

# **WHITEPARISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 27th MARCH 2018**

## **AN INTRODUCTION**

**By Wiltshire Councillor Richard Britton, Alderbury & Whiteparish division**

It doesn't seem long since I was writing an Introduction to the Parish Council report for 2017. How time flies!

Back in 2003 when, as a newly-elected District Councillor, I first started attending meetings of Whiteparish Parish Council two items regularly appeared on their agenda: Traffic issues in The Street and speeding and parking issues on Common Road - especially around the school.

And I'm afraid the same two issues continue regularly to appear on the council's agenda today.

I congratulate the Parish Council on their perseverance in considering these two most intractable problems over the years and I share their immense frustration that no practical solutions have emerged. The school parking problem is an especial frustration because it is caused mostly by parents - most of whom (but not all) are residents.

I'm very much afraid that these issues will continue to be a bugbear for the Parish Council for years to come!

Away from these ongoing traffic problems (which are common to many villages) the Parish Council has had another busy year:

- the maintenance, improvement and enlargement of the footpath network
- liaison with the Parish Steward and more widely with Wiltshire Council on highways and other maintenance issues
- consideration of, and responding to, planning applications (some quite controversial)
- and attending to a great many general maintenance issues around the village

are just some examples of the work the Parish Council does to make sure Whiteparish continues to be the attractive place it is in which to live. Residents who take all this for granted need to bear in mind that Whiteparish's general well-being is largely down to a group of dedicated, unpaid individuals who devote much of their free time to protecting and furthering residents' interests in the ways I have mentioned.

The Parish is lucky to have such a hard-working Parish Council under the strong leadership of its chairman, Trevor King, and professional and hard-working Clerk, Maria Pennington.

Ladies and Gentlemen I salute you!

Richard

## **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee has responsibility for overseeing the financial aspects of the Parish Council, including providing proposals for the annual Budget and the financial assets of the Council.

The Budget for the financial year starting April 2018 show a total increase of £3,995, predominantly arising from:

- an agreed £3,000 contribution to the proposed new skatepark
- an increase of £600 to cover increased hours for the clerk, to better reflect the increasing workload
- together with inflationary increases

The Committee identified some Budget savings including:

- reduced admin expenses
- allowances for regular repairs to the existing skatepark, benches and other small items

As a Parish Council, we are legally responsible for the provision of graveyard capacity. A few years ago the Church estimated the existing provision is sufficient until circa 2025. The Parish Council agreed the need to build financial Reserves in anticipation.

## **Planning**

The Parish Council continues to consider at Parish Council Meetings every application for development within the Parish. We welcome contributions from members of the public in writing, e-mail or in person at our meetings, to help inform us when we are considering our decisions. Any such contributions must be made in good time, taking into account that, because of deadlines imposed on us and on Wiltshire Council, there is sometimes a very short period between us receiving notice of a planning application and the date by which we must return our decision, occasionally requiring a special additional meeting of the Council.

Part of Whiteparish is within the New Forest National Park and we are sometimes invited by the Park Authority to comment on planning issues within the Park. We have also considered the NFNPA draft Local Plan Review 2016-2036.

This year the Parish Council examined the Wiltshire Council Draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan and responded to Wiltshire Council regarding a number of perceived discrepancies.

In the past 12 months the Parish Council have considered 29 planning applications and 10 applications for tree works.

## **Community Area Transport Group (CATG)**

Community Area Transport Group (CATG) is a forum for entry level consideration of transport issues and schemes within South Wilts. With the support of Highways' Officers it makes recommendations to the Area Board.

For 2017/2018 the budget was circa £13,000; parishes are expected to contribute to any project awarded a grant by the Area Board/CATG. Whiteparish Parish Council has received no funds in the past year.

Whiteparish continues to share the Speed Indication Device (SID) with neighbouring parishes and pays maintenance for each week of use; latterly in early February 2018.

