

NITON AND WHITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th May 2023 AT NITON VILLAGE HALL AT 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Councillors: L Sheerin (Chair Niton and Whitwell Parish Council), T Addison (Vice Chair), B Attrill, S Biles, J Boileau Goad, S Burridge, J Hill, A Logan, and A Osborn. Also in attendance: C Burt (Clerk to the Council) Mr K Stay (Parish Warden), Mrs C Brown (representative of the Friends of Ashknowle Cemetary and its Environs - FACE) and Mr R Webb (representative of South Wight Area Youth - SWAY) and 8 Electors.

APOLOGIES: Ward Councillor Critchison

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. She commented that many of the PC's long harboured plans had come to fruition during the past twelve months.

2. MINUTES

Those present had before them the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. THE CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair spoke to an Annual Report on the activities of the Council for 2022/2023 (copy attached).

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented a Financial Report based on the internally audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 (copy attached).

5. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE LOCAL WARD COUNCILLOR

In the absence of Ward Cllr Critchison, the Clerk read from her written report. (copy attached).

6. A REPORT FROM THE FRIENDS OF ASHKNOWLE CEMETARY AND ITS ENVIRONS (FACE) (copy attached)

7. A REPORT FROM SOUTH WIGHT AREA YOUTH (SWAY) (copy attached)

8. COMMENTS, REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ELECTORS

An Elector from Whitwell wished to thank the PC for its assistance in progressing a resolution to a particular flooding issue in Whitwell High Street. Although not yet fully resolved, liability for the situation has been recognised and the necessary repair work is to be undertaken in the near future.

Electors wished to understand how long the road closure on Sandrock Road would be in place. Access is being disrupted, with the No. 6 bus route affected. Cllr Sheerin advised that, unfortunately, no timescale has yet been established due to the complex remedial plan needed to provide safe passage through the area. The PC will ensure Electors are informed once the timescale has been determined.

Mention was made of a rumoured change in vehicle priority on the Blackgang Road as you leave Niton village centre. This could act as a speed restrictor to traffic from Blackgang entering the village. A written request had been received concerned the possibility of a 20mph speed limit being put in place along Rectory Road, Niton, similar to that in place in Godshill.

Cllr Sheerin advised that dialogue is being had with Ward Cllr Critchison regarding a wide range of road safety issues affecting the Parish. Cllr Addison added the traffic volumes through the Parish were being exacerbated due to the ongoing closure of Undercliff Drive to vehicular traffic, the route between Niton and Whitwell had become a de facto 'A' class road. This could have ramifications for many issues when an updated Parish Plan is to be considered.

Taking all these issues, together with the ongoing conversations regarding a possible pedestrian crossing solution to the junction adjacent to Norris Stores, and having heard from Ward Cllr Critchison that a road safety meeting had been held in Brighstone, Cllr Sheerin felt there were sufficient road safety issues in the Parish to organise a similar public meeting to discuss these local road safety issues.

An elector from Undercliff Drive remarked that, although having lived there for a relatively short period of time, he had been impressed by the local community spirit.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:52pm.

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

(Chair)

**NITON AND WHITWELL
PARISH COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
ELECTORS 2022/2023**

Chair's Message

During the last year the Parish Council has completed many of its long harboured plans. Having taken over several assets under long term leases from the IW Council, we have been busy improving their appearance.

The Exchange

This building, formerly the old library in Niton, now provides the PC with a central office and meeting space. Several community groups benefit from this space, including: SWAY, Niton Community Football Club and the local Historical Society. Our local Police Community Support Officer and Ward Councillor hold monthly surgeries, which are well supported. Much needed improvement works on the building continue, with all the windows now replaced.

Allotment Road Car Park

The car park has undergone an amazing transformation. The old dilapidated garages have been removed and a new fence erected around the perimeter. The hedge has been removed improving road visibility.

Bert Sprake Memorial Garden

The garden has undergone a facelift to provide a tranquil space for all to enjoy.

