

Paul Fuller

**Independent Isle of Wight Councillor
for Cowes West and Gurnard.**

Home: 45 Oxford Street, Cowes, Isle of Wight. PO31 8PT.

Telephone: 01983 289595 (24hrs)/ 07 935 090 835 (mobile/ text)

Email: paulfulleriw@gmail.com; Web: paulfullercc.blogspot.com.



Surgeries.

4:30-5pm, Monday 3rd August: Cowes Library, Beckford Road, Cowes.

11-12pm, Thursday 6th August: Meet Your Councillor, The Parade, Cowes.

12:30-1pm, Thursday 6th August: Gurnard Press Bistro, Worsley Road, Gurnard.

10:30pm-11:30pm, Wednesday 19th August: Benches, adj. to the Watersedge Café. Shore Road, Gurnard.

Surgeries.

In the coming months surgeries at Eegons, Cowes and new surgeries at The Horseshoe Inn, Northwood will be jointly held with Cllr. Gordon Adam, for Cowes South and Northwood.

Wildfires.

In the last few weeks (prior to the fire on Headon Warren), a number of residents have contacted me concerning tinder box dry land. In response the IW Council advises:

- Do not light fires in the countryside or other open spaces, including parks, moorland and wooded areas.
- Only have barbecues where signs say you can
- Avoid lighting fires when high winds, low humidity and high temperatures are present or forecast
- Take extra care with the disposal of cigarettes in moorland or countryside areas, ensuring they are fully extinguished and disposed of appropriately
- Never throw cigarettes out of car windows
- Never leave a hot barbecue unattended and always put your barbecue out
- Make sure the ashes are cold and dispose of them responsibly
- Do not litter - take any rubbish home with you
- Glass in direct sunlight can cause a fire so ensure none is left lying around
- At times of heightened wildfire risk there may be access restrictions to land - take note of signage or plans for the local area.



Actions to take if you see a wildfire

- if you see a fire in the countryside, always move to a place of safety and report it by calling 999 - do not assume someone else already has
- do not attempt to tackle the fire yourself
- always follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities

Litter Bins.

I continue to receive calls concerning overflowing bins. As is often the case, when all bins are full, please use another nearby. At Gurnard, bins are visited after dark by badgers and foxes who retrieve rubbish once close to being overfilled. If there are no half-filled bins, please again help us, help our environment by taking your rubbish home with you!

Cowes Week, 200th Anniversary.

With confirmation of new sponsor, North Sails for the next three years, Cowes Week launches its 200th anniversary which takes place from 1-7th August. This year will see the return of fireworks on Friday evening. For details please visit: <https://www.cowesweek.co.uk>

Following installation of signage, I have requested greater clarity is given concerning the diversion of vehicles East to West on Princes Esplanade. During the event, a number of residents have complained that some motorists do not understand what Road Closed means, and in light of this I've called for signage to be made clearer earlier.

In addition, I've also requested foliage being cut back on the Zig Zag steps, and addressing concerns over Fireworks.



Southern Water: Full Council, Motion of No Confidence.

There were four motions that was considered by Full Council in July.



Whilst, from our personal experiences locally with SUD's abandonment, failure to repair water mains, ongoing occurrences of failed bathing water quality and non-attendance at meetings, I personally had no issue supporting the no confidence motion debated and supported by a petition by over 3000 residents.

The one criticism I had concerning the motion was that it left no opportunity to demand the water company addresses its outcomes, which you might expect from the authority. For this reason, as well as supporting the original motion, I saw no reason to also support a counter motion imposing further expectations.

Final Report as Chair of the Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority.

Full Council took a decision to switch my position from lead member from the SIFCA outside body, to deputy replacing me with Cllr Ed Blake, himself an Inshore Fisherman. With respect to no longer being a lead member, I have stepped down as the regional Authority Chair

Whilst, disappointed to step down from my SIFCA family, I received full support from my regional colleagues and am pleased with the legacy that I have left whereby engagement between the agency and fishing communities can be further developed and built upon. This is something I persevered with which is now recognised nationally.

In the meantime, it was an honour to attend the Associations' fifteen year celebration in Northumberland last month. During this event, I spoke to MP's on raising the profile of inshore fisheries and the wider community that it supports. Whilst in Northumberland, I took time out to speak to fishermen about the national decline in small scale fisheries and how this with a few examples is being reversed through diversification.



Planning Updates.

• Chair of Planning Committee role.

