

Serving the Island's



Town, Parish & Community Councils

# The IWALC Bulletin

April 2023

Your questions answered, your experiences shared... news and information from across the Island...links and updates...

**Your IWALC Matters!!**

## Message from the Chair

Welcome to the April issue of the IWALC Bulletin!

April marks the beginning of the new local government financial year and this issue includes a report on local council precepts – that is, the proportion of the council tax that is levied by local parish, town and community councils in order to fund local services. It has not been easy for local councils to set their precepts this year. They have had to balance, on the one hand, the need to maintain current levels of service provision and the increased cost of doing this with, on the other hand, a concern not to increase the burden on taxpayers too much.

Unfortunately, the financial pressures on local councils have also led some to question their ability to meet the costs of their subscription to IWALC. I am sorry to report that we have lost two members this year. However, we are also very pleased to welcome a new member - Calbourne, Newtown and Porchfield Parish Council.

In view of the above, I would like to take this opportunity to remind councils of the benefits of IWALC membership. Membership provides free access to local training courses, topic meetings and workshops and the opportunity to network with other councils and provide mutual support. It also includes membership of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), which provides legal and other advice.

This issue includes details of two forthcoming training courses and a workshop on the relationship between the Isle of Wight Council and local councils. One of the reasons why local councils are under financial pressure is that, owing to the cuts in the Isle of Wight Council's budget, we are having to take more and more responsibility for assets and services previously provided by the Council. The Workshop, which will be held on 27 April, will pave the way for a more formal workshop with the Council later in the year. In my view, this is a good example of an area where local councils need to work together – and working together means belonging to IWALC.

*Cllr Diana Conyers*



### **DISCLAIMER.**

*The function of the Bulletin is to inform members of issues and happenings that are of concern. All articles are taken in good faith and the opinions expressed in the Bulletin are those of the submitter. Submitted articles do not necessarily reflect our views. We cannot take responsibility for any legal queries resulting from these. We reserve the right not to publish any contributions that for any reason we consider inappropriate.*

# IWALC News...

Contact - IWALC County Officer, Heather Rowell ([heatheriwalc@gmail.com](mailto:heatheriwalc@gmail.com))

Website - [www.iwalc.org](http://www.iwalc.org) - Check out our Facebook page too.

The Bulletin - Communications Officer - Jill Webster - [jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com](mailto:jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com)

The deadline for the May edition will be April 30th - Thank you.

## March Executive Meeting

An IWALC Executive Meeting was held at 7 pm on Thursday 30 March at the Riverside Centre. There were 17 participants, representing 15 member councils.

The main issues discussed were as follows:

**1. Changes in membership:** Members welcomed the news that Calbourne, Newtown and Porchfield Parish Council has joined IWALC, but expressed concern that two members (Lake and Wootton Bridge Parish Councils) have left.

**2. Sue Chilton's retirement:** Members noted with regret that Sue Chilton, who has provided training for IWALC members for many years, is no longer able to do so. It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to her.

**3. Royal garden party:** It was noted that Maxine Warr, former IWALC county officer and clerk to many councils, has been nominated by IWALC to attend the next royal garden party, which will be on 3 May.

**4. Protocol 16:** It was noted that IWALC's suggested revisions to Protocol 16, an annex to the IW Council's constitution that determines the relationship between the IW Council and local councils, will be discussed as part of the next constitutional review process.

**5. Draft Planning Enforcement Strategy:** Members discussed the draft strategy, which is currently under consultation. The main concern was the cost of contributing to the services of an enforcement officer, especially for small councils. Comments will be submitted to the IW Council.

**6. IWALC workshop:** It was agreed that the April topic meeting will take the form of a workshop on the division of responsibility for assets and services between the IW Council and local councils (see below for details).

**7. Annual meeting of mayors and chairs:** It was agreed to hold a meeting of mayors and chairs on Thursday 29 June, prior to the AGM.

**8. Village halls:** Following a request from Arreton Parish Council, it was agreed that those councils that have village halls will share their experiences (see below for details).

**9. Threshold for holding by-elections:** Members discussed a proposal by Newchurch Parish Council that the number of people needed to trigger a by-election be increased because of the costs of holding by-elections, especially for smaller councils. While the financial implications were appreciated, many members expressed concern that increasing the threshold could undermine local democracy. It was eventually agreed to propose that the threshold is reviewed and that the government subsidise the cost of holding by-elections in smaller councils. These proposals will be sent to NALC for their consideration.

**10. IWALC representation on Corporate Scrutiny Committee:** Members expressed concern that co-opted members of IW Council committees are not allowed to send substitutes. It was agreed to write to the Leader of the Council, expressing our concern and requesting that the relevant section of the constitution be reviewed.

## Topic Meetings

The next Topic Meeting will be on Thursday 27 April. As reported above, it will take the form of a workshop. The purpose of the workshop will be to share experiences on issues that have arisen and lessons learned with regard to those IW Council assets and services that either have been taken over, or are partially funded, by local councils. The findings of the workshop will provide the basis for a formal workshop with the IW Council later in the year. Councils will be asked to bring information about any assets taken over or services to which they contribute and staff will be encouraged to attend.

## Meetings with Isle of Wight Cabinet

There was an online meeting with members of the Cabinet on Thursday 9 March. About 12 IWALC participants and at least six Cabinet members were present. There was a lively discussion. The main questions and responses were as follows:

- 1. Revision of Protocol 16:** IWALC's draft has been discussed with officers. It will require constitutional change and so will have to be added to a list of proposed revisions.
- 2. IWALC representation on Scrutiny:** Apparently co-opted members of Council committees are not allowed to nominate substitutes. This explains why IWALC's deputy representative was not allowed to attend the last meeting.
- 3. Stakeholder meetings on Military Road:** Freshwater PC will in future be invited to attend meetings, in addition to the IW councillors for the area.
- 4. Poor A level performance:** IWC is concerned about the standard of education in general on the Island, but only has direct control over some secondary schools.
- 5. Digitalisation of mapping data:** Cllr Fuller will liaise with Bembridge PC regarding the incorporation of IWC data into the PC's digital mapping system.
- 6. Speeding Review:** Some of the data collected in the Review is now being checked, pending finalisation of the report. In the meantime, local councils can submit speed-related projects to the Safety Improvement Register, but should bear in mind that priority is given to projects of major risk to safety.
- 7. Amalgamation of small councils with larger ones to increase access to funding:** There was discussion about the feasibility and impact of this and who would be responsible for such changes.
- 8. Police action re road accidents:** Cllr Smith was advised to email Cllr Lucioni regarding her latest discussions with the Police.
- 9. Request for stakeholder meeting re Yarmouth School site:** This will be followed up.
- 10. Future IWC Budget for Community Led Housing:** Cabinet members were unable to say how much this would be.
- 11. West Wight Greenway: This is progressing.**
- 12. Living Well and Early Help Service:** It was noted that the service won a gold award at iESE's recent annual Public Sector Transformation Awards.

When closing the meeting, the Leader thanked local councillors for the work they do.

The next meeting will be at 12 noon on **Thursday 13 April**. All councillors and staff are welcome to attend.

## Meeting with Bob Seely MP

There was an online meeting with Bob Seely MP on Wednesday 22 March at 5pm. Only seven local council representatives attended. Possible reasons for the low attendance were discussed. It was agreed to try meeting at 6 pm instead of 5 pm and to give a week's advance notice of meetings.

Bob began with a brief overview of his recent activities, including a question about additional funding for the Island that he had raised at Prime Minister's Questions earlier that day.

The following questions were then raised:

**1. Progress with Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill:** Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will be made first. Bob is waiting for a letter from Michael Gove, confirming that the IW Council can claim exceptional circumstances to justify lower housing targets in the Draft IPS.

**2. Support with energy bills for village halls:** Bob acknowledged the problem and agreed to re-search possible support.

**3. Decision on future use of Camphill:** Bob repeatedly asks for a decision to be made. He wants to see the land used for housing.

**4. Impact of cuts to IW Council budget on residents:** Still waiting for review of local government funding agreement, but in the meantime the DWP is providing new round of cost-of-living support payments to those receiving certain benefits.

**5. Money to develop sporting facilities:** This is mainly responsibility of IW Council.

**6. Performance and cost of ferry crossings:** Wightlink's services are improving but there are still problems with Red Funnell. IW Council should lobby harder for lower fares. IW Council or government should buy 51% share in ferry companies.

**7. Location/viability of additional food pantry on Island:** Bob will follow this up.

**8. Support for asylum seekers on Island:** Any request for support by an asylum seeker is followed up; each case is dealt with individually.

**9. Capacity to handle more tourists on Island:** There is capacity. [Some confusion regarding this question, possibly due to misunderstanding of MP's question in parliament.]

## Training

In line with the recommendations of the Training Group, which met on 3 and 24 March, the Executive agreed at the March meeting that the next two training events will be as follows:

**1. Access to the Media:** This will be a two-part course, delivered by Abi Fox and Martin Neville, from the IW Council's communications team, in May. The dates have yet to be finalised, but members will be notified shortly.

**2. Councillors Skill Update:** This will also be a two-part course. It will have two main objectives: (i) to refresh members' knowledge of key skills; and (ii) to provide an opportunity for members to discuss any topics where, based on their experience as councillors, they feel they need more information or discussion. The course will be open to all councillors. It will be run by a team of IWALC councillors and staff, led by Trish Redpath, a Nettlestone and Seaview parish councillor with extensive local government experience. The first session will be held on Thursday 22 June and the second on Thursday 6 July, in both cases from 6.30 to 8.30 pm. Prospective participants will be consulted about the issues they would like covered. Further details will be circulated shortly.

