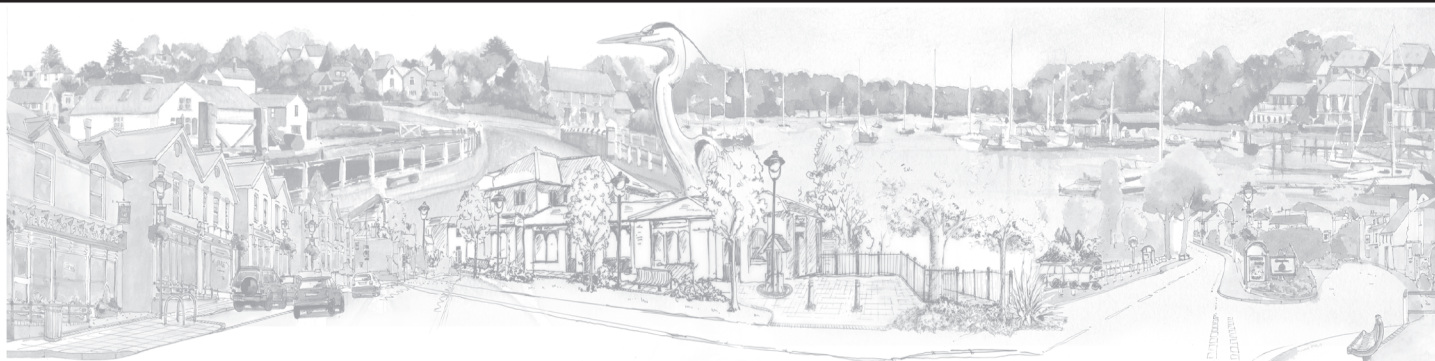




Wootton Bridge Parish Council Annual Report 2024/25

Councillors

We had two Councillors resign and one Councillor was disqualified which has been a great pity. Councillors Judith Hill, Alistair Dolan and Barrie Hailstone have left the Parish council this year. We have said a warm welcome to Councillors Jonathan Smith, Elliot Tyler and Steve Porter who have all been co-opted this year. We currently have 2 vacancies which will be filled at the upcoming election in May 2025.

Brannons

The Post Office is at Brannons every Wednesday from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The Real Junk Food Project provide food that has reached its best before date but is still safe to use such as bakery items, fruit, and vegetables; it is a great way to reduce food waste. After successfully opening at Brannons, they have now moved to The Old School where there is more space for all the lovely food as well as a community café.

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.

Litter Pick & D-Day 80th Anniversary

Thank you to all the residents who joined us on the 6th June 2024 for the lighting of a lamp of peace at Wootton Recreation Ground to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day. A big thank you to Terry's Fish and Chip shop for delivering the delicious orders to the event! We now have our own litter pickers and hoops for residents to borrow so that we can litter pick throughout the year.

Grants

We have given grants to the Wootton Community Primary School's Hardship Fund, Isle of Wight Music, Dance & Drama, The Old School Centre CIC, Ryde Town Council, Wootton Creek Fairways Association, UKSA, Isle of Wight Pantries CIC and Footprint Trust.

Party in the Park

Thank you to all the stall holders, food providers, entertainment, volunteers and residents who came and supported Party in the Park on the 6th July 2024. We raised £259 from the raffle for the Brain Tumour Charity and the Parish Council would like to thank everyone who donated a prize and bought tickets.

Village Improvements

Wootton Bridge Parish Council were thrilled to not only win Best Kept Extra Large Village but also the overall title of Best Kept Village on the Isle of Wight 2024. It has been 11 years since we won anything in the Best Kept Village Awards. It is great to see that the money we have spent on new benches, notice boards and the upkeep of the village recreation ground have been noticed, as well as the Big Tidy Up we do each year.

Wootton Bridge Parish Council would like to thank all residents that help with keeping the village clean and tidy.

Councillor Sarah Redrup, Isle of Wight Council Report

It has been a pleasure to continue serving the residents of Wootton Bridge as your Isle of Wight Councillor over the past year. When I was first elected, I promised that I would help residents navigate what can often be a confusing bureaucratic system at County Hall. Throughout this year, I have continued to assist many Wootton residents with issues covering road safety, healthcare access, planning matters, environmental concerns, and more.

