

# VTC News

## Ventnor Town Council

**A monthly round up of all things Ventnor**



October 2023



### WELCOME TO OUR NEW LOOK MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 'VTC NEWS'

Since the beginning of June, I have stepped into the role of Ventnor Town Council's Acting Town Clerk.

With many challenges ahead as the Town Council transitions through changing times, myself and Rachel Redfearn, our Administrator, are here to support VTC and you, our residents.

Both Rachel and I can be contacted on 01983 853775, my email is:

[alison@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:alison@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk)

It is our collective intention to initially publish monthly with voluntary content contributions from Councillors and staff across the organisation.



Alison Killick,

Acting Town Clerk



#### Message from the Mayor, Steve Cooper:

I have now had the honour of being your mayor for the last 5 months, and what a hectic but productive time it has been. So What has your council been doing?

Internally within the council we have been setting about modernising practices and reviewing policies, which is important work for the council, this enables us to demonstrate the professional caring outlook to the communities we serve.

Externally my personal thanks go to the committee who make Ventnor Carnival Week so special every year.

(cont. on page 2)

#### Ventnor Town Council Contact info:

Telephone – 01983 853775

Website – [www.ventnortowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ventnortowncouncil.gov.uk)

Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road, Ventnor, PO38 1EJ

#### VTC Supports Small Business Saturday

Free Parking all day in three town run VTC Car Parks on 2<sup>nd</sup> December

(IOW Council car parks are only free from 12 Midday)

## Christmas in Ventnor 16<sup>th</sup> December 2023

So much for everyone, Live Music, Santa's Grotto, Carols in the park and much more

From 12:30 onwards Spring Hill Gardens

Free Parking in the three VTC Town Car Parks

(Cont. from page 1)

Especially to the many volunteers that support the event and you, the community for the endless commitment to this historical attraction the town has offered now for well over a hundred years or more.



Councillors serving on the Biodiversity working group had a vision of a community orchard and after some challenges, we can now announce that work begins on the site of the proposed orchard in Steephill Down Road shortly. Watch out for the updates and official opening in the coming months.



The Council are keenly aware of the concerns residents had over the works currently taking place on our seafront area, with the sea defenses and replacement of the cascade's railings. These works are not within our control and are necessary. We do recognise that communications and resident input could and I would say, should have been better organised. To this end, I have sought improvements to the way town and parish councils are informed by the IOW Council of planned works in Island towns, I will provide you all with updates as and when formal progress is achieved. In the meantime please be vigilant of your and others safety when accessing the seafront areas. Construction sites are inherently dangerous locations and should not be entered without permission. We anticipate, by next summer the whole sea frontage should be unhindered by works.



The council has engaged with Better Days Café to formalized an improved working partnership between the two organisations. We would also like to recognise the fantastic work that our own Wellbeing cafe does in helping support individuals and groups in the community. Baby Box and the Food Bank /Pantry continue to provide much needed support to residents. A need now affecting not just the vulnerable or low paid, but everyday families who have been hit by the cost-of-living crisis. We thank all community groups within our town for the hard and dedicated work you put into helping people. Other groups will be featured in future editions of the newsletter.



I have recently met with the helpful team driving the skatepark relocation. The Isle of Wight council have informed VTC that the current skatepark is unsuitable for upgrade, owing in part to the land being required for future sea defences. The IWC have provisionally offered two alternative sites, land below Dudley Road car park and the other on land opposite the outdoor gym at the upper levels of Ventnor Park. Both sites offer challenges and concerns. I suggested a third site in upper Ventnor for consideration. It is now in the very early stages of the planning phase and please be assured the community will be able to contribute views, via consultation meetings when plans progress.



The position of Mayor does not really entail any special powers other than chairing the council meetings and being the council's representative at local events and official occasions. I have deliberately shared with the Deputy Mayor and other councillors, as in my eyes it is not about the position of Mayor, but the collective. Other councillors, staff and most importantly, you the community, are the ones who create success. However, it is a leadership role, and I very much want residents to be part of the decision-making process by contributing your experience and knowledge.