These are both new courses. They will be held on Thursdays, rather than on Wednesdays as in the past, because some councils have been unable to attend on Wednesdays.

## Village Halls

Do you have a village hall in your parish, either one that you run directly or one run by a separate body, such as a community association or management board? If you do, Arreton Parish Council would like to hear from you. They are currently reviewing the management of their village hall and would like to learn from your experiences. Please contact Vivian Roberts at [robertsapc@gmail.com](mailto:robertsapc@gmail.com)

## Best Kept Village Awards

A reminder that judging for the 2023 Awards will be taking place between May 1st and May 21st

## Community Action's Winter Pressures Partnership Zoom meetings

Please contact Sandy Ciccognani ([SCiccognani@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:SCiccognani@actioniw.org.uk)) to be added to the circulation list for more information, log-in details for Zoom and for the date of the next meeting.



## Monthly Meetings for IWALC with IWC Cabinet Members

These take place on the second Thursday of the month, remotely, via Teams between noon and 1pm. They are well worth finding an hour of your day for. All IWALC Councillors and staff are invited to take part in these informal but informative meetings.

Please contact your Clerk for the Teams log-in details.



## Meetings with MP Bob Seely

All Councillors and staff of IWALC Member Councils are invited to take part in these online meetings.

The Zoom log-in details will be circulated to Clerks in advance.



**Please remember to check IWALC's Facebook page regularly for more NALC information and news.**

**If your Council has a Facebook page, please let Jill know and we can re-post your news etc to IWALC's Facebook page.**



## Local Council Precepts 2023/24

The table below provides summary data on the precepts charged by local councils in the new financial year: April 2023 to March 2024. It includes information on the total precept raised, the weekly charge for a Band D taxpayer and the differences between this year and last year.

The data was obtained from three sources: information provided directly by councils; information obtained from council websites; and data recently published in the press (see for example <https://onthewight.com/find-out-how-your-council-tax-bill-compares-to-others-on-the-isle-of-wight/>). The three sets of data are not always entirely consistent. We apologise for any errors or misinterpretations and would welcome corrections from councils.

We asked councils about the process by which they decided how to set the precept. Those who responded all said that it was a difficult process. They had to balance, on the one hand, the wish to maintain current levels of service provision and the increased cost of doing this with, on the other hand, a concern not to increase the burden on taxpayers too much. A number of councils undertook public consultations and, where this was done, the response influenced their decision.

Some councils have managed to avoid any significant increase in their precepts, in most cases by drawing on reserves. Others have had to make significant increases, usually due to increased costs of service provision, the need to fund essential capital works (such as new toilet blocks) and/or takeover of services previously provided by the IW Council.

### Council Precept Data 2023/24

Council	Precept 2022/23 £	Precept 2023/24 £	% Increase/ decrease	Band D charge per week £	% increase/ decrease
IWALC members					
Arreton	10,400	15,000	44.3	0.76	45.4
Bembridge	189,300	210,097	11.0	0.19	45.4
Brading	79,900	89,460	0.9	1.97	0.5
Brighthstone	38,172	39,410	3.0	0.91	3.0
Calbourne	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.07	5.1
Chillerton & Gat	12,000	13,000	8.3	1.33	8.0
Cowes	319,794	335,504	4.9	1.53	4.8
East Cowes	355,283	373,476	5.2	2.65	5.4
Fishbourne	17,000	17,000	0	0.78	1.6
Freshwater	295,287	458,646	55.0	3.48	55.1
Godshill	42,926	45,072	5.0	1.47	5.1
Gurnard	60,186	60,186	0	1.28	-0.5
Havenstreet & A	n.a.	12,769	4.8	0.63	33.2
N & Seaview	77,932	81,350	4.4	0.89	5.1
Newchurch	18,680	20,000	5.6	0.35	6.7
Newport & Car	738,659	727,767	-0.1	1.74	-0.1
Niton & Whitwell	52,411	52,411	0	1.04	-0.3
Northwood	31,612	33,983	7.5	0.76	8.1
Rookley	8,320	9,000	8.2	0.70	7.3
Ryde	1,258,271	1,384,098	9.9	3.23	9.4
St Helens	34,080	34,844	5.5	1.19	1.9
Sandown	n.a.	531,299	n.a.	4.20	50.0
Shalfleet	39,820	45,793	15.0	1.16	14.2
Shorwell	15,000	16,000	6.6%	1.19	1.9
Ventnor	383,370	430,731	12.3	3.30	12.1
Wroxall	20,000	21,550	7.5	0.69	8.3
Yarmouth	65,971	65,970	0	2.47	-0.1
Non-members					
Chale	11,027	17,900	56.5	1.36	57.0
Lake	n.a.	166,262	90.1	1.90	90.1
Shanklin	320,000	320,000	0	1.72	-0.1
Totland	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2.01	-0.9
Whippingham	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.79	12.1
Wootton Bridge	73,000	80,000	9.6	1.15	9.6

# News from NALC

## NEWS FROM NALC: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National Assembly met remotely on Tuesday 4th April. The highlights are as follows.

### 1. NALC HEADQUARTERS, 199 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON

Following earlier reports that NALC's headquarters was being put up for sale as the building is no longer fit for purpose it was confirmed that a buyer has been found, a sale agreed and contracts were exchanged on Friday 31st March. The completion date will be mid-April. The sale price is £2.75m, and the buyer is a hotel adjacent to 109 Great Russell Street. NALC staff moved out of the building on 31st March. Rented office space has been secured for one year from 1st May some 400 metres from 109. In the meantime meetings are taking place at the CCLA offices in the City near Canon Street station. The interim arrangements will provide time for the Management Board to come up with a plan for the use of the funds and the long term arrangements for the management of the association.

### 2. STAR COUNCIL AWARDS

Members of The Assembly were asked to publicise the 2023 Star Council Awards which are being launched on 24th April. Councils, CALCs and individuals are being invited to nominate councils, councillors, young councillors, clerks and CALCs for these awards. The awards will be presented at a Parliamentary Reception on 29th November. Further details can be found at: [www.nalc.gov.uk/starcouncilawards](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/starcouncilawards)

### 3. GOOD COUNCILLOR GUIDES

At the request of IWALC I raised the issue of some of the Good Councillor Guides being out of date. The Chief Executive agreed it was a point well made. The Good Councillor's Guide to Employment has been reviewed and should be available soon. The Good Councillor's general guide is being worked on and should be available in the autumn. It was agreed that there is a need to set a timetable for reviewing the rest of the guides and this will be done.

### 4. CORONATION

Members' attention was drawn to the Coronation pages on the NALC website which has had over 6,000 visits.

### 5. POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

David Francis, Chair of The Policy Committee reported on recent meetings and commented on motions received from CALCs including one from the Durham ALC which wanted to increase the threshold needed for councillors to call extraordinary council meetings from two to the quorum of the council. That prompted me to comment that a motion was on its way from IWALC to the Policy Committee seeking an increase in the threshold needed for bye-elections or parish polls to be called along with a motion seeking financial support for small councils faced with bye-election costs.

### 6. HOW TO GET MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF CALCs AND NALC

We had a breakout session in groups to discuss how to get more people involved in the work of NALC and CALCs. One of the problems is that there is a perception that too few people are doing too much but at the same time it is not always easy to get more people to come forward to fully engage. There were some interesting comments from different areas. Amongst other things there is a perceived need to encourage succession planning and also to formalise the right of CALCs to appoint deputy Assembly members. It was disappointing to note that the Task and Finish Group charged with looking at these issues has not met since September. It has now been agreed the Management Board will meet in May to finalise recommendations to the July Assembly meeting (to be held face to face) and thereafter presented to the 2023 AGM.

Bob BLEZZARD April 2023

## **Fortnightly Meeting with County Officers**

At the March 22nd meeting with county officers, we were delighted to be joined by Daniel Purchase from Breakthrough Communications, NALC's partner on council communications and engagement, as well as data protection and Freedom of Information (FOI). Daniel provided county officers with information and advice on data sharing agreements and other matters related to FOI requests. We also gave several updates including on our work engaging with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, recent changes at Smaller Audit Appointments Limited and progress on our office move.

At the March 8th meeting between NALC and county officers, there was a presentation by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). They explained how the process for updating ward and division boundaries works, the rules they need to follow and how local councils can make effective representations on behalf of their area. It particularly covered what are and are not valid considerations when determining boundaries. The other main topic was handling audit complaints from members of the public.

## **Sign Up Now to Receive Your NALC Emails Directly**

Did you know that you can receive all NALC emails directly?

Please follow the link below to subscribe -

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/nalc-newsletter>



# News from Member Councils

Arreton Parish Council  
Bembridge Parish Council  
Brading Town Council  
Brighstone Parish Council  
Calbourne, Newtown & Porchfield  
Parish Council  
Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council  
Cowes Town Council  
East Cowes Town Council  
Fishbourne Parish Council  
Freshwater Parish Council  
Godshill Parish Council  
Gurnard Parish Council  
Havenstreet & Ashey Parish Council

Newchurch Parish Council  
Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council  
Niton & Whitwell Parish Council  
Northwood parish Council  
Rookley Parish Council  
Ryde Town Council  
Sandown Town Council  
Shalfleet Parish Council  
Shorwell Parish Council  
St Helen's Parish Council  
Ventnor Town Council  
Wroxall Parish Council  
Yarmouth Town Council

## Brighstone Parish Council

There is one reoccurring local issue which I believe may be island-wide and that is the spilling of sewerage.



Brighstone has been experiencing the spilling of sewerage from the man holes in the village since 2014 and this has increased over the years as house building has increased.