Committee Responsibilities

I have proudly served as the Chair of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Health and Social Care, where I've been able to address issues vital to our community including primary care access, dentistry, and domestic abuse provision. I have also continued sitting on several other committees, including Full Council and Licensing Committee, where I have represented residents on a range of important matters.

Road Safety and Community Speed Watch

One of my key priorities this year has been improving road safety in our village. I am pleased to report that the Wootton Bridge Community Speed Watch group is now well-established with nine trained volunteers. We have been actively monitoring speeds throughout Wootton, contributing to safer roads for all residents. During Road Safety Week in November, I led two workshops with Year 5 and Year 6 students at Wootton Community Primary School to create "Speed Scarecrows" with Hi-Vis jackets and safety messages. Across

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, community speedwatch groups together have recorded over 27,327 speeders, with 1,270 drivers receiving police visits after multiple infractions.

I've also been advocating for improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, particularly pushing for a pedestrian crossing at the Sloop bridge. I've been in discussions with the strategic manager of regeneration about including these improvements as part of the Island Green Link funding project and have reached out to Cycle Wight to strengthen this campaign.

Healthcare Access

Throughout the year, I have continued to champion accessible healthcare for Wootton residents. When the relocation of our GP surgery was announced, I organised a public meeting to bring together residents, the Integrated Care Board, Medina Healthcare GP Partners, and Healthwatch. Thanks to strong community feedback expressing the importance of maintaining GP services in our village, Wootton Bridge GP Surgery will remain open alongside a new surgery in Newport that will expand access.

I've also been actively monitoring primary care access across the Island. While GP practices have delivered 117,000 additional appointments this year (a 9.45% increase), I've continued to push for improvements to appointment booking systems and online access. Similarly, I've advocated for better dental care, writing to both Island MPs to lobby for national contract reform, and engaging with stakeholders including Portsmouth Dental School to improve future workforce development.

Gravel Extraction at Palmers Farm

After years of community concern and campaigning, I am delighted to report that the site of the proposed gravel extraction at Palmers Farm has been purchased by the James Tuttieth Charitable Trust, which has partnered with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to protect it. This means that previous plans for gravel extraction will not go ahead, preserving this important natural habitat for wildlife and maintaining the unspoiled landscape that makes our part of the Isle of Wight so special. This represents a significant victory for our community and environment, and I want to thank everyone, especially the WAGE group, who raised their voices to protect this irreplaceable natural asset.

Community Events and Engagement

In July, I enjoyed participating in Party in the Park, where I ran an arts and crafts stall asking children to create collages of what they thought the "best park in the world" would look like. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with

many children and families expressing their appreciation for our Recreation Ground and Play Park.

Our recreation ground is a huge asset to the community. Something that residents have brought up with me a lot since I was elected was the need for a replacement gate on the recreation ground by the car park and I am pleased to report that this has now been installed by The Forge IW funded by Wootton Bridge Parish Council. There are still more things on my list that I hope to tackle soon including cleaning up and upgrading the play park.

Environmental Initiatives

Wootton was recognised as Community Champions by Surfers Against Sewage for joining with Fishbourne Parish Council to fund water testing in the creek by Wootton Creek Fairways Association. This followed my successful Full Council motion on tackling sewage releases in our waters, for which I secured cross party support.

Island Planning and Governance

This year saw significant developments in Island governance. In May 2024, Full Council voted to move to a committee system from May 2025. The Draft Island Planning Strategy was also passed, providing a framework for future development on the Island.

I have closely followed the devolution discussions, supporting the exploration of opportunities while maintaining that the Isle of Wight should remain a separate unitary authority that recognizes our unique island identity and service delivery challenges. All 15 councils across Hampshire and the Solent have unanimously agreed that the Isle of Wight should remain separate, and there are ongoing discussions about an "Island Deal" to address our specific geographical and financial sustainability issues.