Ventnor Town Council's vision is about partnership working, we can and should develop a strategic vision for our local Community. We can build a strong vision based on our unique Ventnor identity and the priorities of the residents Lowtherville, Ventnor Town, St Lawrence and Bonchurch. Partnership working, I believe, should not just be about delivery, but dialogue with you and your involvement in decision making. We need clear goals and narratives on how best to meet our collective needs; This will create the foundation for a successful future

Please do let me have your thoughts and ideas going forward, no matter how big or small. Would you value regular surgeries with myself and other councillors? Would you attend topic meetings with us, if invited? Would you like more public meetings on the issues that concern you most within our town and community? I want to hear from you. Let me have your thoughts, this is your council, and you drive its focus.



(cont. on page 3)

6th November 2023, 6.00pm-8.00pm – Ventnor businesses we need your input on Ventnor Day 2024.

To all Ventnor businesses, on the 6th of November at the Council Offices, Salisbury Gardens, PO38 1EJ, in our Green Room, or other venue depending on how many of you notify us of your confirmed attendance, we warmly invite you to meet with us. This will be your opportunity to help shape and design our premier community event for the town. What would you like to see, hear, and experience? What are you less keen to see and what might we do differently or improve on? Well this is your opportunity to help support and input into this great community event. In the first instance, please indicate your interest and intention to attend by emailing me, Steve Cooper.

[Steve.cooper@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:Steve.cooper@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk)



Cllr Mark Jefferies, Friends of Ventnor Cemetery and Deputy Mayor

At our last committee meeting, it was decided to arrange a quiz to raise some much-needed funds for a project also decided at that meeting. We also welcomed two new members, Sharon Wilkinson, and Steve the orchid man. The quiz took place on Friday 18th August at Ventnor social club and was hosted by quiz master Cllr Dave Logan.

It was a very enjoyable evening and we raised £80.00. This money will be spent on the Bereavement Services Project. Bereavement Services have kindly given us permission to manage the area just inside the gates to the right. This area is where the Lowther Stone and Japanese cherry trees are located. We intend to make this area into a memorial garden. Work has already been started by volunteers Dave Melville, Des O'Callahan and Chris Owen, by digging out a round flower bed. We had a donation of some daffodil bulbs, which will be planted soon.

A seating area and small fence will be installed to section the area off. We will also be installing two information boards, one with information about the Lowther Stone and the other with information about orchids and wildflowers. On the committee side we are always looking for new members. Now we are particularly in need of a secretary. Please contact me on 07870701652 or email Mark Jefferies.

[Mark.jefferies@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:Mark.jefferies@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk)



Ventnor Cemetery



Cllr John Watkins,  
Bonchurch and Ventnor East

Ventnor's Wellbeing Café is an informal gathering of people living with anxiety who are keen to take steps forward in managing their mental health, their overall well-being and in making purpose and positivity a part of each day.

Our group meets four times weekly at Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road in the ground floor community space known as the Green Room. We meet on Monday and Wednesday, 10.00-14.00 and on Tuesday and Friday 12.00-16.00, with a free lunch provided on these two days.

Anyone can struggle with the common, everyday mental health issues of anxiety, depression, social isolation, PTSD, and agoraphobia. As a mutually supportive and non-judgmental group, when someone finds they are having a difficult day, we offer whatever we can to help get them back on their feet. However, please know we welcome anyone who might like to drop by for a cuppa and a chat, knowing you will feel at ease and right at home. Our membership consists of over 100 unique individuals of all ages.

A sensitive supportive group consisting of people from Ventnor and further afield. Café members are always welcoming, unified in their sincere support to help one another and proud of decisions made collectively. As we fully understand what it is like to feel isolated, to be thought of as different and well know the pain of loneliness and abandonment, we offer the much-needed comfort and compassion gained from personal experience.