When speaking to the planning department, they explained that every land owner has a legal right to connect into the sewer and it is the responsibility of the water authority to upgrade the infra-structure to cope with the increased demand.

The water authority have been challenged but have only instructed Island Roads to clean out the drains more frequently, and the problem during heavy rain only gets worse.

My questions to other councils are whether this problem is common in other towns and parishes? Have they made similar challenges without success? Has the issue reached a stage where the Island towns and parishes need to make a stand to put pressure on the water authority to invest in upgrading drainage systems across the island?

You will see on the news that many towns and villages across the south are challenging the same water authority as they also are experiencing the spillage of sewerage in the streams, rivers and into the sea.

I would be Interested to hear from other towns and parishes on their experiences to establish how serious the issue is across the island and which may justify the island joining others to increase the pressure for investment.

*Cllr John Cirrone, (Chairman)*

## Freshwater Parish Council



At Freshwater we have a new councillor, Em Roberts. She was co-opted at the full council meeting in March. Em moved from Surrey a year ago to be closer to her family.

The toilets in Gate Lane are moving forward and we hope to have a site visit in the near future. The roof is on and all the tiles in place. It is beginning to look like we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

My mother lives with me and, like many older residents, no longer drives or holds a valid passport. Although we on the Island will not be voting in May this year, it came to our attention that this was something we needed to think about. We have been in contact with the Isle of Wight Council and obtained through them the new voter photo ID, because if you don't have photo ID you will not be able to vote at the polling stations in the future. Apart from getting Mum to have her photo taken it was a painless process. The one issue that I was not expecting is that this form of photo ID can only be used as proof of identity for voting and can not be used for any other purpose. One last piece of information which may be useful, people can use their blue badge as a photo ID. However if you need to park to poll you may find yourself needing a ticket or getting a ticket if you do not have your blue badge in the car whilst you poll.

The new primary school in Freshwater had its open day on 30th March and Freshwater Parish Councillors were invited to attend. I was happy to accept the invitation along with other three Parish Councillors including our Chair, Daniel James. We spent an hour and a half being entertained by the children, the Headteacher Mrs Grainger and Bishop Jonathan. The lovely Debbie Andre attended in her role as IOW Council cabinet member with responsibility for education and, much to my amusement, sat on the school bench along with Year 6 children. Many thanks were given throughout the service including thanks to everyone who participated with the project from Council officers, the school Governors, (who are a dab hand at flat pack furniture) and the lovely parents and their talented children.

*Cllr Emma Cox (Vice Chair)*

## Ryde Town Council

Ryde Town Council's youth service, Network Ryde, has been awarded a Youth Investment Fund grant of £578,000 to complete the renovation of St Thomas' Church for its use. When the project is complete, Network Ryde will be able to support another 200 young people. Its new home will provide four times the



current space, offering much needed room for sports activities, gaming areas, a fully working kitchen, accessible bathroom and washing facilities, confidential spaces, and quiet study areas. It will also have an outdoor garden space to encourage nature, with seating, and bike storage. The funding will also allow Network Ryde to expand their team of Youth Workers, and to work more effectively with partner agencies, providing the opportunity for confidential meeting space, and community events.

Meanwhile, in the last few weeks, the Town Council has provided £8,000 worth of supermarket vouchers to help local residents struggling with the cost of living crisis. The funding was sourced from Connect4Communities. Beneficiaries, who were referred by community-based outreach workers, were able to choose whether to have a voucher for the Coop or Iceland. We hope to obtain more such funding in the next round of Connect4Communities grants.

*Cllr Diana Conyers*

## Fishbourne Parish Council

Katie Riley, our new clerk, is now in office and is very rapidly and efficiently catching up with the various ongoing issues in the Parish.

At our March Parish Council meeting, we decided to provide £500 towards the cost of keeping the IW Council's Help Centre in Ryde Library open. Ryde Town Council had already agreed to meet the costs but neighbouring parish councils were asked if they were able to make a contribution. Fishbourne councillors are happy to help, because we know that this is an important service used by some of our residents. For similar reasons, we last year agreed a three-year funding package for Aspire Ryde.

After months of discussion and consultation, we have just planted eight trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project. Four trees have been planted in Firestone Glade and four in Fishbourne Lane. Many thanks to the councillors and residents who organised this.

*Cllr Diana Conyers*



## Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council

Parishioners in Chillerton and Gatcombe were delighted by their appearance on Channel Five's programme 'Jewel of the South'.

The programme shows the world how wonderful the Island is. We knew that!

It also showed that Chillerton and Gatcombe was the best kept and loveliest place on the Island. We knew that too!

*Cllr Nigel Phillips (Chairman)*



## Shalfleet Parish Council



Shalfleet Parish Council

**School participation** The March Parish Council meeting involved Year 5 children from Shalfleet CE Primary School, who previously spoke with Cllrs P Broadhead and H Hewston regarding Parish Council matters. A local home-schooled child spoke about road safety in the Parish and asked if the Parish Council could help put up more 'slow' signs, alerting motorists about the presence of red squirrels in the area.

**Coronation events** Several requests for donations towards Coronation celebrations have been received. Shalfleet, Wellow and Newbridge are each planning to hold picnics to mark the King's Coronation.



**Bouldnor Field** will be benefitting from a 'Coronation Avenue' of trees. A new bench is also to be installed at the opposite end of the field to the children's play area. The Parish Council would like to reassure parishioners that there is no intention to build on Bouldnor Field. Woodland tree whips, oak, beech, hornbeam, alder and willow, supplied by The Conservation Trust were planted to form a King's Coronation Avenue stretching across Bouldnor Field on either side of the path leading to Bouldnor Mead. Three High School Year 10 students helped with the digging and planting. Said Mia Cowley, 14, 'It's our future, so it was good to help today.'

**Parish Council meetings** All subsequent Parish Council meetings (aside from the Annual Parish meeting on 26th April) will be held at Shalfleet CE Primary School, in the evenings.

**April 26th Annual Parish meeting** The Clerk arranged for Ella Cooke from Island Waste to give a presentation. Also, Andy Norman will be coming to receive the Parish Council Community Award for 2023.

**Defibrillators** The Deputy Clerk arranged for a notice informing people where the recently installed one at Wellow is, on the Millennium Green noticeboard. Also, put up a poster in the bus shelter at Wellow and renewed the ones at Newbridge Community Centre.

**Blockage of river behind Shalfleet waterworks** A resident very kindly took photos of the blockage. The Environment Agency were contacted regarding this, who have in turn reached out to Southern Water, who are responsible for rectifying the issue.

**Community Led Housing update** CLH officer put together a letter, application form and equal opportunities form for them to complete and return to him. The Clerk has sent these to those people who have already expressed an interest in joining the Working Party. A meeting was held to agree applicants to join the WP on 29th March and the WP is now formed. The next stage is to discuss further the Terms of Reference and its protocols before giving thorough definitions to the size, shape etc. of the properties.

Amy Parkinson (Deputy Clerk)

## Cowes Town Council

Well, Spring has certainly sprung. With warmer days, brighter sunshine and an abundance of daffodils and primroses throughout the town, we welcome the lighter evenings.



**At our March Town Council meeting** - The local Safer Neighbourhood Officer's report included details about anti-social behaviour issues and some drug related offences. A person had been reported as sleeping in The Cut toilets, having declined the offer of accommodation. The Police are investigating dog poisoning at Parkhurst Forest and holding beat surgeries in Cowes, Northwood and Gurnard.

Councillors supported a grant of £1,000 to Cowes Sailability Club to Charter Wetwheels Hamble for two days at £500 per day. The Club gives the elderly and disabled the opportunity to take to the water, with their carers, for an enjoyable experience that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to do.

The Town Council has approved expenditure for the provision of CCTV cameras at Northwood Recreation Ground, subject to IW Council approval as landowner, to reduce vandalism in the area.

Our Projects Committee has a number of large projects underway, including the refurbishment of Medina Road public conveniences and installation of a Changing Places toilet facility and improvements at The Cut.

One project which has now come to fruition is the unveiling of a new mural depicting 'Secrets of the Solent', installed on the west facing side of the Cabin on the Green, opposite Mornington Road on Cowes esplanade.

Cowes Town Council is delighted to have worked in partnership with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) and Southern Water to secure Cowes as a location for one of six new murals. The murals, which consist of six underwater scenes, painted and inked onto boards of marine plywood, when pieced together, form a giant 24ft long and 16ft high map of the Solent, showcasing local species including thresher sharks, undulate rays, seahorses and mantis shrimp.

HIWWT commissioned Southampton-based artist and illustrator, Hannah Horn, to create a series of large, interlocking artworks that celebrate the Solent's extraordinary marine life.

As part of their National Lottery supported project, *Secrets of the Solent*, which works to celebrate and raise awareness of Solent's protected species and habitats. The HIWWT hopes the murals will become landmarks in their locations and inspire viewers to take an interest in the area's diverse marine environment, including its internationally important seagrass meadows, chalk reefs and rocky sponge gardens.

The murals are on display across six coastal locations on the Island of Wight and Hampshire:

### Isle of Wight locations:

The Needles

Aqualibrium Art Gallery, St Helens

*Queens Road, Cowes* – The mural, measuring 8ft x 8ft, is located on the western side of the Southern Water pumping station on Queens Road.

Hampshire locations:

Calshot Activity Centre  
Hill Head Sailing Club  
Blue Reef Aquarium, Southsea

The murals will be displayed indefinitely at their locations. To see a map of the mural locations and learn more about the Secrets of the Solent project [click here](#).