Earlier this year, I was appointed as the new Planning Committee Chair. Since then, I have bedded into my new role which has been strengthened by a new planning committee, and Cllr Bill Nigh as vice chair (also new deputy leader of the IW Council), who stepped up to chair last month's Committee whilst I was on a pre-arranged holiday

One of my roles is to work with officers and ward Councillors on taking conflicting planning applications to committee. To note, that once the statutory consultation ends it is usual for planning officers to liaise with applicants to consider matters and explore compromises that are in many cases agreed. This was the position recently with the Fire Training facility planned at Cockleton Farm. In many cases, in light of this many planning applications are modified before any approval is given. Often on the Planning Portal it is interesting to read the officers justification

From personal experience, often it can prove difficult for Councillors to find sound material reasons to call-in applications, particularly at a time when government seek more delegated decisions by planning officers. As a result, I have been providing support to Councillors from across our Island, when material considerations are not strong enough to justify being heard by committee.

• McDonalds, Cowes.

The Planning Application for a new McDonald's Drive Thru' was unanimously rejected by Planning Committee. In summary, grounds for refusal of the proposal were:



- Proposal failed to demonstrate the support of healthy lives, in proximity of where young people congregated.
- No information was provided to suggest the application needed to be edge of town centre.
- The 2.4m fence would have a detrimental impact, particularly as there is limited space for quality landscaping.
- Loss of trees, and potential impact upon local ecology.
- The application failed to meet Biodiversity net gain policies.
- The application failed to address concerns relating to public rights of way, with no mitigation.

• Local Issues.

I am again chasing up two old Planning Enforcement cases, where concerns have been heightened regarding the impact these cases are having upon the wider community. Because these matters are considered of lower priority to the Planning Authority, despite providing additional information I am considering this be of low priority.

E-Scooters.

In recent weeks residents have raised concerns over E-Scooters being left scattered on the highway. As a result myself and other Councillors have requested the need to repaint parking bays.

I am told that in liaison with the operator Voi, this has been timetabled to occur after the Summer break.

Phoenix Lido, Gurnard Pines.

Following the opening of its new roller rink/ sports pitch work continues to reopen its refurbished outdoor pool. The new lido features a sunbathing area with comfortable seating. It is hoped when opened the 1.2m depth pool will be accessible with a plan to launch a swim school.

Transport Matters.

• Island Roads.

In 2018, the IW Council reviewed its contract with Island Roads through its PFI contract with Island Roads. This was intended to save the IWC £2m per annum. Whilst for many Councillors fell beneath the radar, it meant priorities such as the resurfacing of highways and footways, removal of surplus signage, wonky trees etc. was put on hold.



Over the years, this decision has caused a headache due to discrepancies within the contract. Often, I receive contradictory views on who takes responsibility for certain works, is it Island Roads or the IW Council? Locally, replacement of retaining walls, signs, traffic orders can get referred to the Highways Integrity Register for future consideration. Whilst this should be used as a device for both Island Roads and the IW Council to negotiate a way forward, when either party disputes this, matters can take an immeasurable time to resolve. What has occurred previously is that within the PFI contract, Island Roads can lawfully charge a premium to undertake work on a commercial basis, that otherwise would not apply if the local council was also the highway contractor.

Because of this, very often priorities (i.e new 20's plenty schemes) can be kicked to the long grass, or forgotten about.

• Glen Place junction

I continue to chase Island Roads to repaint its Access Protection Bar at Glen Place/ Worsley Road junction.

• Shore Road.

A request was followed up to improve warning signage, on its sharp bend in Shore Road opposite Winding Way.

• Magdalen Crescent/ Guppy Close.

Following this also being chased by new Cowes Town Councillor for Cowes West, Louise Southwell I've again requested for Magdalen Crescent and also Guppy Close to have pot holes filled. Several years ago, following abandonment to resurface the road, cracks between concrete slabs in Magdalen Crescent were re-sealed to extend the road surfaces life.

• Pedestrian Access to Meadow View.

With support from local developers, I continue to chase this with the Planning Department. It is hoped that once agreement is found as to where new footpaths come out on Tuttons Hill, the SANG can be opened up for the wider community, as well as providing a formalised link to Gurnard Village and via Cockleton Lane to Gurnard Pines as was intended within the Cowes Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan

• Free Bus Travel for Children.

From 1st-31st August inclusive, the Government is funding free bus travel for children within England. To note that some routes (Island the Breezer/ Coaster routes?) are not included in this scheme.

Children aged 5-11 must be accompanied by a fare paying adult, whilst children aged 11-15 can travel independently. When boarding the bus 11-15 year olds must tell the driver where they are going before a ticket (retained by the young person) will be issued.

• Islandwide Cheap Parking: Update from the Isle of Wight Guru.

To save money, this summer on the costly cost of parking, the Isle of Wight Guru makes several suggestions on his website. I know in the past this information has been well received as the cost of driving continues to increase. For details, visit: <https://www.isleofwightguru.co.uk/blog/cheap-and-free-parking-on-the-isle-of-wight>

• Speeding Traffic: Rew Street/ Horn Hill/ Marsh Road

To reduce the ongoing issue of speeding Traffic between Horn Hill and the Luck Bridge, I am investigating requesting signage for a Red Squirrel sign, following the high density of squirrels entering the wildlife corridor from Horn Hill.

