



The IWALC Bulletin

December 2021

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

Your IWALC Matters!!

Welcome to the last Bulletin for 2021. It's been an eventful year, with major changes in the Isle of Wight Council and a number of local councils, but also a difficult one, with continuing pressure on the NHS and both statutory and voluntary sector services.

Christmas is a time when many of us make a special effort to help those in need and this year one of the main needs on the Island is secure housing. Many people, including families with children, will be spending Christmas in inadequate or temporary accommodation, while others will have received eviction notices requiring them to leave their homes in the near future. For a number of reasons, the lack of affordable housing, particularly rented accommodation, has reached crisis point this year. As a Citizens Advice volunteer, I am only too aware of this. The number of clients seeking help with housing issues has more than doubled this year.



In the light of this crisis, we invited IWALC members and housing providers to send us their thoughts about how we might address the problem. We asked them to think about innovative ways of providing more rental housing and in particular about what local councils might do. This issue includes four articles on the subject: an introduction by Ian Stephens, Cabinet Member for Housing; contributions by Martyn Pearl, chief executive of Vectis Housing and John Pritchett, the IW Council's Community Led Housing Officer; and comments by local councillor Steve Cowley about his experience with community-led housing in Shalfleet. We hope that these articles will be the start of an ongoing debate. We have already been promised contributions for the next issue from Southern Housing and Sovereign, the two main housing associations on the Island. In the meantime, please send us your own thoughts.

Also included in this issue is a report on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)'s recent online Future Communities Conference. Highlights included presentations by the chair of the government's Committee on Standards in Public Life, Lord Jonathan Evans, and the secretary of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, Jackie Weaver – famous for her appearance in the notorious video of a Handforth Parish Council meeting!

It remains for me to wish you all a peaceful, happy and healthy Christmas and, once again, to hope that next year will be better for us all. Our editor is taking a well earned break over Christmas so the next issue will be in February.

Diana Conyers

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The deadline for the February issue is January 31st - thank you!

THE ISLAND'S HOUSING CRISIS: WHAT CAN WE DO?

The Isle of Wight Council's Housing Challenge

Cllr Ian Stephens, Cabinet Member for Housing

The new Alliance administration at County Hall has settled in and worked together to bring forward a new Corporate Plan, which has 50 objectives focused on making the Isle of Wight a better place for all. The three main areas for action have been noted as Affordable Housing for Island Residents, Responding to Climate Change and Enhancing the Biosphere, and Economic Recovery. The Isle of Wight Council cannot do this alone and is therefore reaching out to other stakeholders, and we want to work with IWALC to include our local town, parish and community councils, as we want to be a Council of the people, putting the Island's People at the heart of everything we do.

The Alliance has made Housing and Homelessness a key priority, and over recent months the situation has become even more acute with accommodation being sold at prices above the price which can be afforded by local families. Purchasers are focussing on the 'air B&B' market as the Covid 19 pandemic has given rise to staycations, and existing landlords are cashing in on this market.

The overall situation has raised the cost of house prices, reduced the amount of rental accommodation and increased rents to levels which local islanders cannot afford. There are 2400 listed on our housing register, and approximately 200 Island families have urgent need for temporary accommodation.

The Isle of Wight Council is actively searching for accommodation at this time, and if you know of any empty properties, or any which could assist in providing shelter and a home, please contact me at the council (ian.stephens@iow.gov.uk). To speed up our initiatives, we have taken the opportunity to apply and successfully become a Rental Provider, which will give us the chance of applying for grant aid from Homes England, as do Housing Associations.

We are exploring all opportunities to acquire property from ready built to modular. Rough sleepers are finding it so difficult and this is an area which we are keen to address and are looking at various solutions.

We have recently acquired some grant funding from the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF), which we will use to prepare council land in readiness for development and could bring forward approximately 60 units. Housing is such an essential ingredient to everyday life, and yet the problem grows even more acute. Help us to help your community and those that are in need in the coming weeks, months and year.

Vectis Housing Association's Role

Martyn Pearl, Chief Executive

Housing is so important to everyone. It is the basis for good health, education, employment and opportunity. Equally important, it is the glue that binds communities together and enables them to evolve and flourish.

As a local housing association, Vectis Housing Association (VHA) is very aware of the negative impact on local communities of the lack of homes that are truly affordable for Island households. This is often particularly true for younger residents, who may wish or need a home of their own but are unable to afford to purchase outright or the cost of open market rents.

As an Island-focused association that has been in existence for over 45 years, we have gained significant experience of the needs, opportunities and housing challenges that the Island presents. We have over 450 homes across the Island and have an active development programme to deliver more over the coming years. Recently, we have worked closely with parish and town councils in Bembridge, Yarmouth, Newport and Nettlestone and Seaview. Most importantly, we have delivered high quality homes that have reflected the needs of those localities for local people in consultation with local people. We are committed to partnership to deliver the best possible outcomes.

Clearly, delivering affordable homes is not easy. If it were, developers would have done much more of it. There are challenges in finding sites that are acceptable to the community and in planning terms and that are developable. There are also challenges in terms of cost. Our aim is to make homes as affordable as possible,

but rents need to reflect the cost of providing homes in the first instance. So, the site cost, the size and layout of the dwellings and the ability to attract grant are all critical factors in determining viability.

These hurdles will mean that not every need can be catered for or opportunity delivered. However, there are a range of measures that can be employed to achieve viability. As Investment Partners with Homes England, VHA can potentially attract grant funding. Further funding is also available for community-led housing initiatives via the same body. We can look to create viability through balancing properties for rent with shared ownership through which we can recoup some of the cost through sales. In certain instances, we have also worked with private developers where a certain number of homes are sold for full market value, which subsidises the cost of the affordable homes. Although relatively small, VHA is keen to work with local parishes to deliver homes that will be viewed as true community assets where we are able. Our new homes are let initially to people with strong local connections and virtually always to residents on the Island. Our aim is to support vibrant and resilient communities and in addition to high quality homes, we deliver a diverse community events programme reflecting local interests and needs.

We recognize the critical need for a suitable and affordable home for everyone and will continue to work hard to make a contribution to achieving it.

Contact Martyn on 01983-525985 or at Martyn@vectishousing.co.uk

Community Led Housing's Potential

John Prickett, Community Led Housing Officer

IWALC's November 2021 Bulletin stated that 'There is (also) a housing crisis and the Island has been badly affected. There is an acute shortage of affordable housing, particularly to rent.'

One way of addressing housing need is through the Community Led housing route, whereby local groups (possibly at Town, Parish or neighbourhood level) can work towards developing their own housing projects. The Isle of Wight Council support Community Led Housing initiatives by providing an Advisor based at Community Action, who – as well as leading groups through the process - can assist in identifying land, giving technical advice and providing funding for group development, site feasibility and – in time - assistance with capital costs.

What can Community Led Housing bring?

Community Led Housing stands alongside mainstream housing provision at a (usually) small local level. It can ensure the housing provided meets the desires and needs of the local population because:

- Open and meaningful community participation and consent takes place throughout the process;
- The community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes in whichever way they decide;
- The housing is designed to meet the specific needs of that group, which can be a local (geographical) community or a specific group of people (an intentional community), or both, and these benefits can be legally protected in perpetuity.

This method should produce the following outcomes:

- Provide housing that people want;
- Meet a local need but also help to address the Island-wide for additional homes
- Free up existing housing (e.g. existing social or other rented housing or shared ownerships);
- Utilise awkward or vacant sites - possibly in public ownership – that might lend themselves better to a small local project, thereby also contributing to regeneration;
- Enhance the environment, since Community Led schemes have a strong tradition of good environmental performance;
- If a Community Land Trust model is used, provide permanent housing/land assets for the community.

Community Led Housing can cover all forms of affordable (below market rate) tenures, including Social and Affordable rented, Shared Ownership, and Discounted Market Sale. Homes can also be provided for market sale if this helps to subsidise the remainder of the development.

The housing can be provided on vacant or green field sites or by re-use of existing buildings. It can be delivered via partnerships with Housing Associations, private developers, self-commissioning and/or self-build. It can be designed to meet general or specific needs, and can take the form of co-operatives, co-housing, and/or a Community Land Trust. Sometimes additional facilities can be developed alongside.

