

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT WHITWELL VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 26th JUNE 2023 AT 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Councillors T Addison, S Biles, J Boileau Goad, S Burrridge, J Hill (Chair), A Logan, A Osborn, L Sheerin

IN ATTENDANCE: C Burt (Clerk to the Council), K Stay (Parish Warden), James Brewer (IW Council Planning Policy Manager) Natasha Dix (IW Council Strategic Manager for the Environment), Giles Alldred (Vice Chair Shorwell PC) Peter Gosling (Councillor Chale PC) and six members of the public.

Natasha Dix provided a brief background of the IW Council's commitment for a Dark Sky Initiative (DSI) approval by the World governing body. The area in the application process includes some or all of the Parishes of: Brighstone, Chale, Chillerton & Gatcombe, Niton and Whitwell and Shorwell. The process of reducing light pollution on the Island as a whole has been underway for several years, in conjunction with Island Roads, including the replacement of street lighting with lower emitting alternatives. A lighting management policy is to be incorporated into the Island Planning Strategy. In addition, assistance in reducing light emissions will be sought from local landowners and residents. The first phase expression of interest for the DSI has been accepted by the governing body and now the local community; Parish Councils and key stakeholders are being requested to provide letters of support for the application.

James Brewer then outlined the IWC Planning Dept's role in providing a policy control framework for the Dark Skies area. Initially a guidance document will be incorporated into a Strategic Planning Directive. He subsequently provided a brief written rundown of the planning processes and documents/web links to which he had referred. A copy of this is attached as Appendix II to these Minutes.

Cllr Hill acknowledged there were representatives of other PC's present, similarly being requested to provide letters of support and that they wished to pose their own questions. Cllr Boileau Goad asked for a view on how soon the policy control framework could be put in place in light of the Island Planning Strategy (IPS) not having been agreed. James responded that policies around overall thresholds are being considered, especially when carbon neutral aspirations in property construction are being applied, but currently precedents are hard to find. Cllr Addison asked, specifically regarding Niton and Whitwell, how much of the parish will fall within the Dark Skies Park and how that affects adjacent areas. James provided a map showing the area in question covers the majority of the southwest Island AONB. Whitwell does not fall within this area.

Giles Alldred, representing Shorwell PC and expressing the views of Brighstone and Chillerton & Gatcombe PCs, stated there is full support for the overall aims of the DSI, but had reservations concerning the application of planning regulations promoting the concept without meaningful policies and a Strategic Planning Document (SPD) being in place now. James suggested the way forward might be for PC's to seek jointly their Ward Cllrs' support to approach and pressure the relevant IW Council cabinet member to bring in suitable policy linkages as soon as possible.

Cllr Addison echoed the sentiment the participating PC's work together to provide a common approach, believing that the consensus is for the DSI application to proceed, perhaps providing a joint response. Cllr Gosling said Chale PC is supportive also of the DSI, but raised similarly that local planning applications are, and would be, continuing to come forward until definition on light emission constraints and enforcement could be supported by a strong backup from the IWC's planners.

The IWC representatives and the Shorwell and Chale PC's Cllrs were thanked for their valued input.

The member of the public having the long running drainage issue in Whitwell High Street wished to update on recent events. Subsequent to drainage repairs being made by Wight Fibre. A rainstorm then brought to the surface debris from that repair which was deposited across the road. Further FixMyStreet complaints were raised resulting in an IWC District Steward visiting the site and Island Roads were quickly summoned and cleared the debris. A further Island Roads CCTV inspection was made in response to other residents' complaints, which has now identified two additional blockages needing attention. Cllr Biles suggested further FixMyStreet complaints should be raised to maintain pressure for a complete resolution to this long running situation.

A member of the public raised a specific issue regarding Planning Application 21/01827/FUL in High Street, Whitwell, relating to a planned footpath. Per the plans, a footpath will run alongside her house providing access to the development. She has halted all plans for work on her property until the planning decision is given one way or another. She has tried to initiate a dialogue regarding this and other unsightly debris issues with the developer to no avail. She felt the continuing delays to the application are causing unnecessary distress to local residents.