*“This is a lovely mural and good news story,”* said Project Committee Chairman and Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Nicholson. *“It has been good that the Council has been able to work constructively with Southern Water and the Wildlife Trust in delivering something that is informative and can be enjoyed by so many people in such a prominent location, and we would like to thank all those involved in its delivery.”*



*[Photograph shows, left – right, Laura Moran, Southern Water’s Taskforce Project Manager; Councillor Michael Paler; Councillor David Walters; Councillor John Nicholson, Projects Committee Chairman and Deputy Mayor of Cowes; Councillor Phil Sanders; Adam Wilds, Southern Water’s County Customer Manager for the IOW; two members of the public.]*

We hosted a community litter pick on Saturday 25 March in support of the Great British Spring Clean (running from 17 March – 2 April). Turnout was somewhat disappointing, but we collected seven bags of rubbish from the Arctic Park / Arctic Road / Newport Road area.



Plans are underway by Northwood House Charitable Trust for the Coronation Picnic in the Park – Cowes’ free community event which is being held on Sunday 7 May.

The event is supported by Cowes Town Council with funding of £2,000.



Councillors are to consider providing commemorative mugs to mark the Coronation for pre-school and primary school-aged children in Cowes, at our April Town Council meeting.

We currently have two vacancies in the Cowes Medina Ward, which we are in the process of filling by co-option.

The Town Council is looking at the summer planting and watering contracts, ensuring our town is bright and colourful for visitors and residents.



*Kate Scragg (Asst Town Clerk)*

## **Gurnard Parish Council**

Our big news is that GPC has a new clerk. Being without a clerk for almost three months, even with expert support from Heather Rowell, has really emphasized just how vital the role is and councillors, especially our Chair, are breathing a sigh of relief. Richard is stepping into big shoes but all signs bode well. Phew. At the risk of teaching grandmothers to suck eggs I urge, particularly smaller, councils to appreciate their clerks and to recognise what a demanding role these important people fulfil.



The Southern Water (SW) Pathfinder Slow-the-Flow Water Butts scheme has been partially implemented in Gurnard, although some residents have been disappointed by the lack of communication from SW. At the moment there has been about a 50% take-up; now SW are waiting for some more funding for dedicated teams for a second roll-out. The council, mainly through our Beach Safety Working Party, will work more closely with SW to try and improve communications and increase the up-take figure. Several commercial properties and the village hall are now sporting rather smart SuDS planters on downpipes that connect to the main drain and we are looking forwards to having them planted up. They have certainly had a chance for the soil to be thoroughly soaked and settled by recent rainfall! The main purpose of all this work is to try to reduce the rate of run-off flowing into the sewers and triggering CSO use. Gurnard still shows up far too frequently on Surfers Against Sewage warning alerts.

Our report last month focused solely on precept and budget choices and how these choices were shared with parishioners via a questionnaire. I hope sharing the experiences of other councils and perhaps finding effective ways of increasing community involvement could be a really useful result of a shared focus.

*Cllr Penny Acton*

## Yarmouth Town Council

### Yarmouth School Site Working Party

Yarmouth TC School Site Working Group has had many meetings with

a host of different interesting and interested groups. The site has been registered as an Asset of Community Value by YTC, and the Town Council has expressed an interest in obtaining the site. It is difficult to be sure of the deadline for making an offer for the site, but we will continue to seek clarification.

The group has had a great deal of support from the Yarmouth Community in seeking information from the IWC, DfE, the Diocese of Portsmouth etc.

The Council has leafleted both Yarmouth and Thorley with a tear off return slip and an online survey. There have been over 200 responses so far.

We met with Bob Seely who sent out a leaflet supporting and encouraging residents to respond to Town Council's survey. Amongst suggested future uses are Scout and Guide centre, affordable housing for people with a local connection, educational centre, various environmental groups, workshops, boat building, museum/exhibition centre and a 40 bed Care Home.

We have met with Ollie Boulter to discuss planning options and explore the benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan. We had a meeting with the IW Action which is supported by IWC Regeneration Team to explore the possibility of Community Led Housing and other options put forward by local people. Funding could come from IW Action for initial advice from a Planning Consultant.

There is a need for a 'section 77' consultation for the Department for Education before the site is sold. We do not yet know when this will be or how it works and are again seeking clarification.

The IWC also has told us that the decision to sell has not been finalised.

I would like to thank all those from the local community who have encouraged and support the work of the Working Party.

*Cllr Steve Cowley*



*L to R- Thomas Cowley (Yarmouth Town Council), Louise Metcalfe (Yarmouth Scouts & Guides), Nick Whittle (Whittle Marine), Debbie Andre (IWC Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Chris Jarman (IWC Cabinet Member for Resources), John Caulcutt (CBE Delphi Lakeman Memorial Trust) & Steve Cowley (Yarmouth Town Council)*



## Ventnor Town Council

Monthly Report by David Bartlett (Clerk)



### WELLBEING CAFÉ DOES GHOST WALK



On a cold evening over 30 members of the Well-Being Café braved the notorious 'Ghost Walk' at the Ventnor Botanic Gardens. Our host for the evening Mark Tucky spookily set the scene with the history of the site and its reports of ghostly happenings spanning many decades, regaling stories of sightings, builders fleeing the site during its demolition, small children running around in Victorian clothing, workers and patients from the original hospitals roaming around the site. Access to the famous cliff tunnel was one of the highlights and the early 1900's graffiti carved into the stonework reminded us of the history of the old hospital grounds.

### GREEN ROOM KITCHEN UPGRADE

With the increased use of the Green Room has come a need to upgrade its kitchen facilities, so we've been looking for, and found, the required funding: our thanks to all who made it possible:  
*High Sheriff's Fund* a grant of £500 for the purchase of a new larder refrigerator.  
*Isle of Wight Council's connect4communities fund*: a grant of £700 for a new cooker.  
*Howdens, Lake*: for offering free of charge  
6 double kitchen wall units, complete with doors and handles and fitting kits.

### OUR YOUTH CLUB & FAIR TRADE WEEK

To celebrate & increase awareness of Fairtrade, children took part in a range of activities, across Fairtrade Fortnight. Samantha Pidgeon, Ventnor's Coop Co-ordinator visited & delighted the children with the surprise of making Fairtrade fruit kebabs, with a drizzle of chocolate added, for good measure! The children explored a variety of Fairtrade fruits including; bananas, strawberries, kiwis, oranges, grapes, melons & watermelons & played Fairtrade bingo as well as, a version of Snakes & Ladders that mimics the

### PLAQUE UNVEILED



We were visited by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens for the unveiling of the plaque on the West elevation of Salisbury Gardens marking all of the hard work they undertook in restoring the flower beds outside the Council building The big tidy last year to bring the beds back up to scratch was a mammoth task, but the results have been astounding.

### MARCH OUR PLACE EVENT

The opportunity to enjoy a warm space infused with tea and chat that also offers access to advice from a



wide range of experienced Agencies drew residents to St Catherine's Church on Thursday for March's Our Place event organised by our Community Development Officer Tony McCarthy and an amazing team of volunteers. Open from 10.30 to 2.30 it included a hot lunch. You're very welcome to sample it all at its next session on 27 April.

### LITTER PICKING IN ACTION

Sunday morning during a dry interlude three councillors and a small group of residents gathered rubbish as part of the Great British Spring clean.

The hot spots were the car parks but as we now have so many local volunteers litter regularly Picking the town is much cleaner. A big Thankyou to the volunteers from VTC.

## Sandown Town Council

### ***Eastern Gardens Conveniences Opened***



Sandown Town Council's new public toilet and shower amenity has been opened by Town Mayor Paddy Lightfoot, representatives of Sandown Sprint, Lisa Hollyhead Sight for Wight Chief Executive, and local Town Councillors.

The new amenity, costing over £200,000, includes an accessible cubicle with family friendly features, 3 other gender neutral units, and covid safe contactless payment system, with an initial 20p charge for users. Mayor Paddy Lightfoot said 'We have worked to ensure the amenity is open in time for the Sprint and Easter, and have tried to reflect the priorities residents have highlighted in public consultations, including shower facilities in the summer.'

Lisa Hollyhead added 'This state of the art facility will benefit residents and tourists to Sandown, with Sight for Wight donating an interpretation plaque to improve accessibility, and we look forward to working with the Sandown to extend the number of facilities covered, as well as on other projects.' Eastern Gardens Toilets project includes installation of fencing, an eco-friendly roof covering, and the seaside scene on the amenity specially chosen by local residents.

Tim Addison from the Sprint added 'We'd like to thank the Town Council for their ongoing support, and this new amenity benefits events like ours, as well as residents and visitors to the Town.'

Deputy Mayor Alex Lightfoot concluded 'The Town Council are working on other accessibility projects, working with Sight for the Wight, and other partner agencies, will help improve accessibility for all.'



Richard Priest (Clerk)

# Other News...

ISLE OF WIGHT HELP WITH THE

## COST OF LIVING

01983 823134

[iow.gov.uk/costofliving](http://iow.gov.uk/costofliving)

### General help and support

Citizens Advice IW can give free help with money issues and much more.

☎ 0800 144 88 48 or Textphone on 18001 0800 144 8884

🌐 [www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk](http://www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk)

### Debts and paying bills

Citizens Advice Money team.

☎ 01983 823898 ext: 2825

✉ [debtinquiries@hwcab.org.uk](mailto:debtinquiries@hwcab.org.uk)

🌐 [www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk/money-advice-team](http://www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk/money-advice-team)

### Buying food

🌐 [www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving) and tap on 'food' for more information. Join a community pantry and for £5 a week, receive over £15 worth of food.

