

# Ventnor Town Council Newsletter



## Message from the Mayor

I would like to wish everyone a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2025 and thank the wider Ventnor community for all the support they have put in over the last year to make this a truly fantastic community to live in. We have had many obstacles to keep our town open, vibrant and viable, with road closures, and all manner of other challenges, but we did it and got through it together.



### Some highlights of 2024.

It was with great pride that I attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of Ventnor Rugby Club, running continuously since 1974, although the Club is much older, having been founded in 1936. Our town is very fortunate to have such an amazing asset in the Watcombe Bottom Sports Centre.



I also attended the prize presentation of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Isle of Wight Fell Running Championships series. Although organised in conjunction with Ryde Harriers running club, the event is very much a local affair and was the idea and vision of a former Ventnor Town Councillor Brenda Lawson, and Island fell running legend, Eddie Leal, both no longer with us. Councillor Lawson wanted to increase foot fall in the Town post the July/August school holidays and my friend, Eddie Leal, embraced the idea, as he just wanted to bring fell running to the Island and Ventnor has the best and biggest hills. A perfect combination and one I will continue to support. Date for your diaries **13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> September 2025** will be the 31<sup>st</sup> running of the weekend event.

### Community Orchard Coming Soon!

Plans for our very own community orchard in Ventnor, which will be in Steephill Down Road, are now in place. The site could accommodate about 18 fruit trees of various types. We will start off this year with 5 or 6 and in subsequent years add to the stock. The location has an interesting history, and we intend to provide information boards for locals and visitors alike to ponder and enjoy the site as another Ventnor attraction.



Our beloved paddling pool was recognised by the Seaside Heritage Network in the Bucket and Spade competition, obtaining silver, 2<sup>nd</sup> spot. A testimony for the hard work of all those that look after the pool and general areas. Thank you from us all; your work and dedication is recognised, valued and appreciated.



And finally...We will again undoubtedly face challenges in the year ahead, but I have confidence that our community will thrive and promise always to keep you all fully informed on any developments affecting our town, Bonchurch, St. Lawrence and Lowtherville.

Councillor Steve Cooper (Mayor)

## Thursday Kitchen

The Christmas lunch was an amazing success with over 80 people in attendance. The meal was superb, and we are indebted to the volunteers who worked incredibly hard to put together such an impressive celebration. Corny cracker jokes, terrific trifles and superb sprouts added to the fun and everyone went home very full and very happy! Our Local IOW Councillor, Ed Blake, and our MP, Joe Robertson, came along and helped serve the meals and chatted with some of the local residents.

We also thanked two very special young people who have given up their time every Thursday in the school holidays to volunteer at Thursday Kitchen. They help by serving the meals professionally and politely and bring a smile to all the people at the lunches. Congratulations to Amelia and Summer for being star volunteers!

During the last year Thursday Kitchen has cooked over 2,200 meals and served 7,500 teas and coffees for local people. Not only is this a hot meal for everyone, but it is a place where we can meet for a cuppa and a chat, share experiences and make new friends. Why not come along and see the magic that is Thursday Kitchen? Absolutely everyone is welcome.



## Ventnor Well-Being Café

What an amazing year we had in 2024, including trips all over the Island and to the mainland, making decorations for the Town during Carnival Week, a fabulous Christmas lunch at the Mill Bay and a Christmas party with the biggest pass-the-parcel you've ever seen! In December we spent a very cold day in Winchester visiting the Christmas Market. It was great to see the spectacular Cathedral and all the beautiful Christmas decorations around the town. On Fridays we have a fabulous volunteer, Juile, who helps Terri to cook and serve over 20 meals to the group. We are indebted to her for all the hard work she puts in and the poignant and often funny readings, quizzes and games she brings along.

Everyone is welcome to come along to Well-being Café. It is a support group for people to help them overcome mental health challenges, social isolation and loneliness, grief and physical health problems such as chronic pain. It is a warm welcoming place to meet new people, share experiences and connect with the local community. We have members aged from 18-88 and some fabulous canine friends that attend with their well-behaved owners!

