

= Whitwell , Isle of Wight =

Whitwell is a small village located on the south of the Isle of Wight , approximately 5 kilometres north @-@ west of Ventnor , the village 's nearest town . In addition to this , it is about five minutes away from its neighbouring small villages of Godshill and Niton , the latter of which , Whitwell forms a Civil Parish . According to 2001 census data , the total population of the village was 578 . There is a variety of stone and thatched housing , as well as some more modern housing , the most recent of which was completed in 2006 .

Whitwell 's small size has led it to become a very close @-@ knit community with a range of amenities including a garage , a 700 @-@ year @-@ old church , the oldest pub on the island , dating back from the 15th century and a post office , which was recently re @-@ located to a new premises inside the church bell tower . A trout farm is located towards Nettlecombe , with three lakes covering 1 @.@ 5 acres (0 @.@ 61 ha) . The waters are well stocked with carp , roach and tench .

Whitwell is named after the " White Well " inside the village , and pictured below . The well was visited by many during medieval times on pilgrimages , and now well dressing occurs annually each summer . Across Whitwell , six more old water standards can be seen . They were built in 1887 by William Spindler . Half the cost of installing the wells was covered by William Spindler himself , the remainder by people of the village . The water was supplied by Mr Granville Ward from a spring on his land at Bierley .

= = History = =

" White " is derived from an Old English word meaning clean or pure , and the village of Whitwell is likely to take its name from a well or spring with a reliable supply of fresh water . The original White Well , located towards the south end of the village was once a place of veneration as a ' holy well ' and a site of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages . The waters of the well were believed to contain healing powers for the infirm . The tradition of Well Dressing was started and now occurs annually at the site of the well . Each year the well is dressed and blessed by the local vicar giving thanks for water and a blessing for the village .

In the village , six red iron water pumps can be seen at various intervals . These were built in 1887 by William Spindler , a prominent figure in St Lawrence whose tomb now lies in Whitwell Graveyard . One is located next to the White Well in Ventnor Road , two along Kemming Road , two along the High Street , and one on Nettlecombe Road .

Many of the village 's buildings such as the White Horse pub , date back to the 15th century . The Church has portions dating back to as far as the 12th century , with newer additions built in the 13th , 15th and 16th centuries . In comparison to this and the rest of the village , new housing has been built relatively recently along Bannock Road . The latest new housing was completed in 2006 .

In 2009 Whitwell won the award for the best kept large village , in addition to the award for the overall island 's best kept village , an award it has previously won in 2003 . Judges from the competition were impressed by maintenance of bus stops , verges seats , commercial premises and gardens and the success of the new post office .

= = Governance = =

Whitwell lies within the parliamentary constituency of the Isle of Wight with the seat held by Conservative member Andrew Turner , and within the same area of the Isle of Wight Council . Together with Niton , the village forms a civil parish , chaired by Councillor John Andrew Stotesbury . The Parish Council has ten members , six for the Niton ward and four for the Whitwell ward . The Council meets ten times a year alternating the venue between the two villages .

= = Geography = =

Whitwell is located in the south of the Isle of Wight , slightly to the south of Godshill , and extends to the southern shore of the island . The nearest town is Ventnor , about 5 kilometres South of the village . Niton is the nearest village about 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) away , which together , Whitwell and Niton form a civil parish . Also close to the village , is Nettlecombe , the site of a lost medieval village located slightly to the north east . The entire village is surrounded mainly by fields and classed as an ' Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty , forming part of the Isle of Wight AONB . ' The relief is mainly flat , with some slight hills . It contains 1 @, @ 910 acres (7 @. @ 7 km²) of land , 687 acres (2 @. @ 78 km²) in 1905 being arable land , 775 ½ acres permanent grass , and 74 ½ acres woodland .

With the villages co @-@ ordinates at N 50 @. @ 60223 W 1 @. @ 29967 , its climate is warm , with a sea breeze coming in from the coast . It benefits from Ventnor 's micro @-@ climate as a result of being in a sheltered location on the cliff of the island 's south coast . This offers the village more sunny days than much of the British Isles , and fewer frosts .