• Cheap Petrol

For details please find local app from Adam and Mike! For details please visit: <https://findcheapfuel.com/>



Opportunist Burglaries.

The police ask residents to be vigilant by locking sheds and ensure doors to properties are locked. This is requested as unwanted intruders and opportunist burglaries occur during the summer.



Gurnard Luck to Thorness Bay Coastal Path.

We really hoped that it would be possible to ensure that the Gurnard to Thorness stretch of Coastal Path, after closure for two years, would reopen to coincide with the school summer holidays. Unfortunately due to the dry weather it is taking longer than anticipated to erect the new fencing and the required posts. The latest that I have heard back from Rights of Way, is that this may delay the path being opened by a few weeks.

June's Joyride Festival.

Many thanks to Northwood House who responded to a concerns raised by residents following June's Joyride Festival.

I have summarised the responses to questions received were as follows:

Residents have recently approached me concerning the Joyride Festival that took place last month at Northwood House. Issues I have been requested to seek clarity on are as follows:

1. Whilst the event was for three days, why was public access to the Park restricted for over a week? Residents from Crossfield Avenue and Park Court raised concerns that pedestrian access home was impaired.

For safety reasons (moving vehicles in particular), the risk assessments deemed it necessary to limit park access more than just the three days of the actual event. Signage at Park Road Steps and Ward Avenue zebra crossing advised of a diversion via the highway payments of Ward Avenue and Park Road, which would have only inconvenienced people by an extra couple of minutes rather than walking through as normal. Access to Park Court wasn't impaired unless people were trying to walk to it directly through the park from the Ward Avenue.

2. Concerns being raised regarding security guards.

The security guards are employed from a trusted local company to secure the event site for the period of operation. As far as I'm aware there were no reported incidents, although several dog walkers did verbally express their frustration about diverted routes.

3. Why the lack of engagement with local residents and businesses. As volunteers help fund and take care of Northwood Park, is it likely there will be a community gain/ share of profits to the Cowes Community?

This was a privately booked event, not organised by the Charity, which simply hired the required space. The event was publicised in the Northwood House Summer newsletter, distributed around the town during the last few weeks in May. We felt that to be ample to tell people what to expect, but will look to improve that in future years should the event decide to return in the same format.

4. What steps have been agreed to repair damage caused by this event?

Apart from some minor wear and tear to grass areas which will be restored gradually over the season.

5. Concerns were raised regarding the understanding that some of the land was is common land, therefore are there restrictions in place for a week long takeover?

Please can you provide the documented evidence about the areas of the parkland you understand to be common land?

6. What permissions/ licences were in place to use the park for this specific event, which returns in 2027?

The event ran under a Temporary Event Notice granted from the IW Council covering areas of parkland used by the event. This information is available from the Council's Licencing team if required. Areas of the event inside the lawn boundary fall under our own Premises Licence arrangements.

Whilst I fully accept that Northwood House has to be run commercially, could I request your thoughts/ views or any helpful suggestions, I may pass on to our community.

We have to run commercially to survive and meet our objectives. Support from the community and their representative's is vitally important to us and we appreciate you raising the concerns that you have. We hope that the bigger picture of helping support the Island economy by attracting new people and events to our shores is also considered.

As you are no doubt aware, the Island is struggling badly from a downturn in tourism, so we must all step up to do our bit to encourage people to come. I'm delighted to report that many businesses owners in the town that I know reported an uplift of spending across the LeBlanc weekend, with many of the guests descending into the town after the cycling to enjoy its warm hospitality and retail offerings.

In a nutshell, this month:

- I met with Briary Court residents at a special surgery. Items that I took away included the need for dropped kerbs, a barrier for the Egypt Hill Bus Stop and support contacting our Member of Parliament.
- As a deputy, I attended my first meeting of the IW Council's Policy, Resources and Finance Committee. This month's meeting was dominated by concerns over the IW Councils finances and setting a budget for next year.
- Congratulations to Louise Southwell who was duly elected as Cowes West's new Councillor. Michael Paler and Mark Reen (the other candidate in the Cowes West Election) were co-opted to fill the other two vacant seats.
- Further anti-social behaviour has been reported on Cowes Seafront/ Gurnard. Please report any incidents you witness of offences to the police on 999.
- Data is being analysed from a smart camera footage in Cowes. Of interest is the fact that in one week 2500 cyclists were recorded travelling in the wrong direction in the High Street, whilst the towns busiest day is Sunday!
- CCTV has led to vandals being apprehended for damage to the Mornington Road Public Toilets.
- I continue to chase up entitlement to Sainsburys vouchers, following the deadline lapsing. I've been told that there is a finite timescale to use vouchers, and are unlikely to be honoured when missed.
- I've been contacted by residents leaving Sunnycott. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you need support.
- Trees have now been cut back from Churchill Road. A big thank you to Officers from the IW Council for support!