Does your community wish to take this further?

Is your community missing an opportunity? Have you identified a housing need in your area? Do you or could you have a group with an appetite to develop a Community Led Housing scheme? What could Community Led housing bring that the mainstream routes do not (e.g. small or targeted schemes, co-housing or co-operative schemes, a Community Land Trust)?

Do you have or know of a site that could be used for such a purpose, or a developer who might be prepared to incorporate some Community Led housing?

If so, contact the Community Led Housing Officer, John Prickett, who is based at Community Action, Riverside Centre, Newport and is happy to meet with groups or individual representatives island-wide - either virtually or in person, and also to travel to see possible sites.

Contact details:

Telephone 01983 52405 e-mail jprickett@actioniw.org.uk

web site link <https://www.communityactionisleofwight.org.uk/what-we-do/community-ledhousing>

National links:

Community Led Homes - <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/>

Community Land Trust Network - <https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/>

Community Led Housing: Experience in Shalfleet

Steve Cowley, Chair, Shalfleet Parish Council

Most 'affordable' housing is not really affordable. We need more social housing, what was always called 'Council Housing', because local authorities built and over saw it. It was a real achievement to house people in good accommodation with responsible landlords.

I attended a NALC Zoom seminar titled 'Making Affordable Housing More Affordable' recently; it mainly confirmed to me how great a challenge it is. I have been working with Isle of Wight Community Action's Community Led Housing officers, first with John Brownscombe and now John Prickett, and IWC Planning officers, to try to find a suitable site in the Shalfleet area.

The first site I suggested was on the SHLAA list but as soon as I suggested it, it was removed from the list. The second site supported by planning officers, was fronted by land owned by IWC but the IWC Regeneration Team said their access to the site was constrained by a third party. Shalfleet Parish Council has had discussions with the owner of a site which went out to local consultation. This has now been put on hold because of problems with sewage disposal.

I have now started consultation with planners on another site, and I am awaiting a response – fingers and toes crossed.

My concern is that Community Led Social Housing is stigmatised because it is for low-income families and likely to be on greenfield sites. There are only a few previously developed sites therefore defined as being 'Brown Field' sites. Because they have been previously developed, they are expensive to clear ready for building on. It is good to see the Government acknowledge this in the grant of nearly £1m to IWC to clear just three sites.

Bob Seely has said developers are putting 'Profit before People' which is a reflection on how the economy works. In the real world if we are to get social housing, that we all agree is in desperate shortage, we need a way of paying for what we need.

This is very hard work, but there is help for Councils both small and large, if you dig deep there are people to help and money to develop plans. Although this is a challenge, I believe Town and Parish Councils have the passion and drive to meet this community need!

IWALC News...

Southern Water:

At IWALC's Executive Meeting on 25 November, it was agreed to compile a list of the various concerns that member councils have about water supply and drainage issues in their area and send these to Southern Water. If any council has any such concerns and has not yet sent them to us, please do so as soon as possible. We would also advise councils to report such issues to Southern Water directly. Their staff have already visited a number of local councils and will be visiting others in due course. The Southern Water contact is Keith Herbert -

keith.herbert@southernwater.co.uk

(See also Southern Water's article later in the Bulletin)

Resilience Workshop:

As part of the follow-up to the September Resilience Workshop, IWALC has combined with Community Action IW to conduct a survey of councils' current and possible future involvement in community wellbeing activities. A short survey has been sent to all councils. Please do complete and return it if you have not already done so.

Meanwhile we were encouraged to see that the Workshop's recommendations are reflected in the specifications for the Isle of Wight Council's Living Well and Early Help Service, which has recently been put out to tender. Particularly significant is the requirement for a community-based approach and collaboration with local councils.

IWALC Digital Friendly Pledge:

At IWALC's September Executive Meeting, members agreed to sign up to Age Friendly Island's Digital Friendly scheme, which is designed to encourage and support user-friendly access to digital services on the Island, and at the November meeting they approved our Digital Pledge (see below). We would encourage individual councils to sign up to the scheme.

We pledge to:

- Ensure that our digital methods of communication, with both members and the general public, are user friendly;
- Encourage and support member councils and individual councillors to use appropriate digital communication methods;
- Hold our meetings, workshops and training activities digitally if or when it is safer or more appropriate to do so;
- Encourage member councils to sign up to the Digital Friendly Island Scheme.

Training:

We have held two online training sessions in the last month: one on Code of Conduct, presented by the Isle of Wight Council's Monitoring Officers (Chris Potter and Justin Thorne) on 24 November, and one on Introduction to Finance, presented by Sue Chilton on 1 December. Both were well attended.

Website:

Some of you may have noticed that the IWALC website looks different. This is because Cllr Dave Hardy is very kindly refurbishing and updating it. He is still working on this, so what you see now is not the final product but very close to it. He hopes to present it to Wight Computers by the end of the year.

An annual hosting fee has yet to be sorted but Dave has said that if it is on the same basis as Lake PC it could cost about £70. He will know by the end of the year so that our Treasurer can include it in the budget. Dave invites everyone to have a look (www.iwalc.org) and please pass any comments on to him.

Diana Conyers

We asked our new councillors how they are finding their role. Here are the responses we received from two of them: Penny Acton of Gurnard Parish Council and Frank Baldry of Sandown Town Council.'

Has it measured up?

I've been a resident of Gurnard for thirty years but not been actively involved in much village life until this year; even 'Mothers and Toddlers' was 'Mothers and Toddlers and Mike' when our son was young as I was teaching full time and my husband's working life was more flexible.

My only awareness of the PC work was the development of the Gurnard Neighbourhood Plan. I was an interested by-stander rather than an active supporter as I was still working and also supporting two elderly and increasingly frail parents who lived in Devon.

I went to my first PC meeting as a member of the public in August of this year – to put in my two-penny-worth on a planning application. I was pushed into attending because a friend who lives opposite the proposed site couldn't attend and wanted to make sure her feelings were expressed.

It was at the meeting that a vacancy on the council was pointed out to those of us who stayed to hear the discussion and the rest, as they say, is history. So has it measured up? Hard to say as I wasn't entirely sure what I was expecting but it seemed a way to be able to give something back to a village which has provided me with 'roots' and is a lovely place to live so in those terms most definitely, 'Yes!'

Are you enjoying it?

I am enjoying MOST of this new role as a councillor, even the quantities of emails which flood in from our great clerk are usually interesting, though I wish I was a little more capable of reading plans for planning applications.

I have been out walking more as I like to go and 'have a look' if at all possible to try and move things from paper plans to my head and get a better grasp of what is proposed. The sheer quantity of planning applications for new housing, pricing on which is usually far out of reach for locals, dismays me but at least building is not yet anything like the situation on the mainland.

Do you find it interesting overall?

Almost everything is interesting but think I will find what comes up even more interesting once I have a better understanding of just what is, or isn't possible, within the role of Parish Councillor and find the line between responding as a councillor and as an individual.

Do you find it challenging?

I've always been someone who wants to run before I can walk so sometimes it's a challenge to hold my tongue and accept that not everyone is as concerned about my particular interests as I am. However it's good to be back in a situation where there is robust discussion as this is something I have missed since retiring.

Do you find it rewarding?

I'm not sure I've been a councillor long enough to have a real answer to this. I am very, very pleased however as I feel I have encouraged GPC to look towards working with neighbouring councils more with our recently



agreed joint approach to an area LCWIP involving Cowes Town Council and Northwood Parish Council. If I could see some more of this sort of co-operation I would be very pleased as I have always believed that it is better, and much more effective, to work as a group rather than in isolation. I've been really interested by the work other local councils have done with Artecology.

Do you find it disappointing?

I have never had the courage to stand up and be counted as a member of a group like Extinction Rebellion but have been something of an activist in one form or another most of my life, usually on environmental concerns. In fact I think I suffer a form of Climate Anxiety and find it hard to understand how others are not similarly concerned about the adverse effects of so much human activity on the natural world. My only disappointment within my new role is that I feel the environmental impact, and perhaps education about possible ways of ameliorating the damage we do, is not (perhaps cannot be?) given greater weight at parish council level. It is an area in which I will always find it hard to be 'unbiased'.

Why did you join the council?