Niton Recreation Ground

Due to the age of the current equipment on the Rec, work is being undertaken to replace or repair it. This is a long term plan. We have replaced the skateboard half pipe and work is underway to replace and re-locate the basketball hoop.

Parish Warden

The new role of Parish Warden was filled by Mr Keith Stay. You have probably seen Keith doing his rounds in both villages. From refurbishing our benches to keeping the streets clear of rubbish, Keith has made an outstanding contribution in helping to maintain our local assets and the surrounding environment.

Parishioner of the Year

It was with great pleasure this new award was presented to Mr John Stotesbury for his valuable contribution in helping the Parish. The award was to recognise his hard work, often going un-noticed and unrecognised, and was well deserved.

Ashknowle Lane

We continue to monitor and maintain this safe, quiet route between our two villages.

The villages of Niton and Whitwell held extremely popular celebrations commemorating the Queen's Platinum jubilee. We were proud to be included in making these wonderful events possible.

This forthcoming year, we will strive to continue in supporting our parishioners and maintaining the appearance of our unique villages in all aspects

Councillor Lorraine Sheerin

The following provides a summary of activity undertaken over the past 12 months:

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 grateful to the Niton Harbour Club for grass cutting on the Village Green and to Island 2000 Trust for ongoing support within its Gift to Nature portfolio.

COMMUNICATIONS The Parish Council aim to communicate better with the local community. All documents available to the public are posted on the website www.nitonwhitwell.org.uk In addition, the Parish Council has continued to use a community Facebook page to disseminate up to date news items.

Notices and agendas are also placed on the Village notice boards and the Exchange is open most Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays between 9am and 1pm should anyone want information, help or advice. Our Community Police Support Officer and Ward Councillor, Claire Critchison, hold monthly surgeries at the Exchange.

COMMUNITY GRANTS During the year, grants were awarded to South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY) The Friends of Ashknowle Cemetery (FACE), Niton and Whitwell Wis. Grants are awarded in recognition of the benefit to the community afforded by each asset or service.

ENVIRONMENT The Parish Council funds the services of an Environment Officer who patrols Niton and Whitwell on a weekly basis. The officer has the power to issue £75 on-the-spot fixed penalty notices where owners fail to pick up after their dog. Niton toilets, bus shelters in the parish and the Recreation ground are inspected regularly by the environmental officer. These rounds are supplemented by the vigilance of our Parish Warden

MEETINGS The Parish Council meets on the fourth Monday in the month (except August and December). The location alternates between Niton and Whitwell. Members would like to thank the Whitwell Village Hall committee for the use of its venue. 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 formal business commences. Meeting agendas also include an invitation to submit comments and questions in writing to the Clerk for a written response to be provided as soon as possible after the meeting.

PARISH PLAN The current Parish Plan was written in 2013, A new plan that will form the basis of planning, environment, safety, traffic, and travel in the Parish will be designed to work in conjunction with the proposed new Isle of Wight plan, when it comes to fruition.

PLANNING The Parish Council considered and commented on numerous planning applications in the Parish; plans that were commented on included:
Whitwell: to build 24 houses with access off Whitwell High Street – Status - Registered, A fresh application may be forthcoming in 2023.
Niton: to build 54 dwellings on the land at Ladyacre Farm, Niton – Status – Registered, Appeal Decision – Remains unknown.

PRECEPT Given the prevailing economic circumstances we all face, the Parish Council agreed to set its precept for 2023/24 at the same level as the previous year at £52,411, this represents a small decrease per month for Band D properties. Full details of the budget are available on the Parish Council's website.

PUBLIC TOILETS The Parish Council toilets in Niton are maintained by the Parish Council and regularly cleaned by Top Mops Ltd The toilets are a much-appreciated local asset. The Environmental Officer and Parish Warden also check the facilities regularly. Despite this vigilance, some minor acts of vandalism occur. This antisocial behaviour is not tolerated, and instances have and will be reported to the Police.