Meetings at the Green Room include chatting over a cuppa, bingo and quizzes, colouring, knitting and other crafts, playing with gadgets such as a VR headset, puzzles and board games. We also have regular visits from outreach workers from Living Well and Early Help Service who give support and advice on all sorts of issues including finances, benefits and housing.



## Really Useful Thursdays

On Thursday 6th February from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm, Ventnor Town Council and partner agencies will be at our monthly 'Really Useful Thursdays' session at St. Catherine's Church. Previously called 'Ventnor Our Place', the event brings together groups from the local voluntary and community sector with Island-wide agencies. Organizations invited include Citizens Advice, Age UK, Southern Water, Health Watch, Diabetes Group IOW, Living Well & Early Help, Veterans Outreach Support, Sight for Wight, Baby Box Isle of Wight, Green IOW, Solutions4Health and our local PCSO. There will also be a Mayor's Surgery drop-in session with either Steve Cooper (Mayor) or Steph Toogood (Deputy Mayor) from 12.30-1.30pm.

Many thanks to the congregation and Church Wardens at St. Catherine's Church for supporting and hosting the event.

There will be free tea, coffee and cake and the opportunity to talk to representatives of these organizations to access support or have an informal chat. It's a chance to meet with groups and agencies that don't have a permanent base in Ventnor.

The event also includes our weekly Thursday Kitchen. A group of volunteers have come together to offer a free lunch every Thursday as a part of the Town Council's Warm Spaces scheme. This has been running every week since the beginning of 2023.

St. Catherine's Warm Space is also open for coffee, tea and cake, every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 10:30 to 12:30; it is free, and donations are appreciated.

If your organization would like to take part in Really Useful Thursdays or you would like more information, please call Catherine 01983 853775 or e-mail [catherine@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:catherine@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk)



**St Catherine's Church Ventnor**

**10.30am - 1.30pm**

### Really Useful Thursdays Drop In And Chat

- Looking for a place to connect, relax, and access support over a cuppa?
- Join us at our FREE monthly community drop-in sessions, open to all ages and circumstances.
- Friendly volunteers and local organisations are ready to help or connect you to the right people.
- Mayor's Surgery Drop-in from 12.30pm

February 6th

March 6th

April 3rd

May 1st

**2025**



**free refreshments**

**free lunch served from 12 midday**

## BBC Radio Solent's Soapbox Appeal

This January, BBC Radio Solent is spearheading a campaign to collect donated toiletries and cleaning products for community schemes, with the Ventnor Library Service and Ventnor Town Council joining the effort.

By contributing new and unused personal care items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and household cleaning products, Islanders can support the BBC Radio Solent Soapbox Appeal and make a tangible difference in their community.

At the end of the month, the Library Service will distribute the collected donations to community pantries across the Island, ensuring they reach those who need them most. Ventnor Town Council will distribute donations left at Salisbury Gardens to St Catherine's Church and Baby Box, Ventnor.

For a full list of drop-off points and the items needed, visit [BBC Radio Solent's 'Make a Difference' website](#).

For library opening times and more information on how you can get involved with your local library, [visit Isle of Wight Library Service's website](#). For Ventnor Town Council's opening times, please see page 8 of this newsletter.



## Ventnor Library

Ventnor Library is a partner library and is supported by Ventnor Town Council.

Ventnor Library offers the following services:

- ⇒ Books
- ⇒ DVD hire
- ⇒ Free Internet access and WiFi
- ⇒ E-books and e-audio books
- ⇒ E-magazines and newspapers
- ⇒ Talking books on CD
- ⇒ Large print books
- ⇒ Blood pressure monitor loan scheme
- ⇒ Free access to Find My Past genealogy website
- ⇒ Free access to the British Newspaper Archive
- ⇒ Word processing and scanning facilities
- ⇒ Colour and black and white photocopying
- ⇒ Reference collection
- ⇒ Local studies collection
- ⇒ Newspapers
- ⇒ Bus pass applications
- ⇒ Teenage area

The Isle of Wight Council's library service is set to launch an exciting new newsletter this month, aimed at keeping residents informed about the latest news and events in local libraries.