Perhaps because I'm nosy? I hope because I really care about the community, the future for our children and being involved in the lovely place I live.

Are there any particular topics/subjects which particularly interest you?

I've already said that the environment is very important to me. In Gurnard we are not within the Island's AONB but the Biosphere encompasses us all and, as I've recently become a member of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, I am interested in seeing if there could be common ground found between the Trust (and other environmental groups) and the Parish Council. It's an exciting time with the IWC putting the Green Island concept and holding its climate pledge more central in its approach.

I'd also like to encourage a wider participation across the community in parish affairs. It was really pleasing to have a good turn out at a recent public meeting aimed at revitalizing the Association which runs the village hall. The hall is very well used and provides a really vibrant community hub with a wide range of activities and groups (yoga classes, art classes, the WI, the film society, a creative writing group) meeting there. These opportunities complement the sailing club, the village shop and Gurnard Press as well as the school and church, they are all important aspects of a thriving community. All too often though the only members of the community seen at parish council meetings are there to object to a planning application.....oh, hang on a minute. Isn't this where I started? Seriously, it would be useful to have more community input and a wider response to help guide the council and ensure we are responding appropriately to community hopes and needs.

Is this short or long term for you?

Since I've only been a councillor for a couple of months this is a tough question to answer. Additionally I am not an elected councillor but was co-opted to fill a vacancy so I don't know what support I would have if I were to stand at the next elections ... or if my aging brain will still be going by that stage.... and that feels like an appropriate ending for the interview. *Cllr Penny Acton (Gurnard Parish Council)*

As a new councillor, so far I am very pleased to serve as a councillor but am very disappointed with the amount of time it takes to get things done.

I have met with Phil Jordan re having yellow dashed lines painted where the coaches turn by Sandown Pier; all it would take is someone from Island Roads to look at the problem (job done), but the licence needed for the change in road flow would cost £750, when it's a 'pence' job. Rant over!

Pleased to say we had a very good Remembrance Day, early this year. We got Pier Street Toilets open earlier and the new decorative lights are up.

I have also got plans for a Large Bottle Eating Fish to be situated on a beach entrance slope.... again, with another licence of £700 plus! The beach is a big tourist plus - please let us get Sandown back to what it was - bright, clean and a place to visit and live. *Cllr Frank Baldry (Sandown Town Council)*

News from NALC

NALC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The NALC National Assembly met virtually today (8th December), this being the first meeting of the new two year term following the committee elections.



NEW NATIONAL PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL CHAIR

The new national president, Baroness Roz Scott of Needham Market joined the meeting, leaving a Lords Select Committee meeting to introduce herself. Roz thanked NALC for appointing her national president and said she would work with the parliamentary vice presidents to champion the local council sector in the Lords. It was also the first meeting for the newly elected national chair, Keith Stevens from East Sussex who replaces the retiring chair, Sue Baxter who stood down having completed her two terms as chair. Sue will however remain involved as a working vice president.

COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The committee election results were formally announced where I have been returned unopposed to the Management Board and the Smaller Councils Committee. It was with some disappointment noted that not all committee seats had been filled. It was left that vacancies on committees will be filled by co-option with a steer being given to address diversity. In the case of the Management Board for example all those of us elected are middle aged or older white males based in the south of England. We have three seats to fill by co-option and will endeavour to address the imbalance.

NATIONAL LOBBY DAY 2022

National Lobby Day 2022 has been fixed for Wednesday 23rd March. This has become an annual event when parish, town and community councillors descend on Westminster to lobby their local MPs. It did not take place this year due to the pandemic but in 2020 just before the lockdown it was highly successful with well over 100 MPs lobbied. This year we will extend the net to include members of "Their Lordships' House" as this is where proposed legislation tends to be amended. Participation in Lobby Day is open to all councillors from IWALC member councils.

NALC CAMPAIGNS: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

One of NALC's campaigns is aimed at youth engagement and encouraging young people to engage with the democratic process and consider becoming local councillors. We received two short presentations from Fay Holland of an organisation called Groundwork which has produced a report called "Youth in a Changing Climate" and from Dan Lawes of Youth Politics UK. Further details can be found online respectively at www.groundwork.org.uk/youth-ina-changing-climate and youthpolitics.org.uk



Bob BLEZZARD December 2021

NALC Future Communities Conference:

On 2 December I attended an all-day online conference on Future Communities, organised by NALC. There were five plenary sessions, including excellent presentations by Lord Jonathan Evans, chair of the government's Committee on Standards in Public Life, and the now famous secretary of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, Jackie Weaver. Both emphasised the need for high standards of conduct in local councils.

There were also five workshops, which were held consecutively and repeated twice. I attended two of these: one on community-led planning, which demonstrated that if developers, the planning authority and local communities work together, it is possible to provide the sort of housing that communities need and want; and one on the role of local councils in promoting a sense of community, which drew on the experience of the Eden Project Communities (<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/>). The key messages from both were similar to those from our Resilience Workshop: the need for community-based development and partnership working and for councils to be proactive and 'think outside the box'.

The closing speech was given by NALC's outgoing chair, Sue Baxter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the work she has done during her time as Chair – and in particular for coming to the Island to attend our recent Resilience Workshop.

Diana Conyers

Just passing on apologies from MP Bob Seely's office for the late cancellation of the Zoom meeting with Town and Parish Councils on Wednesday December 8th. Bob had last-minute business to attend to in the House.

The Zoom meetings will recommence in the new year.



Could I suggest that you all regularly check your Junk or Spam folders as I understand that some of my emails to you find their way there... how very dare they!!
-jill



Thank you to everybody who contributes to and supports the Bulletin, and to the team who puts it together.

We're taking a break but will be back again in February 2022.

This time of year isn't necessarily a happy time for everybody - we wish you all a peaceful Christmas, be kind to yourselves.



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 print submitted articles.

News from Member Councils



Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council

Newport, Saturday 20 November was astonishing. In my 30 years in this town I have never seen it as busy as it was for NCCC's 'Day of Christmas'.



So many happy faces, happy children, happy families. Shops are reporting record sales. This proved that not everything councils do is bad news; that Newport, in particular, is not what the naysayers claim. The staff team of NCCC worked so hard to deliver the Day of Christmas and my grateful thanks go to them all.

This is precisely the sort of event that NCCC has always tried to provide for local residents. Something positive from the precept rather than just covering for services that have been cut by County Hall. It's what those of us who campaigned for emparishment back in 2007 wanted to offer.

Cllr Geoff Brodie (Chair of Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council)

Fishbourne Parish Council

Our long-awaited Bird Interpretation Board, which was prepared in conjunction with Bird Aware Solent, has now been erected on Fishbourne beach. Bird Aware Solent is an organisation that seeks to protect and raise awareness of the many sea birds that populate the Solent. It is funded by mandatory contributions from anyone building new residential properties within 5.6 kms of the Solent coast. The Board will be formally 'launched' on 16 December.



We are currently conducting a survey of all our residents, to find out what they like and don't like about the parish and what they would like us to do to improve their lives here. We will use the findings to prepare a parish action plan.

As you have probably heard, our wonderful Parish Clerk, Maxine Warr, is moving to the mainland and so has had to resign. She will be sorely missed. We have advertised the post and are hoping to recruit a replacement later this month.

Cllr Diana Conyers

Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council

In Chillerton and Gatcombe we are having another consultation on the future of our primary school. The options include a tie-in with the Island Free School in Ventnor. This is the choice of local activists and may be endorsed by the Parish Council when presented at its next meeting.

Christmas is coming and the Parish Council is, as last year, distributing gift bags full of goodies to people who, in non-Covid times, would have been invited to a Christmas Lunch.

The Community Association is to erect a village Christmas tree with lights and decorations in the grounds of the Village Hall where it can be enjoyed by everyone.

Nigel Phillips (Chairman Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council)



Cowes Town Council

November saw the return of Remembrance Sunday services. Reverend Poppe led services at the War Memorial and in St Mary the Virgin Church. Mayor of Cowes, Councillor Paul Bertie, and Reverend Poppe took the parade's salute on Cowes Parade. The services were well supported and we thank all those who attended and took part in the parade.