The Eastern Yar , originating in the north @-@ east of the island , extends an infant tributary to Whitwell and at one point , a stone sheep wash is still present . The River Yar Trail was set up on 24 May 2002 , with a milestone outside the White Horse in Whitwell .

Whitwell 's built environment is characterised by its mixture of stone and thatched housing . There is a mixture of single and two @-@ story houses , with most single @-@ story housing on Bannock Road , recently developed with a small estate of bungalows . Terraced housing features in the centre of the village . The most notable house in the village is The Old Rectory , close to the church and was formerly a Bed and Breakfast .

= = Church = =

The Church of St. Mary and St. Radegund is a Church of England church , located on rising ground at the south end of the village , adjoining the rectory . It is the only church in the village . Parts of the church date back to different centuries , the earliest being 12th , with later parts added in the 13th , 15th and 16th century . In April 2007 , the village 's post office was relocated inside the church 's bell tower , the first of its kind to actually be located inside the church .

= = Amenities = =

The village used to have a wide range of facilities used by local residents . However over the years , many of these have gone . These include two shops , a playgroup , its Methodist church , the forge , a nursing home and youth hostel . The facilities left include :

Post Office ? The village used to have its own , family owned post office . This was closed in 2006 , however later in 2007 was relocated onto a new premises inside the church .

Pub ? The White Horse in the village centre is a popular pub across the island . It suffered a fire in 1987 , then again 20 years later in 2007 which saw its temporary closure . Prior to the two fires , the pub was thatched , however after the fire in 2007 , a tiled roof was built , in an attempt to prevent future fires .

Garage ? The village 's garage , named Whitwell garage is one of the only garages left on the island to still sell petrol (excluding supermarkets) . It also sells cars , MOTs and servicing , specialising in Ford .

Village hall ? It is used to host a variety of activities , as well as the Whitwell Village Show , which takes place annually each summer .

Due to the village 's small size and small population of 578 , most amenities are located outside the village . Many are located in the slightly larger neighbouring village of Niton , such as a Pharmacy and doctor 's surgery . Others are located in the nearby town of Ventnor .

= = Transport = =

=== Rail ===

Whitwell Station , on the Ventnor West branch of the Isle of Wight Central Railway , was opened along with the other stations on the branch on 20 July 1897 . It was equipped with a passing loop , two platforms , a signal box and a substantial station building . Located at the top of Nettlecombe Lane , the station is located close to the village and the community it was intended to serve , unlike any other stations on the line .

However the track has now closed , and the waiting rooms have now been converted into two cottages and the old up platform has been restored . The site is now a popular tourist destination and is used for holiday accommodation . An old railway tunnel just outside the village is used as a mushroom farm . Another tunnel is still present on Nettlecombe Lane (pictured to the left) leading to the station .

=== Bus ===

Southern Vectis bus route 6 links the village with the towns of Newport and Ventnor , including intermediate villages . The last bus from Newport is early at 18 : 22 providing no evening service for the village . The seasonal ' Island Coaster ' also runs through the village during the summer . Wightbus and Southern Vectis take students to school , which has caused some controversy over two bus companies taking a small number of students to school .

=== Roads ===

There are only three roads exiting the village , Ventnor Road leading to Ventnor , Kemming Road leading to Niton and the main High Street which leads to Godshell .

The main road leading to Ventnor has recently been widened and resurfaced to cope with the larger number of cars using it , however this has caused controversy with nearby residents with reports of many cars speeding through the village . A sign was later put up , warning motorists if their speed exceeded the 30 @-@ mile per hour speed limit . More were later put up across other parts of the village .

=== Walking ===

The River Yar trail runs through the village with the milestone outside the village Pub . In addition to this , bridleways are maintained , running to nearby villages Wroxall and Niton . Future plans could see a pedestrian link from Whitwell to Niton along the main road .