

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2015/16

COMMUNITY GRANTS

During the year, grants have been awarded to NHS Community First Responders (£500), the Edward Edwards Library and community hub (£2,000), South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY) (£2,000), Whitwell Village Hall roof repairs (£1,000) Niton Lantern Parade (£200) and to Niton and Whitwell Parish Churches towards the grounds maintenance of Niton Churchyard and Ashknowle Cemetery (£600 and £400 respectively). Grants are awarded in recognition of the benefit to the community afforded by each asset or service.

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. Transfer of the freehold from the Isle of Wight Council is being pursued.

NITON FOOTBALL CLUB PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The lease for the football field and new clubhouse and the "community payback" (\$106) agreement between the developer and the Isle of Wight Council are in their final forms and awaiting a few last-minute details. Once these are signed, it is expected that planning permission will be granted for the proposed development. The Parish Council remains committed to doing everything possible to safeguard the interests of Niton Football Club and the local community and to prevent the building of 4 houses within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) without the building of a clubhouse for the Football Club.

ALLOTMENT ROAD CAR PARK

Although some progress was made towards the acquisition of the car park in March, the Parish Council has expressed concern regarding the very poor structural condition of the garages, the presence of asbestos sheeting, issues of tenancy and a number of abandoned vehicles. In view of the present situation, the Parish has resolved to defer the matter until the Isle of Wight Council has removed the garages and abandoned vehicles.

ASHKNOWLE LANE BRIDLEWAY ALL WEATHER FOOTPATH SURFACE

The Parish Council is to receive a "Tesco Bags of Help" grant of £8,000 to provide a 1.5 m wide all-weather surface of stabilised gravel across the field at the Niton end of the bridleway/footpath between the villages. It is hoped to carry out the work early this summer when the ground is dry and damage to the crop in the field will be minimised.

WHITWELL WAR MEMORIAL

The War Memorials Trust has indicated that it would give a grant of 75% towards the cost of professional cleaning for the Whitwell War Memorial, which would render the entire inscription legible. A comprehensive bid for funding must now be submitted and approved before work commences.

ROADS

After 18 months of negotiations, the two long-awaited and much-needed Undercliff Drive diversion road signs were finally erected at no charge to the Parish Council. These are the sign

overhanging Whitwell Churchyard directing traffic towards Niton and the sign outside South Wight Medical Centre in Niton directing traffic to West Wight.

The condition of Whitwell High Street/Ventnor Road is a major concern as the carriageway continues to deteriorate. Island Roads will not resurface the road before Southern Water replaces the frail water main beneath it but that work is scheduled for next winter. The Parish Council is working with Councillor Dave Stewart towards the road being resurfaced before winter comes again.

PLANNING

The Council commented on 38 of the 39 planning applications in the Parish. During the year, 7 planning applications were granted by the Isle of Wight Council against the recommendation of the Parish Council.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Parish Council was delighted to launch its new fit-for-purpose website in January of this year; furthermore, all development costs were covered by a grant from the Government's Transparency Fund for Smaller Authorities. Under the Transparency Code, all documents available to the public are posted on the website at www.nitonwhitwell.org.uk

Notices and agendas are also placed on the village notice boards. A file is currently available in the Edward Edwards Library in Niton with information about the Parish Council including the annual report, minutes and agendas, and will continue to be available for the foreseeable future. Written reports are provided monthly for the 'Connections' magazine.

PARISH PLAN

The updated Parish Plan was published in September 2013 and adopted as Supplementary Planning Documentation (SPD) by the Isle of Wight Council in 2014. The content of the Plan is now a material consideration, where relevant, when determining planning applications within the Parish.

Hard copies are available from the Edward Edwards Library in Niton; the adopted (updated) version can be accessed via the Parish Council website.

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

UNDERCLIFF DRIVE

Local geological expert Dr Bruce Denness' proposed scheme for the long-term stabilisation of Undercliff Drive has received overwhelming support from the Parish Council and members of the public. The Parish Council recognises that the whole life of the Parish has been adversely affected by the closure of Undercliff Drive, with businesses being hit particularly by the loss of vehicular access between Niton and Ventnor. It has submitted Dr Denness' proposal to the Isle of Wight Council for serious professional consideration and is continuing to press for its adoption. It is also working with Councillor Stewart towards the complete reinstatement of Undercliff Drive.

PERPETUUS TIDAL ENERGY CENTRE (PTEC)

In April 2016, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) granted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consent to Perpetuus Tidal Energy Centre Limited against the representations of the Parish Council inter alia. The Parish Council will make every effort to learn more about the technical and practical aspects of the project in a transparent manner.

NUMBER 6 BUS SERVICE AND "NITWHIT" BUS

Monday 28th September 2015 saw the launch of the "NitWhit" community bus service commissioned by Niton & Whitwell Parish Council and operated by Minibus-Plus. The hail-and-ride bus ran for a six-month trial period on Monday, Thursday and Saturday mornings with a timetable designed to fill gaps left by the scaling back of the No. 6 service, and the withdrawal of "Dial-a-Bus". The trial has now ended following the resumption of an hourly service on the No. 6 route for

the summer. The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who has supported the service. Discussions are in progress with other parish councils on the route with a view to providing an enhanced service next winter, possibly concentrating on a Sunday service to Newport.

PRECEPT

After making no increase last year, in order to maintain current services and approve projects for the coming year (including community transport, youth outreach, and the all-weather pedestrian route between the two villages), the Parish Council raised the precept to £34,167 from £18,839. This represents an increase of £1.37 per month for Band D properties. Full details of the budget are available on the Parish Council's website.