The town's festive lights are installed, lighting up the darker evenings, and our Christmas Tree is on display in Francki Place. Cowes Business Association and local businesses held a late night shopping evening on Thursday 2 December, with many shops open until 8pm. Cowes Town Council funded the provision for free parking in Cross Street long-stay car park between 3pm and 8pm for the event.

We have promoted the IW Council's provision for free parking in long-stay off-street car parks on Small Business Saturday (4 December).

The Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee have considered and recommended approval of the draft budget for 2022/23, which will be ratified at the Town Council's meeting on 16 December 2021. Redecoration of

street furniture is planned for completion prior to the start of the main tourist season in 2022 and our seafront flagpole will be flying a new Town Council flag for Easter 2022.

The Projects Committee is close to finalising arrangements for The Cut enhancement project and installation of a community orchard at Northwood Recreation Ground.

We are waiting to hear from the IW Council regarding our bid for funding from the Changing Places Toilet Fund.

We have been successful in our bid for match-funding for the creation of an area LCWIP for Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood, working in partnership with Gurnard and Northwood Parish Councils, and look forward to working on this over the coming months. *Kate Gibbs (Asst Town Clerk)*



Image 1 of the Mayor of Cowes, Councillor Paul Bertie, and Reverend Poppe inspecting the parade on Remembrance Sunday.

Image 2 of our festive lights.

East Cowes Town Council

This month has been a celebration of awards. Wight Shipyards received Queen's Award for Industry who have also taken on 19 new apprentices. Red Funnel Travel Awards held at Albert Cottage Hotel. 150 people attend from business across for the Island to be recognised for the service.



Three local winners Red Funnel Tourism Awards recognising the achievements of East Cowes businesses ComiCoffee, John Cattle's Skatepark Group and the Waverley Caravan Park.



The Chancellor announced a grant of £5.8 million for the town to transform the Columbine Building, Venture Quays area, Albany Barracks and improve the seafront.

You can find out more about the plans at the East Cowes Waterfront Public Consultation at the Classic Boat Museum in East Cowes during December on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th 10am-4pm and Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th.

The Community Hub and Library is going well and should be finished by June next year.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a new year.

Michael Paler (Chair of East Cowes Town Council)

Gurnard Parish Council

This is Gurnard Parish Council's first contribution to IWALC bulletin and I'm really pleased to be writing it. I am a (very) new councillor, having been co-opted to a vacancy in October. I am still finding out a lot about the role even though my fellow councillors have been welcoming and helpful and I feel very much part of the council already.



The GPC does a great job ensuring that the village is cared for (a recent litter pick has left the village looking spick and span) and our Neighbourhood Plan provides us with a great strategic over-view. Considering the up-keep of our lovely, and very well used Village Hall, the Old School Meadow and the amenities (for public use) on Gurnard Green provides a bit of light relief amongst all the planning applications that come in!

Something I noticed when I first started reading all the paperwork sent out by our wonderful and very hard working clerk, was that GPC didn't seem to be much of a contributor to the wider Island local government layers; that is one of the reasons I'm pleased to be contributing to the IWALC bulletin.

Another pleasing piece of news is that GPC has recently decided to work jointly with Cowes Town Council and Northwood Parish Council on the development of a LCWIP.

It is good to see GPC making these connections as I believe the different tiers of local government working together, and thus strengthening our voices, must be a good way forward in a world facing so many challenges.

If I'm right in thinking that this will be the last bulletin of the year, I'll close by wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year. *Cllr Penny Acton.*

When you lose an experienced Clerk...

At our November Parish Council Meeting we had to reluctantly take the resignation of our clerk, Mrs Maxine Warr - and it was the same for Fishbourne Parish Council - which is extremely sad for both of our councils.

I worked with Maxine on Newport Parish Council, when it was first created, for many years and during the time I was a member, we became friends. Then, when I became its Chairman, you realise what good support you have. The same goes now that I'm on Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council. I must say that Maxine is the best. She is always there to help, give advice, and most of all, to organise all our members to make sure we are a well-run council for our residents and keep to the laws.

I know I speak for our members, and for others who have worked with Max, in saying a big Thank You and send our best wishes as you move on. We send all the luck, health and happiness to you and, of course, your mum and Graham, in this new chapter in your life.

We will all miss you, but I know your email address so you don't get rid of me that quickly!!

Kind Regards

Cllr Peter J Whiteman (Vice Chair Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council)

I think Maxine would tell you she has me to thank for getting her into Clerking all those years ago. Sorry Max!

I met Maxine when she was working for Ryde Development Trust and, when I was tasked with setting up the new parishes of Ryde and Newport, I couldn't think of anyone more capable than Max to Clerk at Newport. I talked her into applying and the rest is history. Suffice to say, she went from strength to strength and has become one of the best Clerks on the Island.

A few years later, I was tasked with finding a locum Clerk for Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council - and who better to recommend than Max! And she's been there ever since.

I think I can safely say that Clerking has become Max's perfect job. She loves it. And I know from talking to councillors at her parishes, old and new, that they think the absolute world of her.

Max is always 'up for a challenge' and when I needed someone to play a rowdy and objectionable member of the public, for a role-play exercise at Chairmanship training, I couldn't think of anyone better to ask than Max. I could not believe the way she threw herself into the character and I promise you, she certainly scared more than a few delegates when they tried to Chair a mock meeting! She certainly didn't give them an easy time. Max, make sure you sign up for some Am Dram in Boston!!!

On a more serious note, Max has always been there, ready to support any Clerk, any time she was needed. So reliable and approachable. A true friend in need.

She is someone you can count on and I like to think she has become more of a friend than a colleague to me over the years. She will be missed greatly by the parish community here on the Island and I'm sure, by the many friends she has here.

I will not be losing touch with Max as she will be continuing as our internal auditor, but I hope that we will also get the chance to meet up for a good old 'goss' when she comes back to the Island for a visit.

I'm sure we all send her our best wishes for the next exciting episode she is about to embark on. All I'd say is "watch out Boston, Max is on her way!!" But seriously.... "Good luck Max, and please keep in touch."

Sue Chilton (Clerk, East Cowes Town Council)

And here's a word from Maxine herself.....

Thank you and Goodbye!

As some of you know I will be leaving for the mainland in the new year and would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the help and support I have received as a Clerk over the last 14 years.

Having worked and locumed for a number of different councils, and also spending two years as your County Officer, it has been a real pleasure to get to know such a wide range of Councillors and Clerks.

Clerking is not always the easiest of roles, but I can honestly say it's been a terrific experience, and that's down to the personalities I've encountered along the way. Therefore, this is a heartfelt thanks for your consideration and friendship.

I wish you all well for the future. *Maxine Warr*



Other News...

Community Resilience Project: FREE training offer

Measuring the impact of your work is important for a variety of reasons. Evidencing the effectiveness of your services, projects and programmes is crucial to secure continued and new funding. A track record of success can also help good ideas spread, allowing the positive change to reach more communities and improve more lives. Equally important is identifying projects and services that are not doing well, so that they can be changed and improved - ensuring that the resources committed to them have the impact which was intended.

While each project and each organisation are different, there are proven strategies and tools that can be used to analyse and improve the impact of your projects on individuals and groups, including family groups.

With this in mind, we are now offering a new FREE online session Evidencing the impact of your projects on individuals and families which will take place on Tuesday 8 March 2022, 10:00-12:00.

In this online training session, you will learn about simple and easy ways of measuring the impact of your projects and services. This will contribute to their effective management and monitoring. The data collected will also be extremely useful for your fundraising activities and grant applications. All attendees of this training will receive a FREE copy of the Change Radar Tool for use in their projects.

On popular demand we are now offering an additional FREE online training session Improving the success rate of funding applications on Tuesday 22 March 2022, 10:00-13:00.

For other FREE training events offered by the Community Resilience Project in 2022, please go to our website: <https://www.communityactionisleofwight.org.uk/what-we-do/support-for-voluntary-groups-charities/training/>. To book your place on any of these courses please email: zodonnell@actioniw.org.uk

Zoryna O'Donnell

(Volunteer Training Coordinator - Community Resilience Project)

Registered Charity Number: 11118711

Change Lives
Change Your Own
Volunteer



**Volunteering is a great way to meet new people
and enrich your sense of purpose in life.**

Our volunteering opportunities include:

- **BEFRIENDING:** Face to face and telephone
- **TRANSPORT:** for medical appointments or leisure
- **SHOPPING:** with or for our clients
- **PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION**

To make a difference contact the Good Neighbour Scheme:

Call: 01983 525282 Email: GNS@ageukiw.org.uk

IW Foodbank



A MESSAGE FROM PARAGON

I would like to let you know that You First has changed its name to Paragon. We still offer the same support services for adults and children who are experiencing domestic abuse we have just re branded and changed our name.

