

Niton & Whiwell Parish Council

Niton and Whitwell Parish Council serves the small neighbouring villages of Niton and Whitwell in the south of the Isle of Wight, where 50% of the parish's population is aged 50 and over. The parish has limited public transport, few shops and services and social isolation is a particular concern.

"When the Isle of Wight Council 'Dial-a-Bus' service was withdrawn in 2015, the Parish Council became concerned that some Parishioners may suffer increased isolation, being unable to access the scheduled bus service. The same year saw the end of Isle of Wight subsidies for uneconomic, commercial bus routes, resulting in cuts to the winter service" - Vickie Ford, Niton & Whitwell Councillor.

In 2016, Age Friendly Island, in partnership with Niton and Whitwell carried out an audit of the physical and social environment of the Parish. This was to ascertain whether these aspects met the needs of their older residents. As a result, a report was published highlighting the positive work taking place, as well as offering recommendations for improvements. The recommendation for transport stated that the Parish Council should not only work with other stakeholders, but also offer a series of social trips to help combat social isolation.

In response, the Parish Council actively set about arranging an ongoing programme of Island minibus trips. Local residents have had the opportunity to take part in:

- Wine tasting at Adgestone Vineyard
- Visiting the Christmas World display at Busy Bee Garden Centre
- Watching the Dick Whittington pantomime
- Visiting the IW Donkey Sanctuary
- Having lunch at the End Of The Line Cafe
- Shopping at the Co-op supermarket in Freshwater

The trips are popular, well attended and very much enjoyed. To book a place, residents are charged a small deposit, which is refundable on attendance. The trips are seen as an important part of the Parish's commitment to Age Friendly Island and the Age Friendly Charter.



Niton & Whitwell residents enjoying a shopping trip to Freshwater

"Our first trip to Christmas World attracted interest from only 4 Parishioners, but subsequent trips have been so popular that we have needed to hire a 27-seater single decker bus!"

Vickie Ford, Niton and Whitwell Councillor

8 minibus trips have taken place to date

25+ older people have attended minibus trips