

Serving the Island's



Town, Parish & Community Councils

The IWALC Bulletin

December 2022

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 last issue of the Bulletin for 2022!

It's been a productive year for IWALC. We have increased our membership, which now includes 28 of the Island's 33 parish, town and community councils, and we have many new, enthusiastic members of our Executive Committee. We have held meetings on housing, community health and wellbeing, climate change, road safety, the cost-of-living crisis and planning enforcement and in April we held an 'open day', at which we showcased our activities and shared our experiences. We have held training courses on basic councillor skills, code of conduct, and equality and diversity and facilitated training for new clerks. We are now represented on the IW Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee, Health and Wellbeing Committee and Planning Committee and we hold monthly online meetings with members of the Council's Cabinet and the Island's MP. And, last but not least, our online *Bulletin* has continued to be very popular and the circulation list has grown significantly over the year. It is now distributed to more than 80 organisations and individuals, in addition to local councils and all IW Councillors.

This issue of the *Bulletin* includes a report on our November meeting, in which we combined an Executive meeting with a special meeting to discuss the cost-of-living crisis and planning enforcement. It also includes information on what our member councils and other organisations are doing to address the cost-of-living crisis. Action by local councils ranges from the establishment of 'warm spaces', a local household assistance fund and street monitors, to Ventnor Town Council's sponsorship of a film about the experiences of residents who are struggling to make ends meet. We showed the film, called *Family Voice*, at our November meeting.

I am proud that our local councils are, once again, rallying round to support their communities at a time of crisis. The November meeting included a presentation by Ian Lloyd, the IW Council's Strategic Manager for Partnerships and Support Services, who emphasised the need for everyone - the IW Council, local councils, the voluntary sector and local communities - to work together, as we did at the height of the Covid epidemic. A number of coordination measures have already been put in place, including a special cost-of-living help page on the IW Council's website (see <https://beta.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/>) and bi-weekly online coordination meetings, organised by Community Action. I would encourage all councils to visit the website and add information on their own activities, and to attend the bi-weekly meetings. And if you have not already seen the film *Family Voice*, you can watch it on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/zjEAFmwlSbE>.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members, especially my two vice chairs (Mick Lyons for the first half of the year and Anne Bamford for the second) and our treasurer (Sue Hardy), and our two part-time staff (Heather and Jill) for all their effort and support this year. And finally, on behalf of IWALC, I would like to wish everyone a peaceful and warm Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Cllr. Diana Conyers

Stop Press

We have just heard that last Thursday, 8 December, Aspire Ryde and the Isle of Wight Radio raised enough money to provide over 200 Christmas hampers for Island families. The money was raised through a phone-in programme, in which local businesses were invited to buy a hamper. The aim was to raise enough money for 100 hampers but, thanks to the generosity of local businesses and individuals, this target was more than doubled. The hampers will be delivered to families across the Island by The Lions. What better example could there be of community cooperation in times of need?

IWALC News...

Contact - IWALC County Officer, Heather Rowell (heatheriwalc@gmail.com)

Website - www.iwalc.org - Check out our Facebook page too.

The Bulletin - Communications Officer - Jill Webster - jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com

The deadline for the February edition will be January 31st - Thank you.

November Executive Meeting

There was an IWALC Executive Meeting at 7.45 pm on Thursday 24 November at the Riverside Centre. There were 24 participants, representing 22 member councils.

The main decisions made at the meeting were as follows:

1. A revised version of Protocol 16 (an annex to the IW Council's Constitution that sets out the relations between the Council and local councils), which had been drafted by a working group appointed at the last meeting, was approved. The revised version, which has been sent to the IW Council for their consideration, emphasises the need to see local councils as equal partners and provides for discussion about the appropriate division of responsibility for assets and services

2. Non-member councils that access IWALC for services, such as to borrow funds from the Public Works Loan Board, will from the next financial year be charged for the service.

3. Cllr Emma Cox (Freshwater Parish Council) was appointed as IWALC's representative on the IW Council's Planning Committee. She will be supported by Cllr Giles Alldred, the former representative, who has had to resign due to work commitments. It was also agreed to ask the IW Council to review its policy and allow IWALC to provide a substitute when the main representative is unable to attend.

4. Our County Officer and Communications Officer will receive a 10% salary increase with effect from April 2023.

Open Meeting

The Executive Meeting was preceded by a special meeting, open to all councillors and staff of member councils, which began at 6 pm. The meeting, which was attended by at least 30 people, was divided into two parts.

The first part focused on the **cost of living crisis**. It began with a showing of the film *Family Voice*, which was commissioned by Ventnor Town Council and produced by Utility Films. The film records the experiences of residents struggling to make ends meet and the efforts by the Town Council and other local organisations to address poverty in the town. The film was introduced by Tony McCarthy, the Town Council's Community Development Worker, and David George, the film's producer. This was followed by a presentation by Ian Lloyd, the IW Council's Strategic Manager for Partnerships and Support Services. Ian summarised the proceedings of the Food Waste and Food Poverty Conference, held on 18 November, and outlined the measures that the Council, together with other organisations, is taking to address the cost of living crisis. He emphasised the need for partnership working, learning lessons from the experience during the height of the Covid pandemic, and encouraged local councils to get involved.

The subject of the second part of the meeting was **planning enforcement**. Ollie Boulter, the IW Council's Strategic Manager for Planning and Infrastructure Delivery, and Russell Chick, Planning Team Lead, gave a brief presentation on the nature and scope of their enforcement work.

They invited local councils to contact them to discuss enforcement issues in their areas and possible ways of working with the IW Council to improve the service.

Copies of the two presentations have already been circulated to member councils. The *Family Voice* film can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/zjEAFmwlSbE>.

Meetings with Isle of Wight Cabinet

There was an online meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet on Thursday 10 November. Unfortunately only five IWALC members were able to attend this meeting. Issues discussed included the draft Island Planning Strategy, illegal tree cutting, visits to the new recycling centre, the bid for a new special school, and the Island's share of police funding. Cllr Peacey Wilcox informed participants that the Council now has a dedicated website with help re the cost of living. She praised the latest issue of the Bulletin and thanked councillors for all the work they do on a voluntary basis. Cllr Fuller suggested that a future meeting might focus on planning issues. A detailed report has already been circulated to members.

The next meeting will be at 12 noon on Thursday 12 January. All councillors and staff are welcome to attend. Details will be circulated near the time.

Meeting with Bob Seely MP

There have been two online meetings with Bob Seely since the last Bulletin.

The first was on Tuesday 8 November. There were thirteen participants. The main issues discussed included support for households using heating oil, wastage in the NHS and schools, the current status of ferry services, an update on dentist and pharmacy services, flooding due to surface water runoff, and possible implications of the budget to be announced on 17 November.

The second was on Wednesday 7 December. Only six IWALC members attended. The main topic of discussion was the recently announced changes to the draft Levelling Up Bill, which the MP helped to secure, and their possible impact on the draft Island Planning Strategy (DIPS). Bob explained how the changes could facilitate the argument for lower housing targets on the Island on grounds of exceptional circumstances. He said he was now glad that approval of the DIPS had been delayed. Discussion focused on the impact on the provision of affordable housing to meet local housing needs. The MP has already circulated a summary of the changes to all councils.

Other topics of discussion included:

- The scarlet fever outbreak: The need to provide more guidance for parents suggested.
- Yarmouth-Fishbourne ferry service: Bob said he had successfully negotiated with Wightlink to improve the coordination of ferry and train services.
- Shortage of residential care: Bob said that government funding has been obtained to enable the IW Council to reopen Bluebell House care home in Ventnor.
- Southern Water: Bob agreed to send an update to councils on his latest discussions with Southern Water.
- Disability benefits: Bob agreed to try to find out how many people on the Island are claiming disability benefits.

Training

There will be two training events in January.