MEETINGS

The Parish Council meets on the fourth Monday in the month (except August and December), with the venue alternating between the Edward Edwards Library in Niton 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.

G R Melville
Chairman of the Parish Council

V J Ford
Clerk to the Parish Council

Parish Action Plan

Action No.	Requirement	Action	Progress
3.1	Sections of the Rookley to Niton road need considerable upgrading.	The Parish Council will analyse Island Roads' published seven-year schedule of works; will monitor and lobby for compliance; and will lobby for a revision to the schedule if needed.	Island Roads attended a PC meeting in March 2014; liaison is now improved. April 2015: some work to upgrade the road has commenced but the impact on Niton businesses must be minimised in future.
3.2	Make tourists more aware of the area's facilities and attractiveness.	The Parish Council, helped by George Glover and Visit Isle of Wight funding, is preparing a local tourist leaflet.	The tourist leaflet was printed in March 2014.
4.1	Drainage on some sections of the roads in Niton and Whitwell remains poor.	As with 3.1, the Parish Council will hold Island Roads to account.	Some work was done over the winter of 2013-14. The Niton-Rookley road is under discussion. July 2015: Island Roads has launched a "Ditch It" campaign to encourage farmers/landowners to plough land in the right direction and dig ditches where they should be dug.
4.2	The Town End car park needs to be controlled to limit long-term parking by caravans and large vehicles.	The Parish Council will approach the Isle of Wight Council with view to acquiring the car park under the Localism initiative.	April 2014: the process is underway. April 2015: Further action required to engage the Isle of Wight Council in dialogue April 2016: Parish Council awaiting removal of garages and abandoned vehicles by the Isle of Wight Council
5.1	Given the support for car sharing indicated in questionnaire responses, the parish requires a community-led scheme to pursue this.	The Parish Council has formed a Transport Committee to tackle all three transport action points.	The committee will report progress in mid-2014. April 2015: No progress reported April 2016: No progress reported
5.2	A minibus is available for community use. Considerable interest in this has been shown, but planning and organisation is needed.	The Parish Council has formed a Transport Committee to tackle all three transport action points.	Discussions are underway with Niton Primary School. April 2015: No further progress with regard to the school minibus but, as with 5.3, the Parish Council is exploring all viable options. Winter 2015/16: "NitWhit" community bus service 6-month trial.
5.3	A wide range of transport options are available but many people do not know about them.	The Parish Council has formed a Transport Committee to tackle all three transport action points.	The committee will report progress in mid-2014. April 2015: As with 5.2, the Parish Council is actively exploring all viable options April 2016: New Parish Council website being developed to inform residents
6.1	Pre-application planning consultation needs to be improved, to streamline the planning process.	The Parish Council has changed its policy and now welcomes pre-application approaches from all planning applicants.	The PC's policy changed in July 2013.

Action No.	Requirement	Action	Progress
7.1	Whitwell lacks a children's recreational area and facilities.	The Parish Council has set a six-month target for a suitable site to be identified. The Whitwell ward councillors will convene as a committee to consider all options, including discussions with the owners of development land.	<p>The PC is conducting a Housing Needs Survey (May 2014) which may lead to an opportunity to provide a play area in conjunction with a Whitwell development.</p> <p>April 2015: The Housing Needs Survey demonstrated no need for a development in Whitwell; however a possible new opportunity has been identified.</p> <p>April 2016: No further progress</p>
7.2	Facilities for team games and other physical activities for the younger generation are less than adequate.	The Parish Council is in close touch with the Football Club over its future, and is seeking information from the IW Council over the Youth Club building's status.	<p>April 2014: A planning application which includes improved football club facilities is imminent; a Community Interest Company, with PC support, is negotiating to take over the Youth Club building.</p> <p>April 2015: Having worked with Niton FC to agree Heads of Terms of a new lease with the landowner, the Parish Council found it necessary to oppose the planning application made in December 2014.</p> <p>Niton Community Projects has lease of former youth club building and car park.</p> <p>April 2016: The lease for the football field and new clubhouse is about to be agreed</p>
9.1	Liaison with the Isle of Wight's Director of Tourism is needed on marketing local tourism.	The Parish Council aims to place its tourist leaflet with local businesses.	The tourist leaflet was distributed in March 2014.
9.2	A wider parish application of bulk purchase of domestic central heating fuel needs to be pursued.	The organiser of the Whitwell scheme has been asked to work on extending it to Niton, with Parish Council support.	<p>The target date for introduction is September 2014.</p> <p>April 2015: No progress</p> <p>April 2016: No progress</p>
13.1	The chain support posts alongside the Eastern Yar in Blackgang Road, Niton, are damaged and need replacing with something more robust.	Work is underway to address this problem.	<p>This work has been started but not yet completed, and the PC is chasing Island Roads (April 2014).</p> <p>April 2015: Island Roads has effected a "make do and mend" solution.</p>
13.2	Niton and Whitwell are separated by a very busy road with no footpath - a great concern expressed by survey respondents.	The Parish Council is committed to achieving a footpath on this road. We will also lobby for a 40mph speed limit, and for work to upgrade all of Ashknowle Lane.	<p>May 2014. Main road land-owners are being identified and approached. Speed limit: The IW Council has been approached; Ashknowle Lane: The PC is in talks with the IW Council.</p> <p>April 2015: the Parish Council is attempting to identify the landowner of the Mayflower Cottage to Lower Fields section. One firm quotation for an all-weather surface has been obtained.</p> <p>April 2016: The Parish Council is to receive a "Tesco Bags of Help" grant of £8,000 to provide a 1.5 m wide all-weather surface of stabilised gravel across the field at the Niton end of the bridleway/footpath between the villages; work to commence early summer 2016</p>