We always play bingo and there is a plentiful supply of drinks and biscuits and sometimes cake! The group likes to be active, and our next outing is on the Island Breezer to the Needles. On top of this, we often have speakers on a variety of subjects who bring ideas and suggestions that bring about lively discussions.

Why not drop in, Ventnor Wellbeing Café wholeheartedly welcomes you.







Cllr Steph Toogood, Ventnor West. Saturday Busking

This is the third year that I have coordinated the Saturday morning busking for VTC.

It is exciting that the musicians repeatedly ask to play the following year as they enjoy the venue and the view. The two-hour sessions are weather permitting from 12.00 noon by the paddling pool. We started at Spring Hill Gardens, which worked well for the musicians but there was limited seating and, we found that the footfall was better on the seafront.

Entertainment is enhanced with the children around the paddling pool jiggling and dancing to the beat! I must admit that this year, we had some challenges.

Week one was the return of the popular local band, The Pact. They did have a battle with the SW wind but managed to produce wonderful music. Sadly, weeks 2 and 3 were cancelled due to driving wind and rain. We missed Lucan Hickmott with his beat box and Pisco Sour. An unusual South American group.

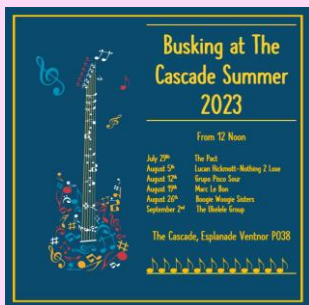
Week four and the sun was shining for Marc le Bon with his eclectic renditions accompanied by his guitar.

August weather was kinder until the following Saturday produced a hailstorm late morning. However, the Boogie Woogie Sisters entertained us from the shelter of the veranda at The Met, thanks to Rosie.

Early September brought us the local ukulele group now known as V.U.L.G.A – Ventnor Ukulele Lubbers General Assembly. Interesting that there was such wonderful bright sunshine that the group had difficulty seeing their music. This was the biggest group with twelve musicians and the best weather so far. This year we extended the sessions to the 9th of September with another local band named SKaMP.

Due to the extensive Cascade building works this group happily moved along to Mill Bay veranda, thanks to Tracey. Each Saturday morning VTC’s maintenance manager, Brian Roberts, spends time setting up the musicians. Many thanks to Brian for this.

Looking forward to next year when we hope to allow these community spirited people to bring a smile to our faces.



A taste of the summer Busking this year



Cllr Phil Warren, Ventnor West. St Boniface Fields

### Activities

The site is one of VTC’s managed assets which is maintained for the benefit of local residents.

### Allotments

There is an increasing interest in growing home produce now which leaves the waiting list for plots fully subscribed. All plots, including Childrens Services, and The Well Being Café have been very productive. Again, this year the allotment site formed part of the Bonchurch Open Gardens weekend and attracted around one hundred visitors. The positive written feedback given conformed that *‘the site is a green and tranquil oasis, which is both varied and productive.’*

### Community Shed (VCS)

Membership numbers are buoyant with new members joining after visiting the VCS stall this year’s Ventnor Day. This provided the opportunity to purchase items crafted in the workshop and also see the finishing process of a three-foot, hardwood memorial bench.

The Community Shed continues to support individual projects as well as the production of memorial benches.

Adding to a remarkably busy calendar has been support for St Catherine’s sixth form horticulture group and the remarkable Olivia Parkes pop-up installation at La Falaise shelter during this year’s Ventnor Fringe.





Cllr Ian Bond, Ventnor West

As part of the Assets and Services working group, I take a keen eye on Ventnor Park, especially as I am using it myself most days.

Since the damage from last year's storms, our park has coped well with everything the weather and this year's successful events have thrown at it. We had some small graffiti and flyposting problems to deal with, as well as the usual minor repairs.