RIGHTS OF WAY, INCLUDING ASHKNOWLE LANE BRIDLEWAY The Parish Council are delighted with the Isle of Wight Council's Rights of Way teams resurfacing at each end of the Ashknowle Lane bridleway (Allotment Road/Lower Fields and the path adjacent to Whitwell church). This bridleway provides a safe route between the villages.

ROAD TRAFFIC AND SAFETY IN THE PARISH The Parish Council continues to work closely with the Isle of Wight Council and Island Roads to find a way of making our villages more pedestrian friendly. A number of meetings have taken place with the Isle of Wight council in 2022/2023 and the subject is discussed at most monthly Parish Council meetings. Councillors will continue to try to slow traffic at specific danger points.

WHITWELL TELEPHONE KIOSK LIBRARY Thanks go to Carol Bellamy of Whitwell for looking after the library, which is a much-loved asset to the village.

Councillor Lorraine Sheerin
Chair – Niton and Whitwell Parish Council

Christopher Burt
Clerk – Niton and Whitwell Parish Council

Financial Report – Annual Parish Meeting 17/5/23

- The Precept for the 2022/23 financial year was increased by 5% to £52,411 to accommodate the increased costs to maintain assets taken on by N&W PC on long leases from the IW Council. These included:

The Exchange building in Niton High Street, the Bert Sprake Memorial Garden at the junction of Chatfield Rd and Town End Lane and the Allotment Road car park, adjacent to Niton Recreation Ground. Much work has been completed as a result.

- Cash reserves had been built up during the prior 2-year period, whilst the country was in Covid lockdown.
- The combined result of these circumstances was that the PC's financial position was healthy.
- It enabled the PC to enlist a paid Parish Warden to ensure Parish assets and surrounding areas are well maintained.
- It also enabled funding to be made available to replace old and damaged equipment at Niton Recreation Ground – including the skateboard half-pipe and soon to be erected basketball hoop.
- Given the prevailing economic circumstances, the PC agreed to maintain the 2023/24 Precept at its prior year level.
- However, this will still ensure existing Parish wide assets and services and future projects will continue to be maintained and fulfilled at the highest levels during this financial year.
- Financial information is detailed below:

	Year Ending 31st March 2023	Year Ending 31 st March 2022
	£	
RECEIPTS		
Precept	52,411.00	49,915.00
Localised Council Tax Support grant	Nil	Nil
Bank Interest	470.85	17.94
Bequest Account Interest	5.92	0.64
Grant from War Memorials Trust	Nil	Nil
Whitwell Best Kept Village Award	Nil	Nil
Covid-19 Community Support Grants	Nil	Nil
Miscellaneous	585.12	Nil
VAT Repayment	5,429.22	0
Total Receipts	58,902.11	49,933.58

PAYMENTS

Clerk's Salary	11,144.93	10,641.53
Mileage	36.90	50.85
Administrative Expenses	1,046.18	2,041.21
Subscriptions	496.43	737.63

Insurance	816.70	658.60
Audit Fees	350.00	450.00
Grants	3,927.00	3,720.00
Room Hire	125.00	50.00
Training	Nil	20.00
Niton Recreation Ground	31,526.77	1,811.08
Villages, assets, and rights of way	13,694.57	6,195.44
Churchyards	650.00	400.00
Niton Public Toilets	4,068.75	7,009.39
Community bus service	Nil	2,457.00
Castlehaven Village Green	1,422.67	500.00
Niton Football Club	Nil	Nil
NitWhit Soapbox Derby	Nil	Nil
Smugglers Trail	399.00	Nil
Community Response & Backup (CRAB)	Nil	991.94
S137	40.00	291.67
Misc	Nil	227.50
VAT	8,907.48	2,717.96
Total Payments	78,727.38	40,926.80