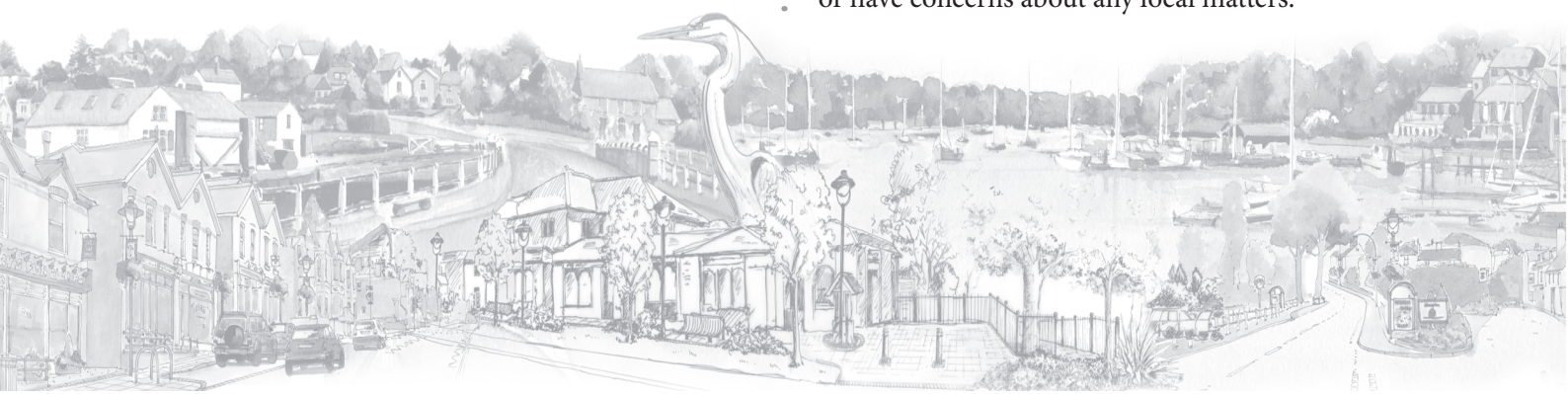
Looking Ahead

As I look to the year ahead, I will continue to work hard to represent your voice and help with any issues you may have. My priorities include:

- Continuing to push for improved road safety measures, including the pedestrian crossing at the Sloop
- Ensuring that GP services remain accessible within Wootton Bridge
- Advocating for the Island's interests in ongoing devolution and governance discussions
- Look to clean up and improve the Play Park on Wootton Recreation Ground

It has been a privilege to serve as your Councillor over the past year, and I look forward to continuing to work with and for the Wootton Bridge community.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you need assistance or have concerns about any local matters.



Wootton Bridge Parish Council Office (Help and Information Centre (HIC)) & Parish Council accounts 2024/25

The following report shows the income and expenditure for 2024/2025, 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 2024/2024 is £92,000 and represents approx. £65.06 per annum per household at band D or £1.25 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 2025			
31 March 24		Current year end 31 March 2025	
INCOME		£	
80,000	Precept	Precept	92,000
4,137	Interest on investments/bank interest	Interest on investments/bank interest	4,699
601	Donations	Donations	1,226
600	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	600
26	Photocopying	Photocopying	32
302	HIC Income	HIC Income	169
929	Events	Events	806
5112	Other Income	Other Income	0
722	Gravel Pit Road Residents	Gravel Pit Road Residents/Other Income	880
92,429		TOTAL INCOME	100,412
EXPENDITURE		£	
12,060	Public Conveniences	Public Conveniences	12,348
47,018	General Administration incl. salaries	General Administration incl. salaries	53,263
2,830	Events	Events	2,682
600	Gravel Pit Road Residents	Gravel Pit Road Residents	960
1,350	S137 payments	S137 payments	10,021
4,003	Help and Information Centre	Help and Information Centre	3,935
12,203	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	13,092
2,373	Environmental Officers	Environmental Officer	2,500
2,461	Churchyard maintenance	Churchyard maintenance	1,805
1,002	Christmas tree	Christmas Expenditure	1,450
1,000	Post Office	Post Office	1,000
432	Seat & Sign maintenance	Seat & sign maintenance	298
1,546	Village Square cleaning & maintenance	Village Square cleaning & maintenance	1,460
0	Capital Expenditure	Capital Expenditure	385
88,878		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	105,199
GENERAL FUND		£	
118,992	Balance at 1 April 2023	Balance at 1 April 2024	122,543
92,429	Add total income	Add total income	100,412
211,421			222,955
-88,878	Deduct total expenditure	Deduct total expenditure	-105,199
122,543	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2024	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2025	117,756

The Parish Council Office has been open for 24 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, Liz and Lorna, continue to do what they can to address IW Council and tourist queries that come in.