A paragon is a perfect diamond, we all aspire to be the best, the people we work with are whole and perfect just as they are and the work we do is helping that to be revealed and helping each person flourish, we aspire to be the best team and always hope what we do is the very best we are capable of.

Our new logo - a pear cut diamond with all the facets reflecting the multi-faceted people we all are –always striving to be amazing, strong, resilient and flawless – just as the people we work with can be.

If you would like further information about our activities or copies of our leaflet or posters signposting support, please visit our website: <https://paragonteam.org.uk/teams/isle-of-wight/> or email Teresa.BrimbleBrennan@iow.gov.uk

Tracey Jackson (Manager)

IW Council

Details of a new Safe Accommodation Strategy will be considered by Cabinet members next week.



The Domestic Abuse Act, which comes into force in March, has placed a statutory duty on councils to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation.

Local authorities are required by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to undertake a 'Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment' and develop a 'Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy'.

In response, the Isle of Wight Council commissioned a partner to undertake the needs assessment which has informed the development of the strategy and its action plan. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure all victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to safe accommodation support services appropriate to their needs in order to live safely and that responses to perpetrators support victim/survivor safety. The strategy outlines the following six objectives:

- Preventing violence and abuse through early intervention and education.
- Survivors have access to a range of appropriate housing options and support services, which increase safety and prevent homelessness/loss of tenure.
- Lived experience shapes service design and delivery.
- Develop and embed a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.
- Improve our data and intelligence.
- Hold perpetrators to account while providing opportunity for change and support.

The proposed strategy has been supported by the Domestic Abuse Forum and has been consulted on widely with stakeholders, providers and both current and former service users.

Cabinet lead for adult social care, Councillor Karl Love, said: "These plans enable specialist support for victims in safe accommodation that helps support their needs. Our council priority is to make sure vulnerable people are protected from harm and have the chance to rebuild their lives in a safe community and in a place they call home. Domestic abuse in all forms is unacceptable and these plans will send the message that we will make sure victims have the support they need and a place a of safety."

Subject to Cabinet approval next Thursday (16 December), the implementation of the plan will be led by the Domestic Abuse Forum and newly developing partnership board.

The connect4communities grant scheme is launching again this December.

The programme is funded by the new Household Support Fund, awarded to the Isle of Wight Council by the Department for Work and Pensions. Community programmes, voluntary groups, education settings and charities are all encouraged to apply for funding to support vulnerable households with essential services this winter. Town, parish and community councils can also apply.

Among last year's recipients was The Footprint Trust, an Island charity which helps those in fuel poverty by promoting energy and water efficiency. Ray Harrington-Vail, general manager, said: "Last year was our busiest year in almost two decades. As an Island charity we have given £24,000 worth of aid in just 12 months. The connect4communities grant contributed towards this amount, enabling us to offer practical solutions for Islanders who had been most affected, financially, during the pandemic. There has been a huge rise in fuel poverty — particularly among households whose income has been hit by job losses. The council's grant has helped to fund our work in the community; this has included the provision of white goods and energy vouchers for pre-paid meters, all of which has gone directly to those in need. In addition to the practical support that The Footprint Trust provides, their guidance on energy saving offers long term support to households."

Local community groups are invited to apply for community grant funding to deliver projects and activities that help provide vulnerable families with food, utilities and keeping warm. This funding is intended to benefit households struggling to afford food, fuel and other essential items.

Another beneficiary of the previous community grant scheme was Pan Together, a charity that provides a community hub for the residents of East Newport. Rachel Thomson, community centre manager, said: "Although Downside Community Centre and the Isobel Cafe were closed to visitors during the various lockdowns, our support services have remained a lifeline to many local families and vulnerable adults, living in one of the most disadvantaged areas on the Island. Funds from the connect4communities winter grant contributed towards 20 hot home-delivered meals each weekday lunchtime for local children and young people whose families were 'on the cusp' of eligibility for free school meals during the lockdown from January to March this year. A total of 1,805 no-cost children's meals have been distributed since March 2020. As well as supporting families, we have offered discounted meals to vulnerable adults, which we were able to subsidise thanks to the council's grant and the support of other generous funders. Meal deliveries, prescription runs, and grocery shopping have also been undertaken by our amazing team of volunteers and staff."

Applications for the connect4Communities grant scheme are open until March 2022. Those who wish to make an application, are advised to do so sooner rather than later, to avoid missing out.

For more information about the grant scheme and how to apply, visit www.connect4communities.org

Food and fuel vouchers

Schools, colleges and early years settings will provide food vouchers of £15 per child per week to cover the Christmas holiday and again for the February half term, as they did over the October half term. These vouchers are for children eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM), children with a social worker or open to early help, 16 to 18-year-olds previously eligible for free school meals and two to four-year-olds accessing childcare and eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium.

A food and fuel voucher worth £50 each will be made available to care leavers in need who are not covered by the extended free school meal provision. A food voucher worth £25 each will also be made available to those in receipt of council tax benefit.

Island families who are struggling to afford food and fuel will get extra help over the autumn and winter months thanks to the 'connect4communities' programme — led by the Isle of Wight Council.

Financed by the £1.1 million Household Support Fund, awarded to the authority by the Department for Work and Pensions, the new measures target families and individuals who may be struggling and is part of a nationwide effort to recover, following the pandemic.

Councillor Debbie Andre, Cabinet member for children's services, said: "The last couple of years have been tough with exceptional challenges for everyone but there are many people for whom it has been especially difficult. Some of our Island residents are struggling to pay for essentials like their food, keeping themselves and their homes warm and covering the cost of utilities. With this new funding we can support a range of schemes that offer a helping hand to people in need and, in doing so, build resilience in our communities."

At least 50 per cent of the total funding will go towards families with children, with the remaining funding allocated for other vulnerable households, including individuals such as care leavers. The programme to deliver the schemes across the Island is called 'connect4communities' and will include:

- food vouchers provided to eligible children and young people through schools and early years settings;
- funding to set up new community pantries in areas of need;
- support for care leavers and other vulnerable groups with food and fuel bills via social care teams and frontline services;
- grants for community and voluntary organisations to help meet the needs within their local communities;
- funding for the Citizens Advice to provide assistance with fuel and utility bills;
- food vouchers for those in receipt of council tax benefit.

Helping community and voluntary organisations give local support

Other support to be provided by the programme includes grants for community and voluntary organisations, such as Citizen's Advice.

Firstly, Citizen's Advice will use the funding to provide a single point of contact for Island residents to understand the sources of support that may be available to them through the connect4Communities programme, and via other means. This will be via the existing Help Through Crisis Helpline (Isle Help - Help Through Crisis (iow.gov.uk)).

Secondly, Citizens Advice will use the funding to provide supermarket or food bank vouchers for food as well as direct financial support to households with fuel bills over the winter period.

Community organisations can apply for grants that will support initiatives that help people in need with food and fuel. This can range from learning to cook healthy and nutritious meals on a budget or with slow cookers, or activities around food preparation that involve the whole family.

Further funding will be allocated to specific initiatives such as holiday and food projects that provide cookery and food support to families during school holidays as well as projects aimed at supporting those in work on low incomes.

Community pantries

Funding will be used to set up community pantries in areas of need. Community pantries work on the principle of giving those in need the opportunity to have a 'helping hand' by getting food at a lower rate on a weekly basis. Items found in the pantry will be a range of fresh, frozen, and general foods which will change on a weekly basis. Access to the community pantry is by way of membership, and for a small weekly contribution, members receive food to a significantly higher value.

Housing costs

In exceptional circumstances, help will be made available for housing costs where it cannot be met by existing schemes such as Discretionary Housing Payments.