## **Environment, Transport and Highways**

The Parish Steward has been kept busy in the village on his allocated one day a month visit. However we have been notified by Wiltshire Council that the Parish Steward will not be working in the parishes for the next few weeks, as he will be helping to fill potholes which have either been created, or even made worse by the recent weather. The Parish Steward undertakes minor highways works which are set for him by the Parish Council, and he also carries out tasks as he identifies them. If you become aware of aspects of highway maintenance that will improve the safety and environment of our village please inform the Clerk. Works he can carry out include maintenance on roads (minor potholes), pathways, verges (highway strimming) and drainage areas and over the winter he has worked hard clearing the leaves off the footpath and layby by the Church, along the pseudo footpath as well as clearing and cleaning road signs, clearing of small grips, culverts and road gully tops. The Parish Council is aware of the poor state of some of the roads through the village and continually reports defects to the Highways Authority. Highways have replaced damaged railings and rectified a drainage issue along Common Road.

White lining near the school and the pseudo footpath in Common Road is scheduled for work in Wiltshire Councils coming financial year.

The Parish Council continues to pursue the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) after submitting a report regarding issues of ice at the junction of Miles Lane and the A27. Miles Lane received work from the Velocity Patching programme and is scheduled for further work. Land owners are being reminded to keep their ditches clear in order to prevent excessive water build up with inadequate drainage.

Wessex Water have once again advised that the boggy verge on the Romsey Road near Meadow Court has been dealt with. Please inform the Clerk if the problem returns.

Inconsiderate parking throughout the village continues to be a concern. The school is reviewing its school travel plan regarding pupils accessing the school. There are parking issues at the entrance to Green Close and in Highlands Way. The Police and Fire Service have been made aware and we understand the Fire Service will be making an assessment in the near future. Please can residents be mindful of where and how they park, especially near road junctions. The parking of vehicles on junctions/corners reduces visibility and thus safety. Please take into account emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire engines. Can they access the area and if so, can they do so without the need to mount pavements? Also please be aware if you are obstructing pedestrian access anywhere, potentially effecting the vulnerable.

It was agreed to use R2/Section 106 funds for two pieces of new play equipment for the children's playground. These funds originate from a charge that local authorities in England can place on development in their area. Quotes and grants are being sought for a replacement skate park. Further information will be made available to residents when the design and timing of the project is decided, providing grant funding has been successful.

The X7 and X7R buses remain servicing Whiteparish.

The Mobile Library continues to have visits to Ashmore Close as follows:

- Thursdays 10.35am – 11.05am: Apr 05, May 3, May 31, Jun 28, Jul 26, Aug 23, Sept 20
- Saturdays 12.05pm – 12.35pm: Apr 28, May 26, Jun 23, Jul 21, Aug 18, Sept 15, Oct 13

Wiltshire Council continue to make budget constraints and therefore more pressure is being placed on local parish councils to cover areas which Wiltshire Council will not.

## **Rights of Way**

There are over 30 Rights of Way (footpaths and bridleways) throughout the Parish. These range from the short paths within the village itself which are no doubt familiar to most villagers, to the longer routes up to Pepperbox and Dean Hills and to the east to the Sherfield English/County boundary. It is easy to combine these paths into circular walks through and around the village. A map showing all these paths is attached.

A Parish Councillor inspects all these Rights of Way at least once a year to ensure there are no problems such as blockages or broken stiles or gates. We contact the land owner where problems do occur as they are responsible for ensuring that there are no obstructions to the paths across their land. We are grateful to those land owners who maintain their paths without prompting!

As a consequence of budget cuts, Wiltshire Council no longer undertakes improvements to Rights of Way nor clearance work. It will however provide new gates and clearance equipment if the manpower is provided by volunteers. So our village paths will now only be maintained if enough villagers volunteer to help.

Last year the New Forest National Park provided us with four new kissing gates which a group of volunteers, including several Parish Councillors and members of the Ramblers, installed along Path 5 to replace badly damaged stiles (parts of paths 4, 5, 6 are in the National Park).

