

Paul Fuller

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

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Surgeries.

12:30-1pm, Thursday 3rd September: Gurnard Press Bistro, Worsley Road, Gurnard.

4:30-5pm, Monday 7th September: Cowes Library, Beckford Road, Cowes

5:30-6pm, Monday 7th September: Isle of Wight Community Club, Park Road, Cowes.

7-7:30pm, Monday 7th September: The Horseshoe, Newport Road, Northwood. (with Cllr Gordon Adam)

5:30-6pm, Wednesday 9th September: The Portland, Worsley Road, Gurnard.

11:30-12:15pm, Thursday 17th September: The Phoenix Café, Gurnard Pines, Gurnard.

10:30-11am, Thursday 24 September: Coffee & Chat, All Saints Church, Tuttons Hill, Gurnard

11:45-12:15pm, Thursday 24th September; Eegon's Café, High Street, Cowes. (with Cllr Gordon Adam)

5:30-6pm, Wednesday 30th September: The Portland, Worsley Road, Gurnard.

Drought Update.



Residents have approached me with concerns over unkempt hedgerows and land being left fallow or uncut during the drought. Please note, landowners are under no legal obligation to ensure that land is cut back.

Locally where fires have occurred (Headon Warren), this was caused by individuals lighting fires near parched land. The other incident, resulting in the loss of 80m of hedgerow at Chale, was caused by a spark from a passing steam engine.

Since wild fires have occurred and since the Island is suffering from drought, the IW Council issued the following:

Enjoy the island, but please help keep it safe

We're expecting the hot, sunny weather to continue into September, there remains a high risk to grass and wildfire. Dry grass, vegetation and heathland can ignite in seconds, and even a small spark can quickly spread.

Please do not use BBQs, disposable BBQs, fire pits or any open flames on/near beaches, in woodlands, countryside, parks areas and other open spaces.

Enjoy the sunshine safely:

- Pack a picnic instead of a BBQ
- Dispose of cigarettes safely and never throw them on the ground
- Take your litter home or use bins provided
- Leave fire pits, campfires and BBQs at home

If you see a fire:

- Move to a safe location
- Call 999 immediately and ask for the Fire Service
- Give the location as accurately as possible.

To note, whilst the IW Council has issued the above guidance, it is noted that the public use common sense when considering having a bonfire, barbecue/ stoves, fireworks or taking out their steam engines...



Beach Huts. Legal Charges questioned.

I met with and am supporting beach hut owners, who are seeking feedback from the Isle of Wight Council concerning charges for renewing licences, public liability and legal fees.

I've spoken to a number of beach hut owners Islandwide, many who have complained about not receiving a response back. Could I please ask that I am copied into any email sent to the Council, as this allows me to chase up matters.

Waste Bins.

Please report damaged waste bins to: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/article/1320/Report-a-waste-problem> or call 01983 823777.

To note, if you are not to blame for damage or loss to your bin, I've been assured that will not be charged.

I picked up on line, that a number of residents at Gurnard Pines do not have food waste bins, if this applies to you, please let the IW Council know!



Coastal Path Reopening.

The Thorness to Gurnard Luck section is due to officially re-open 12pm, Wednesday 9th September. Last month's hot weather helped delay the opening, due to conditions making it more onerous to erect new fencing. In addition new cracks also needed to be surveyed.

Update: Whilst work continues, the path reopened on 29th August.

Overgrown Hedgerows and Trees.

Hedgerows can have a proper cut back from 31st August, to coincide with the end of the bird nesting season.

In the meantime, I have also forwarded complaints concerning over hanging trees and brambles at Mornington Wood, Churchill Road (now resolved) and Shore Road.

Near Rew Street, I am also investigating the opportunity for residents to acquire land that has become overgrown

Anti-Social Parking.

• Princes Esplanade, Gurnard; Egypt Esplanade, Cowes.

During the summer, I continued to receive complaints concerning overnight parking on Princes/ Egypt Esplanade from residents. Please note, at the moment most of Cowes/ Gurnard seafront remains unrestricted for parking. The reason for this is due to the number of the angling community who fish at night, who when consulted a few years ago objected to restrictions that prevented them from fishing. To note, unless there is a bye-law in place, or the land is privately owned you cannot restrict one vehicle from another.

Whilst residents accept they have no entitlement to a view, I've been approached to restrict mobile homes parking along the Esplanades. From experience, over the last few years most mobile home owners stay for a few days and park away from properties between The Hawkins in Cowes and Solent Shores, Gurnard.

Having read on-line posts concerning this, most people advise that they do not support more parking restrictions in the seafront. In the meantime, please let me know your views.

• School Pick-Up's

With children returning to school this month, I have been requested to ask that parents are mindful of where they park their cars at school pick up time. This follows residents living near to the school avoiding going out during pick up and collection times.

