

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2011/12

PLAY EQUIPMENT

The long-awaited cableway was finally installed in Niton Recreation Ground in September 2011. Funding of £1,450 was given by Niton Youth Club and £1,000 pledged by the Isle of Wight Council this year towards the refurbishment of the skateboard half pipe; it is hoped that work will commence in summer 2012.

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

NITON YOUTH CLUB

The Parish Council is committed to supporting the retention of the Youth Club and its premises.

NITON LIBRARY AND PUBLIC TOILETS

As part of its commitment to facilitate the running of Niton library, the Parish Council gave a grant of £1,500 to the management committee in September.

After closure by the Isle of Wight Council on 1st April 2011, Niton public toilets were re-opened by the Parish Council on 20th April under a Tenancy at Will agreement. A formal long-term lease is being agreed and should soon be in place. The Parish Council is indebted to local volunteers who clean the toilets on a daily basis and to Norris Stores which supplies cleaning materials free of charge.

LEASE FOR A PAD-MOUNTED SUBSTATION IN DOCK LANE, NITON

Due to the high number of electrical supply faults in Castlehaven Lane the Parish Council received a request from Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE) for a 99-year lease on a small area of land at the bottom of Dock Lane on which a pad-mounted electrical substation could be erected. SSE is making a one-off payment of £1,500 for the lease and covering all of the Parish Council's legal costs. In January, the Parish Council gave permission for installation to commence prior to formal agreement of the lease to expedite the eradication of the faults. SSE has kindly agreed to form 2 concrete steps at the bottom of Dock Lane footpath while installing the substation as a gesture of goodwill; this should improve pedestrian access.

PARKING

Alongside Councillor Dave Stewart, the Isle of Wight Ward Councillor, the Parish Council has been actively seeking solutions to parking problems in Niton.

The needs of local residents, service users and businesses are being considered. Work continues.

PLANNING

The Council commented on 44 out of 56 planning applications in the Parish. During the year, two planning applications were granted by the Isle of Wight Council against the recommendation of the Parish Council.

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 currently available in Niton Library with information about the Parish Council including the annual report, minutes and agendas, and will continue to be available for the foreseeable future. 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 magazine. Sadly, since April 2012, reports will no longer be published in 'The Beacon' magazine as significant charges have been introduced.

COMMUNITY-LED PLAN

A steering group, chaired by Mr Peter Marsden and including local residents and Councillors, has been meeting since September 2011. The group has produced, distributed and collected a questionnaire and begun to process the data. The Council has applied for a Big Lottery 'Awards For All' grant of £2,500 to cover the cost of analysing all the data and, in the longer term, producing a community-led plan, which may be a revised Parish Plan incorporating Village Design Statements or a Neighbourhood Plan; the Council will shortly be considering which option best serves the community of Niton and Whitwell.

PRECEPT

Reluctantly, in order to maintain much-depleted reserves at a minimal £3,000, the Council resolved to increase the Parish precept for the first time in 5 years, raising it from £12,200 to £14,200 for 2012/13. At £14.28 per annum per Band D household, the Parish precept is still one of the lowest on the Island.

MEETINGS

The Parish 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 press and public are welcome to attend and there is a public question time before the formal business commences.

W C Arnold
Chairman of the Parish Council

V J Ford
Clerk to the Parish Council