

APPENDIX 1

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL – SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF COLLABORATION OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS - RESPONSES

- a. Chillerton and Gatcombe
- b. East Cowes
- c. Gurnard
- d. Newport
- e. Niton and Whitwell
- f. Ryde
- g. Shalfleet

1. How do you provide information and communicate with the Isle of Wight Council? Please list all forms of communication.

- a. Through email mostly although some face to face meetings take place. We also communicate through the ward councillor.
- b. Mostly by email, phone – very rarely letter
- c. Mainly email, sometimes phone
- d. Email, telephone, personal contact
- e. Mainly e-mail but some telephone calls and the occasional letter.
- f. Email, letter, phone, in person
- g. Mainly email, but also letter, telephone and contact form from IWC website

2. Which Isle of Wight Council services do you work with and how helpful do you find the contact for each service?

- a. We interact with Island Roads more than the IWC but have recently dealt with Rights of Way and we pay into the Environment Officer service. Communication is excellent and very helpful for both services particularly the EO service
- b. Recreation and Open Spaces, Environment, Parks and Gardens. Stores, Beaches, Rights of Way, Planning – all very helpful
- c. Rights of Way, Planning, Island Roads, environment
- d. Planning, Licensing, all Neighbourhoods services, Regeneration, Legal Services
- e. We work very closely with Rights of Way and find them very knowledgeable and helpful.

Similarly, Clive Joynes in Electoral Services.

- f. *Well Being Service – we find the staff that visit our offices to hold clinics very helpful and approachable but find the service especially difficult to reach over the telephone.*

Environment Officer – Excellent lines of communication and responsive.

Planning – Varies depending on the availability of staff.

Legal Services – Varies depending on the availability of staff, but often slow to answer queries.

Parks and beaches – Excellent lines of communication and responsive.

- g. Over the years have worked with many IWC services:

Rights of Way have always been extremely helpful, as has the Tree Team/Tree Officer

Electoral Services – Clive Joynes in particular

Legal and Democratic Services

Highways.

Property Services

Planning

3. **Would you welcome a single initial point of contact for Town and Parish Clerks?**

- a. Yes, we have Jayne Tyler already but a senior contact would be helpful
- b. We had a silver line and a parish team which raised the IW Council above other authorities in terms of working with parishes. (Bit late but - If it aint broke don't fix it)
- c. I believe Jayne Tyler already acts as the single point of contact
- d. Yes
- e. In theory, yes. But it doesn't always work and if you know who you need to contact it's easier to contact them directly.
- f. *No. Would much rather T & P Councils were provided with a detailed directory of staff listing their area of responsibility and their direct dial or extension numbers. This would negate having to go through the main number and alleviate the long waits hanging on the phone. We have been told there is an officer designated as a single point of contact but they are often unresponsive*
- g. We already have a single point of contact should we wish to use it; Jayne Tyler who regularly sends us IWC news and information through Press Releases. I have always found Jayne very helpful

4. Most Isle of Wight County Councillors attend Town and Parish meetings in their ward area. How do you think this relationship could work better to both inform town and parish councillors of Isle of Wight Council business and vice versa? Should there be a formal procedure to facilitate this?

- a. Our ward councillor covers a wide area so is unable to attend all our meetings which can be frustrating. He circulates a report which informs us of IWC business but less pressure by reducing the number of parishes covered would be a solution and give the residents a better service
- b. No, the current system (voluntary) seems to work well in the majority of cases. If the councillor is truly interested in serving the community then the parish meetings are the closest they will get to them.
- c. This works really well, our Ward Councillor is also a parish councillor
- d. Our Parish Council has all but one of its seven IW Councillors as members, plus another who represents an IWC ward outside the Parish. The exchange of information could not be better.
- e. Councillor Dave Stewart attends most of our meetings despite his other commitments. The relationship works very well in my experience.
- f. Existing procedures adequate.
- g. We are lucky our Ward Cllr attends most of our Parish Council meetings. I also email Cllr Hutchinson if issues crop up between meetings. Believe this process works fine, no need to complicate it

5. Should there be a greater role and support for ward councillors as a point of contact and liaison between the Isle of Wight Council and Town and Parish Councils? How could this be achieved?

- a. See above (Our ward councillor covers a wide area so is unable to attend all our meetings which can be frustrating. He circulates a report which informs us of IWC business but less pressure by reducing the number of parishes covered would be a solution and give the residents a better service
- b. Depends who the councillor is to a great extent. Not sure giving them a greater role would work – it might be interpreted as interference.
- c. No response
- d. It is probably incumbent on IW Councillors whether they have a good relationship with their parish council
- e. I feel it's achieved in 4. Above
- f. Existing procedures adequate
- g. Difficult as our Ward Cllr is also Deputy Leader of the IWC, so obviously he has time constraints. Feel with him attending our meetings and responding promptly to my emails is fine.