The bi-monthly newsletter will be delivered directly to subscribers' email inboxes every two months, offering a wealth of information including library news, event updates, book reviews, details about library services, and exclusive interviews with library staff.

There will also be opportunities for readers to get involved and ask any questions they may have about Isle of Wight libraries.

Signing up is easy – simply visit the Isle of Wight Library service website <https://www.iow.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-heritage/libraries/> and click on the link to subscribe.

For those without an email address, paper copies of the newsletter will be available in council libraries.

### Greener Wight

In addition to the Greener Wight book collection, the library service is also supporting customers to live 'greener' lifestyles in other ways –

- ◆ Litter pickers are available for loan either to individuals or groups.
- ◆ Green Island Veg Economy (GIVE) tables are now present at most libraries providing people with the opportunity to share produce, plants, and seeds.
- ◆ Recycling for Good Causes boxes, in which people can donate old coins, phones, stamps, and other electrical equipment, are now situated in all libraries. The money raised from these donations goes to local charities chosen by the library.



### Ventnor Library Opening Hours

**Open 4 days a week**

Tuesday	9.30 to 12.30 and 1.30 to 5.00
Wednesday	9.30 to 12.30 and 1.30 to 5.00
Friday	9.30 to 12.30 and 1.30 to 5.00
Saturday	9.30 to 12.30 and 1.30 to 4.30

Telephone 852039

Email [ventnorlibrary@iow.gov.uk](mailto:ventnorlibrary@iow.gov.uk)

# News from the Business and Community Committee

Business and Community committee (B&C) have had a very busy year. Staff and Councillors are enjoying working with both Businesses and Communities to keep Ventnor vibrant. Interestingly there has been good public attendance at the meetings and much has been achieved with a "mixing of minds".

Here are a few of the events:

The busking in 2024 was somewhat affected by inclement weather but most Summer Saturdays, the Cascade and paddling pool were alive with music.

Ventnor's iconic paddling pool won a very prestigious award - The silver award from Seaside Heritage Network's Bucket and Spade List.

Carnival week had the Pirate Fest to increase the attractions offered. Pirates of all ages appreciated the presence of Jack Sparrow and Captain Hook. Start thinking if you would like to be involved with 2025 event or perhaps you would prefer to be in the stocks!

Ventnor Day in the Park drew the crowds and 2025 will have the expanded and rebranded Ventnor Summer Festival over 2 days.

Did you know that both The Cascade and Ventnor Park scored highly in South and South East in Bloom?

Spring Hill Gardens now has a small memorial garden for the late Kevin Garlick - Ventnor's talented shoemaker.

Thursday Kitchen at St Catherine's church is very busy and the Really Useful Thursdays organized by Catherine Hammond, Business and Voluntary Sector Officer, saw more agencies attending. This will continue in 2025.

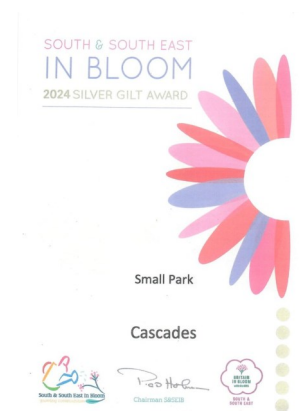
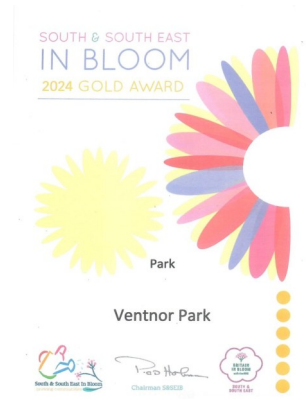
This is just a snapshot of 2024 for the B&C committee. Please feel free to attend our friendly meetings held at the Green Room in Salisbury Gardens:

Thursday 6 February at 5.30pm

Thursday 10 April at 5.30pm

Councillor Steph Toogood

(Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Business and Community Committee)



Baby Box and Ventnor Community Pantry  
opening hours:  
Tuesday 3-6  
Saturday 10-1



## Ventnor Youth Club Update

Ventnor Youth Club are offering dance classes, taster sessions and workshops to local children aged nine and over. The 'Let's Dance' sessions will run weekly on Tuesdays in Upper Ventnor at St Margaret's Hall. Children will learn different styles and choreography, including; Hip-Hop; Classical; Tap; Contemporary; Jazz and more. The classes will be led by a qualified and fully insured dance teacher and performer: UKA, NVQ and BA DANCE.

Please [book on our website calendar](#). Sessions are £2 and we ask that you book a course of four sessions for £8. We will arrange the collection after we have received notification of sign-up.

Follow us & contact us on Facebook at Ventnor Youth Group.

This opportunity is supported by Ventnor Town Council and the IOW Council.

Further information to support families in Ventnor is available on the Town Council website, and the IOW Council [Family Info Hub](#)

### Achievement Awards for all ages

The provision of a UKA dance teacher provides Achievement Awards for all ages if the participants are interested.

There will be a related event happening in the year that will give young people aged 16 and over the opportunity to receive an accredited qualification in dance and leading classes and workshops. The training will also feature Just Jhoom (wellbeing, movement and physical exercise).

The qualification will provide: volunteers; young people; youth and community workers; sports coaches and leaders interested in dance and activity provision, with ideas for basic dance moves and fun ways to introduce dance to young people within their community.

### What to expect

Aims of the qualification workshop:

- To understand basic dance movements needed to participate
- Explore the basic elements of Street Dance, cheerleading and Just Jhoom (wellbeing, movement and physical exercise)
- Deliver basic dance activities to groups of young people and understand adaptations and developments that can be made to develop dance and/or activities.

After the course, participants will be able to introduce dance activities to young people in a community setting or Doorstep Sport Club.

### Who is it for

Young people aged 16+ interested in leading sport, community sport project leaders, youth work and leadership, coaches and volunteers.

## Ventnor Youth Club, Let's Dance:

### Tuesdays

**Group 1: Ages 9 to 12 5.15-6.15pm**

**Group 2: 12 & over 6.15-7.15pm**



## Ventnor Community Playgroup



**NEW sessions starting from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September!**

### Ventnor Family Centre Weekly Pop in Chat and Information Sessions

Our Doors will be open on Mondays from 9am to 1pm. Open for parents/carers (including those expecting a baby) to pop in to chat with our team and find out about support and services available for them

Follow us on social media to find out about any themes or topics being covered but pop along any week with any questions you have

**Ventnor family centre: Mondays 9am – 1pm**

Albert Street

Ventnor

PO38 1EZ

Phone: 01983 408718

Email: [lowfamilycentres@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:lowfamilycentres@barnardos.org.uk)

Website: [www.isleofwightfamilycentres.org.uk](http://www.isleofwightfamilycentres.org.uk)



## Ventnor Community Playgroup

### Bump, Baby and Toddler Group

**Ventnor Family Centre, Albert Steet**

**Monday and Thursdays  
10.30am – 12 Midday  
Term Time Only**



### CONTACT

Eloise Preston

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



Funded by UK Government



## No. 31 Bus - Ventnor's Community Bus Service

As many of you will know, Ventnor Town Council supports the provision of the No 31 Community Bus route that provides a service to St Lawrence and Bonchurch villages on Tuesday and Friday mornings. For the last 6 months we have been able to extend this Service for an additional hour and also to run on Saturday mornings. The Bus picks up at various points and starts / terminates at Ventnor Boots, where a detailed timetable is available. This additional service will continue for the next 18 months and we hope that you and others will continue to use it. The journeys cost £2.50 each way or is **free to Concessionary Bus Pass holders**. The service was welcomed by Bonchurch users whilst Leeson Road was closed and we hope that more residents will take advantage of the service.