Councillor Andre added: "Exceptional housing support is not only for households who receive benefits but also for anyone on a low income who is struggling financially. If your energy costs are a high proportion of your income, for example, you might be eligible for help. I would urge anyone who is unsure if they can get support to contact [connect4communities](mailto:connect4communities@iow.gov.uk) by email at connect4communities@iow.gov.uk or by visiting the website, or contacting Citizen's Advice.

Voluntary and third sector organisations, who know their communities best and are in the ideal position to provide support, are encouraged to apply for grants via the website: connect4communities.org

Christmas schemes that provide food and activities to Island children who are eligible for free school meals will receive funding totalling more than £20,000.

Members of the Isle of Wight Council's Cabinet approved four separate grant awards recently.

The funding comes from the Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, which was set up so local authorities could offer healthy food and enriching activities to children eligible for free school meals during the 2021 school holidays.

Hundreds of children, young people and families on the Island enjoyed a summer of fun thanks to the connect4communities programme. Activities included horse riding, holiday clubs and play sessions and similar will be available over the festive break.

Councillor Debbie Andre, Cabinet member for children's services, attended one of the summer schemes and saw first-hand the children having fun and making new friends. She said: "I was struck by the energy and enthusiasm of the staff building trust with the group which enabled them to identify any further needs and to be able to signpost parents to additional support. I wish to say a huge thank you to all of the providers who have worked with us to support families by arranging fun and exciting activities for children and young people and also providing them with a nutritious meal. The HAF programme has been a real success in providing a range of quality activities for children and young people who might not otherwise have had the chance to attend a holiday club or an activity day."

In its latest budget statement, the government announced funding support for the HAF programme for a further three years. The aim of the scheme is to make free places available to eligible children for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week and for six weeks a year.

Trevor Nicholas, chief executive of Aspire Ryde, said: "Aspire Ryde are pleased to once again offer our food and fun programme during the Christmas holidays. Funded through the HAF initiative we will be providing free access to our soft play facility allowing children to play and learn alongside a healthy hot daily meal. There will be visits from Santa as well as reading with a Disney princess and comic book characters. We are excited to be able to provide this excellent opportunity for children to play, learn and eat together in a fun and imaginative Christmas environment. In addition we will be providing support to parents around budgeting for Christmas and assistance with home cooking as well as support for those experiencing crisis around Christmas time. It is fantastic that we are able to provide this experience for children and families who need it most."

The activity providers for the Christmas HAF are as follows:

Aspire Ryde

Aspire will be running a Fun and Food Christmas Club. Kids play session with a healthy meal provided in the Kingdom play activity centre. Ages four to 16 years. Email: info@aspireryde.org.uk or call (01983) 716020.

Island Riding Centre

Island Riding Centre are providing activities which include horse riding, craft activities and interactive learning related to horses including well-being, diet and nutrition with a healthy lunch provided for ages six to 14. Email: winter@islandriding.com or call (01983) 214000.

Theatre Educational

Theatre Educational's 'Christmas Cracker' runs for two days on 22 and 23 December. This festive holiday provision is for children aged five-16 years and will include performance work themed on the popular musical movie 'Nativity'. As well as creative performance based sessions, there will also be themed prop and accessory making as well as arts and crafts. A hot delicious and nutritious meal will be provided for all participants. There are two sites for these workshops in Newport and Ryde. If you want to book please call Katy on 07984 170014 or fill in the application via: <https://app.classmanager.com/portal/theatre-educational/register>

Ventnor Community Early Years

Ventnor Community Early Years are providing sessions offering activities including gymnastics, dance, arts and crafts, sports, and woodlearn forest school and much more. For five to ten years old. Email: ventnorcommunityearlyyears@gmail.com or call (01983) 856868.

For more information about the Holiday Activity Fund, please visit: connect4communities.org

Vulnerable renters on the Isle of Wight struggling due to the impact of the pandemic will be helped by a share of a multi-million pound support package recently announced by the government.

The Isle of Wight Council has been allocated around £160,000 to support low-income earners who are behind on their rent — helping to prevent homelessness and support families get back on their feet.

The fund recognises the impact the pandemic has had on households in the private rented sector with the lowest income, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said. It also forms part of the council's ongoing support to those who are in need in the private renting sector.

The funding will be available through the winter months and households at risk of eviction or homelessness should contact the council if they require help.

Councillor Ian Stephens, deputy leader and Cabinet member responsible for housing provision and housing needs, said: "Our response to support people at risk of homelessness during this crisis has protected many lives and it is vital we continue to provide support as we enter the winter months. As a top-up to the existing

Homelessness Prevention Grant, this money is ringfenced for homelessness to target those most in need. It will help us to support low-income private renters with COVID-19 related rent arrears to avoid eviction or find a new home where necessary to prevent homelessness."

People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness should contact the council's Homelessness Reduction Team who can advise of the options available to you and how the council can assist you.

For further information, visit: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/care-and-Support/Housing/Homeless-Section/Homelessness> or call (01983) 823040.

New rules for face coverings come into force

New rules for face coverings and COVID-19 safety have come into force.

Concerns over the new Omicron variant of the virus which has arrived in the UK, has meant restrictions have been tightened to curb the spread of the virus. Face coverings are compulsory again in shops and settings such as banks, post offices, hairdressers and public transport while all travellers returning to the UK must take a PCR test on day two and self-isolate until they receive a negative result.

All contacts of suspected Omicron cases must self-isolate, regardless of their age or vaccination status. Test and Trace will be in touch with those cases. The measures have been introduced as a precaution while more information is gathered and assessed on the variant's transmissibility and any possible effect on the vaccines.

Simon Bryant, the council's director of public health, said the vaccination programme and test, trace and isolate system continued to be the most effective way of reducing transmission, along with practising good hygiene, keeping spaces well ventilated, and wearing masks. He said: "I encourage everyone to get vaccinated, whether it's their first or second dose or booster. Research has shown the vaccines help reduce the risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19, as well as reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 and protecting against variants."

Councillor Karl Love, Cabinet member for public health, added: "I can't emphasise enough the importance of continuing with our COVID safe behaviours, particularly with Christmas on the horizon. "Wearing a mask, letting in fresh air when you meet at home, hand washing and social distancing are all going to play a big part this festive season. Please take an LFT test before you enjoy a Christmas event or go and mix with people you don't normally see. All these things together will help protect our Island community this winter. It's far better to go the extra mile to protect each other and the gains we have all worked so hard for."

"Don't forget to use [keeptheislandsafe.org](https://www.keeptheislandsafe.org) for COVID-19 information for the Island."

Scams and Frauds to watch out for...

The cold weather hasn't stopped rogue traders from coming to the Island to try to con us into having work done on our properties. Be wary of any leaflets through the door or anyone knocking the door offering to do work on the property – legitimate traders wouldn't behave like this!

There have also been reports of the "Nottingham Knockers" - generally males that turn up at the door and try to sell cleaning products – do not engage with them – the products will be over-priced and poor quality.

Some residents have reported receiving emails from E-on claiming that there was an error on their bill and that if you click on the link you can follow the process to correct this. Do not click on links in emails – this will be a phishing exercise designed to harvest your details. If you are a customer and are unsure give them a ring to check the validity of the message.

Be alert to calls from internet providers claiming that there is a problem with your internet connection – this will be a ruse to get you to access your device and potentially give the scammer access – Internet companies will NEVER contact you in this way.

Quite a few reports about scam lottery letters. These letters are designed to resemble the National and Post Code lotteries. The letter states that you will need to pay an advance fee to claim your winnings – the winnings are non-existent and this is an attempt to defraud you out of money

It hasn't taken the scammers long to hop onto the Omicron covid scare! Latest emails purporting to be from the NHS state you HAVE to take a new omicron PCR test and if you don't you will have to isolate! There is obviously a link for you to click to order your test – DON'T this is a scam and although it looks like a genuine NHS email if you check the sender address it isn't a valid NHS one.

Remember – STOP – THINK – CHALLENGE

There is a marked increase with scams through WhatsApp messaging with scammers cloning numbers and purporting to be a close family member or sending a message saying this is my new phone number and subsequently asking for money for various emergencies. WhatsApp have joined forces with Citizens Advice and Friends Against Scams to launch Stop Think Call a new campaign to help educate people on how to protect themselves and their WhatsApp account from fraud, for more information go to <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/stopthinkcall> you can also go to the Friends Against Scams web site to watch a short video and learn how to protect yourself and those you care about from scams.

