

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2008/9

1. CO-OPTION

Miss Sue Oatley was co-opted onto the Council to fill a vacancy in the Niton Ward in June 2008.

2. QUALITY COUNCIL STATUS

Progress towards this depends in part upon the Clerk gaining the 'Certificate in Local Council Administration' (CiLCA) qualification. The Clerk has undertaken the 'Working With Your Council' course, which is an excellent foundation for CiLCA. Progress also depends upon sufficient Parish Councillors being elected rather than co-opted, and also undertaking the prescribed training. Quality Council status would open up new funding opportunities for the Council and could lead to the local delivery of some services in conjunction with the Isle of Wight Council.

3. PLAY EQUIPMENT

The Council is giving its full support to the NIPPA (Niton Play Park Appeal) project and recently submitted an expression of interest form to the Isle of Wight Play Builder Programme on behalf of the NIPPA team. Due to the fantastic preparation and public consultation work done by the team, the Island's Play Partnership is now considering supporting the project from April 2010.

The search for land suitable as a playground site for young children in Whitwell continues.

4. NITON YOUTH CLUB

The Council strongly supports the retention of the Youth Club and its premises and will continue to press for this throughout the consultation period.

5. ONE MILLION BLOOMS

The Council has secured a grant of £3,800 from the Isle of Wight Council for the "One Million Blooms" project 2007 and 2008.

The clearance and re-planting of the Bert Sprake Memorial Garden in Niton is already well under way as part of the project. Further work is planned at sites in both Niton and Whitwell.

6. PLANNING

The Council continues to comment on all planning applications in the parish. During the year, five planning applications were granted by the Isle of Wight Council against the recommendation of the Parish Council.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

The Council has adopted the Freedom of Information Act Model Publication Scheme. A list of all documents available to the Public is posted on the website, with copies held by the Clerk and at Niton library. Notices and agendas are placed on the village notice boards. A file is now available in Niton Library with information about the Parish Council including the annual report, minutes and agendas. This information is now also available from the updated Council website. Written reports are provided monthly for the Connections and South Wight Beacon magazines.

8. AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING

The Council is continuing its search for suitable sites for small scale rural housing development in response to the need identified by the Rural Community Council Affordable Housing survey. This would enable local people to remain within the local community. Any suggestions you have for small sites, or for affordable housing to be included in larger developments plans, would be welcomed by the Council.

9. UNDERCLIFF DRIVE

In response to the Isle of Wight Council consultation programme with regard to the future of Undercliff Drive, the Parish Council has formed a joint working party with Ventnor Town Council. It is hoped that a practical approach can be established which is acceptable to local residents and relatively inexpensive. The Council is also pressing for the public footpaths along the Undercliff to be re-opened as soon as possible.

10. STAFFING

Our Parish Clerk, Nigel Harris, left at the end of July 2008 and was replaced by Vickie Ford. Vickie is a local resident. She is working to familiarise herself with the many aspects of the Parish Clerk's role.

11. PRECEPT

The Council, through prudent housekeeping, was able to keep the parish precept for 2009/10 at the 2008/9 level of £12,200. At £12.45 per Band D household, the parish precept is one of the lowest on the Island.

12. MEETINGS

The Council meets on the fourth Monday in the month (except August and December), with the venue alternating between Niton Primary School and Whitwell Village Hall. In addition there is a Planning Committee meeting on the second Monday in each month if any planning applications have been received. The public are welcome to attend and there is a public question time before the formal business commences.

J A Stotesbury
Chair of the Parish Council

V J Ford
Clerk to the Parish Council