☎ 01983 296592 East Cowes Community Pantry

☎ 07961 959003 Ventnor Community Pantry

☎ 01983 563732 Ryde Community Pantry

### Connect4communities

Support including food vouchers, getting weather appropriate clothing (directly with your school) and more.

✉ [connect4communities@iow.gov.uk](mailto:connect4communities@iow.gov.uk)

🌐 [www.connect4communities.org](http://www.connect4communities.org)

### Benefits

Check whether you are getting all the benefits you can. Citizens Advice Help to Claim line.

☎ 0800 144 8444

🌐 [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators)

### Energy bills

The Footprint Trust give guidance on energy bills, efficiency and grants.

☎ 01983 822282

✉ [info@footprint-trust.co.uk](mailto:info@footprint-trust.co.uk)

🌐 [www.footprint-trust.co.uk](http://www.footprint-trust.co.uk)

### Pension Credit

If you are of State Pension age you may be entitled to Pension Credit. If you get Pension Credit you can get other benefits.

☎ 0800 99 1234 or Textphone on 0800 169 0133

🌐 [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)

### Paying for broadband and mobile phone

Social tariffs are available if you're on a low income.

🌐 [www.ofcom.org.uk/cheap-broadband](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/cheap-broadband)

### Feeling lonely

The Living Well and Early Help Partnership works on the Island to connect people.

☎ 01983 240732

✉ [reception@lweh.org.uk](mailto:reception@lweh.org.uk)

🌐 [www.lweh.org.uk](http://www.lweh.org.uk)

### In a crisis

If you have no money for food, gas and electricity you may be able to get emergency help.

☎ 01983 823859

🌐 [www.iow.gov.uk/HelpThroughCrisis](http://www.iow.gov.uk/HelpThroughCrisis)

### Other useful contacts

🌐 [www.helpforhouseholds.gov.uk](http://www.helpforhouseholds.gov.uk)

🌐 [www.islefindit.org.uk](http://www.islefindit.org.uk)

🌐 [www.gov.uk/helpforhouseholds](http://www.gov.uk/helpforhouseholds)



4008 00312



# Isle of Wight Council



## Cost of living

We have recently updated our website <https://www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/warm-spaces/> to highlight winter warm spaces that are staying open all year round. We haven't heard back from everyone, please can you ask anyone you know who is running a warm space to confirm their plans with me on [abigail.fox@iow.gov.uk](mailto:abigail.fox@iow.gov.uk). We will pass the info to CAB who also share this info via [islefindit.org](https://www.islefindit.org) <https://www.islefindit.org.uk/>

Please continue to share information about cost of living support with residents:

- Use the Isle of Wight cost of living web pages <https://www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/> to see what's available near you. You can also call the council contact centre on 01983 823134.
- Contact Citizens Advice Isle of Wight on 0800 144 88 48 or [enquiries@iwcab.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@iwcab.org.uk) [enquiries@iwcab.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@iwcab.org.uk) Their advice is free, confidential and independent. They can help with debt, benefits, legal advice and much more.
- Check out this video <https://www.facebook.com/reel/119086581029149> with 3 energy saving tips from local experts The Footprint Trust. You can contact them for free advice on 01983 822282 or via their website. <https://footprint-trust.co.uk/>
- Use the connect4communities website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities/supportforfamilies/community-grantrecipients-iow> to see what other support is available in your area.
- The government Help for Households website has information about help with childcare costs, benefits and many other schemes. <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

## Community Pantries

Did you know?

- Community pantries are free and for anyone so they can top up their weekly shop.
- Join a pantry and for £5 a week, receive over £15 worth of food.
- You don't need a referral, contact your nearest pantry directly to join.
- The Pyle Street Pantry in Newport is opening soon.



### East Cowes Community Pantry

**Community Spirited, Vectis Road, East Cowes, PO32 6HN**

**01983 296592**

Opening hours are:

Tuesday, 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Wednesday and Thursday, 10:30am to 12:30pm

### Ventnor Community Pantry

**Baby Box, Victoria Street, Ventnor, PO38 1EJ**

**07961 959003**

Opening hours are:

Tuesday 3pm to 6pm

Saturday 11am to 2pm

### Ryde Community Pantry

**Oakfield CE Primary School, Appley Road, Ryde, PO33 1NE**

**01983 563732**

Opening hours are:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

3.00pm to 4.30pm

Get more info about community pantries and accessing healthy food on our website

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/food/>

Please share this Facebook post or tweet.

## Free and low cost activities this Easter

There are lots of free and low cost things to do this Easter holidays on the Island including a kids go free offer at Dinosaur Isle (ts and cs apply), free things to do at our libraries and low cost entry to our museums. There are also still places available on the Holidays Activities and Food scheme which are free for families who are eligible for free school meals.

All the information is in the cost of living section on our website. <https://www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/events/>

Please share this Facebook post or tweet.



## Our new Family Information Hub

Our brand new Family Information Hub <https://familyinfohub.iow.gov.uk/kb5/iow/directory/home.page> has been set up for parents and carers. It will help to keep people up to date with information, support and advice available in their local area.

The online directory provides information about organisations, services and activities available for local families. It includes early years and childcare, support for families, health and wellbeing, leisure and much more.

The site has a great search tool, which means you can search by postcode for things happening in your local area. The Hub will continue to grow as new organisations sign up and share information about what they provide.



## Advice and guidance to help people live independently at home

Focusing on older adults and people with disabilities, our recommissioned independent living advice and guidance offer aims to help people to live as independently as possible in their own homes. Led by our award-winning Living Well and Early Help Service, free, impartial support is available on a wide range of daily living equipment and aids. Staff and volunteers will aim to help residents choose the right product for their needs. This includes advice about specific disability aids, equipment and services over the phone, by email or in-person at an Independent Living Support Clinics held across the Island.

Residents have the opportunity to try items before committing to buying or hiring, such as:

Staff can also advise people on grants and discounts they may be entitled to, or ways to make energy saving changes to their home to reduce bills.

Go to the Living Well and Early Help website for more information. <https://lweh.org.uk/>

*Abigail Fox (Public Health and community communications lead)*

## More News...

### Isle of Wight Council residents and photographic voter ID

From 4 May 2023, all electors who vote in a polling station will be required to show photographic identification before a ballot paper can be issued to them.

The Isle of Wight Council does not have any planned elections on 4 May, but, nonetheless, residents are being urged to make sure they are ready to vote in any future elections and by-elections - including town and parish council elections - by checking they have an accepted form of photographic ID.

Accepted forms of ID include:

- a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport;
- a UK or EEA drivers' licence;
- some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card.
- Voters will be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID online at [www.voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/](http://www.voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/) or by completing a paper form.

The full list of accepted ID is available on the Electoral Commission's website, along with more information about the new requirement and details of how to apply for the free ID, at [electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](https://electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID)

Claire Shand, the council's Returning Officer, said: "Even though we have no planned elections on 4 May 2023, it is important that those who want to vote in future elections and by-elections make sure they have an accepted form of ID. It may seem early but checking now means you will be ready to vote at any future polls. Residents who do not have one of the accepted forms of ID can apply for free ID either online or by completing a paper application form and sending this to the Isle of Wight Council's electoral services team.

If you need any help with applying for the free ID or want to request an application form, contact the electoral services team via [electoral.services@iow.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.services@iow.gov.uk).

For further information, visit: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/council-and-councillors/elections/electoral-registration/photographic-voter-id/> or call (01983) 823380.

Anyone who wants to have their say in elections must also be registered to vote. It only takes five minutes to register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote). Voters wishing to apply to their council for free ID should first make sure they are registered to vote.

### **Isle of Wight footpaths and bridleways repaired and improved in £38,500 grant funded scheme**

Bridges have been repaired, footpaths surfaced and stairs replaced as part of a £38,500 grant funded scheme to improve Isle of Wight public footpaths and bridleways. Much of the funding for the projects carried out by the Isle of Wight Council's Rights of Way team has come from the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership through its Access for All Fund.

Work has included resurfacing or repairing more than 1,600 metres of public bridleway or footpath as well as footbridge replacement and the installation of new boardwalks/platforms and steps. Similar funding is expected to be available for 2024/25 and the Rights of Way team and AONB unit are looking forward to working together again.

Works have included the following projects:

- Public bridleway N108 (Dark Lane), Carisbrooke - surfacing improvements: A popular path on the outskirts of Carisbrooke providing off road routes to Gatcombe and the wider public rights of way network.
- Public bridleway GL44.56 Godshill Park Farm, Freemantle — surfacing improvements: Public Bridleway GL44 forms part of the rural sections of the Red Squirrel Trail, a cycling route popular with residents and visitors.
- Public bridleway GL36/NC43, Donkey Sanctuary - improved multi-use bridge: As well as providing a sustainable transport link to the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary, public bridleways GL36 and NC43 are popular with all users and provides access to the AONB.
- Public footpath T22, Alum Bay - surfacing improvements: Public footpath T22 provides pedestrian access to one of the most popular and iconic beaches on the Isle of Wight, Alum Bay.
- Public footpath V124, Binnel Bay - beach access improvements: Public footpath V124 to Binnel Bay has had a challenging access down the eroding coastal slope. These works have made this easier for people to use.

### **Living Well and Early Help Service receives national recognition**

A ground-breaking service which is empowering residents to live well and independently at home and in their own communities, has received national recognition. The Living Well and Early Help Service, delivered by Aspire Ryde and their community partners, scooped 'Gold' in the transformation in health and social care category in this year's iESE Transformation Awards.