GENERAL FUND

	2022/2023	2021/2022
	£	£
Balance as at 1 st April	95,363.28	82,646.60
Add Total Receipts	58,902.11	49,933.58
Deduct Total Payments	(69,819.90)	(37,216.90)
Balance as at 31st March	84,445.49	95,363.28

EARMARKED RESERVES (Bequest Account and earmarked donations)

	2022/2023	2021/22
	£	£
Balance as at 1 st April	8,966.82	9,952.20
Add Total Receipts	Nil	Nil
Deduct Total Payments	Nil	(991.94)
Balance as at 31st March	8,966.82	8,960.26

TOTAL RESERVES

2022/2023	2021/2022
£	£

Balance as at 1 st April	101,605.58	92,598.80
Add Total Receipts	58,902.11	49,933.58
Deduct Total Payments	(78,727.38)	(40,926.80)
Balance as at 31st March	81,780.31	101,605.58

BANK RECONCILIATION

	31 st March 2023 £	31 st March 2022 £
CURRENT RESERVES		
Lloyds Current Account	49,246.60	69,607.49
Lloyds Business Instant Access Account	180.08	179.74
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	25,985.86	25,506.50
National Savings Investment Account	6,367.77	6,361.85
Total	81,780.31	101,655.58
LESS Unpresented Cheques	Nil	(50.00)
NET RESERVES AS AT 31ST MARCH	81,780.31	101,605.58

Represented by:

General Fund	72,813.49	92,645.32
Earmarked Reserves	8,966.82	8,960.26

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Chairman

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Responsible Officer

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Date

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Date

Gareth Hughes

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Internal Auditor

10/05/23

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Date

ASSETS

At 31st March 2023, the following assets were held:

	£
Office equipment:	
Dell laptop computer and HP printer	600
2 x 4-drawer filing cabinet	200
3 tub chairs	50
8 stacking chairs	120
Desk & Office Chair	150
Village assets:	
25 Wooden Seats	6,858
3 Wooden Notice boards	905
1 Aluminium Notice Board	468
9 Village Signs	3,067
2 footpath signs (NT30)	188
2 Seats (Niton Rec)	426
4 Picnic benches (Niton Rec)	624
3 Information Boards	2,083
2 K6 red telephone kiosks	2
1 Christmas tree stand	158
2 Sets of Christmas tree lights	368
1 bulb planting tool	20
Older playground equipment:	
Swingmaster swings with 2 cradle seats	99
Swingmaster swings with 4 flat seats	139
Wildcats Wicked Wheels Skateboard Fun Box	250
Playground equipment purchased 2010 and 2011:	
Peak	276
Supernova	26
Metal nest swing	146
Tri-action unit	1,039
Vega	91

Basic toddler unit	201
Crazy Nellie	42
Sunflower	88
Mini car	143
Horse seesaw	105
Cableway	4,428
Safety matting	7,555
Playground equipment purchased 2023:	
Half pipe skateboard ramp	25,995
Basketball hoop	1,825
Land as per attached schedule valued at £1 per site	9
Total	58,117

Christopher Burt – Parish Clerk

Ward Cllr Claire Critchison - annual councillor summary May 2023

Resident engagement

Councillor updates on facebook and in the Connections newsletter each month to keep residents informed of latest council news and what I have been involved with locally.

Monthly Cllr surgeries at the Niton Exchange Parish Council office. Regular visits to the WI coffee mornings at the Chale Village Hall and Whitwell Church – these have been a useful way to meet with residents and get to know the community.

Cllr community catch up/surgery sessions June/July 2023

Niton: Wednesday 21st June 10.30- 11.30 am at the Exchange

Whitwell: Monday 3rd July 10.30 – 11.30 am at the church

I have followed up resident enquiries with planning issues, road safety, vehicle access, police enquiries, rights of way and environmental health. Given advice and passed on information.

I have liaised with the Parish Councils on issues involving the IW Council e.g., Niton Football Club, Chale Green, Sway, Wightfibre, Island Roads, Rights of Way.