At Gurnard, for new parents it is often helpful to understand in advance the best place to park in advance. When I spoke to a number of parents last year, I was surprised that some parents did not know of alternatives (within 5 minute walking distance) were closer in distance and safer for children to walk from school.

Burnham Advocacy Proposals for Migrants.

Friends, family members and residents have bent my ear on the following an article that appeared in the Island media, visit: <https://www.islandecho.co.uk/burnham-advocacy-website-proposes-asylum-centre-for-the-isle-of-wight/>



Having read beneath the headlines and undertaking research, it appears this proposal comes from a political think tank. To note, this isn't an official document from any political party, was not written or endorsed by Andy Burnham, his team or any organisation associated with him. Under the hypothetical asylum proposal, claims would be registered and considered at an Isle of Wight centre under UK law, with appeals taking place where permitted.

If any such proposals progress, given the input of many concerned residents, there is little likelihood of updates being brushed under the carpet. I've posted questions raised, and the response at: <https://paulfullercc.blogspot.com/>

Noise Nuisance Complaints.

I have been contacted over the summer by a number of residents impacted by noise nuisance from neighbours.

In general unless the noise is a regular problem, it is considered to be more anti-social, when it occurs after 11pm, or before 7am. In the first instance please copy me in to correspondence with environmental.health@iow.gov.uk

In the meantime, please ensure that you keep a log with dates and times, as this can be used as evidence.



Speedwatch.

With the Autumn approaching, we are once more seeking volunteers to join the Northwood and Gurnard Speedwatch Group. Once we have new volunteers, these can be trained with 'watches' taking place around both villages.

Please let me know if you wish to volunteer and of roads you would like to see prioritised. I am advised the next street for Speedwatch is Pallance Road (although we only have a limited amount of residents free to undertake training).

Report from Chair of the IW Council Planning Committee.

- The September Planning Committee is scheduled to consider proposals for a new children's home in East Cowes.
- Councillors will this month visit ongoing developments at Horsebridge Hill, Place Road and new housing (originally refused by Planning Committee, and overturned on appeal) at Baring Road. Training will take place for all Councillors after site visits. The purpose of the Training is to look at social housing, affordable housing and will show the margins developers now work within on the Island.
- At Full Council, the Island Planning Strategy will again be considered. Once more Councillors will be offered the choice of supporting current Inspectors compromise of 700 new dwellings per year, or the fall back option of 1100.
- Also being considered is the 'National Scheme of Delegation', whereby Government will reduce the number of 'exceptional' applications being considered by Planning Committees. On the Isle of Wight the Committee could be considered ahead of the game as we currently consider less than 1% of applications. Nationally the target is to reduce the current number to 4% (giving me, as Chairman more wriggle room). Sadly the Chair will no longer have the final say as this responsibility will now fall upon officers. From dialogue received, I support making the process and the rationale for Councillors call-in more open and transparent following the current constitutional process.
- The Governments new Planning Bible, the National Planning Policy Framework was issued during this summer. Proposals are currently being digested both nationally and locally and will be fed back in the coming weeks.



Planning Issues Locally.

- Requests have been followed up for additional Tree Preservation Orders. These are being followed up!
- I am attempting to set up a round table meeting with developers, highways and the Parish Council to progress footway connectivity to the Meadow View development.
- A Planning Officer's application was considered by Planning Committee. Following feedback from neighbours and other agencies, proposals were approved with conditions.
- In Northwood, I've been asked for feedback following lizard fencing being installed rear of 391 Newport Road.
- As reported last month, proposals to develop a new drive thru' at Three Gates Road was refused, in summary due to Three Gates Road being considered the wrong location.

Public Spaces Protection Order: Sky lanterns, Balloons and Disposable Barbecues.



Following a recent consultation, the Environment and Community Protection considered feedback whereby residents supported restricting sky lanterns (88%), balloons (84%) and disposable barbecues (69%) on open IW Council land.

As a result the Committee agreed to: request a future report setting out the feasibility, legal implications, resource requirements and costs of a restricted or seasonal approach for identified high-risk sites, together with a summary of existing enforcement powers, information from the Hampshire and IW Fire and Rescue Service regarding wildfire impacts where available, and opportunities for partnership working, education and signage.

This will be revisited by the Environment & Community Protection Committee on 24th September

Bathing Water Alerts.

Following last month's rain, the Environment Agency again issued a bathing water alert for Gurnard.

In preparation for a future meeting with Southern Water, I have requested an action plan from the water authority on its Plan B actions that followed the abandonment of their SUDs proposals, its short term proposals and how Southern Water intend to mitigate further discharges in the longer term. This will be fed back on-line, once I receive a response.