6. How do you as clerk disseminate information to councillors. Do you copy all information to all councillors irrespective of content, or, for example, only to the relevant chairs of committees?

- a. Information is circulated to the whole council
- b. Mostly to all by email, but information needing a decision is brought to a council meeting formally. In the majority of cases it is appropriate to copy in all councillors
- c. I tend to email all councillors unless it is a specific issue only relevant to a specific working party
- d. Most information goes to all councillors. It is not the Clerk's role to vet information.
- e. As a relatively small Council, N&W only has one Committee: the Planning Committee and it's the whole Council! So most information goes out to all councillors. On occasions, I will only send information to the Chairman, Chairman and Vice Chairman, Chair of Planning or the relevant member(s).
- f. *Generally, all Councillors sometimes just to relevant committees*
- g. We do not have any committees currently at Shalfleet – so I email all my 6 Cllrs any information I feel is relevant to them.

7. How could Town and Parish councils be more involved in the process of allocating Section 106 monies in their area? Should they be involved at an earlier stage when Section 106 agreements are drawn up, and suggest potential projects in their area?

- a. It is essential that the T&PCs are involved in the process as they are the closest to the community and are very aware of any need. If they could be involved from the beginning of the process this would be most helpful
- b. Parishes should have a seat at the table at the earliest possible opportunity when Sec 106 is being discussed. They are closest to their communities and know best where and how these monies could benefit the community.
- c. We would very much like to be involved and are suggesting community projects for any large scale planning application received.
- d. They could be more involved in the early stages. Allocation of monies depends on the nature of the agreement.
- e. I could write an essay on this! Absolutely no question in my opinion, town and parish councils should be involved in negotiating the s106 agreement right from the beginning. Please find attached a copy of the letter sent to IWALC by our Chairman, which also relates to question 8

- f. Yes, this is a great idea
- g. At Shalfleet developers have sometimes contacted the PC to ask what the Cllrs wish for the Parish in terms of s106 monies, i.e. we have negotiated a pathway across one of our playing fields for the Bouldnor Mead site, linking the Coastal path. Do feel s106 monies from development in the area should be spent for the benefit of the area.

8. Should Town and Parish Councils be consulted on planning issues in their area and at what stage? Should training be given?

- a. I believe this is already a statutory requirement as T&PCs as statutory consultees. Training is available through IWALC and a workshop has been offered by IWC although no date has been set.
- b. Yes at the earliest possible stage. Definitely training is a must if the PA want relevant comments on applications
- c. Yes we should be consulted.
- d. Of course. We are statutory consultees. We should be consulted at an early stage and planning training should be offered; though IWALC do a reasonable job of filling the gap.
- e. Town and parish councils should be consulted for their local knowledge, particularly where planning policy requires a local interpretation. Most of us are not Chartered Planners but we do have valuable local expertise. Key areas could be identified but local knowledge does not require formal training
- f. *Yes early consultation would be welcome especially for larger developments. Training opportunities would also be welcome. There is a lack of understanding about the different roles of T & P Councils in the planning process.*
- g. Planning training is already given to new Cllrs through IWALC (if Councils are a member and HALC also put on training sessions). Sessions have been set up in the past clustering Parish and Town Councils together for pertinent issues. I personally contact the Case Officer of a particular planning application for extra information if needed.

9. Do you think that it would be useful to have a nominated planning officer to act as a key point of contact for groups of parishes?

- a. This may be confusing as there is already a case officer for each application who is available to respond to queries

- b. Yes, this was suggested many years ago and was never actioned – also parishes should be used more for enforcement
- c. Possibly
- d. Yes
- e. No, we can contact the Planning Officer responsible for the application directly.
- f. Yes
- g. No – contact the Case Officer direct if required

10. Does the Isle of Wight Community Safety Partnership engage well with Town and Parish Councils to enable them to address local concerns and support them in any initiatives that they might want to pursue?

- a. The local PCSO operates a regular drop in session and we address any concerns straight to him or the PC.
- b. Not in our parish – East Cowes. Occasionally the PCSO will attend meetings but only when asked
- c. Yes, they attend most meetings and send a report if they cannot.
- d. No. They rarely engage. However, we have a good relationship with our Neighbourhood Policing Team.
- e. I have no experience of this.
- f. *The CSP rarely communicates with RTC – we understand there is a P & TC rep on the CSP appointed by IWALC.*
- g. Not especially, believe they contact us if needed

11. How does your council gain access to new funding streams and/or grants? Would it be of benefit to you to have access to a specialist officer?