Road safety issues

Cllr Nick Stuart and I arranged a joint road safety meeting on Wednesday 22nd March in Brighstone. The meeting discussed traffic management, quiet roads, road safety and community speed watch in the South/

West Wight. It was a very informative meeting, and we will be arranging more in other villages throughout the year.

I have had many requests for a pedestrian crossing at the junction near Norris Stores in Niton. I have met with the IWC Highways Team, and they have confirmed that budget has been allocated towards the investigation of a crossing in Niton Village. The project will survey the area and find out what will and won't be suitable for the very constrained location.

I will continue to request for other traffic management requirements in the villages and the need for highways risk assessments.

Winter pressures

I have shared cost of living information, details of warm spaces, helped with access to services and signposted residents to organisations for assistance.

Events

I have attended Niton and Whitwell village events including the Jubilee celebrations, remembrance services, Christmas markets, village coffee mornings and Niton and Whitwell horticultural show and coronation celebrations.

Niton and Whitwell Parish Council AGM

Input from F.A.C.E.

Thankyou for inviting me , I'm Caroline Brown and a member of FACE,
Friends of Ashknowle Lane Cemetery and its Environs.

There are currently 14 volunteers in the group and we meet up on the second Saturday of each month, although some members go up more frequently.

What we do

We manage the boundaries – hedges, the areas around the graves including the wild flower areas and the large grassed area below the graves down to the bottom boundary. This area has gradually been cleared of heavy undergrowth and brambles in recent years.

Hedging of boundaries is now being carried out by Oz and Paul.

Trevor and Clive carry out most of the grass cutting.

Heather Hicks' work on recording and mapping out of all headstones and their inscriptions which is now available as a booklet.

Equipment and tools

We use our own smaller hand tools, strimmers , Flymo and chainsaw.

The purchase of the ride-on mower has been a great asset and is now essential now we have a much larger area of grass to maintain.

Request for 10% increase in funding.

We're asking you to consider a 10% increase in funding to help cover the increase in costs.

This would help to cover fuel and maintenance of the ride-on mower.

I've had a quote of £250 for a service- extra for sharpening blades and any replacement parts/repairs.

Fuel for the Flymo, strimmers and chainsaw. In the past, individuals have been happy to pay for some of the fuel used themselves. But because we are maintaining a much larger area this is no longer realistic, especially as some volunteers are now going up more frequently to complete these tasks.

Dogs

Unfortunately, now the cemetery is now cleared and a lovely open space there are a small number of dog walkers who are allowing their dogs to go in the cemetery. We are now having to clear up after them.

We've had a sign made and are looking to put a discreet fence along one side of the front hedge by the entrance to deal with this.

New volunteers

Talk to Niton and Whitwell PC

- Weekly activities in Niton, Rock Solid and Roots have around 50 youngsters attending each week. The Roots Group 12+ have to operate a booking in system to limit numbers it is so popular.
- The River Project (Mentoring) 2 group at St Frances in Ventnor, 1 group in Brighstone and as from September 1 group in Niton Primary School.
- Zoom Cooking or whats in the box? 27 families across the area participate.
- Family support work, we are supporting 9 families at the moment, three of whom are in Niton and Whitwell.
- We have a post 14 group with 15 youngsters attending – moving towards the Young leaders training. Covid impact. 6 activities a year 4 volunteering, 2 young leaders supporting younger age group, and 1 overnight residential.
- 1 – 1 mentoring 6 youngsters including 2 from Niton – range of problems anxiety, depression, trouble with the school or authorities.
- Corf Camp weekend and the Lakes Trip in the Summer
- Coronation cream tea in a box to 50 old folk across the area – eaten early!
- Currently have four workers on the team – two of which are part-time.
- Future – still working on building a Community Hub in Chale Green, funding of £640k has been pledged, sorting out Common Land hiccup; and taking a close look at the Wroxall area where there are high levels of deprivation.
- At the moment all our funds come from grants or donations, so all contributions gratefully received.
- Any questions?

RAW

17/5/23