

## Fishbourne Parish Council - Chairman's Report 2017/8

This has been a very busy year for the Council particularly with the new ferry expected next July and the associated developments at the Fishbourne and Portsmouth Terminals. It has also been a year of change, including local elections. Last May we welcomed three new Councillors, Sarah Talbot, Denise Kilpatrick and Patrick Tobin. It is also sad that we have lost one of our most regular attendees at Parish Meetings, Richard Carpenter; meetings just aren't quite the same without him. Our thanks also to John Smith, who stood down at the same time. Cllr Cooper handed me his resignation at the end of July, which I felt was a very sad day. This I am sure was influenced by the stress caused by residents lobbying over the Wightlink plans although there were no doubt other factors. I would like to thank Cllr Cooper for all his input to the Parish Council over many years, and his fountain of knowledge over issues affecting the Council. He has recently been replaced by Susan Honeywill, who is also most welcome. The Parish Council can only function through the efforts of its members and thanks must go to them and also to the public-spirited residents who work behind the scenes for the good of the community.

The Parish Council met a total of 14 times in the last year and surgeries are held on Tuesday mornings at 10am in the Yacht Club. Councillors attend as often as they are able and I usually attend alternate ones. The Parish Clerk is there most weeks. If you have any issues or want to raise questions this is a far less formal route than attending the Parish Council meeting, although any matter that requires a decision has to be referred to a full monthly meeting.

Turning to the Wightlink terminal changes, last summer there was a totally unacceptable level of queuing along Fishbourne Lane, several times impacting on the A3054. Whilst residents can accept that when the Music Festival is on there will be some traffic issues, having it weekend after weekend due to ferry reliability, terminal works and other outside influences is just not acceptable. The Parish Council arranged a meeting with the Senior Wightlink Managers to discuss the problems, which was held on 14<sup>th</sup> August. On the 10<sup>th</sup> August, two parishioners requested a meeting and came to my house in the early afternoon. They said that a number of residents felt that my Chairmanship of the Council was toxic and that at the meeting on Monday I would receive a tsunami of complaints and that to avoid this and the resultant bad publicity for the Council it would be wise if I resigned as chairman. Their reason for making this statement was that they alleged I had meetings with Wightlink managers on my own and that I was in some way influenced by Wightlink to an extent that it was not possible for me to properly represent the Council. They were unaware that Councillor Ivor Warlow had accompanied me to all the relevant meeting on which they based their opinion.

In the event I decided that it was not appropriate to resign, that I had properly represented the Council and had used my influence to get matters improved to the best of my ability. As matters evolved and completely unknown to me until ten minutes before the meeting started, Wightlink produced plans for the redesign of the Fishbourne Terminal based upon a drawing and discussions that we had suggested at previous meetings. The tsunami of complaints did not occur and the result of these plans is being implemented at this time. I believe the Parish Council, supported by local residents and our

Ward Councillor, has had a very beneficial influence on the terminal design, and whilst there will always be some things we don't agree on, many of our ideas and suggestions have been incorporated in this design. The new ferry is scheduled to enter service at the end of July. Number plate recognition may not be implemented until next winter to allow for staff training. We have been in contact with Island Roads (and Wightlink) over the resurfacing of Fishbourne Lane which is scheduled to be carried out this autumn, although it was originally meant to be completed before the arrival of the new ferry.

We have reviewed and commented on fourteen planning applications in the Parish. We are always pleased to hear parishioners' views on any application that may affect them. We have had a considerable amount of correspondence over the cycle path between Ashlake Copse Lane and Ashlake Copse Road. The owner of that piece of land is using it as a road link between the two roads, and the Council Rights of Way have sited the bollard that was intended to prevent such use in a different position from that shown on the planning application. This makes it completely ineffective and the agreed fixed barriers at the south end were replaced by gates, which are left open (indeed nailed open). Sadly, a typical example of money being wasted on ineffective measures and of local people being misled.

The Council has been reviewing parking on the Lower Green in an attempt to stop long term parking and yet make the facility available for local people to use. This item is ongoing as I attempt to get a new system in place at County level to allow Town and Parish Councils to make small changes at their own expense, providing there are no safety issues. Likewise, there is also an issue with the five spaces opposite the garage for which it has been suggested we should have a residents' permit parking area. The Parish Council will be following this up. The Council has also agreed the installation of a bin to collect dog mess at Quarr and this should be installed in the next month or so.

We have agreed to make a donation to the RVCY disability day as we view this as an event of importance to those who have mental or physical problems and provides them with a day out when they can enjoy themselves with friends. Smaller donations were given to Armed Forces Day and Community Action IW for their Optio car service.

And finally we are talking with parking enforcement in an attempt to get a parking officer to attend Fishbourne Lane on busy days in order to move on vehicles parking in the lane whilst awaiting their ferry booking, and I spoke to the police on the issue of lorries changing trailers in Fishbourne Lane/Ranalagh Drive, and on following their advice I understand PC Kate Berry has spoken to the companies concerned and hopefully this issue is now resolved.

A busy year in the not so sleepy Parish of Fishbourne!

Malcolm Hector

Chairman