



Welcome to edition 80 of our Clerk's Column circulated as usual to the 490 residents on our Residents' Forum email list and through the Chronicle's page 4.

OCTOBER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Two of last Monday's Town Council Meeting's Agenda items – Lowtherville by-election and Second Homes – are covered separately. The others were the monthly *Finance Report*, the *Heads of Terms* proposed by the Isle of Wight Council for our Lease of the four Central Car Park bays required by the new Public Toilet, the removal of the now redundant *Aviary in Ventnor Park*, agreement to the proposed treatment of the Park's four trees with exposed roots and the Town Clerk's Report.

BY-ELECTION FOR LOWTHERVILLE

Filling the recently created vacancy for a Town Councillor to represent the town's Lowtherville Ward required at least 10 residents to write to the Isle of Wight Council's Elections Officer to request one. We're delighted to have been informed that condition has been met and a date for the by-election will be announced soon.

BOB SEELY MEETING TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS

On Wednesday evening I attended the latest of the meetings the Island's MP holds virtually for representatives of Town & Parish Councils. He began by welcoming the £65 million government funding for Southern Water and the achievement of the Island's NHS



Trust in securing the 'Good' rating across its services from the recent Inspection. He also referred to his responses to the Draft Island Planning Strategy before opening up a 45 minute Q&A.

This covered three main concerns: the *Motorbike Races* that have now been granted a licence for April next year and affecting Chale, Brighstone and Shorewell directly; *Housing Developments* where Bob Seely was clear that he felt even the reduced targets identified in the Planning Strategy were too high and he is wanting something nearer 250 new homes a year with all being affordable; *Is the Island to have one Parliamentary Constituency or two?* To which the reply was that the announcement would be made in the spring, he expected it to be two and had argued the case for an East/West split with Ventnor included in the West.

SECOND HOMES & HOLIDAY LETS

The 2011 Census revealed that there were just over 6,500 vacant and second homes on the Island, equivalent to 9.7% of the dwelling stock and significantly higher than the regional (4.0%) and national (4.3%) averages.

The Isle of Wight Council's 2018 Housing Needs Assessment notes about Ventnor that *holiday/second homes is the main driver of the housing market* and that *A local agent estimated that between 60-70% of properties purchased in the area are by those looking for holiday/second homes from the mainland.*

With over 2,000 Islanders on the Housing Waiting list, the almost total absence of homes to rent and the fear for those facing eviction by landlords looking for greater incomes this is a crisis. The Town Council has asked the Isle of Wight Council to use every means at its disposal to mitigate this trend, to work with other coastal and tourist town and to provide us with quarterly statistics for second and homes and holiday lets in Ventnor so that the trend can be monitored.

CO-OP LOCAL COMMUNITY FUND SUCCESS

Thanks to Tony McCarthy and his colleagues two of our major community development activities, our Youth Work and the Anxiety Café, have both been successful in the applications for inclusion in the Co-op's Local Community Fund. So between 24 October this year and 22 October next year their work will be advertised nationally to Co-op Members who can choose to provide support for their selected schemes through their purchases of Co-op branded goods. Donated funds will be distributed at the half way stage and at year end.

ISLAND ROADS – AN APOLOGY

Last week's Column wrongly implied that Island Roads had been slow to respond to Town Council proposals for adjustments to the High Street. Happy to apologise to Kevin Burton and his colleagues for that: the work is progressing well.

VIA MY TWITTER FEED LAST WEEK

- A [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) Briefing today examines the fact that 'the high cost of private renting is leaving almost one million families paying rents they cannot afford.'
- The lengthening NHS waiting lists also hit the poorest hardest as the [Kings Fund](#) finds 'On average waiting lists have increased by more than half (55.2 per cent) in the most deprived areas, compared to a third (36 per cent) in the least deprived areas.'