Be wary of text messages purporting to be the NHS – the most recent says that you are eligible for your NHS covid pass and failure to apply may result in a fine – it then provides a link to a website. This is not genuine – there is NO fine for not having a Covid pass – DO NOT click on the link

Another warning to be careful if you receive any emails from friends and contacts asking for money. It is highly likely their account has been hacked and the message will be from a scammer – not a friend. If you aren't sure pick up the phone and call your friend, you will be doing them a favour as they probably won't even know that their account has been compromised.

NEVER respond immediately to any request for financial help even if you know the person well – it is likely to be a scammer posing as them.

Sally Ash (Trading Standards)



The Isle of Wight College has made it through to the final of the Association of College's national awards in two categories:

- The AoC Award for Widening Participation
- The British Council Award for Internationalism.



The next stage of the process is for each finalist college to be visited by a team of assessors, with the winners to be announced Spring 2022.

OPEN
EVENING | 8TH DECEMBER
4PM - 6.30PM

Following our hugely popular open day in November, we have scheduled **an extra open evening before Christmas**, giving our current and potential students another opportunity to visit the main campus in Newport and CECAMM in Whippingham.

2022 WELDING COURSES

Level Three TIG
Evenings over 22 weeks
Jan 6th – June 30th
Thursdays 5.30-7.30pm

Limited
Spaces

Level Two TIG
Daytime over 9 weeks
2nd Feb – 6th April
(excluding academic holidays) 9.00-4.30pm

Level Three TIG
Daytime over 9 weeks
27th April – 29th June
(excluding academic holidays) 9.00-4.30pm

cecamm
cecamm.co.uk

Call
01983 550800
for more information



info@iwcollege.ac.uk

IW Chamber of Commerce

Enter now for the 2022 IW Chamber Business Awards sponsored by WightFibre



The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2022 are now open! To enter for an award, businesses need to head to <https://www.iwchamberawards.co.uk> for full information and to download the entry forms. Businesses will need to create a user account within the site, which they will use to upload their finished submissions. Entries are open now, until February 1st 2022.

The winners will be presented at the Island's most prestigious awards ceremony, held at Cowes Yacht Haven on Friday May 6th. The awards are being presented for the first time since 2019 and this year are sponsored by WightFibre.

"We're thrilled to be once again looking forward to the biggest night of the year for the business community," says IW Chamber Chief Executive Steven Holbrook. "It's a real opportunity to bring people together to celebrate success, in what has been an unprecedented and difficult time for us all. In the last year businesses have evolved, shown resilience and overcome all sorts of challenges as a result of the pandemic. We'll be recognising those outstanding achievements at our awards ceremony on the 6th May."

The IW Chamber's Business Awards are judged by impartial experts, drawn from across the UK and the world. Businesses will be assessed objectively and judged wholly on their submission. Any Island based business can enter; they don't need to be members of the Isle of Wight Chamber. Entries will reflect activity and success in the 2021 calendar year.

"I would recommend that every Island business enters for an IW Chamber Business Award," says Steven Holbrook. "The process makes a business look at themselves from a distance – to analyse the things they do well, which can often highlight areas for potential growth too. Their awards entry will spotlight the things they are particularly proud of, as well as considering the wider perspective, which is good for planning, structure and development. The process in itself has real value – it's definitely not just about winning on the night. Winning is the cherry on the cake for a select few but everyone who engages in the process will get plenty out of it, including individual feedback from the expert judging panel. To be shortlisted for these hugely prestigious awards is a huge achievement."

This year's category list includes a new Entrepreneur of the Year Award, along with the Made On The Isle of Wight Award which recognises homegrown success, as well as a Launched in 2021 Award which spotlights a newly launched product or brand.

The event hasn't been held since October 2019 because of the pandemic. Bringing the ceremony back in 2022 presented an opportunity to reposition the awards night as a precursor to the summer, rather than at the end of the year.

"For the first time we'll be holding the awards in the spring, with warm weather and much more daylight," says Steven Holbrook. "Traditionally the event has been held in December or November, on quite a chilly evening! 2022 will be something of a transitional year, as we move away from the pandemic and start to do some new things on the night. We're really laying the foundations for a new type of Chamber Awards night. It's an exciting and very fresh take on our signature event, which is now firmly established in the early part of the year."



Entries are open from Wednesday December 1st and all entries must be submitted on-line by close of play on Tuesday 1st February 2022. Judging will then take place and a shortlist will be published at the end of March.

"WightFibre is proud to be the overall sponsor of the 2022 IW Chamber Business Awards – this prestigious night does so much to celebrate the success of the IW Chamber and the Island's business community. WightFibre are thrilled to be part of it" – WightFibre CEO John Irvine.

Emma Spinelli

Monthly Report from MP Bob Seely

(IWALC Bulletin 03.12.21)

Vaccinations

I have received lots of emails about vaccinations recently, so I want to share you what I know from those overseeing the vaccination process here. Unfortunately, the national booking system does not consider the stretch of water between us and the mainland so when Island-based appointments are not available it suggests the next closest vaccination centre geographically. I have made my opinions on this oversight clear to the Health Secretary, but we must work with it as best we can.

In addition, the national system only provides access to vaccination slots at community vaccination centres; on the Island this is the service provided by Solent NHS Trust at the Riverside Centre; it does not have details of the vaccination services provided by local GP services such as those at Westridge, Carisbrooke or local GP practices.

As Islanders, we know that travelling to the mainland for a vaccine would be a costly inconvenience therefore I would encourage you to follow the advice of our local NHS and don't make the journey.

I would urge everyone to wait for an Island slot to become available. Please do not telephone your GP but await your letter or telephone call. Most GP surgeries have information regarding booster vaccinations on their websites.

Please go to the following website for further information on the Isle of Wight vaccination process:
<https://keeptheislandsafe.org/vaccinations/>

GP Survey

Healthwatch Isle of Wight want to hear about your experiences of accessing GP Services on the Isle of Wight between July 2021 and the end of December 2021.

Please also encourage family and friends to complete this survey by 31 December 2021. Thank you.
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/XO4IDI/>

Ferry and Rail Integration

I have called on the Government to give themselves the power to intervene in ferry timetables as well as rail, and I have responded to a consultation on the South Western Railway (SWR) timetable with examples of where services don't connect well.

In addition, I have repeated my call for the Government to place a public service obligation on the ferry operators. The last FastCat to the Island is at 8:20 pm. This is just not acceptable. A public service obligation could change this.

We need better integration between ferry and rail services to make connections easier for Islanders and visitors.

Water Quality/Environment Bill

We all agree that the current frequency and volume of storm water discharges around the Island is unacceptable. I recognise this and government recognises this. The question has always been about how we tackle it, and the answer is through legal enforcement.

I am pleased that we now have new legislation that will force water companies to significantly reduce the frequency and volume of storm overflows.



That is a huge step forward from where we were. I was also pleased when Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow, confirmed that ecological sites and bathing waters would be looked at first, because in my mind there is no doubt that this applies to the Isle of Wight.

I am keen to see Southern Water making the Island a priority area for water clean-up, and while I welcome their assurance that Sandown will be a 'pathfinder' area with £23m being invested to increase flow capacity at the Sandown site, the question remains, what about the rest of the Island? That is the question I am currently seeking an answer to.

Houses in Whitwell

I have submitted my objections to plans to build 24 houses and an access road off Whitwell High Street. This is yet another example of a housing development designed for profit, not people and it will be existing residents and the surrounding environment that will pay the price if this application is approved.

Residents are understandably concerned about the increase in traffic and the risk of flooding to their properties.

There are brownfield sites across the Island in desperate need of development that could address the housing needs of Islanders young and old. New homes must be built with people and communities in mind.

Police Plan

I welcome the new 'More Police, Safer Streets' plan, launched by Police & Crime Commissioner Donna Jones which details a number of priorities which include putting 600 more police officers on the streets by 2023 and improving police visibility, tackling anti-social behaviour and rural crime, and preventing young people from committing crimes.

