

# Paul Fuller JP, CC.

Annual Report from

YOUR Independent Isle of Wight Councillor

for Cowes West and Gurnard.

MAY 2010

## **Cowes West and Gurnard Ward.**

Within the 2007 boundary review, the 6 small wards in the Cowes area were replaced by 4 larger wards. Cowes West & Gurnard has an electorate of 3,107, and is the third largest ward by electors on the Island. The Ward extends from Hillis Farm and Gurnard Ledge in the West, to Mornington Road and the Northwood Park boundary in the East. To the south, the ward includes homes on the North side of Park Road, the West side of Place Road and extends as far as the rear gardens in Pallance Road.

## **Representing your views first!**

This is my first Annual Report to residents who last June elected me to represent your views at County Hall. Since then, I have endeavoured (and enjoyed!) working hard for every resident, and have not lost sight of how it is a huge privilege for me to undertake this work. Within this report, I will summarise the issues that I have been working towards; contentious issues I have supported, some of what I have achieved, meetings which I attend, and how you can be kept up to date with what I am doing.

I'm committed to representing your views first. If you're not happy, or you think I've got things wrong please tell me. If I pass things on to the Council to be dealt with, I expect your issues to be resolved. If for any reason you are dissatisfied, let me know- so as I can fight your corner! This was what I was elected to do on your behalf and what I will continue to do, so long as I remain your Councillor!

## **How To Contact Me**

If you require any support, please contact me by the following means:

By post to: 74 Wyatts Lane, Cowes, Isle of Wight. PO31 8QA.

By telephone to: 01983 289595 (24 hours) or 07 935 090 835 (mobile)

By e-mail to: [paulfuller@onwight.net](mailto:paulfuller@onwight.net)

If I can't help you out, I will try to find out who can. If you want me to visit, please let me know and I will arrange to meet at a time convenient to you. Alternatively, I hold regular surgeries, these are published in my Cowes Beacon and Gurnard News reports and are promoted on both Parish and Town Council Notice Boards. As a rule of thumb surgeries are held on the following occasions. No appointment is necessary.

6 - 6:30pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month: **Northwood House**, Ward Avenue, Cowes.

5 - 5:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month: **Isle of Wight Community Club**, Park Road, Cowes.

6 - 6:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month: **The Portland Inn**, Worsley Road, Gurnard.

11 - 11:30am on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month: **The Woodvale**, Princes Esplanade, Gurnard.

### **Planning Applications.**

Although I am a member of the Isle of Wight Council's Planning Committee, I also became the most regular speaker representing views to the Committee, as a ward Councillor. Of the 69 applications heard by the Planning Committee, Given its popularity - 14 (over 20%) related to the Cowes West & Gurnard Ward.

When possible, I try to urge Planning Applicants to talk to neighbours at pre-application stage. When this occurs, it has overcome delays and provides an opportunity to open up dialogue and can resolve conflicts between residents and developers at an early stage. This was achieved for **The Moorings**, for a proposal in Baring Road and for two current applications in Gurnard. For larger applications, I've suggested public exhibitions be held, and this has occurred for **Solent Lawns** and for the **Cross-Solent Gas Main** proposal.

When large applications do arise, I will also mail-shot areas affected.

I am looking forward to working with residents on the **Cowes Town Plan**. I am supporting the Isle of Wight Society and Cowes Town Council in trying to facilitate this, which we hope will give Planners the tools required to challenge further erosion of our Conservation Areas. If you are interested in becoming involved, or can offer some assistance however great or small, please let me know!

As a Planning Committee member, I supported the Wind Turbines application for Cheverton Down.

## Schools.

I voted in support of **School Reorganisation** for local schools. The transition is due to start in 2011.

Last year I was appointed as a School Governor at **Cowes High School**. Information is due for release this month on the new School, with work commencing October/ early November.

I am strengthening links with **Cowes Primary, Gurnard Primary** and **Solent Middle School**, and have offered my continued support to the Head Teachers and Governing Bodies of these schools.

## Transport.

I seconded a proposal put by Cllr Edward Giles at Full Council ensuring the IW Council supports lower ferry fares. This initiative, driven by the MP was upheld by all Isle of Wight Councillors.

I remain committed to seeing bus fares reduced, particularly for Under 18's.

I undertook a consultation which provided evidence, saving Service 32 from cutbacks. I've asked that the Newport bound bus via Rew Street (service 30) calls at Charles Road, and have been given assurance that this service is safe at least until September.

I remain supportive of the PFI award, and have raised concerns through this process regarding the resurfacing/ repairing several roads in Cowes and Gurnard, namely Albert Road, Shore Road, Cockleton Lane, Lower Church Road, Rolls Hill, Ward Avenue, Parklands Avenue. I have supported my neighbouring Councillor in making representations concerning Whitehouse Road.

I have successfully campaigned for proper pavements. These include resurfacing Worsley Road, whilst a new pavement has been laid for Park Road. I've campaigned to see a pavement linking Park Road to Crossfield Avenue on Baring Road, and this is included in the 2010/11 Capital Programme. The Programme also includes safe crossing points for Cowes Primary School and the pavement linking Pine Tree Close & Egypt Hill on Baring Road is pending subject to Advance Design.

## Combating Crime.

Last year, I promised to work with Trading Standards to see the No Cold Calling initiative which I helped to initiate in Northwood and Gurnard be rolled out in Cowes. Since then, I've taken up a number of issues on behalf of residents, the most recent being with Energy Suppliers.