Now in their 14th year, the annual awards celebrate innovation and transformation within the public sector.

The service was jointly commissioned by the Isle of Wight Council and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB) in April 2022. Since then, the community-led partnership has made a real difference to the lives of more than 2,390 Islanders, helping them to stay well, independent and connected with their local community.

This includes people living in some of the most remote areas of the Island, thanks to the launch in December of its innovative mobile support hub. As well as providing improved wellbeing and more sustainable community support, the service is also helping to reduce demand on the Island's health and social care services.

Help can include anything from social contact and building people's support circles, to referrals into community groups nearby or linking them with the job centre, Carers Isle of Wight, housing support, health and social care assistance or cost of living help, to name a few.

To find out more about the Living Well and Early Help Partnership, call (01983) 240732 or visit [lweh.org.uk](http://lweh.org.uk)

## Trading Standards

We have some more scams to share with you this week –



- Emails are being received purporting to be from the Government. They have the Government logo and a crown on them in an attempt to make them look authentic. They state that you are eligible for a discount under the Energy Bill Support Scheme and ask you to click on a link to provide details to receive the discount. Along with your name, phone number and address they ask for your date of birth along with your bank details to receive the discount. This is a SCAM do not click on the link and definitely do not provide any details, scammers are relying on our increased vulnerability due to the current cost of living crisis.
- Residents report receiving calls alleging to be the fraud department of your bank claiming that payments have been taken for online sales and they will try to get you to download an app onto your device that will give them remote access. This is a scam and once you have given them the access they will be able to glean information about you and potentially take all of your money. This type of scam was investigated in this weeks episode of Scam Interceptors on BBC1. By using ethical hackers they were able to intercept the scam and prevent the victim from losing their money. If you receive a phone call claiming to be your bank and trying to get you to give them access to your device hang up immediately, close your device down and contact your bank on the number on the back of your card or by calling 159 and selecting your bank. NEVER give anyone remote access to your device.
- We have had a report from a resident saying that she is getting constant phone calls from somebody saying that her computer isn't working properly and they are offering to fix it – they will then try to gain remote access to your device in an attempt to defraud you. Luckily this lady recognised this as a scam however they continued to harass her throughout they day becoming rude and aggressive. If you don't recognise the number calling you DON'T answer the phone or look into some form of call blocking
- Be wary of any pop ups or emails claiming that your device security has expired and asking you to click on a link to renew it. If you aren't sure when it expires free security is available from a selection of companies online, or you can purchase this from trusted traders.



*Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)*

## Community Action IW

Due to a high demand, Community Action Isle of Wight is now offering an additional session on funding applications:



**Community  
Action  
Isle of Wight**  
*at the Riverside*

**How to improve the success rate of your funding applications – 15 May 2023 (10:00-13:00) – FREE** thanks to grant funding.

Most charities and voluntary groups apply for funding as part of their efforts to raise money for the work they do in their communities. Many of the important public services are now run by charitable and not-for-profit organisations. Ensuring the viability and financial sustainability of these services is crucial for the wellbeing of our communities.

This online training session is designed to help representatives of charitable and not-for-profit organisations to gain the knowledge and skills needed for successful funding applications - in the shortest possible time.

### TESTIMONIALS:

“Clear steps for making grant applications, plan to follow and tools to support. Well presented in a clear and easy to understand format.”

“It has helped me to think more about the funding application process, what I need to do to be more successful within the process. The practical exercise and the listening to the comments/questions from the other participants sharing their knowledge/experience were very useful.”

“The Outcome Planning model is really useful and something I will use in the future.”

“Lots of ideas that I had not considered for improving quality of applications.”

You can find more information and book your FREE place on this online training course here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-improve-the-success-rate-of-your-funding-applications-tickets-591376893207>

Also, there are still a few places available of this very useful course:

**INCREDIBLE VALUE!** Only £60 per person for the whole training course if you are based on the Isle of Wight - thanks to grant funding.

### **PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS – 5, 6, 7 & 12 June 2023 (all days 10:00-13:00) – 1 booked**

Projects are, more than ever, a fact of life for all organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Some people do projects well, whilst others go from one disaster to the next, never seeming to learn the lessons of the past.

By applying project management principles and tools, you can avoid the common problems associated with projects and become an effective and successful project manager.

The Project Management Skills training is designed to introduce you to key elements of project management and to equip you with useful skills, practical tips and tools to ensure the success of your projects.

This training comprises four modules delivered online via Zoom.

Module 1 - Monday, 5 June

Module 2 - Tuesday, 6 June

Module 3 - Wednesday, 7 June

Module 4 - Monday, 12 June

All days 10:00-13:00.

People will need to attend all four modules in order to receive certificates

**COURSE FEE - £60** (you would have to pay hundreds of pounds for this training elsewhere!).

### TESTIMONIALS:

“This training has been sooooo helpful and extremely worthwhile! I have learnt so much, as I haven't managed a project before I know what I need to be doing in the future which will give me a good place to start. This also has helped me so much in terms of being involved in projects too and what should be happening at each stage.”



“Lots of tools given which can be taken away and used afterwards.”  
“It has given me the skills that I lacked and the confidence to improve them.”

You can find more information and book your place on this online training course here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/project-management-skills-tickets-531977688587>

## **Caring about our piece of Earth – our wonderful Isle of Wight**



Did you know that Earth Month takes place during April every year and that over a billion of people from some 193 countries will celebrate the Earth Day 2023 on Saturday 22nd April?

This topic is very close to our hearts at Community Action Isle of Wight. Our new 4-year project Resilience at the Heart of Isle of Wight is working alongside the cultural strategy, the UNESCO Biosphere designation and promotion of healthy and positive lifestyles which not only benefit from our unique island environment but also can contribute to biodiversity and sustainability on our little piece of Earth.

Over the last few years, our understanding of sustainability moved from the idea of limiting our harmful impact on the environment to the commitment of taking purposeful and deliberate action – doing what is good for the environment at every opportunity.

One of the ways to do it is by participating in the FREE environmental accreditation scheme Green Impact. This award-winning scheme created by the National Union of Students (NUS) of the UK came to the island two years before the COVID-19 pandemic. It was working mostly with our local businesses but a few of non-profit organisations also joined this scheme since it became operational here.

The Green Impact toolkit helps organisations take simple yet tangible actions to become more eco-friendly, ethical and environmentally aware – and save on costs. Green Impact is a visible sign to all your stakeholders that your organisation takes its environmental responsibilities seriously. It also gives a lot of ideas to your staff, volunteers and to your wider communities as to how they can encourage biodiversity and contribute to sustainability of their local area – starting from their own homes and gardens.

Everyone's achievements will be celebrated at a Green Impact Awards ceremony at the beginning of next year.

Our Community Resilience Team will be working together with the Isle of Wight Council and the Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS) UK to support all organisations and groups who would like to explore the Green Impact scheme and to join it.

Together with our partners, we are preparing a series of online and face-to-face opportunities to find out more about this scheme and to help you with the toolkit – more information will follow soon.

In the meantime, you can register on the online toolkit and have a good look around: <https://toolkit.sos-uk.org/greenimpact/iw/login>

There is also a video run-through:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAFaMVUcBDI/vvCzml\\_cVoK0fQptGGvu5Q/watch?utm\\_content=DAFaMVUcBDI&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFaMVUcBDI/vvCzml_cVoK0fQptGGvu5Q/watch?utm_content=DAFaMVUcBDI&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

And the toolkit user guide: <https://greenimpact.nus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SOS-UK-Toolkit-User-Guide-January-2023-1.pdf>

You can contact Ella Clapham ([ecdev@iow.gov.uk](mailto:ecdev@iow.gov.uk)) or Zoryna O'Donnell ([zodonnell@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:zodonnell@actioniw.org.uk)) with any questions about this scheme or if you need help with the toolkit. We would love you to join in so that we could do what is good for the environment at every opportunity – not only in April but all year around.

*Zoryna O'Donnell (Volunteer, Community Action Isle of Wight)*

## Isle of Wight Walking Festival

### 70 walks for Spring

Visit Isle of Wight's Walking Festival has confirmed over 70 walks for its Spring event, taking place 13-21 May.

All the walks are led by volunteers and local businesses including Shanklin Theatre, Foresters Hall, Tapnell Farm, Brading Roman Villa, Dimbola Museum and Galleries, Wight Walks, National Trust, Natural Links, Natural Enterprise, HIWWT, the IOW Ramblers, Ventnor Heritage Centre, Camp Wight and Aspire Ryde amongst others.

The shortest walks are hosted by Nature-zones and the longest day walk is Mountbatten's Walk the Wight. The longest consecutive is new for 2023; a 24-hour, 72-mile trek with David Yates of the LDWA on 20/21 May.

The Spring programme may be confirmed by there's still opportunities to host a walk during the Autumn event (7-15 October). Contact Sarah Alexander at [walking@visitwight.org](mailto:walking@visitwight.org) for more information.

The popular annual Walking Festival event has been shortlisted for a 2023 Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce award, in the 'Made on the Isle of Wight' category.

<https://isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk>

*Sarah Alexander*



*April 23*

TINNED FRUIT  
SPONGE PUDDINGS  
COFFEE  
TINNED POTATOES  
MEAT (NOT CORNED BEEF)  
LONG LIFE MILK  
TOILET ROLLS  
SHAVING GEL  
SHAMPOO  
TOOTHBRUSHES (SINGLE)  
FEMALE DEODORANT

Isle of Wight foodbank  
*Thank you*



**DUE TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE PUBLIC  
WE HAVE PLENTY OF:**

COOKING SAUCES  
PASTA  
BAKED BEANS  
TINNED PULSES  
CEREAL  
TEA  
PET FOOD



*Thank you*

## Project Fusion

### Bringing together community, mental health and learning disability services

Across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, community, mental health and learning disability services are currently provided by several NHS organisations plus local authority, voluntary and independent sector organisations.

