so try and have a meal before you head out.

Shop around for the best deals

Convenience stores are good for, well, convenience, but you may end up paying more. Compare costs in different places so you know how much you pay for items at each different store.

Try a cheaper brand

Taste tests commonly show that we can't always taste the difference between branded and budget brands, so give a cheaper version a try – you might be surprised.

Shop in the early evening

You can often find a bargain in the early evening as supermarkets push to sell off products that are nearing their expiry date. Be sure to check the use-by or best-before date and whether you can safely keep it in the freezer for a bit longer.

Still struggling?

Contact me at Christians Against Poverty (CAP) for free support, including personal financial education and help for those living on a low income – email timsquires@capuk.org.

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.

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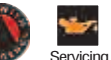
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Tamar Reflections

*A Time to Reflect ...
From Humble Beginnings -
Established 125 Years*

In my Mayoral inaugural speech at the Saltash Guildhall in 1997 – I announced to the guests present that I wished to set up a Community Committee encompassing most organisations in Saltash - with a view to organising a three year programme of Community and festival events to coincide with the 'Tall Ships Race' which was due to start at Falmouth in 1998, with follow-up festivities for the further two years.

Three year programme of events

This idea was enthusiastically embraced by over 25 organisations and Saltash

Cornwall 1998-1999 and 2000 events Committee was born with the staging of dozens of events over that three year period; principally to take place at the Saltash Waterside.

100th Anniversary

At that time, and so pleasingly, under the Saltash Sailing Club's Commodore-ship of Alan Davis, the Saltash Sailing Club teamed up with our Committee as the Sailing Club was preparing to celebrate its 100th Anniversary in 1998 – this proved to be a very successful and meaningful partnership 25 years ago. Now there is another remarkable Anniversary for the Saltash Sailing Club - the celebration of its 125th Anniversary.

Founded 1898

The Sailing Club with an

Images - Sue and John collection



The first race May 27th 1899 (as painted by Tim Thompson May 1998)

agreed Mission Statement was established in the offices of the Steam Boat Company at the Saltash Waterside in 1898 - and so boldly initiated and led

Bickford - all had an active interest in sailing. Doctor Meadows was the first Commodore of the sailing club from 1898 and remained in situ for 24 years, until 1922 (with a short break during the First World War away with the Armed Forces, serving in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry). He returned as a Major.

Once established and following various meetings, agreements and settlements, the first race of the Club was staged on the River Tamar on May 27th 1898 at 3.30pm (see Tim Thomson's stunning image featured).

Pioneering days

From those pioneering days, the club has changed its headquarters more than once, at one time moving to a small premise in Fore Street where the Essa Club is now situated abutting Alexandra Car Park; then another move to where it is now in Tamar Street, situated on the banks of the picturesque and pulsating River Tamar; overlooked by Cornwall's two impressive and vital transport and commuter links structures the Tamar road and Brunel railway bridges currently housed in grand and extended premises now reputed to be one of the finest Sailing Clubs in the UK and further afield.

Multi-faceted facilities

This vibrant and user friendly Sailing Club boasts multi-faceted facilities for sailing dinghies, yachts, cruising, racing or spectating and moreover, offers an inclusive, safe and fun approach in hosting diverse facilities for families; including one of the best for young people able to train as sailing cadets from the age of 11 years to 18 years, with an active link to the Caradon Pilot Gig Club and the Port of Plymouth Sailing Association. Moreover, testament to its diverse approach with additional membership of over 700 recorded, the club membership additionally offers a platform from the novice to the experienced world class competitors.

Doctor Robert Thornton Meadows

It is quite astounding how the Saltash Sailing Club has developed over the past 125 years from a simple idea and one man's extraordinary vision and determination –



Doctor Robert Thornton Meadows as Mayor Saltash Borough in his Regalia. Dr Meadows was Commodore of the Saltash Club from 1898 to 1922

Doctor Robert Thornton Meadows - a man who put his whole being and often money into creating what has now, thanks to its supporters and energetic membership, past and present, developed into one of the most sparkling jewels in Saltash's Crown.

On a personal note, I was so humbled and honoured as Mayor of Saltash (1998) and moreover, the lead of Saltash Cornwall 1998 – 1999 and 2000 and ironically during the Saltash Sailing Club's 100th Anniversary in 1998, I almost feel an affiliation with the Club's founder Doctor Meadows - as we were Mayors of this wonderful ancient Borough exactly 100 and 125 years apart! How coincidental is that!

May I thank and at the same time, wish the incumbent Commodore James Mills, and all at the Saltash Sailing Club absolute and continued success both currently, and for the next 125 and beyond. "Fair winds and a following sea" Sue Hooper MBE Telephone 01752 843073 Email: suehcf@msn.com

The Saltash Ferry Slip - showing the Steamboat offices & steamboat in the background, the building on the right is where the Club's first meetings were held

by the Mayor of Saltash at that time, Doctor Robert Thornton Meadows, who was also a Director of the Ferry and Steam Boat Companies.

