

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2013/14

NITON YOUTH SERVICE

Since the closure of Niton Youth Club in July 2012, the Parish Council has supported the retention of the building and car park for the use of the community. It is actively supporting Niton Community Projects' proposal for these important assets.

Over the last three years, three grants of £500 have been given to Niton Methodist Church to acknowledge and support the work being done with local young people by Mr Dan Wells in the absence of Isle of Wight Council funded youth provision. Currently, the Parish Council is supporting in principle the Niton Methodist Church bid to provide a devolved local Youth Offer.

PUBLIC TOILETS

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. Electricity costs are still being met from a £500 donation received from grateful visitors to Niton.

ROADS

Since the Highways PFI contract came into effect in April 2013, a lack of communication with Ringway Island Roads has repeatedly frustrated attempts to establish a mutually beneficial working relationship to expedite local repairs and address other highways problems. The Parish Council was pleased to welcome two representatives of Island Roads to its March 2014 meeting and, as a result, communications are much improved and outstanding issues receiving attention.

PLANNING

The Council commented on 40 out of 41 planning applications in the Parish. During the year, no 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 Council website at:

https://secureservices.iow.gov.uk/council/parish_councils/nitonwhitwell/

The Parish Council is looking to develop its own independent site in the very near future. Written reports are provided monthly for the Connections magazine.

PARISH PLAN 2013

The updated Parish Plan was published in September 2013. Hard copies are available from the Edward Edwards library in Niton. At present, an electronic copy can be obtained from the Clerk by e-mail request.

In conjunction with the Isle of Wight Council, the Parish Council is working towards the adoption of the Plan as Supplementary Planning Documentation in June. To this end, a public

consultation has been undertaken. Any comments received will be considered before the Plan is brought up to date as far as possible prior to its adoption.

The Parish Action Plan, which forms Appendix 6 of the Parish Plan 2013, is attached showing progress to date.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

In January 2014, the Parish Council resolved to carry out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS), which is an extremely important part of the Parish Plan process relating to the current and future housing needs of the community. This will:

- Identify how many additional homes (if any) are needed in Niton and Whitwell and, if they are needed, what size/type they should be.
- Help to identify where local people would prefer these homes to be built if a need is recognised.

The results of this survey will be analysed and used to form the final Housing Needs Survey, which will be incorporated into the Parish Plan and enable residents to have a real influence over local development. The HNS is being carried out in conjunction with the Isle of Wight Council Planning Department.

TOURIST LEAFLET

One of the local issues identified during the updating of the Parish Plan was the need to promote tourism in our area. The Parish Council is indebted to George Glover for his work on the new tourist leaflet, which is on display in various shops and businesses in the villages. 2,000 leaflets have been printed, funded in part by a grant from 'Visit Isle of Wight Ltd' in return for an advertisement for the Island Dinosaur Trail. The leaflet will also be published on the new Parish Council website.

PRECEPT

Mindful of the Isle of Wight Council's budget deficit and plans to devolve responsibility for discretionary services to local communities, the Parish Council resolved to increase its emergency reserve to cover anticipated additional costs. In January 2014, it increased the Parish precept from £14,500 to £20,000 for 2014/15. At £20.56 per annum per Band D household, the 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 the former Niton Youth Club building and Whitwell Village Hall. If required, there is a Planning Committee meeting held on the second Monday in each month. The press and public are welcome to attend and there is a public question time before the formal business commences.

J A Stotesbury
Chairman of the Parish Council

V J Ford
Clerk to the Parish Council