More detail can be found here: <https://www.morepolicesaferstreets.com/>

Bob Seely

News from Southern Water

We are excited to announce that as of 2022, we will be offering free guided tours of Sandown Waste Treatment works. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the waste treatment process, decipher fact from fiction and understand what actually goes on behind the scenes.



Booking via our dedicated website is necessary, due to expected level of demand and we will share details in due course.

We're making our way around each Parish on the Island and are always keen to deliver presentations and answer any questions you might have, regarding local issues. Watch this space as we'll be in touch in the new year!

Did you know? If 40% of properties on the Island redirected their roof drainage into water butts (therefore removing their connections from the public foul sewer), storm water discharges would be reduced by 80%. This stat is taken from one of our Catchment First initiatives, in which research is being carried out on the Isle of Wight to determine how we instigate the reduction of combined sewer overflows.

Here's more information for your reference: <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life/catchment-first/about-catchment-first>

Warm Christmas wishes from Southern Water, Laura Moran and Keith Herbert

News from Hovertravel

Hovertravel is 1000th signatory in the South East to the Armed Forces Covenant



Hovertravel has formally declared to ensure those who serve, or who have served in the armed forces, and their families are treated fairly, becoming the 1000th signatory in the South East to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Neil Chapman, managing director of Hovertravel, explains: “With Portsmouth Naval Base being one of our closest neighbours we operate in the same waters as the British Navy and work alongside the Queen’s Harbour Master who oversees our marine environment. Hovertravel has historically employed ex-service personnel and is proud to include team members with military backgrounds in its current workforce.

By signing the Armed Forces Covenant we are making a public pledge and highlighting that we are forces-friendly. We are also very keen to encourage other organisations to sign the covenant and we will be looking to increase the number of signatories on the Isle of Wight above the current total of just 11.”

Hovertravel recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and military families bring to its business and in signing the document, has committed to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant. This includes supporting the employment of service leavers, reservists and veterans as well as providing flexible leave for service spouses and partners before, during, and after deployments.

Commodore JJ Bailey ADC, said: “It was my privilege as Commander of HM Naval Base Portsmouth to sign on behalf of all our Armed Forces this commitment by Hovertravel to recognising the contribution that serving and veteran military personnel and their families make to the country, this being the 1000th such commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant made in the South East.”



Hovertravel commits wholeheartedly to the principle that members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families deserve respect and support, and fair treatment.

Hovertravel will also endeavour to ensure that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Furthermore Hovertravel appreciates that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved and will look to encourage the use of our HoverCare facilities when and where appropriate.

Stephen Forster (Creative Director, SRF (Integrated Communications) Ltd)

Message from Wightlink (Fri 3 Dec 2021)



If you have travelled with Wightlink in the last few weeks, you will have noticed we have amended our signs on ships and at ports to reflect the change in the Government's Covid legislation. As you know, it is now a legal requirement for people to wear face coverings while travelling on public transport, unless you are exempt.

Our ships and FastCats are spacious with room for people to spread out and observe social distancing, especially on the breezy outside decks. While customers can enjoy refreshments onboard, we ask they put their face coverings back on when they have finished eating and drinking.

Since our last update, Wightlink has marked Remembrance Day. Captain Mike Smith presented our wreath at the annual service at the Merchant Navy Memorial in London, to honour the seafarers who lost their lives in two world wars. The Masters of all Wightlink vessels invited crew and customers to observe the two minutes' silence to remember those killed in armed conflicts on both Thursday 11 November and Sunday 14 November.

The Clean Air Zone has come into operation in Portsmouth, you may have seen a report on it by BBC South Transport Correspondent Paul Clifton. Basically, cars, vans and motorcycles don't have to pay, but the oldest and most polluting vehicles such as lorries, coaches and taxis are being charged to drive through some roads in the city centre, including all roads to our Gunwharf terminal. Colleagues in Wightlink Business Hub have been talking about this for some time to hauliers and other customers affected by the regulations. Grants have been available from Portsmouth City Council to help them upgrade their fleets.

Refit season continues and St Faith has been our latest ship to undergo dry-docking in Falmouth to keep her 'ship-shape' for another year. After Christmas, regular annual maintenance will take place on both St Clare and Victoria of Wight.

Our £1 million investment in Portsmouth Harbour FastCat terminal is going well. Although, sailings to and from Ryde Pier Head continue as usual, we have put up temporary facilities for customers in the railway station. This work will continue into 2022.

We have launched a Helping Hand scheme, for customers with invisible conditions like hearing impairments and autism. Applicants receive a card they can show to any member of the Wightlink team. This will make them aware of any special needs without having to explain them to our colleagues. To apply, see this webpage – www.wightlink.co.uk/tickets/accessible-travel where there are also full details of how we support disabled travellers. Or you can call 0333 999 7333 on Monday to Friday between 9:00am and 6:00pm or on Saturdays and Sundays between 9:00am and 5:00pm.

The next edition of our brochure Island Link will be landing on doormats in January. It contains a page of discount vouchers valid until the end of March, punctuality and reliability figures and updates on our services and environmental commitments, along with a comprehensive list of all the ways you can save money on your Wightlink tickets.

We wish you all a safe and merry Christmas and an excellent New Year and hope to see you on board again before too long. *Karen Woods (Communications and PR)*

Southern Vectis

We continue to operate all of our services at pre-COVID levels and have seen a great response from our customers returning to use our buses, and offering a full level of service has played a big part in their decisions.



As every year, we'll be operating an industry-leading level of service across the Christmas and New Year period, including our popular Christmas Day services, something rather unique to the Island. We believe it to be the UK's most comprehensive Christmas Day service, something we're very proud of.

Our new Tap-on -Tap-off contactless and paperless payment method continues to be increasingly popular, and when added to increasing numbers of ticket sales through our mobile app, we continue to see a positive shift to people buying their travel without using cash or collecting a paper ticket.

Richard Tyldsley (General Manager)

News from Red Funnel

Red Funnel has initiated the first step in its pledge to plant 160 trees across the Island in celebration of its 160th birthday, officially launching the tree planting initiative with a ground-breaking ceremony at Earl Mountbatten Hospice. This year, Red Funnel is marking over a century and a half of travel between the Isle of Wight and mainland – serving as the Island's original and longest standing ferry operator. As part of the birthday celebrations, Red Funnel is launching a community initiative that will bring together Island partners and residents, to look back on the ferry company's past and to plant the seed for the next 160 years.

Having been inspired by the Island's creative roots and local environment, the ferry company is gifting 160 trees to 11 local businesses, charities, and community groups, to contribute to the important community outdoor spaces for Island residents to enjoy.



The first planting ceremony took place at Mountbatten Hospice earlier this week, with Nigel Hartley, the Chief Executive of the Earl Mountbatten Hospice and Cllr Matthew Price, Councillor for Fairlee and Whippingham, supporting with breaking ground and planting the first tree. Red Funnel is working with local nursery Busy Bee to supply all the trees, fortifying its commitment to supporting Island business owners.

Fran Collins, Chief Executive at Red Funnel said: "We are extremely proud to partner with the community to gift such an important aspect of what makes the Island so unique: it's scenic spaces and biodiversity. We wanted to thank local businesses and residents like the team at Mountbatten Hospice for the amazing work they undertake on a daily basis by gifting trees to help with creating spaces for them to relax and reflect."

Nigel Harley, Chief Executive of Earl Mountbatten Hospice, said: "We are really grateful to Red Funnel for the gift of these trees, enhancing the look and feel of our hospice site is really important to us and the planting of these trees will complement our wonderful garden and outdoor spaces, which are so well looked after by our volunteers. Red Funnel has been a long-standing supporter of our work and this latest gesture is really kind and appreciated by us all at Mountbatten."

Cllr Matthew Price, Councillor for Fairlee and Whippingham, said: "It has been great to attend today's tree plant ceremony and it is wonderful to hear how Red Funnel is supporting the local community through its series of initiatives, whilst also celebrating its 160 year history of supporting the Island community."



The full list of partners includes Mountbatten Hospice, Cowes Town Council, Northwood Recreation Grounds, East Cowes Council, Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Isle of Wight Learning Centre, Kingswood Learning Centre, Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary, Isle of Wight College, and Monkey Haven.

Lara Shingles (Press Office)