125th Anniversary

Over the past 125 years the establishment has really made its mark in Saltash and beyond from those humble beginnings; which were originally supported only by a handful of men including Colonel Knocker, Captain Whitehouse, Frank Gover, Mr A Geake, Phillip Porter, Mr W Betterley and Captain

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With representation in 134 countries the Salvation Army serves the deepest needs of many, including in homeless centres, foodbanks, nurseries and emergency aid following natural disasters. More locally, one of the Salvation Army's priorities is helping people who have lost everything, including self respect, to drug or alcohol addiction. Supporting clients on their journey from despair to hope, the Salvation Army helps them realise that life can be different.

At the Opening Evening of the Saltash Old Cornwall Society's new season of talks, Jackie Javan of Plymouth Salvation Army Citadel described how various rehab centres in Cornwall are able to help their referrals. The serenity of their surroundings can aid in, as Ms Javan put it, "Showing that life could be different and moving from that dark place to the life that the rest of us enjoy."

She spoke of some of the people who the Salvation Army had sought to help. Sadly, some had died in their beds in a hostel but the majority had gone on to rebuild their lives,

with a few even going on to become support workers themselves. They are able to show others that 'what I have achieved you can also succeed in doing.'

Above all Ms Javan's message was never to pass by a homeless person. Many of the street people who they help, say that just a friendly greeting and a smile from a stranger can make them feel that they are worthwhile human beings.

In his vote of thanks Society Secretary Martin Lister, recalled his own past work in a London soup kitchen, learning the lesson that 'everybody has a story to tell.'

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Just Thinking Aloud

“Some things you hear with your ears, others you hear with your heart”. Found in my diary. I was reminded of it when I told someone to whom I always listen that I was trying to put together this month’s bits and pieces. “You’re not going to do another of your political rants, are you?” was the reaction. My response: “Me? Perish the thought!” But it made me think. You, dear reader, will be the judge. With what have I listened this month – ears or heart?

CC Hilary Frank is a good egg. She responds to my queries, not fobbing me off with a non-answer (which unhappily is not the case with all politicians). I asked her to look at the state of Alexandra Square Car Park. She took photographs,

forwarded them to Truro, with the result that Cormac came and did some measurements and temporary patching jobs. They are currently costing a plan to present to the powers that be. Let us hope that something positive comes out of it.

Talking of good eggs, for years Saltash has been blessed with folk who give generously of their time and expertise for the benefit of the young. Be it sports, music, drama, campanology, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, or a whole variety of other activities, we owe these folk an enormous debt of gratitude. Naming individuals still active is fraught with danger, but I hope I will be forgiven for mentioning just a handful or so of good eggs from the past, which ought to ring bells for some of you - as well as bringing others to mind Derek Kitt, John White, Ursula Davey & Dot Spurling, Philip Rundle, John Pearn.

I recently spent a day in HMP Dartmoor for the Storybook Dads 20th anniversary celebration - a charity for which I did a bit of voluntary work for some years - and still support. It does amazing stuff for prisoners and their families. Its founder and still chief executive is Sharon Berry, who left Saltash Comp at 15 in the year that I joined at 34. Patron Terry Waite was there - he who spent five years in solitary as a prisoner of terrorists in Lebanon - and is now Sir Terence Waite KCMG (does not mean “Kindly Call Me God”).



Photo Mary Crawford

Past and Present Commodores Mayor & Mayoress of Saltash & MP Sheryl Murray with Husband Bob

Saltash Sailing Club Celebrate 125th Anniversary

On Saturday October 7th – the Saltash Sailing Club (SSC) was awash with waves of like-minded people steering into the Club to enthusiastically celebrate its 125th Anniversary in nautical style with added sincere gratitude to all those that had made such an historic event possible (also see page 7 Tamar Reflections).

Commodore James Hills welcomed Club members, guests, friends and families who came to pay special tribute to the Club and its founding Pioneers, moreover, to acknowledge its modern generation of patronage at all levels and to recognise the longevity of service of various members; some of whom had clocked up over 50 years.

Also in attendance were SE Cornwall MP Mrs. Sheryl

Murray and her husband Bob, the Mayor and Mayoress of Saltash Councillor Richard and Mrs. Sarah Bickford – also several past Commodores.

Commodore James Hills paid special tribute and presented honorary membership awards to Trevor Bardwell-Jones, Nina Lillie and David Oliver for their outstanding service, achievements and commitments to the SSC over the past decades.

There were other

membership recognitions; these will feature in the forthcoming Saltash Observer with supporting photos.

The wonderful evening rounded off with the Sailing Cadets serving delicious canapés to the delighted guests one and all! - With the wind in their sails they should make outstanding young cadets and one day take the Helm of the Saltash Sailing Club into the new generation of sailors.

Bob Munro

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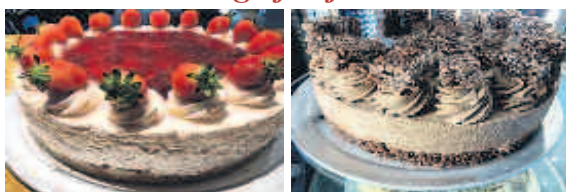
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