If any park users have any comments or suggestions to make about the park, you are most welcome to get in touch at [Ian.bond@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:Ian.bond@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk)

Separately, I have been collaborating with the mayor and other colleagues from the HR Committee updating policies that the Town Council has.

Most recently Cllr Hutchinson and I have been working on an updated GDPR policy for data protection, to ensure that the council keeps your personal data secure and respects confidentiality whenever it is required to do so.



Ventnor Park



Ventnor Park



Tony McCarthy,  
Community  
Development Officer

### Ventnor Our Place – Warm Space

Council's Warm Space initiative, every Thursday at St Catherine's Church a group of volunteers provide free a free lunch from 12:00 midday. All welcome. Thanks to the amazing team of volunteers that prepare lunch and provide a warm welcome.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at the same venue – Ventnor Our Place, advice and support agencies attend offering free community sessions. These usually include Citizens Advice, Living Well – Early Help, Barnardo's, baby Box Isle of Wight, Veterans Outreach, Southern Water, and out local PCSO.

Sessions start from 10:30am and run until 1:30pm. The next monthly session is 23<sup>rd</sup> of November.

### Christmas in Ventnor

Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of December is the date for Christmas in Ventnor festivities this year. Christmas fairs at the Winter Gardens, Baptist Church and St Catherine's Church, there will be live music in Springhill Gardens, Santas Grotto, Lantern Parade and Christmas Carnival and Carols in the Park. The event is organised by Ventnor Carnival, St Catherine's Church, and Ventnor Town Council. More attractions to be announced soon.

### Ventnor Community Playgroup

Now reopened after the holidays – Ventnor Community Playgroup takes place every Monday and Thursday at Ventnor Family Centre, Albert Street (during school term times) from 10:30am to 12:00 midday. For more details, please contact Eloise on email:

[Eloise.preston@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:Eloise.preston@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk)



St Catherine's Church, Ventnor





# VTC News

Ventnor Town Council



## The Back page STOP PRESS

### News from the Town Clerk

#### **Beach Safety Team**

With the hottest September on record, team members Bethany Whitehead and Jack Wonfor along with volunteer Davin Gibbs, our VTC Beach Safety Team had had their work cut out!

Throughout the summer season, the team provide local knowledge: tide times, directions, parking advice, beach safety advice (including Red Flag display in bad sea conditions). First Aid care - cuts, bruises weaver fish stings and much more.

Additionally, the team have dealt with a number of emergency situations where the emergency services have been called.

The team's high level of care, calm and professional attitude in what is an already highly stressful event is to be highly commended indeed.

Well done to the Ventnor Town Council's Beach Safety Team of 2023.



### Beach Cleaning and Paddling Pool

From April 1<sup>st</sup> this year, Brian Roberts from Ventnor Town Council has litter picked Ventnor's Beaches daily keeping them clean and tidy for the beach users. For easy location of a bin, Brian has innovatively installed flags alongside bin.

The children's Paddling Pool – emptied, cleaned and refilled daily – has been again hugely successful and well used by families encouraged by the hot weather this year.

### Bonchurch and Ventnor East Election news

Councillor James Toogood was successful in the recent election held recently in September. He will be representing the residents of Bonchurch and Ventnor East ward.

### Co-option for Ventnor West

The closing date has passed and as such there were three candidates who were interviewed for the vacancy. Full details will be forthcoming shortly.

### Fell Races.

Over the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of September, the Fell Races came to Ventnor.

On Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> (also the hottest day of the year!) over 150 runners started the first race at 1100hrs from the Sea Front – running up the cascades, along Pier Street and into Ventnor. There was a further race at 1500hrs on Saturday afternoon, then on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> the grueling Half Marathon. The event culminated on Sunday afternoon with an awards presentation by our Deputy Mayor Mark Jefferies.

Massive thanks to all of those who volunteered and assisted in making the weekend a roaring success.

