

Serving the Island's



Town, Parish & Community Councils

The IWALC Bulletin

February 2023

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

Your IWALC Matters!!

Message from the Vice Chair

New Year started and IWALC was busy as usual. Unfortunately, our trainer for the Chairmanship Skills Session was unable to do the training. Diana and I felt that as we are encouraging more councillors to have the skills to chair meetings, and we only had a very short time to find someone else we would do it ourselves. We were pleased that between us we could prepare our own slides and the course went ahead. We were pleased with the feedback we got.

After a training meeting this month, it was decided to find additional IWALC trainers to enable us to consider a wider range of training programmes that we can offer. Our recent First Aid Course this month showed the enthusiasm for us to run more courses in both First Aid and other courses such as Media. One of our members has also requested that we change the day and not to always use Wednesdays as some councils meet on that day.

At our Executive Committee meeting Cllr Paul Fuller, IWC Cabinet Member for Planning kindly gave us an update on the Draft Island Planning Strategy with it being delayed for 3 months whilst awaiting a government decision on the New National Planning Policy Framework. This encouraged a great deal of discussion and we decided at our next Topic meeting we would invite members from the planning and housing departments to bring us more up to date with what is happening on the Island.

As usual this month's Bulletin reflects the hard work done by our Island Town, Parish, and Community Councils. Your views are always welcome.

Cllr Anne Bamford



DISCLAIMER.

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

IWALC News...

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

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

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

The deadline for the March edition will be February 28th - Thank you.

January Executive Meeting

There was an IWALC Executive Meeting at 7 pm on Thursday 26 January at the Riverside Centre. There were 21 participants, representing 19 member councils.

The meeting began with an update by Cllr Paul Fuller, Cabinet Member for Planning, on the current status of the Draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS). He explained that, as reported elsewhere, the resubmission of the IPS to the Full Council has been delayed till July, to allow amendments to be made to incorporate proposed changes to the planning system (especially housing targets) currently under consideration by the government.

This led to many questions about both planning and housing issues, including the current status of the IW Council's housing company and problems related to second homes and holiday lets. It was therefore decided to hold the February Topic Meeting, on the interrelated topics of planning and housing, focusing in particular on ways of increasing the supply of rented housing.

Members also discussed the IW Council's request to local councils to help fund the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. There were two concerns about this request. One was that most local councils are already supporting the sector in one way or another in their local areas. The other was the ad hoc way in which this and other requests for support had been made. It was decided to write to the Council, expressing these concerns.

As a result of this discussion, members decided to hold a workshop on the future relationship between local councils and the IW Council. The purpose will be to establish a proper process for negotiating the division of responsibility between the two parties, thus enabling them both to plan ahead. The aim is to hold the workshop in March/April.

The meeting also approved the IWALC budget for 2023/24 and received reports on training (see below), communication and various meetings that members had attended on IWALC's behalf.

Topic Meetings

The next Topic Meeting will be on Thursday 23 February. As reported above, it will focus on housing and planning issues, especially ways of meeting the need for rented housing.

Meetings with Isle of Wight Cabinet

There was an online meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet on Thursday 12 January. Nine IWALC members attended. The meeting began with a presentation by Natasha Dix, the IW Council's Strategic Manager for the Environment, on problems of waste collection on the Island's 257 unadopted or unsurfaced roads, which are a safety hazard to the waste collectors. This was followed by an update on the status of the

Draft Island Planning Strategy and questions on IWALC's proposed changes to enforcement, the Council's request to local councils to help fund the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, and its proposals to increase tax on second homes. Members also reminded the Cabinet that we are waiting for a response to

our suggested revisions to Protocol 16 of the IW Council's Constitution. A detailed report of the meeting has already been circulated to members.

The next meeting will be at 12 noon on Thursday 9 February. All councillors and staff are welcome to attend.

Meeting with Bob Seely MP

There was an online meeting with Bob Seely on Wednesday 25 January. It was a brief meeting. Only nine IWALC members attended and there were only three questions. These related to the need for more police presence on the streets of Newport and elsewhere, government support for small businesses, and the unreliability of Wightlink's Yarmouth to Lymington service.

Training

We held two training events in January.

One was a two-part, face-to-face course in Chairmanship Skills, held at the Riverside Centre on 11 and 25 January. Unfortunately, the intended trainer, Sue Chilton, had to withdraw at short notice. The sessions were therefore delivered by Anne Bamford, Diana Conyers and Heather Rowell. There were 15 participants in the first session and 13 at the second. The feedback from participants was positive. IWALC would like to thank Anne, Diana and Heather for stepping in to run this course.

The other course was on First Aid. This was a special course, delivered by Lindsey Hood, currently clerk of Fishbourne and Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Councils and a trained paramedic. Participants paid a small fee, which was donated to Ryde Inshore Rescue, who provided the equipment. There were 12 participants, all of whom found the course useful and enjoyable.