Three members of the public representing the Niton Harbour Club (NHC), wished to understand what the PC was undertaking to restrict or remove the structure at the edge of Castlehaven Green. Cllr Boileau Goad commented this is a topic which has been a long running active issue for the PC. Cllr Osborn provided an update that the IW Council Rights of Way team have active involvement. When developments are provided to the PC, NHC will be advised. The NHC thanked the PC for its involvement in stabilising the green and enquired whether further works could be carried out to improve the green's surface with a layer of topsoil. Cllr Boileau Goad added there were plans to do so but were delayed during the Covid pandemic. It was suggested if the costs involved could be quantified, the subject could be considered by then PC at a future meeting. A further issue was raised regarding the placement of an informational post on the green. The positioning is considered to be affecting the view of the bay and a request for it to be moved elsewhere was suggested. The Clerk will take this forward. A further update was sought regarding the ongoing drain/stream leakage onto the bridleway. A concern is that the overspill water could be contaminated by dangerous elements/chemicals, proving a hazard to health. NHC's request is for an IWC drainage surveyor to visit the site to ascertain how a permanent solution to the problem could be found. Cllr Addison commented the issue of land ownership in the area is being progressed by the PC's legal representative. The intent being to understand if and what scope and potential the PC has to adopt tracts of land to overcome the many issues raised. Cllr Boileau Goad assured the NHC members that the PC is working hard to find solutions to the many issues concerning Castlehaven Lane.

The subject of overgrown verges and hedges was raised, specifically, but not limited to Castlehaven Lane. Natasha Dix responded that the programme of works in place will ensure all footpaths and bridleways are cleared, but could provide no definitive timescales.

Meeting opened at 7:48pm.

M01/06/23 APOLOGIES: Councillors Attrill and Critchison.

M02/06/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

M03/06/23 DARK SKIES INITIATIVE Based on the discussions detailed above, members were asked to consider providing a letter of support for the DSI application. Cllr Addison advocated doing so, but caveating the support by ensuring the IWC introduces the necessary Special Planning Directives to strengthen the IWC Planning Depts ability to turn down schemes where light emissions are deemed contrary to the aims of the DSI. Cllr Hill questioned whether we submit independently or, in concert with the other affected PCs. It was suggested we work in tandem with the other local PCs to produce a common view but submit our own letter of support.

RESOLVED: N&WPC to write a letter of support to the IWC regarding its application for the proposed Dark Sky Reserve in the South Wight. Further the PC will write to IWC, in support of neighbouring PCs, calling for further discussions with the IWC, regarding the planning policies associated with the DSI.

M04/06/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2023 be taken as read, confirmed, and signed as being an accurate record of the proceedings.

M05/06/23 FINANCE

5.1 Financial Statement & Bank Reconciliation: Members had before them a schedule showing a cashbook balance of £92,865.36 in general funds (including £3,399.05 in earmarked reserves, £26,157.37 in the public sector deposit fund and £6,367.77 in the Bequest Account.

RESOLVED: that the financial statement as of the 20th of June 2023 be received and noted.

5.2 Payments for Authorisation A schedule of accounts for payment was set before the meeting.

Type	Date Paid	Payee	Details	Amount
DD*	12.06.23	Plusnet	Internet for the Exchange	28.87
DD*	15.06.23	EDF	Electricity for Niton toilets	1.00
tbc		Marie Woodward	Installation of basketball hoop Niton Rec	975.00
tbc		RoSPA	Equipment inspection at Niton Rec	136.20
tbc		Wight Embroidery Ltd	Embroidery to Hivis jackets	50.00
tbc		indigo graphics	Signage and etch	269.71
tbc		IW Council	Business rates The Exchange	39.00
tbc		John O'Conner	Maintenance at Niton Rec	137.55
tbc		Parish Online	Annual chg Digital Mapping	134.40
tbc		Top Mops	Cleaning @ Niton toilets	280.80
tbc		Community Action	C Burt & K Stay salaries	1,333.04
tbc		C Burt	Expenses	170.27
Total				3,555.84

* Denotes already paid

RESOLVED: that the Parish accounts as listed above be approved for payment.