If you are able to join the volunteer group to help install gates or undertake other work to keep our paths maintained please contact Councillor John Herrett.

Rights of Way in the countryside are inevitably prone to becoming overgrown if they are not used regularly. Please make full use of this free local amenity and if you do come across a problem report it to Councillor Richard Burr or the Parish Clerk.

## **Community Emergency Plan**

Following the flooding problems experienced by many communities in recent years, the Government is strongly encouraging all communities to have an Emergency Plan so they are better prepared to take the initial steps should an incident happen.

Whilst Whiteparish is unlikely to suffer from flooding, having no rivers nearby, we could be impacted by other emergency situations such as major disruptions caused by severe snow/ice, Flu pandemic, loss of one or more utilities, animal disease (e.g. Foot & Mouth), major fire etc.

Our Community Emergency Plan now provides details of key contact points, sources of help and equipment and service providers which might be required in such circumstances so that the Emergency Committee are not starting from scratch in any disaster situation. The Emergency Committee currently comprises Parish Councillors but if any villager feels they have experience/expertise which would benefit the Committee please contact Councillor Richard Burr or the Parish Clerk.

## Community Speedwatch

The Whiteparish Community Speedwatch (CSW) team volunteers have been in action since February 2014. We are one of over 135 teams operating across Wiltshire. The team now operates at six speed check sites, nominated by Wiltshire Police after road speed tests. Three are on the A27 within the 30 mph limit, one is in the 40mph zone to the east of the village on the A27 and two are on Common Road in the 20mph limit in close proximity to the school.

Whiteparish shares the speed device with Landford. We have the speed device every 3 weeks for 3 weeks at a time. 7,679, vehicles have been measured this year compared with 11,175 last year. Of these 303 (3.9%) were recorded as speeding (36 plus mph within the 30 limit, 47 mph plus within the 40 mph limit and 25 mph plus in the 20 limit); this slightly down on last year's figure of 398 (3.6%). Vehicles measured at excessive speeds (30mph plus in the 20 mph limit, 45mph plus in the 30 limit and 60mph plus in the 40 limit) totalled 44 (0.4%) this year, higher than the 43 last year but about the same in proportionally (0.4%) as reported last year.

The drop in the proportion of vehicles measured speeding has plateaued.

2014										
	February	March/April	May	June	July/August	October	Nov/Dec	January	February	Annual
Reported for Speeding	13.5%	10.1%	9.90%	9.6%	4.1%	5.8%	4.8%	3.4%	5.5%	6.59%
	February	March/April	May	June	July/August	October	Nov/Dec	January	February	Annual
Excessive Speeding	1.9%	1.2%	1.44%	1.5%	1.1%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.82%

2015										
	April	May	June/July	August	September	November	December	January/February	Annual	
Reported for Speeding	8.7%	4.3%	5.1%	6.7%	2.8%	5.2%	5.9%	6.5%	5.6%	
	April	May	June/July	August	September	November	December	January/February	Annual	
Excessive Speeding	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%	0.8%	0.2%	0.6%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	

2016										
	April/May	May/June	July	August/September	October	November	January	February	Annual	
Reported for Speeding	3.8%	3.3%	4.2%	3.7%	4.4%	2.8%	3.2%	4.3%	3.6%	
	April/May	May/June	July	August/September	October	November	January	February	Annual	
Excessive Speeding	0.7%	0.1%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	

2017-18										
	April/May	May	June	August/September	October	Nov/Dec	January	Annual		
Reported for Speeding	2.5%	3.3%	6.6%	4.1%	3.0%	3.3%	5.5%	3.9%		
	April/May	May/June	July	August/September	October	November	January	Annual		
Excessive Speeding	0.4%	0.2%	1.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	1.2%	0.6%		