- a. The Clerk is proficient at accessing grant funding and I believe this is the same in all T&PCs.
- b. More by chance than design as there are so many other things going on. It would be useful to have an officer sending through relevant info re availability of grants etc.
- c. Yes
- d. We depend on things being brought to our attention either by third parties or by personal research. Access to a specialist is something that would help a great deal.

- e. I apply for funding on behalf of the Council. It is time-consuming but we have been successful in our applications
- f. We look out for available funding but would welcome advice from specialist officer at the IW Council on bids and being informed by the IW Council of any funding streams available to T & P Councils
- g. Search internet, Community Action does give details of grants available for a variety of things. Research as and when required

12. Would you welcome council officers for specific services coming to speak at meetings, by invitation?

- a. This happens already
- b. Yes
- c. If it is an area of interest
- d. Yes
- e. They have done so when invited.
- f. Yes
- g. If it's something we need further information about, not just for the sake of it.

13. What services are your council directly responsible for?

- a. None
- b. Parks and gardens, play areas, paddling pools, skate park, library, environment officer, public toilets, town hall etc
- c. Toilets, grounds maintenance, play ground
- d. Town and parish councils are NOT responsible for services. However, we have chosen to provide the following services, most of which used to be provided by the IW Council (list not exhaustive):
 - 4 x public toilets, 2 of which are in County town centre
 - 4 x recreation grounds with associated children's play areas and sport changing rooms
 - Victoria Rec. Pavilion (licensed premises)
 - 7 x allotments
 - All school crossing patrols within the parish
 - Supporting independent youth services
 - Support for bus service in east of parish

- Offering events for our residents like Xmas lights and fair, Fireworks display
- Flowers and planters within Newport town centre and Carisbrooke village
- Litter and dog waste bins

*Shared support for 'Shaping Newport' Place Plan delivery

*Shared support for an Environment Officer

*Shared support for delivery of new Residents Parking Zones

*Shared support for new Community Connector

* *With IW Council*

- e. Recreation Ground (ours), public toilets (leased from IWC), small memorial garden, Village Green
- f. *Beach Cleaning; Youth Service; Public Toilets; Beach Safety; Planting and Watering; Town Marketing; Allotments; Decorative lighting and Christmas trees; Some Public realm improvements; Skatepark*
- g. Responsible for Parish Council owned Open Spaces and maintenance of same. Play areas – I carry out weekly safety checks on our two play areas and a RoSPA annual inspection is carried out. Commenting on planning application for the Parish

14. What services do you provide as a council in partnership with others, excluding the Isle of Wight Council?

- a. None
- b. Local festivals and events, upgrading of local areas and facilities.
- c. No response
- d. None
- e. No 6 winter Sunday bus service in partnership with Chale and Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Councils.
- f. *None at present – Services either provided directly by RTC or under contract with external providers. However, RTC does fund the Waterside Pool and key town events and sees this as partnership working.*
- g. Grass cutting for Wellow Millennium Green – they give a contribution towards this

15. Have you undertaken or are currently undertaking any joint working with another Town/Parish council? If so, please give details of the project and things that went well and what didn't go so well.

- a. C&GPc work with Chale PC and Niton and Whitwell PC to provide funding for a winter Sunday service for the No6 bus. This has worked well for a number of years
- b. No
- c. No response
- d. No
- e. Please see 14 above. The partnership works very well 😊
- f. *We have a contract for Wallgate servicing and maintenance shared with other T & P Council's.*
- g. Member of West Wight Town and Parish Councils Association, to which I was recently appointed Clerk. Able to discuss issues and concerns which affect all 7 member Councils to give a bigger voice on these matters i.e. planning enforcement.

In the past whilst Clerk to Freshwater, worked with Totland PC re the skate park – if there are areas that overlap think joint working can be very effective. Recently liaised with Yarmouth TC over a new bus shelter/pathway

16. Do you have any performance measures for any of the services that you provide, to identify the effectiveness of delivery?

- a. None
- b. Services are monitored by officers of the council
- c. No response
- d. No. Only councillor overview. However, we practice performance management with our Clerk who also practices that with his 8 staff members
- e. We have passenger numbers for 14 above
- f. *Not at present – services provided by external contractors, set standards within contract for performance*
- g. No and not starting! Try to give a good, effective service and sort any issues out if and when they crop up.

17. Is your Town/Parish council currently engaged with the Patient Participation Groups at GP surgeries and the locality hub in your area? How is information fed back into your council? Is any of this information passed back to the Isle of Wight Council? If so, how?

