

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2009/10

1. CO-OPTIONS

Councillors Derrick Hussey and John Norris did not stand for re-election to the Parish Council in June 2009.

Messrs Roy Barclay, Keith Fradgley and William Wyatt-Millington were co-opted onto the Council to fill one vacancy in the Niton Ward and two in the Whitwell Ward in July.

2. PLAY EQUIPMENT

The Council was awarded a Playbuilder grant of £50,000 through the Island's Play Partnership in March 2010 as a result of the excellent work done by the NIPPA (Niton Play Park Appeal) group. Work on the new playground was due to start in March 2010 but sadly had to be delayed until April due to excess surface water on Niton Recreation Ground. The new play equipment will cater for children from toddlers to teenagers.

There is currently a shortfall in funding of approximately £5,000. The Parish Council has agreed to cover this with a grant of £2,500 and an interest-free loan for the balance, to be repaid by the NIPPA group by the end of March 2011.

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

3. NITON YOUTH CLUB

The Council strongly supports the retention of the Youth Club and its premises and is continuing to press for this.

4. BERT SPRAKE MEMORIAL GARDEN

The clearance and re-planting of the Bert Sprake Memorial Garden in Niton is already well under way although work has again be delayed both by freezing temperatures and then by excessive rainfall. The flower bed is now prepared and planting should commence shortly.

Planting of bulbs and shrubs opposite Whitwell Village Hall and at the southern entrance to Whitwell village is planned for summer and autumn.

5. PLANNING

The Council commented on 23 out of 29 planning applications in the Parish. During the year, one planning application was granted by the Isle of Wight Council against the recommendation of the Parish Council.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Under the Freedom of Information Act Model Publication Scheme, a list of all documents available to the Public is posted on the website. Copies of the list are held by the Clerk and at Niton library. Notices and agendas are placed on the village notice boards. A file is available in Niton Library with information about the Parish Council including the annual report, minutes and agendas. This information is also available from the updated Council website at: www.iwight.com/council/parish_councils/nitonwhitwell.

Written reports are provided monthly for the Connections and South Wight Beacon magazines.

7. 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.

8. UNDERCLIFF DRIVE

During the year, the Council has repeatedly sought to become more involved in the consultation on the options for Undercliff Drive. A public meeting held in March in Niton Village Hall arranged by IW Councillor Wyatt-Millington and attended by Mr Chris Wells, IW Council Transport Policy Manager, gave local residents a welcome opportunity to voice their opinions on the Ventnor to Niton traffic study.

9. PARISH PLAN AND VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS

The Council is looking to update the Parish Plan (2004) over the next 18 months. The work is to be undertaken by a task group including Councillors and local residents. Please notify the Clerk if you would like to be part of this group.

10. PRECEPT

The Council, through prudent housekeeping, was able to keep the Parish precept for 2010/11 at £12,200. There has been no increase since April 2008 and, at £12.45 per Band D household, the Parish precept is one of the lowest on the Island.

11. 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