In addition, I continue to liaise with agencies such as the Solent Protection Society and Surfers Against Sewage and this month return to taking up my position as the IW Council's member within the Solent Forum.



Anti-Social Matters.

Anti-Social matters continue to be reported to the police, in the last few months **vandalism and criminal damage** was reported to the police, as was cases of **barbecues** and public gatherings taking place on open land.



The foreboding **balacclavad scooterist** causing distress to residents, particularly the elderly, small people and animals (I kid you not!). Whether it was police action, residents, my newsletter, or new adventures the individual disappeared.

The displacement of **Road Closed signage**, motorists not understanding the meaning of what subsequent signage actually means, together with inappropriate diversion signage caused some concerns over **Cowes Week**, where the police took a pragmatic approach! I was also asked to ensure risk assessments took place for **firework displays**!

Another new Prime Minister!!

Over the summer prior to pondering on the success of Count Binface, I am intrigued that we have another new Prime Minister at the helm of government and await with interest what the future holds under his new regime. Whilst locally, we continue to see how this will impact upon the Isle of Wight and Island lives.

Keeping abreast of Mr Burnham's day one priorities, for fun, I've highlighted these and will monitor and review these again in 12 months time, to see how these have moved forward....unless of course we get another Prime Minister.

The priorities, that I've captured are:

- Energy Bills: VAT to be scrapped.
- Bus Fares being capped at £2
- Ending of Rough Sleeping.
- Business rates rebalanced (for pubs, clubs and music venues)
- Number 10 North.
- Unfreezing Income Tax Personal Allowance
- Devolution and improving local public control.



Hedgehog (and other wildlife) Corner: Drought Special!

The best way to support UK wildlife during a drought is to provide fresh, accessible water sources and leave shaded, un-mown areas in your garden for shelter. It is important to ensure wildlife oasis' are monitored. The best way to do this, is to ensure this is focused very much in residents gardens.

Provide Water



- **Set out shallow dishes:** Place small bowls or saucers of clean water on the ground for hedgehogs and other mammals, and use elevated bird baths for birds.
- **Add pebbles or stones:** Put stones, marbles, or pebbles inside your water dishes so insects and bees can land and drink safely without drowning.
- **Maintain water cleanliness:** Change the water daily and clean bird baths weekly to stop diseases from spreading.
- **Top up ponds carefully:** Add water to low garden ponds using stored rainwater from a water butt if possible. If you must use tap water, let it stand for 24 hours first. Ensure steep ponds have stones or ramps so animals can climb out.

Provide Shade and Shelter

- **Feed hedgehogs:** Leave out meat-based cat or dog food (avoiding fish flavours) alongside fresh water when natural food like earthworms becomes hard to reach in dry ground.
- **Stop cutting the grass:** Leave lawns and wildflower areas long. Tall grass holds moisture, stays cooler, and protects small creatures like beetles and frogs.
- **Leave the garden untidy:** Avoid pruning bushes or clearing away log piles. Overgrown areas create vital cool shade for hedgehogs, amphibians, and insects.
- **Add mulch:** Put a layer of organic mulch like bark or compost around garden plants to keep the soil moist and soft for foraging birds and mammals.
- **Offer Supplementary Food**
- **Support birds:** Put out small amounts of high-energy food like suet balls or soft scraps if insects and worms are scarce.



Also this month:

- I continue to respond to residents who are dissatisfied with how the current Planning Call-In process operates. This, as referenced earlier in my report is being visited via the Government driven 'National Scheme of Delegation'.
- I am providing support to rehouse a resident, unhappy with their housing tenancy.
- Dangerous metalwork was removed from footpath CS4 linking Battery Road with Egypt Esplanade.
- I attended a recent meet your Councillor event hosted by Cowes Town Council on the Parade during Cowes Week.
- I hosted a meeting with Beach Huts in Gurnard. This I am working with the IW Council to respond to enquiries.
- Next month I'll be preparing for this winter's super el nino, which is threatening winter storms (if you believe the meteorologists) As a result, I am seeking to resurrect the Northwood and Gurnard Flood Action Group.
- During Cowes Week, action was taken to remove graffiti
- Action has been taken following a resident seen flytipping waste.
- I have taken up concerns raised regarding a vexacious complainer that has taken up considerable IWC resources.
- Parking Enforcement Officers were contacted during the summer following anti-social parking in Park Road.
- A positive outcome has followed long standing planning enforcement action in Gurnard.
- I am investigating the imposition of VAT charges for Ground Rent in two separate locations.
- Whilst not holding my breath, I am hopeful for Voi repainting their e-scooter/bike bays.
- Congratulations to the Daisy Ring Bus Charity for their success over the past year.
- I am supporting local businesses in attempting to accrue new Government Grants recently made available.
- This summer, I received visitor/ residents complaints concerning businesses and attractions closing early.