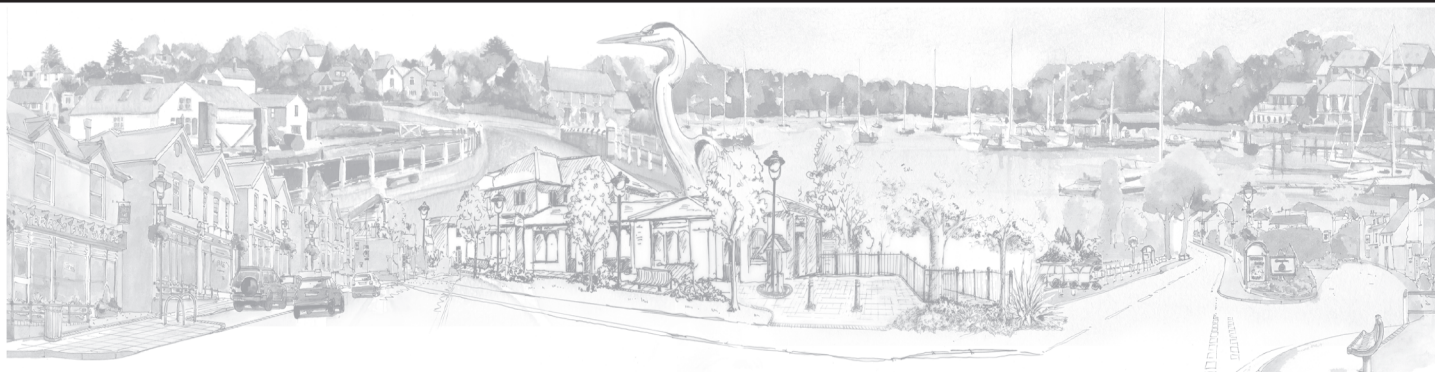




Wootton Bridge Parish Council Annual Report 2023/24

Councillors

We have had several Councillor resignations, which has been a great pity. Councillors Chris Cory, Daryll Pitcher, Terry O'Brien, Dave Burley, Ian Yeo and John Ward have left the Parish council this year. We have said a warm welcome to Councillors Judith Hill and Sarah Redrup (who is also the Ward Councillor) who have both been co-opted this year.

Staffing

The Office is now open five days a week, Monday to Friday from 9am to 2pm each day. This has been achieved by the Assistant Clerk, Lorna Morey passing her Cilca and becoming fully qualified as a Clerk.

Brannons

Knit and Natter Group is still being run on Thursday afternoons by Councillor Evans who puts a lot of work and effort into its success.

A drop-in clinic run by Living Well and Early Help team has commenced at Brannons on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month – they offer guidance and support from attendance allowance to local activities and anything in between.

Every Thursday at 1.15pm we have a food recycle store run by The Real Junk Food project. They provide food that has reached its best before date but is still safe to use such as bakery items, fruit, and vegetables. It's a great way to reduce food waste.

We have started monthly drop-in sessions with the local PCSO Karen Allen who can assist you with any queries or concerns you may have.

Coronation of King Charles

The Parish Council donated commemorative bookmarks to all the children at Wootton Community Primary School and £250 of new books to the school library. We still have some book marks in the office at £1.50 if anyone would like to purchase one.

Grants

We have given grants to the Wootton Community Primary School's Hardship Fund, Citizen's Advice, Ability Dogs for Young People and Victim Support.

Party in the Park

The Party in the Park was held in July, being the first for a few years due to the Covid outbreak. It started quiet, due to the inclement weather but once the weather improved the visitors came. The response we received was positive and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Recreation Ground

The council continue to contribute to the maintenance of the recreation ground. There are still areas we would like to improve when funds permit.

Village Improvements

We have installed a new sign and a new noticeboard at the Recreation Ground which displays all the latest Parish Council news.

We have been working with the Police and Councillor Sarah Redrup to start a Wootton Speedwatch which will hopefully be commencing soon.

Vandalism

Play equipment at the Recreational ground was vandalised however the culprits were identified and the damage was paid by them. The Defibrillator situated on the office wall was also damaged. The police initially looked at the matter but closed the case however by chance another incident in Ryde happened and the offending youth was recognised and arrested and prosecuted. The result of his punishment is still to be confirmed.

Planning

There have been serious concerns raised by interested parties regarding the proposed excavation of minerals at Palmers Farm. The Parish Council has shown support that this excavation should not go ahead. The matter is still ongoing. We thank Councillor Evans for her hard work in the preparation of material regarding planning matters for consideration by Councillors.