One is a two-part, face-to-face course in Chairmanship Skills, which will be delivered by our regular trainer, Sue Chilton, Clerk of East Town Council, on Wednesday 11 and Wednesday 25 January. The sessions will

be held from 6.30 to 8.30 pm at the Riverside Centre. This course is designed not only for existing chairs but for any councillor who may consider becoming a chair in the future – or just wants to know more about this important skill. Participants should register through their clerks.

The other is a special course on First Aid, to be delivered on Wednesday 18 January by Lindsey Hood, clerk of Chillerton and Gatcombe and Fishbourne Parish Councils and a trained paramedic. The focus will be on the use of defibrillators, but other basic first aid skills will be included. Since this is a practical course, numbers are limited and we cannot accept any more participants. Those who have registered should have already received details.

Press

As reported by Louise Hill for On The Wight-

https://onthewight.com/changes-to-isle-of-wight-council-planning-enforcement-could-see-local-councils-pay-for-the-service/?mc_cid=662df44cdc&mc_eid=7735b1c7f9

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.



Teams log-in details are circulated to all Clerks prior to the meetings.

Meetings with 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.



In addition, IWALC continues to be included in the regular Heads of Organisations meetings with Bob Seely,

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.



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 Training

WHAT?

Chairmanship Skills (Two Parts)

WHEN?

Wednesday January 11th &
Wednesday January 25th

TIME?

6.30pm to 8.30pm

WHERE?

The Riverside, Newport

WHO?

Training is open to all Clerks, Councillors and Staff.

HOW?

Please book your place through your Clerk, with Jill

COST?

Free for all IWALC Member Council staff and councillors.
£75 per person for non-member councils

BUT!!

£50 charge for any person who fails to
attend without giving prior notice.

BOOK BEFORE?

Friday January 6th



jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com

News from NALC

NEWS FROM NALC - Report from Bob Blezzard

It has been busy at national level over the past couple of weeks with meetings of the Management Board, the National Assembly and an informal meeting of the Smaller Councils' Committee. The highlights are as follows:

White Ribbon Accreditation

The Management Board has endorsed a proposal from the National Network: Women Councillors for NALC to support the White Ribbon Campaign and agreed that NALC should become a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation. White Ribbon UK is a charity which seeks to engage with men and boys in violence prevention, predominantly against women as part of the global White Ribbon movement. White Ribbon Day is the international day for the eradication of violence against women held annually on 25th November. CALCs and local councils are equally encouraged to become White Ribbon accredited or supporter organisations. Public sector bodies achieving White Ribbon accreditation can demonstrate they are meeting the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

NALC Headquarters , 109 Great Russell Street, London

NALC's long standing headquarters building in central London is no longer fit for purpose and is being put on the market. The intention is that staff will move out by February 2023. Temporary alternative premises will be rented and the savings from no longer paying business rates should be sufficient in the short term to fund the rental costs. Since the pandemic there has been a greater move to staff working from home and more appropriate permanent arrangements will be made in the long term.

NALC/SLCC Memorandum of Understanding and Partnership Statement

It was reported at the last Management Board meeting that a Memorandum of Understanding and a Partnership Statement had been signed by the chairs of NALC and SLCC at the recent SLCC Conference. These documents include amongst other things an understanding that NALC will encourage member councils to support their clerks becoming SLCC members and SLCC will expect its members to recommend their employing councils to join NALC through their "home" CALCs. Whilst welcoming this move I was critical that the wording of the documents had not been run past the Management Board ahead of being signed. I think some improving amendments could have been made to both documents.

Smaller Councils' Committee

The Management Board responded to a substantial consultative report from the Smaller Councils' Committee which drew attention to the needs of the smallest councils which are seeking, amongst other things simplified versions of contract templates of documentation they can sign up to and concise factsheets and guidance possibly offered in one amendable "blue book." The response whilst acknowledging the issues raised was light on solutions and this was raised at the National Assembly following an informal meeting of the SCC the previous day. THE SCC is pressing for greater representation on the committee from the "grass roots" by having one member elected from each of the eight regions.

Housing and Planning

There was at the National Assembly an interesting session on housing and planning and was timely given that the Government's Levelling Up Bill is making its way through Parliament. The meeting was attended by Owen Edwards from the Better Planning Coalition which is made up of some 30 organisations across the

environment, housing, planning, heritage and transport sectors which have come together with the aim of influencing the planning system to make it fit for people, nature and the climate. The meeting restated NALC's policy of inter alia supporting a planning system which incorporates a significant role for local councils, but does not support across the board extended permitted development rights. In addition NALC recognises the need for more affordable housing and would welcome initiatives which will enable LPAs and local councils to deliver more along with a fair infrastructure levy system which gives local councils a voice and benefits them financially so they can deliver more for their local communities. The meeting also agreed that NALC should join the Better Planning Coalition.

Bob BLEZZARD (December 2022)

NALC advice services

Although NALC agreed about two years ago that all IWALC member councils would have direct access to NALC's legal and financial advice services, some councils have had difficulty doing so. This problem has now hopefully been resolved. Please let us know if you experience any further problems.

Please note that NALC now also offers advice on human resources and employment issues. For further information about this service, which is provided in conjunction with Worknest, contact:

- Access to Employment law/HR advice localcouncilhr@worknest.com
- Access to Health & Safety Consultancy localcouncilhs@worknest.com

Meeting of NALC Coastal Communities Network

On 24 November I attended an online meeting of the NALC Coastal Communities Network. It was chaired by Justin Griggs, NALC's Head of Policy and Communications. Ryde Town Council also attended, together with participants from Pagham PC (West Sussex), Warton PC and Morecambe Bay TC (Lancashire), Weymouth TC and Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils.

The main speaker was Beccy MacDonald Lofts, executive officer of the Local Government Association's Coastal Communities Special Interest Group, which has 57 members. She outlined the Group's recent activities, which include liaison with other coastal organisations and briefings to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Coastal Communities (see <https://www.coastalpartnershipnetwork.org.uk/coastalcommunitiesappg>).

In subsequent discussions, participants raised the following concerns:

- The housing crisis and its causes, including the need for local authorities to be able to charge higher council tax rates for second home and empty homes
- Inadequate sea defences - especially important in view of rising sea levels and resulting in loss of agricultural land
- Deprivation in coastal communities and the need for them to have access to funding under the government's levelling up agenda
- Approval of planning applications on floodplains without complementary measures to address flood risk
- The impact of Natural England's policies about the discharge of nitrates on planning applications
- Discharge of sewage, including 'dry sewage', into the sea.

It was agreed that housing issues are one of the main, if not the main, concern. Justin reported that NALC has made a submission to the recent consultation on Holiday Lets. See <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/2223-nalc-supports-licensing-for-short-term-holiday-lets%20> for details. Beccy reported that they are planning to give a briefing to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Coastal Communities on housing next year.

It was agreed to circulate a list of other possible issues on which the Network should focus to members for their inputs and to publicise the meetings (which are held quarterly) more widely. If you would like to join the Coastal Communities Network, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/national-networks>.

Note: Since the webinar was held, the government has announced its intention to introduce registration of holiday lets and to hold a consultation on the need for planning permission to convert properties from residential to tourist use.

CLLr Diana Conyers

Updated information-

From our September Bulletin-

NALC secures Arnold-Baker discount NALC has secured a 20% discount for member local councils and county associations off the purchase price of the new 13th edition of Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration. The purchase price will be £164.99, reduced to £131.99 with a NALC member discount.

Following problems for members trying to place an order, they are now asked to email: James.Begg@LexisNexis.com to request their copies.

Fortnightly meeting with county officers

At our recent regular fortnightly meeting between NALC and county officer colleagues, (03/12/2022) we were pleased to be joined by Garry Brown from NALC's partner Blachere Illumination. The discussion focussed on county association events and annual general meetings, including how to engage with commercial sponsors. It was helpful to reflect on how different partners value the opportunity to sponsor or exhibit at events and how those partners bring such a range of experiences and interests to those events as well. We all also shared the challenges of running events since the pandemic and the pros and cons of virtual, in-person and hybrid events. Other issues covered include the forthcoming provisional local government finance settlement, meeting dates following next year's local elections and NALC's HR support to county associations.