In line with the recommendations of the Training Group, which met on 19 January, the Executive agreed at its January meeting to hold the following courses in 2023:

- Basic Skills Refresher Course, for new councillors and those wishing to update their knowledge: May/June
- Course on Enforcement Procedures, by Ollie Boulter, the IW Councils's Strategic Manager for Planning and infrastructure Delivery:
- Financial Management: September/October, in preparation for next year's budget preparation.

Further details will be circulated in due course.

CHILLERTON AND GATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Salary: Scale SCP 18 – 28 (£13.21 - £17.05) depending on experience, a home working package will also be applicable.

30 hours per month, pro rata

The Parish Council is looking to appoint an enthusiastic and innovative Clerk to fully service the needs of the Parish Council.

The Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and the Responsible Financial Officer. The successful candidate will be required to carry out the lawful instructions of the Council, to advise the Council, to assist in policy formulation and prepare all the information required in respect of the Council's activities. In addition, as Responsible Financial Officer, the successful candidate will be responsible for the effective management of resources, all financial records and for financial management.

The ideal applicant should:

- have previous local council or government experience and hold or be prepared to work towards obtaining the Certificate in Local Council Administration
- have good literacy, numeracy, IT software, word processing and communications skills
- have a flexible approach to working hours including the availability for evening meetings
- be prepared to work from home.

For a job description and further details, please contact the current post holder:

Mr L Hood, 21 Queens Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 3BG

clerk@chillertonandgatcombe.org

Applications should be returned to the above address by 10th February 2023

Community Action's fortnightly Winter Pressures Partnership Zoom meetings

The next one is on Tuesday February 21st at 3.30pm

Please contact Sandy Ciccognani (SCiccognani@actioniw.org.uk) to be added to the circulation list for information and log-in details for Zoom.

Monthly Meetings for IWALC with IWC Cabinet Members

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

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



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.



Meetings with MP Bob Seely

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

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



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

News from NALC

A special meeting of the NALC National Assembly took place remotely on Thursday 2nd February. The purpose of the meeting was to agree arrangements for the marketing and sale of the NALC national headquarters, 109 Great Russell Street, London WC1 which NALC has owned since 1994.

The building is a grade II listed Georgian town house which has six floors but is no longer fit for purpose to meet the Association's requirements. Lift access is not available to all floors and the building is therefore not compliant with accessibility requirements. The building is listed in the NALC accounts as having a book value of £2.5m. Annual budgeted expenditure on the building is £90k including business rates. Some years ago the Management Board agreed to sell the building when the time was right, probably on completion of the Crossrail project. Crossrail was significantly delayed and other external factors including Brexit and the pandemic meant that the sale option was put on hold.

Management Board agreed to instruct the Chief Executive to approach NALC's preferred agents to get an update on current market conditions. The agents indicated there is strong interest in property in the area and this would be a good time to market the building for sale. Management Board agreed to market the property and the agents are preparing marketing material. There has already been a lot of interest in the property and this may necessitate a quick decision.

NALC is researching options for alternative more appropriate accommodation in central London. Plenty of rented office space is available and there is also the possibility of using other organisations' spare space, for example the LGA. It is in any event planned to move out of 109 by the end of March with temporary arrangements being funded from the savings made as a result of the move. If the building is sold the Management Board and the Finance and Scrutiny Committee will need to advise on an investment strategy to ensure the financial outcomes are positive for the Association. NALC staff are supportive of the move to more modern facilities.

In order to allow the sale of 109 to proceed at speed the National Assembly agreed the following motion with 95% of delegates voting in favour:

"That National Assembly delegates to Management Board its responsibility to dispose of 109 Great Russell Street on the basis that the offer accepted is in excess of the current balance sheet value of £2.5m and has been recommended by our professional agents as the best offer at the current time taking account of market conditions.

Bob BLEZZARD February 2023

I attended a virtual meeting of the NALC National Assembly on Tuesday 17th January which was essentially a briefing on local arrangements in celebration of the Coronation on 6th May and over the bank holiday weekend.

The meeting was attended by Bruno Peek who was Pageantmaster of the Platinum Jubilee and has been the organiser of many high profile events. A significant issue to come out of the briefing is that HM The King has requested that beacons are not lit as part of the Coronation celebrations. It is understood that it is too soon after the Platinum Jubilee when beacons were lit and too soon after the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Bruno did however advise that it is intended to light beacons in 2024 in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of D Day. BB

(Please see Page 17 for IWC information about the Coronation)

Updated information-

Confirmation re discounted purchases of Arnold-Baker-

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.

Thank you to Lisa at NALC for confirming that to place an order, please contact James Begg -

Email: James.Begg@LexisNexis.com

Number: 07833 725 530

Fortnightly meeting with county officers

At the latest meeting of county officers and NALC, (27 01 2023) we covered another wide range of topics. This included a discussion on the rare occasions when a local council has severe financial difficulties, training for councillors, follow-up from our recent event on preparations for the King's coronation, and parish remuneration panels. There was also an update from the meeting of JPAG and our online learning offer.

