

## OUR CONSULTATIONS - THE PROCESS

### INITIAL OPEN MEETINGS

Yarmouth Town Council resolved on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007 to hold public meetings to consult on the preparation of a Parish Plan. These took place in Yarmouth and in Thorley with a total of 93 attending, representing some 22 local organisations as well as individual residents, and a total of 27 volunteered to help with the project. Two representatives of the Town Council were appointed to the Steering Committee for the Plan and those who had signed up at the public meetings to serve on that Committee were invited to its first meeting on 15 April 2008. From the outset, apart from the Council representatives, all involved have not been “selected” but are enthusiastic volunteers.

### FLYER CONSULTATION

Between 27<sup>th</sup> October – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2008 Steering Committee members and other volunteers delivered 945 Flyers to households in Yarmouth, Thorley, and peripheral areas of Bouldnor and Halletts Shute/West Hill. With the consent of the relevant Parish Councils, those resident in adjoining areas were included as they are very involved in Yarmouth and Thorley businesses and activities. People were asked to give their likes, dislikes and what they would like to see improved.

301 Flyers were returned, a 32% response. There were over 2,500 comments a summary of which is given in Appendix 1.

### WORKING GROUPS

Five Working Groups of volunteers, 26 people in total, used the Flyer comments to construct the adult and youth questionnaires. Some of the comments could not be used as they were impractical or rather too personal, but the general quality was high. The Working Groups also helped with the summaries of questionnaire responses and the Action Plans.

### ADULT CONSULTATION BY QUESTIONNAIRE

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 the *West Wight Beacon* delivered the Adult Questionnaire to 962 households. These were then collected by Steering Committee members and other volunteers.

405 Adult Questionnaires were returned, a 42% response. This is a high level of response demonstrating that people care about the area and like to be consulted.

Although a high response could be expected from the 65+ age group, it was pleasing to see a good response also from the 30-64 age group. A full breakdown of the Adult Questionnaire responses is given in Appendix 2.



Collecting the Adult Questionnaire © SM

## **CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

The views of young people about the area and its facilities are important and we have sought to consult them even though their numbers are small. The 2001 Census gave a much lower percentage of population aged 0 – 17 for Yarmouth and Thorley (13% or 103 people) than for England (23%) or the Isle of Wight (21%).

We involved Yarmouth Primary School children by having stands about the project at two events organized by their Parent Teacher and Friends Association. Some of the children made a model of Yarmouth, which was shown being presented to the Mayor in a local newspaper photograph. A lively, informal consultation with 30 children aged 5 – 9 years was chaired by the Mayor in March, where they shared their likes, dislikes, activities, and changes they would like to see in the area.

A Youth Questionnaire for 10 – 17 year olds was devised by a Working Group for the Young and distributed to our young in schools and local youth organisations.

55 Questionnaires were returned and of these 40% were from Yarmouth and Thorley residents, reflecting the particular feature in West Wight of easy movement of young people between schools, clubs and facilities in Yarmouth, Freshwater and Totland.

Full details of the Youth Questionnaire and results are given in Appendix 3. Where appropriate, young views are given alongside those from adults in the analysis of issues in the summary of findings section of the Plan.

Young people in the area belong to a wide range of clubs. 17 clubs were listed in Yarmouth, Freshwater, Gurnard and Ryde, but mainly in Yarmouth and Freshwater: 2 Youth Clubs; 2 sailing & 1 yacht clubs; Scout, Guide & Brownie clubs; Football, Rugby and Karate Clubs; Riding clubs; Music, Dance & Drama groups; Church groups; Ice Skating club.

The Primary School children belonged to a total of 8 clubs, including 6 members of a Swimming Club, an activity surprisingly not mentioned by the older group.

The important issues for the 10 - 17 age group are transport; then education, sports facilities and health; and then social venues, the environment and personal safety. Nearly all students have access to a computer at home and, although the Primary children were not asked this question, all use computers at school.

The Primary children wanted to upgrade the Recreation Ground and its equipment, a picnic area, a swimming pool in Yarmouth, a Sports Centre in Yarmouth, and a park and play area in Thorley.



Informal consultation, Yarmouth Primary School ©SM

## **CONSULTATIONS AT THE PLAN'S DRAFT STAGE**

### **Yarmouth Town Council**

A special meeting of the Town Council in July 2009 received and approved the draft Plan for public consultation and members of the Steering Committee were thanked for their hard work. Councillors judged it to be a very good and worthwhile Plan. An amendment to the reference to the West Wight Landscape Partnership in the Action Plans had previously been made following a Councillor's review of the Plan.

### **Isle of Wight Council Departments**

In addition to useful contacts with Council Officers throughout our project, we sent a draft of the Plan to many departments. As a result our Plan is better informed, as is illustrated by the examples given below, and we are grateful for this worthwhile liaison.

A discussion on the public understanding of sustainability led to the brief description on page 13 of the term “social sustainability” used in our Action Plans. Additional information has been inserted in various sections of the Plan, such as the list of sites of potential archaeological importance on page 6, the description of the Estuaries Project on page 11, and the addition of “Conservation and Design” as a responsible authority in Action Plan B10 (ii) on page 34. Liaison between one of the Working Groups and the Highways Department has been amplified by reference to the Local Transport Plans on page 27 and that department has also given us a list of ways in which it could help to deliver specific Action Plans.

### **Public displays**

We distributed to all households in July 2009 an invitation to displays of the draft Plan in Yarmouth and in Thorley over two weekends. A total of 185 people attended (despite the constant drizzle on one day) and their verbal and written responses showed great interest in and overwhelming support for the Plan. The responses spoke of appreciation for the Committee’s work and confidence that action would follow, such as “pleasing to see that the issues have been correlated, indicating that solutions will be properly prioritised and co-ordinated” and “appreciated the chance to voice our opinions”. There was special interest in the information gathered about our area, and this honest approach: “we take so much for granted that it’s good to have all the aspects of our community broken down like this.”



Public consultation on the draft plan in Thorley Church © SM