December's bi-monthly legal bulletin for county officers went out this week and covered annual council meeting dates for local councils with elections and the Coronation bank holiday, toilets at council premises, dogs at council meetings and powers to provide commercial bus services.

At the meeting between NALC and county officers, (18/11/2022) we discussed national and county conferences and annual general meetings, their format, and how they work. I am particularly keen for NALC to attend and support as many as possible; I know many of our partners do too, so we are working together on how to do this more effectively. There were also updates on our engagement with the government and forthcoming meeting with the new local government minister, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities select committee inquiry on levelling up funding, and our review of NALC publications, including advice and guidance.

News from Member Councils

Arreton Parish Council
Bembridge Parish Council
Brading Town Council
Brighstone 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
Lake Parish Council
Nettlestone & Seaview 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
Wootton Bridge Parish Council
Wroxall Parish Council
Yarmouth Town Council

Niton & Whitwell Parish Council

Our two little helpers, Lorraine and Clair braved the freezing morning to decorate our tree with decorations made by the pupils of the Niton Primary School.

We have also supplied and decorated a tree in Whitwell Churchyard.

We have a warm space now in Niton, provided by Niton Library.

We are continuing our efforts to combat the flooding that has taken place recently in both villages and are in ongoing conversations with all the agencies involved.

We wish all our parishioners a Merry Christmas and to keep warm and safe!

Cllr Sherlie Burridge



Shalfleet Parish Council

Community Led Housing

Community Led housing must be bought forward by the Community.



Shalfleet Parish Council

The dwellings would be for people of the Parish, those who have a family connection to the Parish or those who work in the Parish.

Shalfleet Parish Council has been looking for a site for some years and after making an appeal in the Village News, one has been selected for 8/10 dwellings.



Aerial view.

A working group has been formed including members of the Parish Council, the landowners, Community Action supported by the IW Council, ex IW Councillor Stuart Hutchinson and ex Parish Councillor Alex Burt.

The group has obtained a grant, funded by the IW council through Community Action. This money will be used to fund initial surveys for the site and take advice on setting up a Land Trust, which will be a separate from the landowner and the Parish Council.

Sally Woods (Clerk)

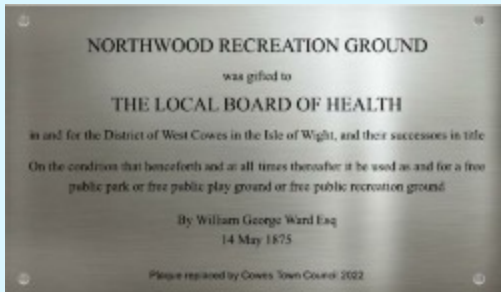
The site is at Crossways, Dodpits near Newbridge, which is part of Ningwood Manor Farm (see aerial view above).

We will continue to keep you informed.

Sally Woods (Clerk)

Cowes Town Council

We have installed two new plaques at Northwood Recreation Ground. The first is a lovely wooden plaque at the Community Orchard. This has been hand carved by Island company Dovetailed Design, based in Shanklin.



The second is a replacement plaque, providing details of the heritage of the gifting of the recreation ground by the Ward family. This is located on the Park Road entrance pillar, with kind permission from the IW Council, following requests from residents for the plaque to be reinstated.

Preparations for Winter Pressures to help the community are now in place. We have a number of locations for people to come to for company and a warm welcome, also signposting to help when needed. Food banks are also ready to help.

WARM SPACES - COWES: Connecting, support, companionship:

Every Monday 10am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm: Cowes Library, Beckford Road. Free Wi-Fi, free computers, free charging, advice and information, people to chat to, space to work, free activities.

Every Monday 10am-12 Noon: Baptist Church, Victoria Road. A warm welcome for all.

Every Tuesday 10am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm: Cowes Library, Beckford Road. Free Wi-Fi, free computers, free charging, advice and information, people to chat to, space to work, free activities.

Every Tuesday 8:30am - 11am The Apex Church @ St Faith's. Light breakfast available. All are welcome.

First Wednesday of each month 10am-12 Noon: Beckford Centre, Beckford Road. Cafe.

Second Wednesday of each month 2pm-4pm: Alzheimer cafe. Cowes Football Club, Reynolds Close (off Park Road). 01983 220200.

Every Thursday morning 10am-12 Noon: Drop-In @ St Faith's. Enjoy coffee, company, laughter and interesting local speakers.

Every Friday 10am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm: Cowes Library, Beckford Road. Free Wi-Fi, free computers, free charging, advice and information, people to chat to, space to work, free activities.

First Friday of each month 10.30am-12.30pm: Northwood Cemetery. Free tea, coffee and biscuits!
2nd Dec. Tombola!

Cowes Town Council cont'd

Every Saturday 10am to 4.30pm: Cowes Library, Beckford Road. Free Wi-Fi, free computers, free charging, advice and information, people to chat to, space to work, free activities.

There's a list of Warm Spaces across the Island on IW Council's website: <https://orlo.uk/UWEyQ>
Websites for help and support:

www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving

www.islefindit.org.uk

Cowes has a growing Creative community who are taking part in the Island Collection Island Creative Workshop helping the groups to flourish. It's great to see a new gallery in Cowes High Street.



On 24 November we had our annual Festive light switch on event, coinciding with the Town Council's Christmas Tree being lit. The lights were turned on by Island High Sheriff, Kay Marriott, supported by the Mayor and Councillors. We were very fortunate with the weather as it had been a very wet and windy day, but thankfully it stayed dry for our outdoor event. The school choir from Lanesend Primary School started the event with a selection of Christmas carols, drawing a crowd of people to the area to hear the singing and see the lights turned on.



Cowes Town Council cont'd



The Town Council has purchased new lights for the Christmas tree this year, which glowed against the damp paving, providing a lovely and popular photo opportunity, captured beautifully by Cllr Paler.



Looking ahead to Christmas, we welcome Small Business Saturday this coming weekend (3 December), with free parking between 12 and 6pm in IW Council-owned Long Stay car parks (Brunswick and Mornington Road car parks) and our town's late night shopping event on Thursday 8 December. Our local businesses need the support from residents to keep their businesses in the town. It is great to see the variety of independent retailers, making Cowes an attractive place to visit and shop.

Kate Scragg (Asst Town Clerk)

Photos courtesy of Cllr Michael Paler.

Freshwater Parish Council



I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Parish, Community and Town Councils, their Councillors and Officers a very Merry Christmas.

We are very lucky at Freshwater Parish Council to have Melanie Gardiner, our Just Ask Community Support Officer working for us. I thought other Councillors may be interested in the work Mel does and in particular the work Mel is doing to help our residents during the cost of living crisis. The following is Mel's report.

Freshwater Parish Council Household Assistance Fund

Working within the community as Community Development Officer for Freshwater Parish Council allows me the opportunity to work with individuals and local organisations within the West Wight.

In view of the current cost of living crisis we made an application to the Connect4Communities Household Assistance Fund. (Original application was for £5000 increased to £15000 with further time to spend).

To qualify for assistance under our funding, households must show that they are spending in excess of 10% of household income on fuel/utility payment or live in a property with an energy efficient rating of D or lower.

Definition taken from the Centre for Sustainable Energy:

CSE's Fuel Poverty Calculator has been updated to account for the new definition of fuel poverty: Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE).

Fuel poverty is when people have to spend a high proportion of their income to keep their home warm due to a combination of poor housing with inadequate insulation and heating, expensive energy tariffs, and low incomes. One outcome for those in fuel poverty is poor physical and mental health. NICE, which provides evidence-based guidance for NHS and social care professionals, recognises that living in a cold home will make most health conditions worse – from childhood asthma to heart disease.

Under the new LILEE definition, households are considered fuel poor if:

- They have a Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) of band D or below (low energy efficiency).*
- Were they to spend the required amount on fuel to heat their home adequately, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line (low income).*

The fund is to help with the costs of fuel related expenses.