Traffic is still slower than 2014/5 and 2015/6 and about the same as 2016/7

We have lost a number of volunteers over the course of the year as some volunteers are no longer able to help us so **we need more active volunteers**. Wiltshire police experience is that traffic speed will rise again if activity is not maintained. Furthermore it has become clear that police activity will gravitate to areas where a CSW team is active as they can use the data gained to maximise their own results. The Parish Council has received frequent pleas for action on cars speeding through the village. Whilst the existence of a Community Speed Watch is no guarantee of any action by higher authorities on this issue, it appears that no action would be considered if there is no Community Speedwatch in place. It was for this reason that the scheme was introduced to Whiteparish.

We need more volunteers for the effective running of the team especially as we now have more sites. If we cannot keep an active team operating we will endanger the great support we have been getting from Wiltshire Police in helping to control speed in the village.

Driving down speed will drive up safety for Whiteparish residents especially children.

- **80% of children** hit by a car travelling at **40mph** will **die**
- **80% of children** hit by a car travelling at **30mph** will **live**

If you can spare some time to help keep Whiteparish a safe place to walk, ride and drive through, contact Mike Hayday, CSW coordinator, or Maria Pennington, Parish Clerk, for more details: [mike.hayday@btinternet.com](mailto:mike.hayday@btinternet.com) or [maria.pennington456@btinternet.com](mailto:maria.pennington456@btinternet.com).

### **New Forest National Park**

The National Park Authority invite the Parish Council to two meetings. The Consultative Panel is made up of almost 60 representatives from local interest groups and local authorities including Parish Councils. Presentations usually share issues that are Park-wide across a broad spectrum of topics.

The Quadrant meetings divide all Parish Councils within the Park into four sectors. The North West Quadrant is therefore able to focus on issues and topics that specifically impact our local area. This meeting particularly allows for an information exchange in both directions.

### **Area Board**

Wiltshire is divided into 18 Area Boards. We are within the Southern Wiltshire Area Board along with parishes from Downton to Winterslow but excluding Salisbury City. The board receives presentations from a range of organisations such as the police, fire service, health service and Wiltshire Council, as well as more local organisations.

For example at the last meeting, the Fire Service explained that they wanted contacts for vulnerable people in our communities so advisors could visit, check on the fire safety arrangements, fit free smoke alarms and offer advice and support as needed. For a free Safe and Well visit, call 0800 0382323.

The Members of the Board are the Wiltshire Councillors who represent the communities in the area. Members of the public are welcome to attend and there are always opportunities for both the public and parish councillors to contribute or ask questions throughout the evening. As part of its work, the Area Board supports a number of projects, with those attending the Board meeting determining our priorities. One project that Whiteparish has benefited from is the replacement of footpath stiles with kissing gates, we have installed about 70 kissing gates in the community area and the work is continuing.

We have a budget for local highways improvements, this is how the virtual footpath to the School and the 20mph speed limit were funded. The Area Board also provides community grants, and we have supported a wide range of projects across the area with both community and specific youth funds. All of these decisions are made in public at the Area Board meetings.

The next meeting of the Area Board is at the Trafalgar School in Downton at 7.00pm on the 28th March.

## **Memorial Centre and the Memorial Ground**

2017 was a successful year for the Memorial Centre and Ground. We have this year completed a number of key projects and hosted some new events.

- Car Park resurfacing
- Refurbishment of the Children's play area, this included the refurbishment of the large multi-play unit and the gravity bowl spinner and the installation of two new pieces of equipment, a toddler roundabout and a zig zag balance beam activity trail. The new equipment was financed by a grant from the Parish Council using R2 funds. Part of the remaining cost was funded by the 2016 Winter Ball which was brilliantly managed by Maggie Davis and her hardworking ball committee.
- We have installed the new bench funded by a generous donation by the Breakaway Club.
- We have completed the survey of the Newt Pond required under the terms of our planning permission and are pleased to confirm that the resident population of Great Crested Newts are thriving.