- a. No
- b. No
- c. No
- d. Of the three GP surgeries within the parish only one has a functioning PPG that we are aware of. No surgery PPG has engaged with our parish council. Neither has the Locality Hub in the past two years.
- e. Yes, one Councillor attends our local PP group and feeds back to the Council as necessary.
- f. No
- g. Both the Chairman and I have been members of the PPG and we have fed back information verbally at PC meetings. PC recently gave a donation towards the West Wight Health Centre Media project. Currently a vacancy for Shalfleet PC rep

18. What engagement does your Town/Parish council have with the local schools in your area? How is this information fed back into your council? Is any of this information passed back to the Isle of Wight Council? If so, how?

- a. We work with the school if appropriate and recently had a parent liaison on the board of governors. The IWC are not informed as a matter of course,
- b. The council are engaged with local schools and support them wherever possible. News of school's achievements are made public at meetings and through the council's newsletter. Parents have worked very closely with the council on fundraising to build a local play area. Information is passed back to the IW Council through the ward councillor.
- c. No response
- d. We have no formal engagement with local schools of which there are 7 primary, 3 secondary and the Island's 2 special schools within the parish. Some of our councillors are governors at these schools or have individual relationships with them.
- e. Our last significant engagement was related to Rights Respecting Schools: <http://www.nitonwhitwell.org.uk/spencer-bears-visit/>
- f. *We have had Councillors recently attend School Council meetings, we run a Ryde in Bloom School's competition and some of our Councillors are*

governors of local schools. Our Youth Service 'Network Ryde' also works closely with the local secondary schools.

- g. We have liaised with Shalfleet CE Primary School on a number of matters. Last year we agreed a lease with IWC, so the school could use a Parish Council owned recycling area for car parking.

We recently gave a £5,000 donation towards play equipment.

We give school leavers a book when they leave the school i.e. Bible or dictionary.

Chairman also regularly speaks to Headteacher and we have held Parish Council meeting at the Primary School with the children forming the agenda

19. Are you a member of a local council organisation? If so, what benefits are included in your membership and what isn't included that you think would be beneficial?

- a. C&GPC are a member of IWALC, access to free training has proved useful in the past.
- b. The council is a member of IWALC. Benefits are primarily access to training, legal advice, policies and changes in legislation. The organisation endeavours to work closely with IWC but has had varying success with this. The IWC need to recognise this organisation as the representative of the majority of parishes on the island, representing the majority of the electorate at grass roots level.
- c. Yes, sharing information and training
- d. Newport & Carisbrooke has been a member of IWALC for nearly all of its 11 years existence. It gives us access to advice from the national association, though that isn't always timeous. We also value IWALC's membership of your Committee.
- e. N&W PC is a member of IWALC.
Benefits include training and power to lobby the Isle of Wight Council.
- f. *Yes, IWALC. IWALC needs to take the lead for issues that are Islandwide*
- g. Yes – Member/Vice–Chair of the IW Society of Local Council Clerks – very useful for networking and the Society have always offered speedy legal and other advice when requested. Cover all aspects need.

20. **Is there capacity within your premises for any joint provision of information or service delivery to residents in collaboration with the Isle of Wight Council?**

- a. No
- b. We can always try our best to work with the IWC, but it needs to be a *joint* effort. This isn't always the case and parishes often feel they are on their own
- c. No response
- d. No. We use offices rented from the IW Council on the first floor of the Guildhall and provide our public opening hours from Lord Louis Library. If the Guildhall ground floor were to be available in the future such an arrangement could be considered by our parish council.
- e. The Council does not currently have its own premises.
- f. *Yes, we are often asked about IW Council services and find residents are frustrated when we refer them to the help centre at Ryde Library (it is only open 3 days a week) they often resent having to travel to Newport.
RTC provides meeting rooms for Wellbeing Clinics and for IWC Regeneration Working Parties.*
- g. Yes – but we rent the Parish office premises from Newbridge Community Association, so up to the Trustees of that as to whether they agree. I recently approached them and set up liaison with Jigsaw but do not think it has progressed.

21. **If you have any further comments to make that have not been covered by the questions above then please list them here.**

- a. None
- b. A few years ago, the IWC was seen as a ground breaker with their innovative work with parishes and was the envy of authorities across the country. Sadly, at its peak of success, the IWC saw fit to pull the plug. Very sad and such a shame because now the IWC want to work more closely and look to devolve services they will need to win back the trust of the parishes.
- c. No response
- d. No response
- e. No response
- f. No response
- g. Parish and Town Councils are another tier of Local Government to the Local Authority and members endeavour to work well for the benefit of all.

IWC funding cuts have reduced the officers that we can seek help, advice and seek action from when required. I believe we are very lucky on The Island to have such a pro-active and hard working group of Clerks and that Parish and Town Councils have taken over services which the IWC have dropped.