Doctor's Surgery

The Doctor's Surgery closure has hit residents badly, as it is now a permanent closure. Residents are concerned about getting to the new surgery in Newport. Further engagement sessions will commence in April 2024.

Councillor Sarah Redrup, Isle of Wight Council Report

It has been a pleasure to serve the residents of Wootton Bridge as your Isle of Wight Councillor over the past eight or so months. When I was elected, I promised that I would help residents to navigate what can often be a confusing and bureaucratic system at County Hall. So far, many residents of Wootton have come to me for help with issues covering housing, road safety, drainage and flooding, access to care, the planning system and more.

Sitting on Corporate Scrutiny Committee, Licencing Committee and Full Council I have represented residents on a range of items such as the Draft Island Planning Strategy, the new King Charles III Coastal Path, the 2024/2025 budget, sewage releases in our waters, flooding, the Floating Bridge and more.

Within the first few weeks of being elected I wrote a speech to the Planning Committee in support of the proposed Sunny Oaks Solar Farm. In my speech, I wanted to amplify the voice of Tilly, a 17-year-old Wootton Bridge resident by quoting her. She wanted to urge Councillors to think the younger generation and their futures by approving plans to invest in renewable energy. I am pleased to see that Ridge Clean Energy are continuing to support community projects in the village such as helping the Wootton Bridge Community Centre to install solar panels.

I have been meeting regularly with WAGE to discuss how I can best support the campaign against the Gravel Extraction at Palmer's Farm. Also, following the closure of Wight Dash (the domestic abuse charity and women's centre) I have been working with a group of residents who are keen to raise money and awareness with the hope that in the future another women's centre will open once again.

I would like to thank residents, the Integrated Care Board and Medina Healthcare GP Partners and their team, and Healthwatch for attending a public meeting I organised in March to discuss the relocation of the GP. It was very clear from that meeting that Wootton wants to keep a GP in the village, so I promise I will do all that I can to campaign for this.

I have been supporting a group of volunteers to organise a Community Speed Watch Team. So far it has been very positive, and we look forward to our first induction training session with the Isle of Wight Police. By collecting data on Wootton's roads, we will get a much better picture of where the issues are. It will also enable us to gather evidence to use in campaigns for road improvements such as a crossing at the Sloop.

I have enjoyed working with the Wootton Bridge Parish Council since becoming a Parish Councillor and I particularly look forward to supporting Party in the Park in July. It'll be the day after my birthday, so I plan to bring lots of cake to share with all of you!

Over the next year, I will continue to work hard to represent your voice and help you with any issues you may have. So please don't hesitate to get in touch!

Wootton Bridge Parish Council Office (Help and Information Centre (HIC)) & Parish Council accounts 2023/24

The Parish Council Office has been opened for 23 years. We hold a lot of information including excellent local walks leaflets which you are welcome to come in and take away. The Parish Council staff continue to do what they can to address IW Council and tourist queries that come in.

In Brannons we house the Post Office as well as local community groups such as Knit & Natter. The Post Office is open 9.30 to 12.30 every Wednesday and Knit & Natter is Thursday afternoons. New to Brannons is the Real Junk Food Project coming in on Thursdays from 1.15pm.

We will keep you all informed of developments on our web site and Facebook page. Also please feel free to call in and see us at the Parish Council office for updates.

Just to remind you that our other services have remained unchanged:

- The Beat Officer and PCSO call into the office to pick up messages.
- Laminating and photocopying can be carried out at a reasonable charge.
- Local non-profit making events can be advertised on our noticeboard and window.

Parish office opening times:

Parish Council

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu and Fri 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Beat Officer & PCSO

Messages can be left



Parish Council Accounts 2023/24

The following report shows the income and expenditure for 2023/2024, which is waiting to be audited by BDO LLP on behalf of The National Audit Office. No matters giving cause for concern came to the attention of the Internal Auditor and we are waiting to hear from the external auditor. Local government electors have the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts and have the right to attend to the auditor and make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Full details on how this can be done are posted on the Village Notice Board and at the Parish Council office prior to each annual audit, usually in the summer.

The council tax precept for 2023/2024 is £80,000 and represents approx. £55.87 per annum per household at band D or £1.09 per week.