The current service uses 8 and 16-seater buses and is quite flexible in terms of pick-up and drop-off points between bus stops. The routes undertaken are not provided for by Southern Vectis. Ventnor Town Council is happy to receive any feedback that current users of the No 31 bus service may have.

Councillor Steve Milford – Town Councillor for Ventnor, St Lawrence  
 Councillor James Toogood - Town Councillor for Bonchurch and Ventnor East  
 Councillor John Watkins - Town Councillor for Bonchurch and Ventnor East





## Future Meetings

**Town Council Meetings 2025**  
held in the Green Room,  
Salisbury Gardens:

Monday 14 April at 7pm

Monday 19 May at 6pm

(Annual Council and Town  
Meeting)

Monday 9 June at 7pm

Monday 11 August at 7pm

Monday 13 October at 7pm

Monday 8 December at 7pm

## Ventnor West Election News

We welcome Councillor Sam  
Smith who was elected on 24  
October 2024.



## Myth Buster

**Does Ventnor Town Council  
administer the local elections?**

No, if you have questions about  
the process or how to register to  
vote, please contact the Isle of  
Wight Council on 01983 823380  
or visit [www.iow.gov.uk/council-  
and-councillors/elections](http://www.iow.gov.uk/council-and-councillors/elections).

Ventnor Town Council will  
publish the Statement of  
Persons Nominated and the  
Declaration of Result both on the  
Ventnor Town Council  
noticeboard by Spring Hill  
Gardens and on the website.  
However, the Town Council does  
not publish details about  
candidates other than the  
information on the Statement of  
Persons Nominated.

## Governance Update

The Town Council has, this year, introduced new committees of councillors, to deal with business in between meetings of the whole council. These replace the former working parties. The new committees are: Policy & Resources, Environment & Transport, Business & Community, Planning, and Buildings Maintenance. All the meetings are open to the public, except where they are dealing with confidential items.

Cllr Ian Bond, who led development of the proposals working with the Mayor and other members, said: "These changes will ensure that most council decisions are now taken in public, with proper agenda papers, and a written record published on the council's website. They also offer residents another way to raise issues or comment on decisions, before they are made, in a more informal setting than at the bi-monthly full council meetings".

Councillor Ian Bond, Chair of the Buildings Maintenance Committee.

## Environment Update

Work at Ventnor Town Council has been steady over the last few months, as ever I give my thanks to volunteers and staff of Ventnor Town Council.

The New Year sees us hopefully planting new trees on the new Orchard site. Councillors and staff have conducted much research on making this a success, and my special thanks go to Jo Ridley of the Hampshire and IW Wildlife Trust for organising an Orchard day where we were able to ask questions of people who have already planted orchards on the south of the Island. With this help, we hope our small site will be a success.

Libraries on the Island now have Thermal Imaging Cameras thanks to a conversation I had with Stephen Cockett of Wight Community Energy, an ex councillor and Mayor of Ventnor. My request was for Ventnor to have one, and he actually provided many more for libraries around the Island which is brilliant. Thank you to Library staff for facilitating this [https://  
www.wightcommunityenergy.org/project/thermal-camera-loan-scheme](https://www.wightcommunityenergy.org/project/thermal-camera-loan-scheme).

I continue to be involved in environmental projects on the Island alongside Together For Mission Zero. I welcome emails from residents as always. Serving my Community has been an honour for the last 3 1/2 years, I'm grateful to residents for this opportunity.

Councillor Julie Hutchison - Town Councillor for Ventnor West

## How can residents contact Ventnor Town Council?

If you have any enquiries for Ventnor Town Council, there are a number of ways you can make contact.

### In person

Ventnor Town Council office is located in Salisbury Gardens on Dudley Road and is open to visitors during the following hours:

Monday - Thursday, 10am -3pm

### By telephone

The main number for Ventnor Town Council is 01983 853755 and can be used during the following hours:

Monday - Friday, 9am - 4pm

### By email

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