



Welcome to edition 92 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.

BUDGET FOR 2022/23

The Town Council's Budget setting for the financial year 2022/23 started on Monday evening with an informal meeting of Members to discuss an initial draft prepared, as the law requires, by me as its Clerk.

This year's Budget is for a total spend of £487,682 with the Precept funding 73% of that at £355,889. The task of the informal meeting is to agree what savings could be available and which costs are inevitable if service levels are to be maintained, bearing in mind that 52% of the Precept is the costs of taking over services the Isle of Wight Council withdrew funding for and would have been lost to the town, including the Paddling Pool, Grounds Maintenance, Library, Beach Cleaning, Beach Safety, Ventnor Park, Youth Centre, Youth activities and Public Toilets.

There's still work to be done on the Budget so that predicted costs are as accurate as possible and its final version will be formally agreed at the Town Council meeting of 14 February.

IOWC RETAINS COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT REDUCTIONS

The Isle of Wight Council has been reducing the support to working age residents from the Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) as part of its Budget cuts since 2013. The means-tested scheme provides a reduction in the Council Tax charge to the Island's poorest residents. In 2013/14, qualifying residents were restricted to 91.5% their entitlement and that was reduced to 80% in 2014/15. It was reduced again in 2018/19 to 70% and this year to 65%.

Wednesday's meeting of the Full Council decided to retain that 65% level, affecting the money available to 5,556 of the Island's poorest residents. The reductions do not apply to the Island's 4,956 qualifying pensioners.

CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR FOR LOWTHERVILLE

Expressions of interest in becoming one of Lowtherville's two Town Councillors are invited by Wednesday 2 February.

VIA MY TWITTER FEED LAST WEEK

- The [Rowntree Foundation](#)'s UK Poverty 2022 today: 'More than 1 in 5 of our population (22%) are in poverty – 14.5 million people. Of these, 8.1 million are working-age adults, 4.3 million are children and 2.1 million are pensioners.'
- A new [Oxfam Report](#): 'A new billionaire has been created every 26 hours since the pandemic began. The world's 10 richest men have doubled their fortunes, while over 160 million people are projected to have been pushed into poverty.'

MORE INFORMATION: is available from the Town Council's website and @ventnor clerk

LITTER PICKING EXPANDS

Yesterday (Sunday morning) saw an army of



volunteers ready to pick litter from gutters, hedges and in particular car parks. Over 40 Locals with Councillors, St Catherine School Pupils, local joggers and residents of all ages from toddlers to pensioners spent an hour walking, talking and picking to rid the streets of bags and bags of trash. Chat in the Green Room with hot drinks and biscuits finished the morning pick.

THE ICS IS ALMOST HERE!

The Island is part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System, one of the largest of the 42 such areas covering the country that have been quietly developed by the NHS over the last two years or so.

With a combined population of 1.9 million, our ICS brings together four Local Authorities – Portsmouth, Southampton, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, six Clinical Commissioning Groups, 154 GP Practices in 42



networks, 900 Care Providers and 200 Dentists. It needs legislation to give it a Board with powers of funding allocations that was expected to be in place from 1 April but a new target date of 1 July has been announced this week.

PUBLIC TOILETS CLOSING TIME

We're currently closing the Esplanade and Marlborough Road toilets at 5.30pm following aggressive behaviour directed at our staff. We'll review the position as evenings lighten.