

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ELECTORS 2017/18

COMMUNITY GRANTS

During the year, grants have been awarded to Community Action Road Safety (CARS) (£500), the Isle of Wight Citizens Advice Bureau (£50), the Edward Edwards Library and community hub (£3,000), South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY) (£5,000), Niton Christmas Day and Lantern Parade (£200) and to Niton and Whitwell Parish Churches towards the grounds maintenance of Niton Churchyard and Ashknowle Cemetery (£800 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, to Norris Stores, which supplies cleaning materials free of charge, and to Councillor John Stotesbury, who has done everything possible to keep the toilets open during the periods of extremely cold weather over the past winter. Once again, progress on the promised transfer of the freehold from the Isle of Wight Council is still being awaited.

NITON FOOTBALL CLUB PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission has been granted for the proposed development, subject a S106 agreement between the developer and the Isle of Wight Council and the exchange of the lease between the developer and the Football Club. 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; it is currently pressing the Isle of Wight Council for enforcement of Condition 14. of the planning consent, which stipulates that temporary changing facilities for the Football Club must be in place prior to the commencement of any development to ensure uninterrupted use of the ground.

ALLOTMENT ROAD CAR PARK

Although the Parish Council remains committed to acquiring the car park, the matter has again been deferred pending removal of the dilapidated garages by the Isle of Wight Council. The presence of "abandoned" vehicles is being closely monitored by the Parish Council and Councillor Dave Stewart, Isle of Wight Council Ward Member.

ASHKNOWLE LANE BRIDLEWAY

The Parish Council has recently acted to remove the vegetation encroaching on the all-weather footpath surface. During the year, work was carried out to improve other short sections of the bridleway, which were very muddy during wet weather. At its budget meeting in January, the Parish Council set aside an earmarked contingency for improvements to the section from Ventnor Road, Whitwell, to Whitwell cemetery, subject to consultation with parishioners and other stakeholders.

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 still in progress.

ROADS, INCLUDING UNDERCLIFF DRIVE

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. The Parish Council remains resolutely committed to the re-opening of the Undercliff Drive and is currently working with Councillor Stewart, the Isle of Wight Council and local expert Dr Bruce Denness to achieve this. The Parish Council also arranged a meeting with Mr Bob Seely MP and was extremely pleased to obtain his support for the reopening of the road on the basis that it is a designated A road and should remain so.

Despite the increasingly desperate need to resurface Ventnor Road/Whitwell High Street, Southern Water's work to replace the water main in Whitwell High Street/Ventnor Road commenced in early November 2017, paused over the Christmas period and ended in February 2018. Southern Water and its contractor, Clancy Docwra, were delighted with the success of the scheme and with the level of cooperation locally. The long-awaited and much-needed resurfacing of the road is due to take place in June 2018.

PLANNING

The Parish Council commented on 38 of 39 planning applications in the Parish. During the year, 2 planning applications were granted by the Isle of Wight Council against the recommendation of the Parish Council. The Parish Council was represented at the Isle of Wight Council Planning Committee January meeting, at which the application for 9 residential units on land rear of Priory Walk was considered; outline permission was granted against the recommendation of the Parish Council, but the units are to be limited to a single storey with restrictions on overlooking existing residences in Priory Walk.

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 may be accessed via the Parish Council website.

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.

NITON RECREATION GROUND

Essential refurbishment of the skateboard half pipe was carried out in December, funded in part by a grant of over £1,500 from the NIPPA group. The Parish Council has set up a working group to develop a proposal for a new, enhanced skateboard facility of a more robust design, which would be economical to maintain. Potential external sources of funding are also being identified.

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 but has now engaged Island 2000 Trust to assist with restoration work, with the aim of creating a safe and functional public space that provides a natural habitat which is sympathetic to its environment.

The Parish Council continued to oppose the application for a Modification Order for NT46, for the deletion of the designated footpath along the seawall at Castlehaven; the Isle of Wight Council refused the application in March 2018.

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.

Increasingly popular Parish excursions were run to Quarr Abbey in June, the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary and Godshill Old Smithy in August, Arreton Barns Craft Village in November, Busy Bee "Christmas World" in December and "Dick Whittington" at Shanklin Theatre in January.

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 £44,663 for 2018/19 from £41,494 in 2017/18. This represents an increase of 25p 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