This could come in the form of helping people reduce cooking costs by providing air fryers/slow cookers. Or to reduce heating costs by helping with the costs of draught exclusion, obtaining thermal curtains, reflective backing for radiators etc.

Children can be provided with warm coats or boots/bedding etc.

The fund is currently administered by myself (CDO) with referrals being received from Our Place, Churches Together, Community Connector, Dementia Choir, Freshwater Food Bank and Federation of Church Schools Shalfleet and Yarmouth.

Thus far we have made 27 awards to 12 households.

Take up has been slower than expected, however I anticipate that once the weather declines that applications will increase.

The fund can be further stretched through the reclaim of VAT, which will allow us to make best use of the monies available.

Thanks for that, Mel.

Our replacement toilets at Gate Lane have reached the construction phase, the foundations look good and the walls are going up. Hopefully in early 2023 they will be opened to the public. We are maintaining portaloos for the public's use for the duration of the building project.

We are also looking forward to the newly built primary school in Freshwater opening its doors to the staff and pupils of Yarmouth Primary School in January 2023. The site was formerly the All Saints Primary School which had educated the village children for the last 150 years. The school will have new play areas, technology suites, a library and a resource base for special educational needs.

Cllr Emma Cox

Please also see Adam Tucker's information on Page 33.

Fishbourne Parish Council

Fishbourne Parish Council has a new councillor. Councillor Christine Woollin was co-opted at our November meeting, following the resignation of former councillor Weronika Novak.



We held our bi-annual Spruce Up Day on Saturday 12 November. It was originally planned for 10 September but had to be cancelled due to the death of the Queen a few days earlier. Fortunately, the weather was more like September than November – dry, sunny and unseasonably warm! We were therefore able to gather in the garden of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club for lunch after our efforts.

At our December Parish Council meeting we discussed the cost of living crisis. Our main concern in Fishbourne is a number of elderly residents who live on their own. We have agreed to set up a street monitor system, whereby we appoint someone in each street or locality to keep an eye on their neighbours.

Cllr Diana Conyers



Ventnor Town Council



REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

Ventnor's two annual services of Remembrance took place:

Friday 11 November, 10.45, Royal British Legion The road was temporarily closed throughout the short service and to honour the two minutes silence. The service was followed by a 40-minute talk covering the history, role and scope of caring for the town's war dead, both at home in the UK and across the world.

Sunday, 13 November, 2pm, St Catherine's Church

The 2pm service at St Catherine's Church was followed by the Laying of Wreaths ceremony at Ventnor's War Memorial, Park Avenue.

SEA WALL DAMAGE: PUBLIC MEETING



The Isle of Wight Council's public meeting at St Catherine's Church on Thursday was attended by around 30 residents to hear the Isle of Wight Council's Strategic Manager for the Environment Natasha Dix, with a detailed presentation, explain why it had been essential to close part of the sea front following the initial and now ongoing damage to the sea wall. Although funding for repair has been secured from the government and the Environment Agency staff and a contractor are in action the repair is predicted to take many months.

TOILET TWINNED



Ventnor Inner Wheel members met at Ventnor Town Council's newly constructed toilets in the town centre last week to unveil a small plaque to commemorate its twinning with three new toilets in Zambia. The Inner Wheel raised the funds for these toilets in Africa to improve the conditions for young girls and women.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND IS OPEN

This is for organisations in the town in direct contact with its residents that are unable to afford food and energy and housing costs. To meet the rising demand for their support with Christmas and the winter arriving our Food Bank, Baby Box, Community Pantry and Wellbeing Café will need additional funding.

This new fund has been launched by the Town Council in response to suggestions from residents that viewed our new documentary, Family Voice, in which those without enough income speak movingly of their actual experience. The film can be viewed [here](#).

The Fund invites contributions from residents and businesses for distribution to the front line voluntary organisations that will make such a vital difference.



CHRISTMAS TREE TIME

Thanks to our Maintenance Manager Brian Roberts and his team of willing volunteers this year's Christmas Tree is now in its place in the town centre with its lights shining in the dark times.

David Bartlett (Clerk)

Bembridge Parish Council

Bembridge Parish Council was delighted to welcome its new clerk, Julia Shorrock on 21st November. The council is very grateful to assistance from Ryde Town Council, while it was without a clerk or RFO, especially the clerk Lisa Dyer & RFO Tara, & to agree to continue mentoring the new staff members. Bembridge would like to thank Cllr Michael Lilley for facilitating this arrangement, as an important illustration of councils working together to become stronger & more resilient.



Community Chest Awards: The event was held on November 11th. Eleven village organisations presented to a team of judges to apply for grants from the parish council. A wonderful evening show cased the range of organisations in the village, the age ranged from the youngest participant a 4 year old Rainbow to a member of Bembridge Heritage.

Warm Spaces: Since attending the very successful conference at the Riverside, Bembridge has set up a group 'Warm Spaces' which is working to coordinate the efforts of various groups in the village to assist residents to combat the cost of living & energy crisis. More information will be shared in the near future as soon as it is available.

Best wishes to all for Christmas & New Year.

Cllr Liz White (Chair)



Winter Warmers



A VARIETY OF OFFERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GET TOGETHER ARE BEING ORGANISED AT VENUES ACROSS BEMBRIDGE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS, TO ASSIST RESIDENTS TO COMBAT THE RISING COSTS OF LIVING AND ENERGY.

- * THE CLOISTERS
- * BEMBRIDGE LIBRARY
- * THE HARBOUR VIEW CAFÉ
- * THE METHODIST CHURCH
- * BRADING HAVEN YACHT CLUB
- * BEMBRIDGE SAILING CLUB
- * THE BIRDHAM
- * THE VILLAGE HALL



FURTHER DETAILS of events will be advertised, when available, on the Village notice boards, the COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.bembridgepc.org.uk Bembridge Community Notice Board Fb page and the Parish Council Office.

5 Foreland Road, Bembridge, PO35 5XN

Email: clerk@bembridgepc.org.uk

ADDITIONAL HELP/Advice CAN ALSO BE FOUND AT:

IW Council Cost of Living: iow.gov.uk/costofliving

Foodbank: info@isleofwight.foodbank.org.uk 01983 292040

Baby Box: babyboxiow@gmail.com 07850 263477

Aspire: www.aspireryde.org.uk 01983 716020

Citizens Advice:10W: 0800 144 88 38

Living Well & Early Help Service:

reception@lweh.org.uk 01983 240732

If YOU would like to assist by volunteering to help, organise or host an event, please contact the Parish Office

Gurnard Parish Council

Along with most other local councils we are currently setting the budget for 2023-24; we are intending to keep the precept at the same level as last year and have drafted the budget accordingly.



A consultation is out to residents; a paper version, delivered as an insert in the Gurnard News magazine which goes to most households in the village and a digital version available from a QR code. The latter, put together by a fellow councillor who is less of a tecno-dinosaur than myself, is a really exciting development as we are hoping to get a good response to the consultation. I think that sets the tone for this report – we are aiming at a greater community involvement with all our parish council work.

Water Pollution

Dangers inherent in river and coastal waters being polluted from Combined Sewer Overflow discharges (there are two CSOs in Gurnard) is increasingly being recognised on a national scale. Our first full working party meeting including members of the public and IWC met early this month; a major focus was on water quality in Gurnard Bay and our inadequate knowledge about it. We are hoping to work positively with Southern Water and other agencies. The precept consultation includes a proposal about the GPC getting involved in water testing; early returns indicate a lot of interest.

Safety Measures for School Children

Concerns have been raised about the safety of children going to and from Gurnard Primary School and the Police, Island Roads, IWC and the school are all involved in considering how to proceed. This is another issue which features as an item in the precept consultation.