5.3 CONFIRMATION OF NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH BDO LLP: Members were asked to discuss and minute whether there are any conflicts of interest between the PC and BDO LLP (Auditors) when considering the external audit 2022/23.

RESOLVED: Confirmation be provided, that there is no conflict of interest between the PC and BDO LLP.

M06/06/23 PLANNING

6.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

RESOLVED: that the Clerk be asked to submit to the Isle of Wight Council the comments set out in Appendix I which forms part of these minutes.

6.2 PLANNING DECISIONS:

23/00659/HOU Proposed loft conversion, with rear dormer and roof lights in front roof slope at Ridge House Barrack Shute Niton **GTD**

21/01918/HOU Demolition of existing UPVC conservatory; Proposed office with balcony over, entrance porch and alterations to kitchen at 5 Radio Station House Castlehaven Lane Niton **REF**

6.3 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT NOTICES: Members had before them the most recent list of 6 outstanding enforcement situations in the Parish. Cllr Burrridge was appreciative of the information being provided but remarked that since the original notices being registered, some entries had not been updated for many months.

6.4 PLANNING APPLICATION 21/01827/FUL - LAND REAR OF 1 HILLSIDE TERRACE AND TRENALE (known as School House Meadow) HIGH STREET, WHITWELL: Cllr Burrridge confirmed the IW Council's planning portal 'Important Dates Section' had been updated to reflect the developer has been provided a final further extension to 21st July 2023 to submit outstanding paperwork and that a decision by

planners had to be reached by 24th October. If all outstanding issues can be provided by 21 July, a further period for public consultation will be held.

M07/06/23 NITON RECREATION GROUND

Members had before them a quotation from onlineplaygrounds.com for the replacement of various swing seats and chains deemed to be unsafe.

RESOLVED: The Clerk place an order to the company, based on the quotation provided on 6th June 2023.

M08/06/23 WHITWELL HIGH STREET WASTE BIN RE-SITING:

Members were apprised of responses to the re-siting of the bin from its current location to the junction of the High Street and Nettlecombe Lane. The decision was put to Whitwell villagers for their comments. The majority public view was the bin should remain in its current location.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to advise our Ward Councillor and Island Roads the bin should remain in its current location.

M09/06/23 ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

A written report was provided in Ward Cllr Critchison's absence. There were no matters arising from it. The full report is attached as Appendix III to these Minutes.

M13/05/23 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk provided Members with an update on the proposed District 5 Traffic Regulation Orders (D5 TRO - double yellow line extensions) from the IWC's Highways Dept. All amendments subject to the consultation process in 2022 have been approved. These are due to be implemented this month subject to weather conditions and work gang availability.

Cllrs Addison and Critchison recently have been approached by a resident of Nettlecombe Lane to remind the PC of the continuing traffic issue at the junction of Nettlecombe Lane and Whitwell High Street. This is where cars park opposite the junction, making it very difficult to turn right towards Godshill. This situation had been discussed for some time prior to the D5 TRO consultation and it was felt could have been included if the PC had been involved in a discussion from the outset.

The Clerk reported the 2022/23 VAT refund submission had been completed and a sum of c.£8,900 has been requested.

M14/05/23 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS:

There were no Cllr reports to discuss. Two written reports were provided. There were no matters arising. The full reports are attached in full as Appendix III to these Minutes.

M15/05/22 PARISH WARDEN'S REPORT: Mr Stay mentioned a report of Japanese Knotweed being discovered adjacent to Dock Lane, Niton. Cllr Osborn had originally been advised by a parishioner of the plant's discovery in the stream and on land to the left of the Dock Lane (Buddle Steps) footpath. He has reported its existence to the Environment Agency.

Mr Stay updated Members on the dog bag issue in the residential refuse bins at the entrance to Beryl, off Nettlecombe Lane. He reported new bins with lids have been provided and the issue is believed to be resolved.