Any questions or a request for copies of the accounts can be directed to the clerk at the Parish Council office.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024			
31 March 23		Current year end 31 March 2024	
INCOME		£	
73,000	Precept	Precept	80,000
1,016	Interest on investments/bank interest	Interest on investments/bank interest	4,137
15,007	Donations	Donations	601
600	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	600
18	Photocopying	Photocopying	26
358	HIC Income	HIC Income	302
58	Events	Events	929
		Other Income	5,112
350	Gravel Pit Road Residents	Gravel Pit Road Residents/Other Income	722
90,407		TOTAL INCOME	92,429
EXPENDITURE		£	
12,228	Public Conveniences	Public Conveniences	12,060
39,362	General Administration incl. salaries	General Administration incl. salaries	47,018
338	Events	Events	2,830
360	Gravel Pit Road Residents	Gravel Pit Road Residents	600
1,250	S137 payments	S137 payments	1,350
2,932	Help and Information Centre	Help and Information Centre	4,003
48,990	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	12,203
2,260	Environmental Officers	Environmental Officer	2,373
1,950	Churchyard maintenance	Churchyard maintenance	2,461
939	Christmas tree	Christmas Expenditure	1,002
1,000	Post Office	Post Office	1,000
645	Seat & Sign maintenance	Seat & sign maintenance	432
1,359	Village Square cleaning & maintenance	Village Square cleaning & maintenance	1,546
3,138	Capital Expenditure	Capital Expenditure	0
116,751		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	88,878
GENERAL FUND		£	
145,336	Balance at 1 April 2023	Balance at 1 April 2022	118,992
90,407	Add total income	Add total income	92,429
235,743			211,421
-116,751	Deduct total expenditure	Deduct total expenditure	-88,878
118,992	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2024	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2023	122,543

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARISH COUNCILLORS FROM 1 April 2023:

Daryll Pitcher	disqualified September 23
Barry Abraham	
Linda Pitcher	vice-chair
Trish Evans	
John Ward	disqualified March 24
Barrie Hailstone	Chair
Dave Burley	resigned November 23
Lee Lemon	
Christopher Cory	resigned July 23
Ian Yeo	resigned March 24
Terry O'Brien	co-opted October 23 - resigned December 23
Sarah Redrup	co-opted November 23
Judith Hill	co-opted February 24
Alistair Dolan	co-opted February 24

OFFICERS:-

Liz Kingston	Parish Clerk
Lorna Morey	Assistant Clerk

Meetings

The Parish Council usually meets on the third Tuesday in every month except August when no meeting is held and Decembers meeting which is on the second Tuesday of the month. We meet at 7.00pm in the Old School and members of the public and press are welcome to attend. Members of the public can participate in meetings and speak on any agenda item. There is also an Open Forum at the start of every meeting where issues can be raised that are not included on the agenda. Notices and the agendas are posted on the village notice boards, on the web site **www.woottonbridge.org.uk** and at the Parish Council office. Sometimes extra meetings are held to deal with urgent matters such as planning.

Annual Parish Meeting

Additionally, there is a statutory Annual Parish Meeting held during April. The Annual Parish Meeting provides another opportunity for residents to come along and address the Parish Councillors or just to have a say on matters of interest or concern. Reports are given by the Parish Council Chairman, Clerk, Environmental Officers and the Isle of Wight Councillor

Parish Councillors attendance at meetings

The following attendance record is in respect of the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and is in respect of the Parish Councillors who were in office during 2023/24.

Of the 12 **scheduled** monthly meetings held, Parish Councillor attendance was as follows:-

Barry Abraham 10 Trish Evans 9 Linda Pitcher 11 Lee Lemon 8 John Ward 2 Dave Burley 7
Barrie Hailstone 11 Daryll Pitcher 0 Christopher Cory 2 Ian Yeo 8 Sarah Redrup 4 Judith Hill 1
Terry O'Brien 2 Alistair Dolan 1

How to contact your Parish Councillors

Parish Councillors/officers can be contacted at the Wootton Bridge Parish Office on 884555 or by email at clerk@woottonbridge.org.uk

Remember that your Parish Councillors give their time for free because they care about the village; they receive no payments or expenses. Also, much of what we achieve is thanks to the many volunteers who help us in all manner of ways. Together we have raised thousands of pounds worth of grant funding for village regeneration projects. It is very rewarding to work together and to see so many projects come to fruition. If you would like to become involved or would like more information, please contact any one of your Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk on 884555.

Questions relating to this report can be addressed to any one of your Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk at the Parish Council Office in Brannon Way.

This report is also available on the Parish Council's web site at

www.woottonbridge.org.uk



Wootton Bridge
PARISH COUNCIL