This complex arrangement can mean that some people and communities, depending on where they live, do not have the same access to care services, receive the same services or have the same health outcomes

Following an independent review of these services in January 2022 a compelling case was made to bring together all community, mental health and learning disability services across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight into one, new NHS Trust. Our ambition is to have formed the new organisation by April 2024.

The temporary name of this programme of work is Project Fusion and it involves Isle of Wight NHS Trust, Solent NHS Trust, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Bringing the organisations together in this way will deliver benefits for both patients and staff. For patients it will ensure that no matter where you live, your access to services will be the same, the service you get will be the same and your health outcome will be the same. Patients will also benefit from organisations being able to share expertise, equipment and other resources to help improve services. For staff, bringing organisations together will help reduce staffing vacancies, offer career progression and development opportunities and support professionals working more closely together.

This process itself of bringing the organisations together will not result in services changes. Services will still be delivered locally at a place, community and local neighbourhood level in each area.

Over the next year we are committed to working with people who use our services, their families, communities, our staff and partners to ensure a wide range of views and perspectives are considered as we bring our organisations together.

If you have any questions or views that you would like to share with us please contact us at [iownt.iowfusionfaqs@nhs.net](mailto:iownt.iowfusionfaqs@nhs.net)

*Claire Robertson*



## Isle of Wight Society Conservation Awards

As a follow up to the request from the Isle of Wight Society for entries in this year's Conservation Awards, the executive committee has decided that since the entries were very low, the awards will not be recognised this year but held over to next 2024 when they will join with RIBA.

Any entries for this year will be considered in next year's submissions.

*Helen Hewston*



## An Invitation to attend one of Southern Water's upcoming online stakeholder workshops

Southern Water would like to invite you to participate in one of our regional online stakeholder workshops where your feedback will help to shape the priorities that will make up our next Business Plan for 2025 – 2030 (also known as PR24) and influence our longer-term ambitions.

As the largest water and wastewater company in the South East - the most water-stressed part of the UK - we supply 556 million litres of water a day to 2.6 million customers and remove and recycle 1,371 million litres of wastewater a day from 4.6m customers.

To continue delivering high quality drinking water and wastewater services to our customers we must address some very real challenges, including the impacts of climate change and rapid population growth. Warmer temperatures and increased demand, together with more extremes of weather, will also put additional pressure on our infrastructure.

Importantly, while addressing these challenges, we must also work to meet our social obligations to keep bills affordable, enhance health and wellbeing, protect and improve our environment and help to sustain local economies – and it is vital that we seek feedback from key stakeholder such as yourself to do this.

These workshops build on those we held last summer and will provide a further opportunity for you to hear our proposals and influence our decision making as we continue to develop our plans. To view the feedback we received when we last engaged with our stakeholders.

The workshops will comprise a series of presentations from senior representatives at Southern Water, followed by interactive discussion sessions.

The topics we will be discussing will include, but not be limited to:

- Our current performance and future priorities for 2025 - 2030
- Meeting increased demand
- Our environmental commitments
- Storm overflows, flooding and coastal and power resilience
- Keeping bills affordable

The workshops will be held online and will be regionally focussed.

**Hampshire and Isle of Wight**

**Date: Wednesday 3 May**

**Time: 10am - 12.45pm**

Click here to book- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/597803124237/>

If you are unable to participate but feel this is relevant for a colleague, please do share this invitation with them. Please note that spaces are limited. If you have any questions, please contact Vincent Luxmoore on: 020 3617 6359 or [enquiries@southernwaterworkshops.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@southernwaterworkshops.co.uk)

I do hope you are able to participate and look forward to meeting you.

*Toby Willison (Chief Environment and Sustainability Officer) and Katy Taylor (Chief Customer Officer)*



## Monthly Report from MP Bob Seely

### ***Funding Secured***

This month it was announced that the Island is getting a new £10m diagnostics centre meaning faster access to tests, scans and checks for Islanders. This is in addition to the £48m the government has already committed to improving Island healthcare services including the upgrade works currently taking place at St Mary's hospital.

Also, Ryde Town Council has been allocated £578,557 from the government's Youth Investment Fund. The funding will allow Network Ryde to offer young people new activities including cooking, life skills sessions, games nights, movie nights and a nature group.



### ***Funding for Public Services***

I have spoken in Parliament about public services on the Island and why we need additional funding to support them. I made my first speech on 20 March and I raised the same issue again during Prime Minister's Questions on 22 March.

I reminded government of the need for a fairer - and permanent - funding settlement for the Island's public services.

We've secured over £120m over the past five years, including £48m for our NHS Trust; £50m to upgrade our trains, stations, track and Ryde Pier; £20m for the Isle of Wight College; £6m to support shipbuilding in East Cowes and over £7m for arts projects.

In addition, we've also achieved the following:

In the 2018/19 NHS funding formula, the Isle of Wight CCG received a £5.312m adjustment for the costs of unavoidable smallness owing to remote status.

Over the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, the government agreed to give the IW Council an additional £2m in recognition of the 'unique circumstances facing the Council and its physical separation from the mainland'.

I am urging the government to complete its investigation into Island funding and recognise the Island's needs on an ongoing and permanent basis.

I also met with Local Government Minister Lee Rowley on 28 March who has agreed to look again at the Island's case for a fairer funding settlement.

### ***A Better Deal for Island Postmasters***

On 23 March, in Parliament, I requested government intervention to achieve a better deal for Island postmasters. I want the government to look at the payment system for post offices, specifically in relation to the banking framework.

We need postmasters to be able to deliver the services that Islanders require both now, and also in the future, which means reviewing and changing the system without delay.

### ***Update on Tackling Sewage***

I want to make sure people are aware of the facts.

First, the Government has brought in the new Environment Act last year, which is enforcing higher standards for water firms and nature protection. There's also a storm overflow policy specifically to deal with sewage overflow.

Second, I persuaded Southern Water to prioritise the Isle of Wight as an example of national best practice. Their 'pathfinder' project is a multi-million-pound investment programme designed to significantly reduce sewage and storm overflows and improve the rivers, beaches and seas in and around the Island.

The investment is happening in big and small schemes - and there is more on the way. It is not going to happen overnight. But, let me reassure people, it is happening.

There are projects across the Island; £13.5 million to improve Sandown Water Works, £2.5 million for work at Knighton, £5 million in Carisbrooke, over £7 million in Cowes, Newport and Brading, over £1 million for Ventnor supply works and £500k for works in Totland and more for other smaller sites.

There is a scheme to distribute slow-release water butts to households to help alleviate pressure on water systems. A water-butt trial last year in Havenstreet has proved successful. Before the trial, Havenstreet pumping station spilled 20-30 times a year. Since the trial, Havenstreet spills have reduced by 70 per cent.

The water-butt scheme has now moved to Gurnard. If you are a resident in Gurnard and you get a card through the door offering one of Southern Water's free water-butts, please take them up on the offer. You will be helping to divert water away from sewers during heavy rainfall which will ultimately reduce the amount of storm overflows. The more people that say yes to the scheme, the more effective it will be.

Third, I am now talking with Southern Water every fortnight to monitor progress so that I can keep you all informed.

I look forward to working with community groups, Councillors and Southern Water to make sure we maintain and improve our Island's environment.

### ***Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill***

I am seeking to ban the breeding of wild serval cats with domestic cats to produce Savannah hybrids.

I am working in collaboration with the Wildheart Animal Sanctuary in Sandown, who have campaigned against the breeding of wild and domestic cats through their SERVIVAL campaign.

I have submitted two amendments to the government's Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill that seek to ban the breeding of exotic non-domestic cats with domestic cats and prohibit importing hybrid cats from abroad.

I have also written to Lord Benyon, the Minister responsible for animal welfare, asking him to consider my amendments.

Bob Seely MP

### **Western Yar**

Discussions with Natural England regarding opportunities to remove some of the excessive scrub and willow growth on Afton Marsh SSSI—may involve a grazing regime.

### **Southwest Streams**

National Trust working with IW Council to agree a project that will improve water retention and ecology within this area.

### **Caul Bourne**

Meetings with local stakeholders to identify the main issues with the stream and estuary that can be tackled locally. Plan is to scope, map and then identify and deliver solutions. Meeting held with Chichester Harbour Group who have gone through a similar process.

### **Lukely Brook**

Southern Water. Structures to hold back water on Plaish Meadows were built prior to Christmas. Effectiveness now being monitored. Also tree works at Spring Lane Ford to lighten Brook. Now planning remainder of work at Clatterford and Spring Lane for deliver later this year.

### **Medina**

Discussions with Natural England regarding opportunities to remove some of the excessive scrub and willow growth on Dodnor Creek Ramsar / SSSI site.

### **Palmers Brook**

IWC looking to identify remedies for flooding near crematorium.

### **Eastern Yar**

Wildlife Trust. Discussions with Natural England and IW Council regarding water level management improvements on reserve. Expedition to Devon to meet beaver projects.

### **General Comments**

Most work on rivers require a number of licences, and ahead of this we need to monitor and gather evidence. Therefore it does appear that projects move slowly. An interactive map can be viewed at <https://islandrivers.org.uk/map-of-island-river-partnership-projects/> We have a Catchment Plan which is updated annually. <https://islandrivers.org.uk/island-rivers/island-rivers-catchment-plan/>

### **Coming up next quarter**

Most partners continue on their licencing paper trail. Subject to funding confirmation we will commence Invasive Non Native Species work on East Yar, Wroxall Stream, Medina River and Merstone Stream and also water vole habitat enhancements on Wroxall Stream. Work with Southern Water to align Catchment Plans and to contribute to Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan.