In Brannons we house the Post Office. The Post Office is open 9.30 to 12.30 every Wednesday.

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARISH COUNCILLORS FROM 1 April 2024:

Barry Abraham	chair	Alistair Dolan	resigned April 24
Sarah Redrup	vice-chair	Steve Porter	co-opted June 24
Trish Evans		Elliot Tyler	co-opted June 24
Lee Lemon		Jon Smith	co-opted June 24
Linda Pitcher			
Barrie Hailstone	disqualified January 25		
Judith Hill	resigned December 24		

Meetings

The Parish Council usually meets on the third Tuesday in every month except August when no meeting is held, and December when the meeting 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-pc.gov.uk and at the Parish Council office. Sometimes extra meetings are held to deal with urgent matters such as planning.

Annual Parish Meeting

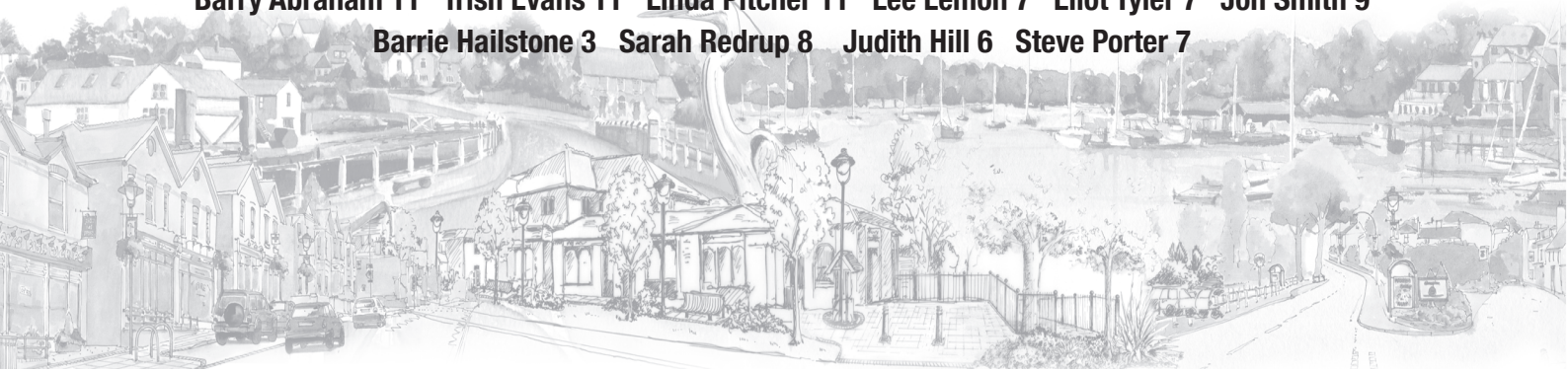
Additionally, there is a statutory Annual Parish Meeting held during April. The Annual Parish Meeting provides another opportunity for residents to come along and address the Parish Councillors or just to have a say on matters of interest or concern. Reports are given by the Parish Council Chairman, 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 2024 to 31 March 2025 and is in respect of the Parish Councillors who were in office during 2024/25.

Of the 11 **scheduled** monthly meetings held, Parish Councillor attendance was as follows:-

Barry Abraham 11 Trish Evans 11 Linda Pitcher 11 Lee Lemon 7 Eliot Tyler 7 Jon Smith 9
Barrie Hailstone 3 Sarah Redrup 8 Judith Hill 6 Steve Porter 7



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-pc.gov.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 website at

www.woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk

