

## **Chairman's Report Fishbourne Parish Council APM 2026**

Parish councils are a group of community minded volunteers keen to be involved in the civic life of their local area. I think that in Fishbourne we continue to exemplify that spirit, and we are supported in our endeavours by our experienced and hard-working Parish Clerk, Katie Riley, whose services we are very grateful for.

Parish councillors are elected for 4-year terms, and in May last year 4 people put themselves forward to election to 6 seats, so no election was required. That left us with 2 seats to fill by co-option, and we were delighted to be joined after the last Parish APM by Carolyn Dugdale who must have enjoyed the meeting so much, she decided to join us.

We still have 1 spare seat to fill co-option, so if anyone here tonight would like to have a discussion about this please get in touch with our parish clerk, Katie, or with any of the existing parish councillors, who will be happy to give you more information about the role.

Our work in the village of Fishbourne and the part of Wootton that falls within the parish, remains focussed on the following areas:

1. Environment
2. Flooding / Pollution
3. Wightlink
4. Traffic
5. Planning
6. Support for good causes.

As I did last year, I will give a quick overview of each, and hope that I have not missed any.

### **Environment**

We hold regular Parish Spruce Up days where volunteers and parish councillors work together in teams to tidy up key areas across the parish. We also work closely with the IWC's neighbourhood team to tackle issues like graffiti and noticeboards, and the Parish council funds the maintenance of various planters around the parish to keep the area looking lovely.

In 2025 Fishbourne agreed to participate in the annual Best Kept Village award and our parish was considered in the "medium sized village" category, where we faced stiff competition from Shorwell and from the combined area of Chillerton & Gatcombe. Although we did not place in the top three this year, the organiser of the awards said that if they gave out certificates for "Highly Commended" then Fishbourne Parish would have definitely got one. High praise indeed, and we hope to do better in 2026.

We also maintain a "Little Library" mid-way along Fishbourne Lane in the old phone box. This is extremely popular and in constant use, which is great to see.

### **Flooding / Pollution**

The Parish council continues to part fund (along with Wootton Bridge Parish Council) water testing of the Creek, which is co-ordinated by the Wootton Creek Fairways Association.

We also assist residents who are experiencing flooding issues, typically caused by either blocked gulleys after heavy rain or by leaking pipes, in which case we liaise with Southern Water to request timely remedial action.

### **Wightlink**

Fishbourne Parish Council seeks to foster a productive working relationship with Wightlink as they are both the cause and the solution to a number of issues which residents regularly raise with us, from traffic jams to noisy ferry infrastructure to environmental improvements to parking.

In March, Cllr Dugdale and I attended an event to mark 100 years of the Fishbourne to Portsmouth ferry crossing along with invited guests from across the Island and from the mainland, including retired Wightlink seafarers who had worked on the route over the years. At the event we spoke to Wightlink's new Operations Director and took the opportunity to thank him for recent improvements which the company has made whilst also flagging ongoing concerns around traffic build up at the Fishbourne terminal, along with various other matters of concern to our residents.

### **Traffic**

Parish councillors have worked hard this year to try to minimise the impact of the seemingly unending series of roadworks which have been inflicted on us by various utility companies and by Island Roads, as they all rush to complete as much work as possible before the summer tourist season.

Although, as a small parish council, our funds and powers are limited, we will always try to work with residents, the ferry operator, Island Roads, the police and the Isle of Wight council as and when required.

### **Planning**

The Parish Council is asked to comment on all planning applications which come forward in our Parish area which, as a relatively small area with limited developments, usually means between 2 and 4 applications per month.

As a non-statutory consultee, we are not the decision-making body in Planning matters (that lies with the IWC's Planning Department and Committee) however we are asked to give our views, to assist in the process, and we are periodically asked to contribute to various consultations.

On behalf of FPC, I respond to various planning consultations, both from the IWC and from national government. over the course of the year.

### **Support for good causes**

All applications for financial support which are received by the Parish Council are considered and, in all circumstances, it is our aim to ensure that any support we give is focused on delivering for residents of our parish. In 2025/6 we supported (amongst others) the following:

- RVYC open day
- St John's Ambulance
- Quarr Abbey (Grant towards a new flowerbed)
- Royal British Legion
- IW Armed Forces Day

In finishing, I would like to pay tribute to the work done by all Parish councillors and the Clerk over the past 12 months, and to highlight the remaining vacancy we have on the Parish Council. If anyone is interesting in joining us, please do get in touch with our Clerk.

Many thanks for taking the time to read my report.

Cllr Ed Hopper  
Chairman, Fishbourne Parish Council