**Further details? Please email [carol.Flux@naturalenterprise.co.uk](mailto:carol.Flux@naturalenterprise.co.uk) 07790 906232**

## Island Roads

### Busy winter season comes to an end



The official winter maintenance season has now ended although Island Roads will continue to monitor temperatures and respond to any threat of unseasonal freezing.

Between October and March, Island Roads undertook 50 gritting runs, using nearly 850 tonnes of salt – just over half the 1,600 tonnes stockpiled annually at the Stag Lane winter maintenance depot.

There were far more runs this season than the 32 undertaken in the previous year, but slightly fewer than in 2020/21 when 53 runs were required. This year was unusual, in that the big majority of gritting runs were carried out in consecutive nights over two cold spells – between 6th - 17th December and between 16th – 25th January, with two runs required on many of those days.

There were no runs at all required in either October and November and just one required in March. Unlike most of the UK, there was no snowfall requiring a highways response.

Dave Wallis, Island Roads operations manager, said: “It was unusual to see so much of the year’s activity concentrated in two main cold spells. I would like to thank the winter maintenance teams for their efforts during the season – once again, they have worked very well in some pretty inclement conditions to keep the treated network safe and accessible for all road users.”

Each gritting run treats over 350km of road, which represents around 43% of the highway network. It means that during the winter, a total of 17,500km were gritted – that’s the equivalent of travelling around the Island 156 times!

*Samantha O’Rourke*

### Groups encouraged to apply for IW Foundation funding

Local charities and good causes are invited to apply for a share of £80,000 from the Isle of Wight Foundation. Grants of between £3,000 and £16,000 are available for projects involved in helping build better communities or supporting people to access employment or housing.

The Isle of Wight Foundation was formed in 2014 by the network of companies which form Island Roads – Ringway Island Roads, Meridiam, Island Roads Services and Vinci Concessions. To date, it has awarded grants totalling well over £700,000 to Isle of Wight good causes. Recently the Isle of Wight Foundation announced that nine local groups would receive a share of more than £92,000 for projects taking place in 2023.

As well as welcoming applications from previous grant recipients, the foundation would particularly like to hear from groups who have never applied to the foundation before. Charities, community groups and voluntary organisations can all apply, subject to meeting the foundation’s funding aims and criteria.

Examples of projects previously supported include building modifications to make them more accessible for all; new minibuses to connect communities and help people to access services; IT equipment to prevent social isolation or support people with training or access to employment; the provision of sports kit to help bring communities together through sport; specialist equipment - such as adapted bicycles or wheelchairs to enable people to take part in new activities.

Havenstreet Community Association successfully applied for funding to renovate its hall’s outside space to create an accessible garden and area for groups to meet and take part in activities.

Veronica Hattersley, Chairman of Havenstreet Community Association, said: “The funding from the Isle of Wight Foundation allowed us to transform our tired and overgrown outdoor space into a vibrant, safe, and versatile area which, both individuals and groups, can use year-round to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature. It has made a huge difference to our local community, providing a beautiful area which is regularly used for events and social gatherings.”



As well as grant funding, eligible projects are supported by Island Roads employees who are given the opportunity to be project sponsors and give their time to share their specialist skills with grant recipients to help them deliver their projects. Funding applications can be made until midday on Tuesday 9 May 2023.

*Anna Price (Account Manager, Robertson Foster)*



## Hovertravel

Hovertravel has been working with its customers to promote online bookings and specifically its HoverBlue Island Resident Fares



The Island Resident HoverBlue card holders receive discounted fares from Ryde to Southsea and it is free to sign up for the HoverBlue card to save over 30% on day returns and over 10% on adult period returns. Once the flights are booked online, islanders just need to show their HoverBlue card at the scan desk when they travel.

Hovertravel has also, in conjunction with local Isle of Wight artist Jayne Myles, launched a new range of souvenirs using pieces of used skirt rubber from its hovercraft. The HoverGreen souvenirs range includes keyrings, hanging art, bookmarks and coasters – with each item featuring a uniquely different design.



Hovertravel wanted to celebrate the past life of its rubber skirts after serving their original purpose of supporting 45 tonnes of hovercraft and flying over the Solent up to 70 times a day. Inspired by her working environment, namely her own kitchen table in East Cowes, Jayne uses discarded materials such as wood, slate and tiles as the canvas for her vibrant designs. For the HoverGreen range the dull, black rubber creates the perfect background for the colourful patterns which characterise Jayne's artistic style.

The HoverGreen range is available now at Hovertravel's terminals in Ryde and Southsea  
*Stephen Forster (Creative Director) SRF (Integrated Communications) Ltd*

## Wightlink

### Homeward bound ready for a busy summer

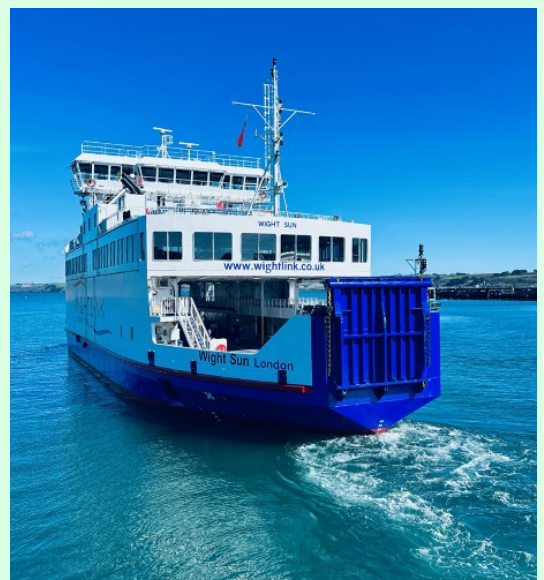
The last of Wightlink's ships has returned home after her annual refit, completing a six month programme of maintenance. The ferry company's eight-strong fleet is now ready for Easter and a busy summer taking holidaymakers across the Solent and supplying the Isle of Wight.

Wight Sun set sail from the A&P shipyard in Falmouth in bright sunshine for her home port of Lymington on Monday (27 March), her journey along the south coast took 15 hours.

"Every ship and FastCat in our fleet has spent time in dry dock this season and they look magnificent," says Wightlink Chief Executive Keith Greenfield. "Our engineers and crew take great pride in keeping their vessels in good order, ready to welcome customers."

Wightlink invests £6million in the upkeep of its fleet every year. One of the main tasks for Wight Sun's refit crew of seven this year was to remove, refurbish and replace one of the ship's propellers. They also used more than 700 litres of paint and anti-fouling for the hull to keep her looking smart throughout the summer.

*Karen Woods (Duty Media Officer)*



## Red Funnel

### **Fruit trees planted in new community orchard, creating safe and relaxing space for local community**

Red Funnel planted 30 fruit trees creating the Queen Elizabeth II Community Orchard with East Cowes Town Council. The orchard commemorates the late Queen and provides Islanders with delicious fruit, including apples, pears and cherries. The Mayor of East Cowes, Tracy Reardon, and Lee Hudson, Red Funnel's Commercial Director marked the donation on 15th March.

The orchard will create a safe and relaxing space for the community and is part of Red Funnel's ongoing commitment to the Island, which has seen 160 trees planted across the Island to celebrate its 160th birthday.

Lee Hudson said, "We are extremely proud to partner with the community to gift such an important aspect of what makes the Island so unique — its scenic spaces and biodiversity."

### **It's double doggy delight on the Solent!**

As part of the Island Ambassador programme, Red Funnel has supported owner Julie Platt and her team of 9 working Siberian Huskies with sponsored travel, meaning a few more Solent trips to make them bark with excitement!

Red Funnel rolled out the red carpet for the beautiful Lacey and Maddie who embarked paw first onto the Red Osprey ferry enroute to the prestigious Crufts in Birmingham.

Red Funnel also arranged for a second doggy day trip adventure with mother and daughter duo Dreamer and Tala, who were the prize pooches on display in the pet lounge of Red Osprey. Dreamer even briefly became "Captain Dreamer" as she was invited up to the bridge to meet her new colleagues as they set sail.

Both Dreamer and Tala are part of the Snostopin Siberian Huskie Team, which has been supported by Red Funnel for many years. Customers and staff were so excited to welcome them again!

### **Teams, groups and clubs win travel sponsorship with Red Funnel's Proud to Support**

A theatre group, netball team and a male barbershop chorus were among 12 recipients of sponsored travel from Red Funnel as part of the ferry operators Proud to Support scheme. The support scheme will assist the groups as they travel to the mainland engaging in events, training, and national competitions. The 12 organisations are Deadman Theatre Group, East Cowes Victoria Athletic FC, The Isle of Wight Panther Kickboxing Club, The Isle of Wight Underwater Hockey Club, The Lynnette Bailey Academy of Irish Dancing, NAUT Cycling Club and Race Team, Solent Netball Team, The Starlight Academy, Vectis Academy, Ventnor Cricket Club, Rugby Club, and Wight Harmony.

Fran Collins, CEO of Red Funnel, said: "We're extremely proud of the enormous talent within the Isle of Wight community and are honoured to support so many incredible teams and individuals. All our ambassadors and teams are important to us, and we're pleased to be able to provide the opportunity to help them to reach their ambitions at a national level."

*Josey Page (Senior Account Executive, Grayling UK)*