Last year in Gurnard and this year in Cowes, I've been working through priorities highlighted within the Safer Neighbourhoods door to door

questionnaire undertaken by the police. As Councillor, I look forward to projects coming to fruition, and am working with the Isle of Wight Council, Parish and Town Councils and the Police to make sure that what residents have asked for is prioritised.

At the end of last summer, I met with residents who had suffered from Anti-Social Behaviour following Beach Parties, on the shore to the west of Gurnard Sailing Club. The Police, with the Isle of Wight Council, held a more formal meeting with residents where it was resolved to increase litter picks and the police increased foot patrols. Activity on this beach continues to be monitored, and I intend supporting Gurnard Parish Council who are setting up a forum to oversee current and future needs of beach users. If you are interested in getting involved please let me know.

### **Community Assets.**

I have and continue to offer support to Northwood House Trustees, by seeing Northwood House & Car Park revenue being transferred to Trustees to manage effectively the running of Northwood House. As local Councillor, I have challenged decisions taken most recently at Full Council.

Following my election, I made myself available to assist the IW Community Club in supporting their request for funding for the essential re-roofing project, which has just been completed.

At Gurnard, I have called meetings with residents investigating future options for the Gurnard School site, should the Isle of Wight Council consider it surplus to its requirements in 2011. Suggestions made so far include a Community Hub, Allotments, Affordable Housing, a Family Learning Centre and Swimming Pool. Although proposals may not all be sustainable, residents will be further consulted at the Gurnard May Queen Event on 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

### **Best value?**

I voted against the current Council Budget, due to many residents concerns over how the proposed budget would adversely impact upon frontline services. The 'Alternative' budget I supported, also proposed to increase Council Tax by 2.5%. This proposal suggested **cutting costs** on **Consultants, communications & street lighting**, whilst **protecting parking permits, environmental concessions** and some **adult care provision** due to be lost. As it is necessary for a mid-year review, the campaigners against the cuts remain hopeful that those decisions which impact upon the most vulnerable will be overturned.

Because it was/is necessary for the Council to cut costs in so many service areas, in setting the budget for this year, I felt very uncomfortable in increasing **Councillors Allowances** by 1.6%. Rather than support or abstain, I was the only Councillor to vote against this increase.

## Accountability.

Since June, I've written monthly reports in **Gurnard News & Cowes Beacon**. These can be accessed via the Gurnard Parish Council (and, soon the Cowes Town Council- I hope!) Website and are circulated during meetings. If any resident requires my monthly report, please let me know!

Whilst a Cowes Town Councillor, IW Councillors were regularly criticised for non-attendance of meetings. I continue to strongly support both Cowes Town and Gurnard Parish Council, where possible. Following tabling reports, I try to stay for the meetings duration, so as to act upon views of Councillors & residents.

### From June 5<sup>th</sup> 2009- March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010:

Attended 38 out of 39 Isle of Wight Councillor summoned meetings, making me the 3<sup>rd</sup> best attendee

Attended 15 further Isle of Wight Council Meetings, 16 Training Events & 10 site meetings with Officers.

Attended 9 out of 9 Gurnard Parish Council Meetings.

Attended 9 out of 10 Cowes Town Council meetings.

Attended 31 Parish Council Steering Groups, Working Parties or associated meetings.

Attended 16 Residents Association or similar meetings.

Made 61 Resident Home Visits.

Held 33 Surgeries, seeing 69 residents in 7 different venues.

Attended 12 school related meetings.

Attended 11 Events and Exhibitions.

Leafleted 155 homes.

Undertook 4 Planning consultations, 2 Highways consultations & 1 bus service consultation.

Received around 2200 Council related emails and sent 1612 emails in response.

Received 557 telephone calls and made 892 telephone calls.

Received 88 letters, responding to 27 in writing.

Have been contactable 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (taking my mobile phone on holiday!)

As Councillor, I received an allowance of **£7296.68** Gross Pay (10 months to 31 March 2010), which is slightly higher than the Basic Allowance, due to me serving as Group Leader from December.

I paid out £843.63 in expenses in the last year from my Allowance, the breakdown of which is as follows:

£383.91 related to my Election Costs.

£220.00 towards mobile phone, and landline costs in relation to my Council related telephone expenses\*

£130.00 towards broadband connection, and associated computer costs\*

£20.00 Travel

£20.00 Meetings

£69.72 for stationary, ink cartridges, paper.

This compares to: £21098.71, £8474.81 & £10490.12 for former Isle of Wight Councillors serving the respective Cowes Castle East, Cowes Castle West and Gurnard wards (between 1 April 2008 until 31 March 2009).

If you wish to see my Declaration of Interests, please let me know. Although this can be viewed under supervision at County Hall, I am happy to provide this information for any elector that requests this in writing.

*\* All Councillors are offered either a Blackberry or mobile phone & lap top. As I cannot pick up a signal from Orange the IW Council's Network Provider where I live, I cannot take advantage of this facility.*

### **The Future....**

My priority continues to be a good ward Councillor, and to be on hand for any resident when needed.

In the coming year, I want to see better representation being given to all members of the Council regardless of their political background. I am supportive of either a politically proportional Cabinet, or a Scrutiny Committee comprising mainly of members outside the ruling group. I strongly believe and want to see all Councillors working for the common good of the Island, rather than dividing themselves along traditional party political lines.

In the next year, being conscious that the IW Council has seemingly lost sight of its commitment to the Eco-Island Agenda, I am anxious to bring pressure to bear that brings this back on track.