Cost of Living Crisis

Following councillor attendance at both the Food Poverty Conference and the IWALC presentation of the powerful film, 'Ventnor Voices' some action has been taken to contact more parishioners, however we are very aware that, as a council, we do not always know who needs help or would welcome it. Councillors have been reaching out to residents in Gurnard Pines and, amongst other village 'warm spaces', The Portland Inn is running a Friendship Afternoon Tea on the last Tuesday of the month. The most recent one, with a focus on Cowes Food Bank (a raffle raised £115), was so well attended that the pub was bursting at the seams. Both the church and village hall host events regularly which work as 'warm spaces'. Research on the concept of a community pantry has shown it is not a practical idea for Gurnard but perhaps closer work with local schools is a way forward. Concerns have been expressed about the village shop, councillors are aware of how important a local shop is for many people. Hopefully supply problems, which have led to empty shelves, have been overcome and improvements should soon be obvious.

Gurnard Clock

Our 'Keeper of the Clock' has dressed the clock for Christmas as his final act before retiring. We are very grateful for all the work he's done. The clock is providing a lovely Christmas focal point on entry to the village which, along with the beautifully decorated village hall, we hope will provide a Christmas boost to spirits.

Happy Christmas to one and all.

Cllr Penny Acton



Lake Parish Council & Sandown Town Council

Lake Warm Space Launched

Local Councillors, parishioners and volunteers joined together to help launch a new Warm Space in the Bay, located at Lake's Methodist Church co-ordinated by volunteer Edna Morris, with Rev Mark Williams, Lake Chairman, Cllr Paul Brading and Sandown Mayor, Cllr Paddy Lightfoot attending the launch.

Edna said, 'We are very aware of the financial pressures being faced by families at this time of year, with energy and food costs increasing, and we wanted to do something to help respond to the local need'.

Cllr Brading added, 'We are working with partners in Sandown and Shanklin to build a support network, as well as make sure there is a warm space in each town in the Bay'.

Funding has been secured to help provide Warm Spaces at Christ Church Sandown, and Age Concern Shanklin, alongside Lake Methodist Church, with other funding supporting projects in local schools.

Edna added, 'Churches and voluntary groups have always been at the heart of local communities, and this initiative highlights the value and strength of working together for the benefit of those that need help'.

Cllr Lightfoot concluded, 'Councils in the Bay, with local groups and organisations, are building closer working relationships, such as youth and economic regeneration, and this much needed project is an example of such a partnership approach'.

Richard Priest (Clerk to Lake PC & Sandown TC)



Photo: Kevin Weeden

When the Isle of Wight Council offloaded public toilets on to Town and Parish Councils in 2011 we inherited three sets of 1960s buildings that were in rather poor condition.

Initially, we improved things by carrying out internal refurbishments, but 11 years later something more fundamental was required.

Now the first replacement Danfo 'pay-to-enter' unit has been installed in Lake Cliff Gardens, representing an investment of nearly £150,000. This contract included demolition of the existing building. This was carried out within the scope of the Council's own funding.

Now we plan to move on to a similar exercise at Lake New Road, but this will require an application for a PWLB loan.

Mike Taplin (Clerk)

Thanks to Mike for his final report, as Clerk to Lake Parish Council, and welcome and thanks to incoming Lake PC Clerk, Richard Priest, for his report on the collaboration of Sandown Town Council and Lake Parish Council.



Other News...

News in Brief from the Isle of Wight Council

COVID grants totalling more than £1.7 million have been paid out to hundreds of Island businesses — and further help is on the way.

More than 500 local businesses have received support from the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF), a business relief fund launched by the Isle of Wight Council earlier this year. Using central government funding, the scheme is intended to support those businesses which have been affected by the pandemic, but which have been ineligible for existing support linked to business rates.



The amount of funding depends on the rateable value of the premises that the business is in. Previously businesses with a rateable value of up to £12,000 identified as eligible for the scheme were awarded a 100 per cent business rate discount. This has now been extended to eligible businesses with a rateable value of £50,999 or less to use the remaining budget of the fund. In addition, the surplus funding is sufficient to award 30 per cent relief to those business with a rateable value of £51,000 and over up to £85,000.

The second phase starts in the next few weeks and businesses will automatically receive the additional funding. The eligible businesses will be contacted to advise them of the additional support being provided and a new bill will be sent out.

Enriching experiences and a nutritious lunch are available throughout the Christmas holidays for the children and young people of families receiving income-related free school meals.

Funded by the Department for Education, the Christmas Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme enables local authorities to coordinate free holiday scheme access locally. The programme will be delivered on the Island by eight approved holiday scheme providers and is co-ordinated by the Isle of Wight Council.

Full details of the free activities on offer can be found here: [Events \(iow.gov.uk\)](https://www.iow.gov.uk)

All participating holiday schemes will offer a nutritious meal and a variety of fun, enriching experiences such as sports, games, cooking and play opportunities. The HAF programme continues to be 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.

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. For more information about the Holiday Activity Fund, please click the link. [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities/holidayactivities>

Isle of Wight Council has given the green light to a major new programme of support for the owners of local companies.

Go for Growth is a programme that provides the owners of small, independent business on the Island with access to a team of 15 specialists offering support across seven areas: Marketing and Branding, Finance and Funding, Human Resources, Technology and Digitisation, Innovation, Exporting and Strategy.

The programme operates out of the Council's recently completed flexible co-workspace (Building 41) and is managed by Digital Islands, a company specialising in setting up and running business support projects. The project has received funding from the Isle of Wight Council and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund and aims to provide support to up to 110 businesses, for free.

The starting place for this support is the online Go for Growth Business Hub (go-for-growth-business-hub.mn.co) Business owners will be invited to join a selection of specialist groups, providing free access to sessions run by the delivery team.

The Island's more vulnerable residents will not be left out in the cold this winter, thanks to a range of measures to help people with the costs of food, utilities and other essentials.

Using its latest round of Household Support Funding from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Isle of Wight Council will be investing more than £1.1 million in a wide variety of schemes and initiatives targeting households facing hardship, between now and March 2023. The initiatives will expand on what was offered in the previous funding rounds to include support for foster carers registered with the council, unpaid carers, care leavers, and people with disabilities. It will also widen the support available to reach out to those who may not be eligible for other assistance but are nevertheless in need.

The schemes will be delivered across the Island via the council's 'connect4communities programme' and will include:

- Food vouchers — these will be made available to eligible Island residents including foster carers, care leavers, gateway card holders, and some people who receive council tax support or housing benefit, among others. Vouchers will be sent out to eligible residents automatically, with no need to apply.
- Discretionary grants to schools — these may be used to help families with costs relating to food and weather appropriate clothing. Parents can apply directly to their child's school for the voucher.
- Funding to support the Living Well and Early Help Service mobile hub, providing hot meals and a warm space for residents in need.
- Funding to Citizens Advice to provide help with fuel and utility bills. The charity will also use the money to provide a single point of contact for Island residents in need, via its Help Through Crisis Helpline. It is anticipated that more than 200 households will benefit from this funding.
- Grants for community and voluntary organisations, as well as town, parish and community councils, to help meet needs within their local communities. Further details about how organisations can apply for grants will be released shortly.
- Funding to establish up to three new community pantries on the Island.

During this period, 33 charities and community associations used their community grant funding to support more than 14,000 households; one-off food vouchers were provided to more than 4,000 eligible households; and just under 300 households received help with their food and utility bills via Citizens Advice.

The funding also provided ongoing support to Island's network of community pantries, which now have more than 600 members collectively. Pantries provide significant benefits for families as they are open to everyone and, in exchange for a membership fee, pantry members can purchase groceries at a much lower cost than supermarkets. Pantries can apply to receive support via the newest round of Household Support Funding, to help them respond to increased food costs and provide wider support services for vulnerable pantry members.

Anyone who is unsure if they can access support, should email connect4communities@iow.gov.uk or visit the connect4communities website. The recommended funding allocations for the period covers October 2022 to March 2023

Check out these scam warnings from Trading Standards and don't get caught out!

