

# REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FIRE AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2017

## Executive position

My Executive role within the council has changed. New responsibilities are depicted with in italics below.

Areas I now take responsibility for include:

- the environment including rights of way, cycling, Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the countryside and rural economy, public spaces, public realm, beaches, public slipways, beach huts and allotments, flood defence, *coastal erosion*, agriculture, fisheries, land and marine based environmental designations;
- fire and public protection including *fire prevention, road safety, environmental health, trading standards, food safety, licensing, community safety, emergency planning, bereavement services, crime prevention, liaison with police and emergency services*;
- local engagement (liaison with town and parish councils - especially regarding the transferral of services).

Areas that I no longer take responsibility for are:

- waste and recycling. (with changes being implemented last year, this took up much of my time).

## Public protection

- Avian Flu

Following the recent confirmation of Avian Flu at Abbotsbury, Dorset officers continue to monitor the situation and remain ready to escalate action should a council response be required.

It is noted that there remains no suspected or confirmed cases on the Island, whilst risk to the public remains very low.

Local media messages have been released highlighting the Prevention Zone requirements and details of how to spot and report Avian Flu.

In the meantime, Trading Standards has engaged with local poultry and pigeon clubs, the RSPCA, the National Trust, the RSPB, poultry producers as well as feed suppliers and pet shops which have agreed to display Defra advice notices.

- Enforcement

Successful licensing enforcement has taken place concerning a premises in Newport.

## **West Wight Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Strategy**

This was adopted by the Executive at its January meeting, with the principal aim of reducing flood risk and coastal erosion through the provision of technically, economically and environmentally sound management measures.

On this, I thank all residents and organisations involved in widespread consultations which took place for this strategy, and I wish to place on record my thanks to both Jenny Jakeways and the Environment Agency for drawing the feedback together in such an accessible form.

## **Bereavement Services**

- Northwood Cemetery

Work continues with the Friends of Northwood Cemetery on the Heritage Lottery bid. The natural burial area is now complete and we are finalising the number of burial plots and the ongoing operation of the area.

Work continues on stabilising and refurbishing the east and west Victorian chapels to enable them to be used once again by the local community.

## **Rights of Way**

- Path orders and upgrades

No objections were received to upgrade public footpaths BB5 and BB34 to bridleway status. In addition, work is underway to divert public bridleway A41 to provide a safer and improved access point to Blackwater Hollow.

Additional moneys (including s106) have been allocated to Rights of Way to make surface improvements to Petticoat Lane (N211), the path between the pond at Carisbrooke and Purdy Road (N54) and a Path at Binstead (R112). All are very popular routes including routes to school, and will be delivered by end of financial year.

Rights of Way has completed a project on a path leading to Beech Copse from the Griffin in Godshill (GL57). A grant was provided by HF Holidays to carry out these impressive works.

Rights of Way is due to meet with St Helens Parish Council, the local member and the RSPB to discuss a permissive path running parallel with Embankment Road, Bembridge. The RSPB has suggested that the route may be dedicated if a through route can be opened avoiding the current dead end.

- Permissive paths

Stone Farm: Thanks to the negotiation of the Isle of Wight Bridleway Group a new permissive bridleway route has been proposed and agreed by a landowner. This will provide a link between Byway A43/Blackwater Shute to the cycle track at Blackwater. Formal permissive agreement is currently underway with Legal Services.

Westover Farm: The legal complication has now been resolved and the Permissive Path Agreement has been completed offering a very popular route for the public to use on foot, by bicycle and on horseback.

- Dedications

Homstead Farm, Ningwood. The issue which was causing delay has been resolved. The dedication agreement is out to all parties for signing.

Brading and Nunwell Down bridleways: These routes over council owned land have now been formally dedicated as bridleways.

- Paths reopened

V93a beach access to Orchard Bay, Ventnor.

- Temporary closures

V124 (Undercliff Drive to Binnel Bay) has been inspected. Works expected to take place in the summer of 2017 to reopen.

N155 (Robin Hill). Rights Of Way will monitor to assess the situation over the winter to see if any further landslides occur. If the land remains stable over the winter a health and safety assessment will take place to consider reopening.

- NFU conservation award

Rights of Way maintenance officer, Neil Morey has been awarded for his many years maintaining the Island's rights of way. Neil's local knowledge, 'can-do' attitude and willingness to pitch in and get the job done, is worthy recognition to keeping our many miles of footpaths and bridleways clear and gates operating.

This award further highlights reflects Neil's recognition within our Island's farming and landowning community.

### **Since last Full Council**

- I attended a Southern Inshore Fisheries meeting, whereby a permit was issued to fish for shellfish in Poole Harbour. The meeting also considered feedback from the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw and the Solent Dredge Byelaw consultation which ended in November.
- I attended the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils executive meeting which took place in November, and attended a follow up meeting with the

chief executive earlier this month. Key issues include: improvements to planning enforcement, parking, insurance liabilities for community minibuses, principal parks and town/parish council involvement in future regeneration initiatives.

- I co-ordinated a meeting between the Isle of Wight Council, Amey and Ryde Aspire to facilitate better partnership working.
- A large number of meetings have taken place with principal officers to provide input in the 2017/8 budget.
- A report has been forwarded to Ryde Town Council concerning fly tipping, waste and recycling.
- I attended a meeting of the Local Access Forum. Items discussed included bringing the Gunville Greenway to fruition, digital mapping of rights of way, debating the Stick and Flick initiative, fords and cow attacks.
- I have met with key members of the fire service, and am in the process of arranging my first meeting with the chief constable and the new police and crime commissioner.

**Councillor Paul Fuller**

**Executive Member for Environment, Fire and Local Engagement**