The subject of the external paintwork on the Exchange was raised. Some areas need refurbishment. Members asked if this was something he could accomplish or whether the task should be tendered to contractors. Mr Stay agreed he would undertake some initial repainting of the worst areas (drainpipes) and determine whether he could take on the whole building as part of his ongoing duties.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.17pm.

Signed..... Date.....

APPENDIX I TO MINUTES

COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. **23/00790/FUL** Proposed upgrade to existing telecommunications installation to include replacement of 3No antennas at 34.3m with 3No antennas at the same height on existing support poles, Installation of 1No GPS at 3.3m height on existing gantry pole at ground level, Installation of support apparatus on existing gantry pole at ground level, Replacement of support apparatus on the existing tower at St Catherines Hill Mast Blackgang Road Niton. **No Objections - Support**
2. **23/00967/LBC** Listed Building Consent for proposed wooden framed glazed entrance to barn in current opening; install concrete block work in areas stone wall no longer present; proposed wood burning stove; improvement to concrete floor at Sibbecks Farm Newport Road Niton. **No objections = Support**

APPENDIX II TO MINUTES

JAMES BREWER'S NOTES ON WHAT PLANNING ADJUSTMENTS THE IW COUNCIL IS PLANNING TO MAKE IN RELATION TO THE DARK SKIES INITIATIVE

Thank you for having us last night and hopefully the Q&A was useful for those in attendance.

Further to the conversations that took place, I just wanted to provide in writing a brief rundown of the planning processes and documents that I referred to, albeit these sit outside of the Dark Skies Park application that the council is looking to make (but would of course help support any such application).

- The Draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS) contains policy EV12 'Dark Skies' (copy attached);
- The proposed Dark Skies park boundary on the Draft IPS map follows that of the AONB boundary in the south west of the island (copy attached);
- At present the Draft IPS is paused in terms of its preparation due to imminent changes to national planning policy at government level, however we expect this to start to move forward into the formal plan making stages towards the end of this year;
- Once the Draft IPS moves into the formal plan making stages and is passing through independent examination, some weight can start to be given to the draft policies in decision making;
- As and when the Draft IPS is formally adopted by the council as our new 'local plan', the policies can be given full weight in planning decision making;
- At this stage, a further more detailed document called a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) could be prepared that 'hooks' off the Dark Skies policy in the IPS;
- SPDs provide more detail information on particular issues and topics, often including technical detail and guidance that doesn't fit comfortably into policy;
- Any preparation of an SPD would include a minimum 6-week period of consultation on a draft;
- The approach of adopting a policy in the IPS and then following up with an SPD would provide the greatest amount of weight to both the policy and SPD in planning decision making (and the greatest ability to then robustly defend any reasons for refusal based on that policy and SPD);
- An example of such a document is the one prepared (originally in 2018 and updated in 2021) by the South Downs National Park Authority to support their designation as an International Dark Sky Reserve (designation achieved in May 2016) – the document can be viewed [here](#).

I'm sorry I didn't catch all of the other parish councils who were in attendance, however if you captured this for the minutes and would be able to forward this information on to the relevant clerks that would be much appreciated (or alternatively let me know who was there and I can do so).

I trust this information assists and if you have any queries, please do let me know.

Kind regards
James

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APPENDIX III TO MINUTES

WARD COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Ward Cllr Community Catch up/Surgery Sessions 2023

Whitwell: Monday 3rd July 10.30 - 11.30am, Whitwell Church

Chale: Saturday 15th July 10.30 – 11.30 am, Village Hall

Niton: Wednesday 19th July 10.30 – 11.30 am, Niton Exchange

No August surgeries due to school holidays

Police Speed Enforcement: Operation Golden Mile speed enforcement includes 15 roads per month.

The locations are community intelligence led and I will be giving the police a list of the roads that I am contacted by residents about the most. Jan – April 2023 the IW had the highest number of mobile speed enforcement hours per district in the Hampshire and IW area.