- Reports of calls from banks, Visa and Amazon saying that money has come out of your account. These are SCAMS – do not respond if you are at all concerned you should put the phone down and wait 10 minutes or use another line and contact your bank to verify



- Be wary if you are dealing with a solicitor and communicating via email. We have heard reports of solicitors accounts getting hacked and emails telling housebuyers to pay the deposit into an account which turns out to be a scam. If you are in the process of purchasing a house always verify solicitors bank details with them verbally – don't trust emails communications with such large amounts.
- A warning to businesses – the report we have received relates to garages and the purchase of parts however could easily apply to any business. Criminals are purchasing car parts over the phone using stolen card details – collecting the item and then the card company will reverse the payment leaving the business at a loss.

Remember – be a little suspicious of everything and don't be afraid to challenge something you aren't sure about. *Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)*



Living Well and Early Help Partnership

Community organisations, the Isle of Wight Council and the NHS are working together to support people on the Island to stay well, independent and connected with their local community this winter.

The Living Well and Early Help Partnership has already helped more than 800 people by linking them with local support. A new mobile hub has also been launched and is helping the team to travel to some of the more remote areas of the Island.

The partnership is delivered by Aspire Ryde, working in partnership with organisations such as Pan Together, West Wight Sports and Community Centre and Ventnor Town Council. Funding is provided by the Isle of Wight Council and the NHS.



The partnership is already making a difference to people's lives. One 91-year-old resident was referred to the team asking for support with social isolation; her husband was in hospital and her family lived on the mainland. During a home visit, the team identified other needs and arranged for her to join the minibus trip to meet people and join a monthly social group. The team also assisted with some benefits support, she was referred to a local charity to become a befriender and transport was arranged to visit her husband in hospital.



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

The council's cost of living help web pages can also be found at www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving

If you would like the Mobile Hub to visit anywhere in your council area next year or if you would like one of the Living Well team to visit any groups or events in your area, please contact Shirley Bradshaw, the team's Operations Manager, at shirley@lweh.org.uk.

Get help with the cost of living - a comprehensive round-up of information

Many people who have never had to ask for help before will need to this winter. All Islanders can get help with the cost of living.

- Get info and links about benefits, support with food, bills and debt and warm spaces on the cost of living section on our website.
- Call the Citizens Advice line for free: 0800 144 88 48 or go to citizensadviceiw.org.uk
- The Footprint Trust can help with energy saving measures. Contact them on 01983 822282 or footprint-trust.co.uk
- General Island support, advice, events: islefindit.org.uk
- Information about cost of living support on the UK government website: www.helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk
- Mental health support: iwmentalhealth.co.uk
- Medical help and mental health support: call 111 or NHS 111

Warm spaces

There are nearly 40 warm spaces listed on the Isle of Wight Council website. All of the warm spaces provide something slightly different. Here are some of the things you can find - along with staying warm and cosy on a winter's day:

- a warm welcome and a friendly face
- tea, coffee and biscuits
- free phone charging
- support and help with other worries
- computer access
- crafts
- someone to chat to
- kid's activities
- a hot meal
- jigsaw puzzles and games
- newspapers
- free WIFI

From libraries to halls, cafes and shops - there's a warm space for everybody right across the Island.

Christmas Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) – free activities and a hot meal

These Christmas holidays; free activities and a hot meal are available for children and young people of families getting income-related free school meals. Thanks to funding from the Holiday Activities and Food Programme there are schemes across the Island for young people to take part in. From wall climbing and a trip to the panto to horse riding, theatre skills, sports coaching and more – there's something for everyone. Activities are for school children from reception up to age 16.

Some programmes offer places you can pay for if you're not eligible for a free place.

Get more information and find out how to book on our cost of living web pages.

The connect4communities website has more information about the scheme.

Winter vaccinations for COVID-19 and flu can:

- save lives
- help people stay out of hospital
- offer protection against getting seriously ill and spreading infection to others
- make it safer for us to live without fear or restrictions

Catching both COVID and flu at the same time increases the risk of getting seriously ill. It is important that those at greatest risk come forward for all the vaccines they need to protect themselves and those around them. You can get your free vaccine by -

- Responding to a message from your GP inviting you to get vaccinated.
- Calling 119 between 7am and 11pm daily to book an appointment or booking online. See below for link.
- You may be offered appointments at the Riverside Centre, St Mary's hospital or a community pharmacy.
- If you need help with booking an appointment or more information about the COVID jab please contact the Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 helpline on 0300 561 0018 (Open between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm at weekends).
- Get up to date information about the COVID-19 vaccination

Free maths courses

Multiply is a new government-funded programme that offers easy access to free numeracy courses and initiatives. The courses can help you brush up your maths skills and help you become more confident with numbers, whether you need help in managing your bills, budgeting or you want to improve your potential at work.

If you're aged 19+ and do not already have a GCSE at grade C (or equivalent) in maths, Multiply is available to you. Courses and workshops are now available via our Adults Community Learning Service at various locations across the Island.

More information and booking details are on the Isle of Wight Council website.

Shop local with the Wight Gift Card

Why not shop local this Christmas and treat friends and family (or yourself) to a Wight Gift card?

Enjoy the best of the Isle of Wight with the Wight Gift Card that gives you the freedom to shop at some of the Island's best restaurants, boutiques, craft shops, bars, and so much more in store and online.

When you don't know what to buy, the Island wide gift card makes a great gift for any occasion. Cards values are entirely up to you, starting from just £5.

Find a list of shops taking part and buy a card go on the Wight Gift Card website

Please visit the IWC website for full information. <https://beta.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/>

Abi Fox (COVID-19 comms lead)

Island Volunteer Fair

We have over 40 organisations from across the Island signed up to come and promote volunteering and now we need to encourage people to come and attend the event in the new year.

The event takes place on Saturday 14th January 2023 from 11am until 3pm at Riverside, Newport.

There are still a few spaces left for anyone who is looking for volunteers. To book simply complete the form here: [Community Action Isle of Wight Island Volunteer Fair 2023 - Community Action Isle of Wight](#)

It may be that councillors themselves would like to consider volunteering for another organisation as a way of meeting new people, doing something that contrasts with work or simply to have fun.

Sandy Ciccognani (Volunteer Centre Manager)



At Riverside
Saturday 14th January 2023
11am -3pm

Connect - Network - Get Involved

Volunteer Fair - All Welcome

www.iwvolunteer.org.uk

volunteer@actioniw.org.uk

01983 539370



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

COOKING SAUCES
BAKED BEANS
ANY BEANS/PULSES
TINNED MEAT
PASTA
CEREAL
TEA
TINNED FISH
TINNED TOMATOES
TINNED VEGETABLES
SANITARY ITEMS
PET FOOD



Thank you

The Footprint Trust

Winter is coming and we need to be prepared...

The local Footprint Trust and Islehelp have issued the following guidance to help keep people warm and well during the coming cold spell....

“As winter finally arrives it’s a good time to make homemade soup using any left-overs. If power cuts are likely to occur due to extreme weather conditions then soup and hot drinks can be kept warm in a thermos flask - so it is a good idea to dig it out from the back of the cupboard.” Said Lisa Beaney of the Trust

“Saving money due to the increase in energy bills has never been more important. Getting an air-fryer and a microwave oven for Christmas could be the most useful gifts you have had for years...much cheaper to use than other forms of cooking...”.

Scammers will adapt to our current situations and will try to take advantage of any vulnerabilities to con us out of our money. Be vigilant and don't be tempted with texts, emails or phone calls that have “too good to be true” offers or even threats that may be scary. Always check with somebody first if you are unsure about a communication you have received. You do not have to apply for any of the government energy grants as they are paid automatically.

Islanders need to be prepared for cold weather, and the possibility of electricity power cuts during the winter months.

Here are some sensible tips...