Improving the Centre and Grounds requires a constant funding stream and this year the Trustees been very active in generating funding for future projects with fund raising events.

- Richard Digance entertained us all on a cold February evening, warming us all up with his witty songs. Many thanks to Berny Higgins for organising this event
- We welcomed the Watermill Theatre Company from Newbury in July. The evening was a great success and we are hopeful that they will return later this year. We extend our thanks to John and Di Herrett for organising the event and entertaining the Theatre Company.
- The Memorial Centre also hosted BBC Radio 4's "Any Questions" in July providing good exposure of both the Centre and the village to a wider public. Many thanks to Stuart McWilliam for the work he put into attracting the BBC and in the organising and hosting of the event itself.

The Trustees again supported a Winter Ball to raise funds this year. It was a great evening and raised a large amount of money to help with 2018 projects.

It was a successful year financially as well, despite the Accounts showing a deficit of £1,724. The Trustees were able to report at the AGM that overall bookings for the centre and the sports grounds were better the previous year. Hire income increased to £19,000 compared to £15,000 last year for the centre and outdoor sports hires were £4,000 compared to £3,000 – due to more football matches. Despite spending over £10,000 on the car park and over £7,000 on the play area we had a deficit of under £2,000 for the year. This is due to the increase in hiring's, mostly from children's parties as well as our fund raising efforts and endowment income.

For 2018 we plan to use funds raised by the Winter Ball to improve kitchen facilities and to work with the Surgery Practice to further improve the car park, subject to funding being available. We also intend to realign the financial year of the Trust from December - November to May – April. This will make a better fit for our main fund raising activities, the Winter Ball and the 100+Club.

## **Youth**

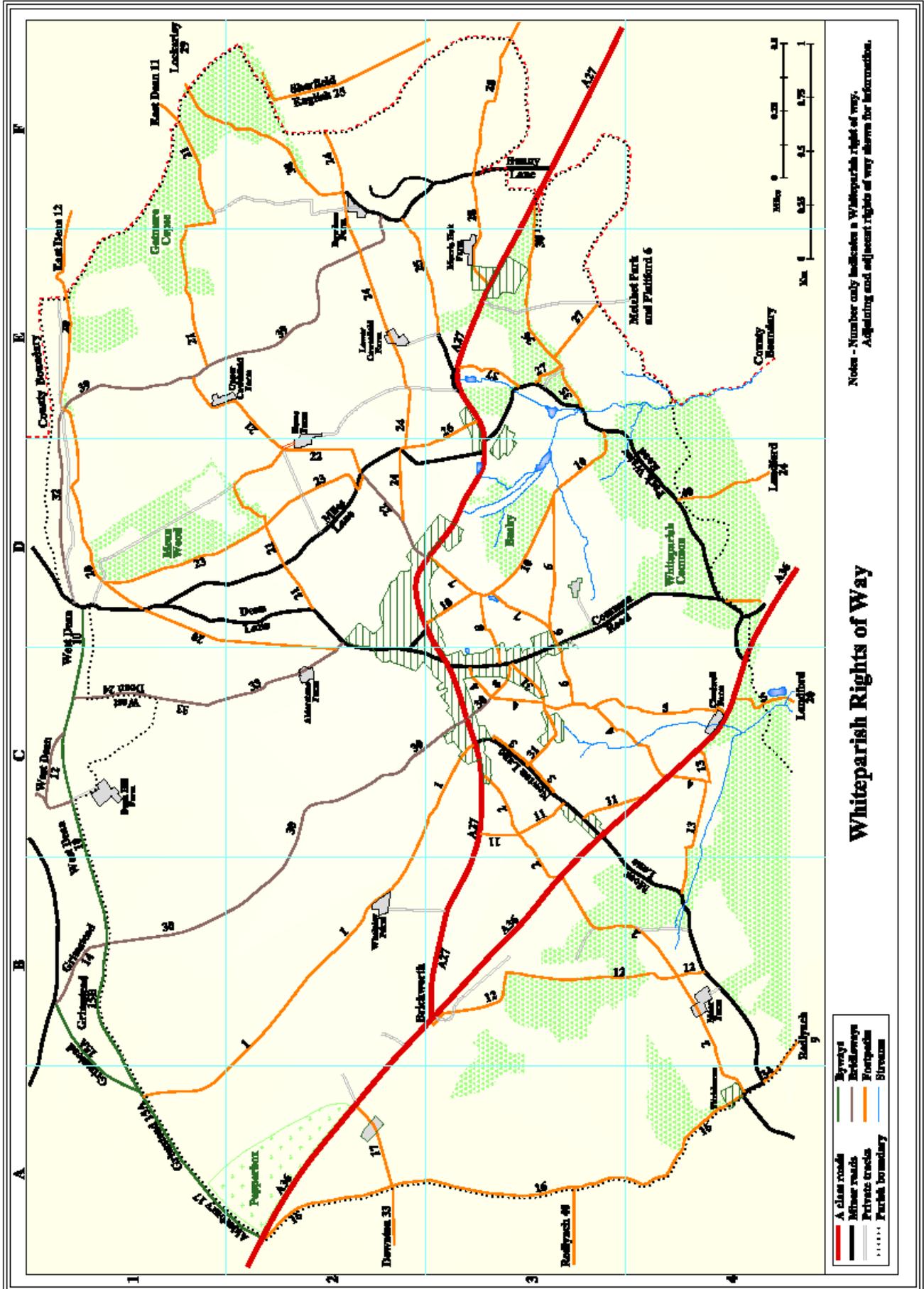
Whiteparish Youth Group marked its fifth anniversary with a special evening at Whiteparish Memorial Centre in May 2017. A bouncy assault course entertained the group's members, while parents and helpers raised a glass to celebrate before a firework display rounded off the evening's festivities. A specially-created cake was cut by Cllr Trevor King, Chairman of Whiteparish Parish Council.

