

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2016/17

COMMUNITY GRANTS

During the year, grants have been awarded to Niton Village Hall (£500), the Edward Edwards Library and community hub (£2,000), South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY) (£2,000), Whitwell Village Hall front wall rebuild (£500) Niton Christmas Day and Lantern Parade (£250) 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 daily, and to Norris Stores, which supplies cleaning materials free of charge. The toilets have also been painted by volunteers during the past year. Transfer of the freehold from the Isle of Wight Council is still being pursued; the lack of progress is due to very limited resources within the Isle of Wight Council.

NITON FOOTBALL CLUB PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission has now been granted for the proposed development. The signing of the lease for the football is imminent; the Parish Council, as “back stop” to the lease, has covered the legal fees in view of the potential community benefits. 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 the Parish Council remains committed to acquiring the car park, the matter has been deferred pending removal of the dilapidated garages by the Isle of Wight Council. The presence of “abandoned” vehicles is being monitored however the Parish Council successfully opposed the introduction of parking charges in the car park in order to preserve free parking for residents, many of whom have no off-road parking and no safe on-road parking, parents/carers dropping off/picking up from Niton Primary school and visitors to Niton Recreation Ground.

ASHKNOWLE LANE BRIDLEWAY ALL WEATHER FOOTPATH SURFACE

The Parish Council was delighted 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 was carried out early last summer, with the new footpath surface being much used and admired. The Parish Council is indebted to all who contributed to the project and to those whose co-operation made it possible.

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 is in progress.

ROADS

The closure of Undercliff Drive continues to have a serious impact on the Parish roads, with the diversionary route through the villages following "C" class roads. A request for the route to be temporarily reclassified as an "A" class road, with attendant considerations and consultations regarding maintenance, was refused. Thus, the struggle to accommodate road repairs whilst maintaining through traffic flow between Shanklin/Ventnor and West Wight and supporting local businesses rumbles on.

In July 2016, the Parish Council played a significant role in halting the daytime resurfacing of Chatfeild Road during the first week of the school holidays. The work was eventually carried out over 7 nights in March 2017.

Despite the increasingly desperate need to resurface Ventnor Road/Whitwell High Street, Southern Water's proposed closure through the coming summer high season would have had a catastrophic impact on the White Horse and other Whitwell businesses. Consequently, after an extremely positive and constructive meeting at the White Horse, a schedule of work that is acceptable to all parties has now been agreed. Work to replace the water main will commence in early November 2017, pause over the Christmas period and end in early March 2018, allowing Island Roads to complete resurfacing before next Easter.

PLANNING

The Council commented on all 41 planning applications in the Parish. During the year, 3 planning applications were granted by the Isle of Wight Council against the recommendation of the Parish Council.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Parish Council's website continues to be an invaluable tool in maintaining communication. 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.

The adopted Parish Plan was also used in the successful nomination of the White Lion public house, Niton, as an Asset of Community Value, thus helping to secure the pub's future for the benefit of the Parish.

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 continuing to work with Councillor Stewart towards the complete reinstatement of Undercliff Drive.

From June 2016, "Reinstatement of Undercliff Drive" has been the Parish Council's number 1 aim on its website to reflect its commitment to this end.

NITON RECREATION GROUND

Essential maintenance work was carried out on the older play equipment during the past year. The zipwire cable, which had reached its limit of adjustment, was also replaced. Refurbishment of the skateboard half pipe is planned for next year, subject to external grant funding being made available.

CASTLEHAVEN

The Parish Council remains committed to fulfilling its statutory duty as custodian of Castlehaven Village Green, thereby preserving the full public amenity. It is indebted to the Niton Harbour Club for the day-to-day maintenance of the Village Green.

SOUTHERN VECTIS NUMBER 6 BUS SERVICE

During the past year, Chale, Chillerton and Gatcombe and Niton and Whitwell Parish Councils jointly funded a winter Sunday service between Newport and Ventnor. After the disappointment of learning that an hourly service will not be resumed during summer 2017, the three Parish Councils have set up a working group to tackle the problem of community transport and explore all options. A very successful Parish excursion was run to Busy Bee "Christmas World" in December and a summer excursion is currently being planned.

PRECEPT

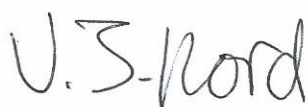
To maintain current services and approve projects for the coming year (including community transport, youth outreach and road safety initiatives), the Parish Council raised the precept to £41,494 for 2017/18 from £34,167 in 2016/17. This represents an increase of 58p per month for Band D properties. 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.



J Boileau Goad
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.	<p>Island Roads attended a PC meeting in March 2014; liaison is now improved.</p> <p>April 2015: some work to upgrade the road has commenced but the impact on Niton businesses must be minimised in future.</p> <p>April 2017: resurfacing between Lacey's Lane and Rectory Road scheduled 27th April</p>
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.	<p>The tourist leaflet was printed in March 2014.</p> <p>April 2016: leaflet published on Parish Council website</p>
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.	<p>Some work was done over the winter of 2013-14. The Niton-Rookley road is under discussion.</p> <p>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.</p>
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.	<p>April 2014: the process is underway.</p> <p>April 2015: Further action required to engage the Isle of Wight Council in dialogue</p> <p>April 2016: Parish Council awaiting removal of garages and abandoned vehicles by the Isle of Wight Council</p> <p>April 2017: Awaiting removal of garages; "abandoned" vehicles being monitored. IW Council proposal to impose parking charges successfully opposed.</p>
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.	<p>The committee will report progress in mid-2014.</p> <p>April 2015: No progress reported</p> <p>April 2016: No progress reported</p> <p>April 2017: The Parish Council has formed a working group with Chale and Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Councils to tackle community transport problems.</p>
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.	<p>Discussions are underway with Niton Primary School.</p> <p>April 2015: No further progress with regard to the school minibus but, as with 5.3, the Parish Council is exploring all viable options.</p> <p>Winter 2015/16: "NitWhit" community bus service 6-month trial.</p> <p>April 2017: The school minibus no longer available for community use due to insurance constraints. The Parish Councils' joint working group is considering all viable options.</p>

Action No.	Requirement	Action	Progress
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.	<p>The committee will report progress in mid-2014.</p> <p>April 2015: As with 5.2, the Parish Council is actively exploring all viable options</p> <p>April 2016: New Parish Council website being developed to inform residents</p> <p>April 2017: As with 5.2, the Parish Councils' joint working group is considering all viable options.</p>
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.	<p>The PC's policy changed in July 2013.</p> <p>Pre-application consultation takes place with the Planning Committee during public question time at Parish Council/Planning Committee meetings.</p>
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> <p>April 2017: A further new possible opportunity has been identified.</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> <p>April 2017: Planning permission for the new Niton Football Club clubhouse has been agreed. The Parish Council awards an annual grant to the local Youth Offer (SWAY); Niton Recreation Ground essential maintenance completed; skateboard half pipe refurbishment planned for 2017/18.</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> <p>April 2017: The Whitwell scheme has been withdrawn.</p>

Action No.	Requirement	Action	Progress
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> <p>April 2017: Work to provide the all-weather surface was completed in August 2016. The Parish Council is now considering improvements to the surface of NT17 bridleway between Church Lane and Ashknowle Lane.</p>