Niton Undercliff bus service/Sandrock Road: The No 6 bus service to Niton Undercliff is not able to run whilst the road is closed, due to the retaining wall that has fallen. It is likely to be closed for some time. If you or anyone you know is finding it difficult to arrange transportation please let me know and I will look into community transport or shared taxi options. I have a meeting with Island Roads and Highways on Thursday to discuss the rectification at the earliest opportunity.

Resident meeting at Whitwell: I met with residents of Whitwell to discuss the planning application 21/01827/FUL School House Meadow, Whitwell. I understand the frustrations of this application hanging over them for almost two years. I explained the planning process from this point forward and that the latest extended deadline is to enable the process to reach a conclusion and that there will not be further extensions. All outstanding information required for a complete application must be submitted by 21 July. The application will then be re-publicised and progressed on the information received on or before 31 July. An extension of time has also been agreed until 24 October. This will allow for the consultation period, as well as consideration of the application at the October planning committee if necessary.

Carriageway crack sealing: Island Roads will be carrying out carriageway crack sealing works on various roads across the Island. The programme commences on 3 July, with completion expected by end of July. Due to the very short duration of the works per site, they will be using 15-minute delay boards where necessary to minimise disruption. If the works are on narrower carriageways where two-way working isn't an option, or the works likely to take more than 15 minutes, short duration road closures will be required.

Ward Councillor Claire Critchison

COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

Councillor Critchison

-Arranged meeting with Ramblers representative to discuss paths that could be created as new public rights of way.

-Have spoken to Rights of Way about making the path next to the Buddle a temporary Bridle way whilst the road is closed.

-Met with Living Well and Early Help service to discuss ways to help with mobility and transport in the village. Meeting to be arranged to discuss option to run a bus service similar to FYT bus.

Councillor Claire Critchison

Councillor Osborn

Update of activities for June 2023.

1. Enabled an 80th anniversary memorial of World War Two bombing of Niton, to be marked with remembrance service at Niton Parish Church and at the graveside of the three Trinity House light house keepers, with attendance of HM Coastguard Station Manager for Ventnor, James Potter, to lay flowers and mark the event with a short memorial speech. The event was also picked up by online and print media through County Press, IW Observer and On the Wight.
2. Discussions ongoing with Niton Parish Church Wardens regarding the Niton War Memorial and the increasingly uneven ground surrounding the memorial, that has dropped due to graves and dry weather, as it presents an increasing hazard.
3. Meeting with Chair of Castlehaven Harbour Club, Mark Donovan, who expressed concerns of harbour club members, as well as members of the public, at the state of affairs, linked to Castlehaven, and the apparent lack of any identifiable outcomes. MD to attend next PC meeting, to express concerns to the Parish Council. Assured him that work was underway regarding the lane, access, rights of way and illegal structures and that these had all been reported to the appropriate bodies, and where appropriate legal actions had been initiated.
4. Monitoring of Castlehaven Lane water flows. Flows down the lane has now stopped. It is unclear if this is due to the current lack of rain and extended heatwave, or whether a permanent resolution to the flow has been achieved.
5. Obstruction to the public footpath from Castlehaven Green and other related illegal structures, have been photographed and reported via the Clerk.
6. Following a report to me of Japanese Knotweed in the stream of Dock Lane, a site visit was conducted and found between 5 and 10 stems. In assessing whether this was an isolated occurrence or part of a wider issue, a much larger area of the JK has been identified on land adjacent to the Buddle Car Park. As ownership of these two areas are unclear, and due to the issues relating to JK, these two outbreaks have been reported to Isle of Wight County Council, and Environment Agency (as per gov.uk online guidance) due to the site being in or close to a watercourse.
7. A meeting request on behalf on the PC Chair, to meet with Highways Department, to discuss Sandrook Road, and understand the issues is scheduled for 29/6/2023 with Samantha Rourke (Island Roads), Phil.Jordan (IWCC) and Claire Critchison.

Cllr Andy Osborn