- ‘Buddy up’ with a nearby friendly neighbour during the day, share cooking and company – it’s cheaper to cook in one oven and keep one room warm
- Zone your home - just heat the room you are in at 18 to 21 degrees, depending on how fit and mobile you are
- Get a rechargeable torch and make sure it is working, do not use candles as they are potentially dangerous
- Have blankets, duvets or sleeping bags ready for extra warmth - make sure you move them out of the way before you get up
- Close your curtains or thermal blinds at dusk to keep out the cold and draughts
- Have a supply of food that does not need cooking, such as tins, cereals and biscuits.
- A thermos flask and a container for drinking water is also a good idea
- Make sure you have a supply of your medicine
- Keep a list of useful phone numbers to hand on a sheet of paper, stick it on the fridge or by your landline. *Your neighbour, nearby relative, carer and doctor are good ones to have written down.*
- Register today on the free Priority Services Register with your utility companies, help will then come in a power or water outage
- Do not use camping stoves or BBQs indoors, or stand-alone portable gas heaters – these can lead to you being poisoned by their fumes
- Only have an open fire or use a wood-burning stove etc if the chimney has been swept and inspected, at least once a year
- If you have not had your home insulated then talk to the Footprint Trust, as you may be able to get a grant
- Have your heating system serviced to make sure it will see you through the winter

Other tips...

- If you are struggling with your energy bills contact the Footprint Trust on 822282
- Make sure you have working smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Talk to the experts at Citizens Advice IW to make sure you are getting all the benefits and allowances you are entitled to Tel. 08001 448848

For more information about getting support with the Cost of Living on the Island go to www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving

Please prepare for severe weather. The Council’s website has some really useful information about getting weather ready: www.iow.gov.uk/weatheradvice



Details of Warm Spaces: <https://beta.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/warm-spaces/>

Flu and COVID-19 can be life-threatening. Find out if you're eligible for a free flu vaccine and COVID-19 booster: www.nhs.uk/flujab and www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccine, or call the COVID-19 helpline on 0300 561 0018.

If you are isolating due to Covid and need assistance call the IW Council Covid Helpline on 823600

If you are needing help with your water bill contact Southern Water on 0800 027 0800

For non-urgent medical concerns call NHS 111 or visit your local pharmacy

For advice on scams call - Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline: 0808 250 5050

To report a scam call - Action Fraud: 0300 123 204

If you are concerned about somebody you care about or for more information on scams visit www.iwasp.org.uk

Ray Harrington-vail

Citizens Advice

Advice First Aiders in Warm Spaces

Citizens Advice IW manages a project where we train up – for free - interested volunteers to become Advice First Aiders (AFAs). Our AFAs do not give out advice but instead signpost people in need to our trusted sources of information, advice, and local services.



Many Island venues have been added to a list of Warm Spaces. These Warm Hubs will provide residents with somewhere they can go, to be warm without having to commit to spending money or joining a group. www.islefindit.org.uk has the list of Warm Spaces by locality which we will be adding to throughout the winter months.

If you currently have a designated warm space in your area, or are planning to this winter we would like to hear from any members of the community, or indeed from any Town or Parish Council members, who would be interested in receiving our free training. We know that having more AFAs embedded at the various Warm Spaces will allow more people to be signposted to receive the help they need, especially to funding to help with food or utility bills.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in this role, we would be very happy to provide you with more details. If collectively you had ten or more interested, and have an appropriate space available, then we would be prepared to come out to you to deliver this training in your village or town. However, our next face-to-face training course will be held on Monday 12th December at the Methodist Church Hall in Newport from 9.30 am to 1.00 pm – so if convenient anybody interested can join us.

Our January training dates are on Wednesday 11th January 10.00 am to 12.00 noon, and Tuesday 17th January 6.00 to 8.00 pm which will be delivered by Zoom.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Simon Barton simonb@iwcab.org.uk.

Our charity wishes you a Happy Christmas and hope we can help your community get through this winter.

Paul Savill

Our Place West Wight

Our Place community activities are still going strong in West Wight. Sessions take place as follows:

- Mondays at Christ Church, Totland, PO39 0ES. Sessions run 2pm – 4pm
- Tuesdays at West Wight Sports and Community Centre, Freshwater, PO40 9XH. Sessions run 10:30am – 12:30pm
- Thursday activity sessions 2pm -3:30pm at West With Sports and Community Centre.

All sessions double-up as warm spaces. We will be taking a break from mid-December until early January as follows:

- Our Place Mondays: Final session Monday 19th December, back Monday 9th January.
- Our Place Tuesdays: Final session Tuesday 20th December, back Tuesday 10th January
- Our Place Thursdays: Final session Thursday 8th December back Thursday 12th January.

To find out more about organisations that attend the sessions and which activities are coming up on Thursdays, visit: <https://westwight.org.uk/community/our-place/>

Our Place will also have a tree at the Celebration of Christmas Trees at All Saints Church, Freshwater from 8th December, with leaflets advertising the sessions and local support available to collect. Leaflets will also be going door to door to help residents learn about the local sessions and support available through the cost-of-living crisis.

Community Meals -Pop along to meet other community members and share a hot meal on the following times each month:

First Monday of the month

Freshwater Methodist Church, Brookside Road, Freshwater, PO40 9ER

12:00 - 13:30 - Free with donations welcome

First Friday of the month

Timebank Souper Soup

Freshwater Parish Hall, Victoria Road, Freshwater, PO40 9HZ

Time 13:15 – 13:45 - Free with donations welcome

Second Monday of the month

Our Place, Christ Church, Alum Bay New Road, Totland, PO39 0ES.

Time 12:45 – 14:00 - Free with donations welcome

Third Tuesday of the month

Our Place, West Wight Sports and Community Centre, Moa Place, Freshwater, PO40 9XH

Time 12:45 – 14:00 - Free with donations welcome

Last Tuesday of the month

Colwell Baptist Church, Colwell Road, Freshwater, PO40 9NB

Time 17:00 – 18:00 - Free but donations welcome

What's on West Wight

Adam, the Community Connector for West Wight has compiled a What's on Guide for Freshwater, Yarmouth, Totland and Shalfleet areas. Information included local groups, activities and warm spaces, plus useful contacts for a range of queries and issues. Physical copies can be collected from the venues listed on the poster or downloaded at <https://westwight.org.uk/community-connector/>. See anything missing or incorrect? Get in touch with Adam via adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk, 01983 240 722 or 07498 496 719.

Freshwater Parish Council cost of living support

Local residents struggling with the cost of living can apply for support through the parish to get help with cost saving devices such as slow cookers or air fryers, heaters and draught excluders. A short assessment form needs to be completed to access support. This project is led by Melanie Gardiner, Just Ask Support Officer.

She can be contacted via justask@westwight.org.uk or 07599 465722. Adam, the Community Connector for West Wight can also complete these assessments for support, contact him via adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk, 01983 240 722 or 07498 496 719..

GlobeFit at West Wight Sports and Community Centre

West Wight Sports and Community Centre are very excited to be working with GlobeFit www.globefit.co.uk to provide a children's holiday activity programme in the Christmas holidays. Please contact them via their website to find out more and get booked in. There are FREE places for children on free school meals but places are limited so don't delay!

<https://www.globefit.co.uk/holiday-clubs>

Monthly Report from MP Bob Seely

Transport

I am seeking a commitment from the Department for Transport that it will finance a multi-million-pound road safety scheme along stretches of the A3056 at Arreton. If approved, the scheme will see the introduction of new road safety measures which are likely to include a new safety barrier and a reduction in speed limit. I'm keen to see our bid prioritised. I have written to, and held meetings with, ministers to make sure we get this project over the line.

I've written to Levelling Up Minister Dehenna Davison asking her department to support the council's bid for an 'Island Green Link' through round two of the government's Levelling Up Fund. The project includes: the creation of a Ryde to Yarmouth public transport corridor; a multi-use cycle route between Newport and Freshwater - the 'West Wight Greenway'; and the Newport Hub and Spokes scheme which will extend existing cycle routes and establish a mobility hub connecting Green Link projects with existing public transport.

Work on Ryde railway pier has now started and will continue until April. This will secure the future of the pier railway link.

I have asked Wightlink and South Western Railway to coordinate their timetables to improve journeys for passengers. They need to work together to create a timetable that is properly integrated and does not leave passengers with journey times far longer and more difficult than they should be.

I am aware that Ventnor Town Council is hoping to see new road safety measures put in place in Belgrave Road. I am happy to help push this forward so if councillors wish to contact me, please do get in touch.