The Group, which was started in 2012 by a small group of parents led by Richard Rendall, now has around 50 members and offers a wide range of activities and trips for children from Years 7 to 11. Regular meetings are held on Friday evenings in Whiteparish Memorial Centre. The group benefits from the support of parent volunteers who run the Friday meetings alongside a member of the Committee. Volunteers are required to undergo DBS checks and a qualified first aider is always on hand during meetings. From September to May the group has offered a separate 'Teen Zone' for older members, but declining uptake led the Committee not to reinstate the facility in September 2017. This saved the cost of hiring the Cowesfield Room and ensures that the Group continues to cover its day-to-day running costs from membership fees.

Events and outings have included a trip to the New Forest Water Park in July, Halloween party, Romsey Rapids Pool Disco, and a Christmas outing to Winchester Ice Rink.

The usual round of fundraising activities was supplemented in 2017 by a Race Night in February, which was enthusiastically supported. The additional funds raised went towards a new table tennis table and new table football. The Waitrose green tokens scheme raised £400.

The regular Friday meetings have featured special activities supported by the Southern Wiltshire Area Board; these have included physical activities run by Go Active, music and creative events from Boomsatsuma and cookery lessons by Any Body Can Cook. Regrettably Go Active has now withdrawn its services, but we understand that the Area Board has secured a replacement provider. Meanwhile, generous grants from the Area Board and Whiteparish Parish Council will fund a qualified Youth Worker to run the regular Friday evening sessions for a year; this will add to the variety of activities and relieve pressure on the Committee, which has seen several changes to its membership during the past year. Efforts will continue to recruit new volunteers and committee members from among the parents of younger members.



Notes - Number only indicates a Whiteparish right of way. Adjacent and adjacent rights of way shown for information.

### Whiteparish Rights of Way

- A class roads
- Byways
- Bridges
- Private tracks
- Footpaths
- Streams
- Parish boundary