Planning and Environment

I have led a successful rebellion in Parliament that will see planning laws amended and enable the Island to plead exceptional circumstances over housing targets so that we can get on with delivering affordable homes for Islanders, primarily on brownfield sites.

I've been pressing ministers to make a decision about the future of Camp Hill. It has been sat empty now for ten years which is unacceptable. I will continue to lobby ministers for a decision.

We are nearly there with changes to arrangements for burials at sea. More on this to follow.

I made the case in Parliament recently that Biospheres should be recognised in UK law. You can watch my speech [here](#).

Funding

I have met with, and written to, Levelling Up Minister Dehenna Davison to put forward the council's case for fair funding. I await her response.

The Isle of Wight Council will receive £638k from the Department of Health and Social Care for the Winter Discharge Fund. This is more than expected and will help get Islanders into the best care and reducing the strain on St Mary's.

Crime

I recently met with Isle of Wight Police to raise concerns about petty criminals, particularly in Ryde, who repeatedly inflict crime on shops, pubs and the community. They're keen to find solutions.

We now have dedicated police officers policing our roads. You may have seen them out and about across the Island tackling driving offences.

Bob Seely

Wightlink



Later foot passenger sailings in December

Wightlink will be running later foot passenger services between Portsmouth Harbour and Ryde Pier Head this month.

They will allow Islanders and mainlanders to enjoy an evening out on the other side of the Solent in the run-up to Christmas.

Wightlink Chief Executive Keith Greenfield says: "If these sailings prove popular with customers, we will consider later sailings at other times of the year on this route."

These services will be operated by Blue Funnel catamarans. Customers should book in advance through the Wightlink App or www.wightlink.co.uk

Extra foot passenger sailings Portsmouth Harbour-Ryde Ryde-Portsmouth Harbour-

Friday 16 December and Saturday 17 December 21:20 and 22:45 22:00
Thursday 22 December and Friday 23 December 21:20 and 22:45 22:00

Meanwhile, Wightlink has teamed up with the shops at Gunwharf Quays to offer extra savings for Islanders using the late foot passenger sailings between Ryde Pier and Portsmouth Harbour this December, together with a free delivery service.

The Wightlink Customer Exclusive Offer* gives ticket holders a 10% shopping discount at Gunwharf Quays on the late evening sailing dates plus a free shopping collection or home delivery service. The deals are available when travelling and shopping on 16, 17, 22 and 23 December 2022.

*Terms and Conditions for 10% discount offer: To access this offer, visit the Guest Services Suite at Gunwharf Quays Shopping Centre proving proof of travel (ticket) with Wightlink and you will receive a discount card to use on that day. This offer is available when travelling and shopping on 9, 10, 16, 17, 22, & 23 December 2022. 10% discount available at most outlet stores, but some may not offer this. Certain products may be excluded from the offer, please check on the day either with Guest Services or the store directly prior to purchasing.

*Terms and Conditions for Free Home Delivery offer: Wightlink customers should download the Dropit App and register their details, then use the code Wight01 to claim free delivery. Shop at Gunwharf and drop bags in the dedicated Dropit Spot in each Gunwharf Quays store. Head home and wait for your bags to be delivered.

Discount vouchers on their way

Watch out for Island Link, Wightlink's twice-yearly brochure, which will be landing on Island doormats next month with discount vouchers for Islanders and mainlanders, together with latest Wightlink news.

Ryde Pier works – coming along nicely

Contractors are making good progress on Ryde Pier, turning the old tramway into a pedestrian walkway. Following the temporary suspension of Island Line services along the Pier, scaffolding has been put in place to allow new steelwork to be installed on the original piles which are still in excellent condition. The project is on track to finish next year.

Karen Woods (Communications & PR)

Red Funnel

Isle of Wight Toy Appeal

For the second year running, Red Funnel is helping to support Isle of Wight Radio's Toy Appeal, collecting toys and gifts for underprivileged children living on the Island.

The appeal serves to brighten up Christmas for less fortunate local children and spread joy to young people facing challenges from poverty.

Since the Toy Appeal began ten years ago, generous Islanders and visitors have donated more than 25,000 gifts, helping an estimated 3,000 children around the Island.

Red Funnel CEO Fran Collins said: "Helping ensure every child on the Island has a special Christmas is really important to us, and we're humbled to have been able to support the Isle of Wight Radio Toy Appeal by turning our East and West Cowes terminals into Toy Appeal drop-off points. We'd like to say a big thank you to all those who help make Christmas special for these deserving young people. Your kindness and generosity will make their day."

Red Funnel Charity of the Year

Every year Red Funnel, together with its staff and customers, select a charity to benefit as the primary recipient of Red Funnel's fundraising efforts, and also support the charity with added marketing and PR support to boost the charity's profile and raise awareness about the important work they do.

Applications will be shortlisted by Red Funnel colleagues, after which the top three will be voted for by Red Funnel customers and the wider Island community. The charity with the most votes will be named Red Funnel's Charity of the Year 2023.

Fran Collins, CEO of Red Funnel, said: "While we will continue to support many charities throughout the coming year, our Charity of the Year will benefit from being the recipient of our active fundraising efforts and work closely with our team on a variety of initiatives, ranging from bespoke fundraising efforts to initiatives designed to elevate awareness and profile for their charity."

Isle of Wight Awards 2022

The results of this year's Red Funnel Isle of Wight Awards were revealed at a glittering ceremony at Northwood House, Cowes. The awards showcased the incredible diversity and strength of businesses across the Island that boasts over 2 million visitors every year.

The coveted annual awards recognised a wide variety of businesses, from those who have been part of the fabric of the Island for decades, through to newcomers bringing fresh talent to the scene. The awards highlighted shining stars within the community with a total of 60 awards handed out across 20 categories, divided into via four main groups (Accommodation, Food and Drink, Things to Do and Other).

Engagement with this year's awards hit a record high. With over 200 businesses nominated and a total of 65,000 votes, the outcome underscored the resilience and determination of Island businesses, particularly following labour challenges within hospitality and tourism.

The Orchards Holiday Park, Briddlesford Farm, Harbour Kitchen, Smoking Lobster and Monkey Haven were among the Gold winners for the night, while the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary notably walked away as the only double-Gold award winner for the night, taking home top prizes for Best Large Attraction and Best Place for Dogs. The full list of awards and their winners are available on the Red Funnel website here.....

(<https://www.redfunnel.co.uk/en/isle-of-wight-guide/awards/>)

Josey Page (Account Executive)



Hovertravel

This autumn, we have seen plenty of adverse weather which combined with our annual maintenance period in November and conspired to reduce our reliability from over 98% (for January to October 2022). We send our sincere apologies to those inconvenienced by these disruptions.



Looking forward, the festivities are well underway at Hovertravel with the decorations in place, jolly Christmas jumpers being worn and stocks of seasonal souvenirs on the shelves. We are also supporting Island Line's 2022 Giftbox appeal, with collection points in both our Ryde and Southsea terminals.

In addition to our ongoing Hover Blue island resident discounts, which can be especially welcome at this time of year, we have also put together a selection of combination deals which offer great savings including a trip to the panto at Kings Theatre, Southsea and a visit to Winchester Christmas Market.

Most importantly in December we have two days (Christmas Day and Boxing Day) when we are not operating, giving our teams the opportunity to spend a well-deserved break with their friends and family. Full details of our Christmas timetable, including the bank holidays operating times, are available on our website.

In between Christmas and New Year we will be operating our highly popular Portsmouth FC charter flight. Pompey fans can enjoy all of the late home match against Ipswich Town on Thursday 29th December and get a coach transfer back to Southsea to catch the 2215 departure to Ryde.

Hovertravel would like to wish all its customers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Stephen Forster (Creative Director)



Southern Vectis

It's likely that the government backed scheme to cap single bus fares at £2 will commence in at the start of January and run for 3-months.

We will be publishing more details in due course, but we hope the special offer will be very popular.

Richard Tyldsley (General Manager)