At the January 16th meeting between county officers and NALC many topics were covered. These included relationships with principal councils, engagement with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and forthcoming legislation known as Martyn's Law to ensure more robust protections against terrorism in public places. We also highlighted an invitation from the Local Government Association for applications to participate in the Innovation Zone at their annual conference in July.

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

Fishbourne Parish Council

There is good and bad news from Fishbourne this month. The good news includes continued support for our monthly Coffee Mornings and the publication of our February Newsletter. The Newsletter is delivered to every household in the parish and this time it includes a special Community Information Support leaflet, informing residents where to go for various forms of help. We would like to thank Northwood Parish Council for sharing their leaflet, which we used when designing ours. You can view both the Newsletter and the leaflet on our website at: <https://www.fishbourneiow.org.uk/newsletters/>



The bad news is that our clerk, Lindsey Hood, is leaving us. He is a trained paramedic and has decided to rejoin the ambulance service. Lindsey took up the post just over a year ago, following Maxine Warr's resignation. Although he had not worked in local government before, he learned remarkably quickly and has proved to be an excellent clerk – efficient, conscientious and friendly, and like most clerks has worked far more than his contracted hours. He will be sorely missed – but we know that his services are badly needed by the ambulance service.

Cllr Diana Conyers

Ventnor Town Council

Report by David Bartlett (Clerk)



SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF OUR SPACE

Held at St Catherine's Church from 10.30am to 1.30pm on Thursday, the first in what will now be a monthly event, the Town Council's *Our Place* provided residents with advice from a wide range of agencies, a Warm Space and a hot lunch. Its regular flow of residents had the opportunity to chat with Veterans Outreach, Barnardo's, Ventnor Community Shed, Baby Box Isle of Wight, Ventnor Community Pantry, People Matter IoW, Living Well & Early Help, Citizen's Advice, Wessex Cancer Trust and Ventnor Community Foodbank.



YOUTH ACTIVITY



Ventnor Youth Club got their hands messy and covered in lard, making super-easy-DIY birdfeeders. The children used pine-cones, string, lard & bird seed, to create a hanging feeder for their gardens or, grandparents' gardens! The children care about our British Countryside & especially the animals – they were saddened to hear that UK bird populations have been declining e.g. (but not limited too); Tree sparrow 98%, Starling 71%, Turtle Dove 71%.

VENTNOR HAVEN

With the annual cost of removing the seaweed from the Haven rising to £103,155 this year the Isle of Wight Council put its management out to open tender on 24 August. Two tenders were received, for £264,320 from Cheetah Marine and £78,500 from the newly formed company Ventnor Haven Management Limited with Geoffrey, Cheryl and Edward Blake as its three Directors. Their tender has been accepted and will come into effect on 1 April.



The Town Council has always kept in touch with both companies because of the threat to the town posed by the hydrogen sulphide produced by the seaweed if left to rot. The change will see a new way of removing it – by an electric pump – with the boat that has protected the town since 2012 laid to rest.

VENTNOR COMMUNITY FAMILY PLAYGROUP

Tony McCarthy has accessed funding to set up a new playgroup in the Family Centre. The sessions, starting in 16 January, will be run by Eloise Preston and be weekly for 13 weeks and twice weekly after that. Sessions will run during School Term Time only. There are limited places available. The project has been funded by a grant from the community Capacity Early Help Fund from IOW Children's Services and has been supported by Barnardo's.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND

Our Community Support Fund has already raised £32,000 to provide vital support for local residents no longer able to meet the costs of all of their food, heat, light and rent by adding funding to our Food Bank, Babybox, Community Pantry and Wellbeing Café as well as issuing food and energy vouchers.

Donations, marked CSF, can be made by:

- *Bank Transfer:* Ventnor Town Council, Sort Code 40-45-09, A/c No. 41366998
- *Card:* phone 01983 853775 or at our office, Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road
- *Cheque:* post or deliver to our office.
- Donations can be anonymous and details of the Fund's organisation are available on request.

SUSTAINABILITY & BIODIVERSITY GROUP

This Working Group held its latest meeting on Tuesday evening. It progressed its plan for a draught proofing scheme for local homes, considered arrangements for the care of the Town Council's wild flower areas and this year's Wild Gardens competition. The needs of the dedicated butterfly area on the revetment towards Bonchurch were discussed as well as Food Waste and signage to prompt the awareness of residents and visitors of the threat to the future of the planet.

Gurnard Parish Council

Precept Consultation

Councillors issued a BIG THANK YOU to the 95 parishioner households who contributed to our consultation. This number represents about a 10% return rate which we hope to build upon in future. Councillors were pleased that there was general acceptance of the priority areas given in the consultation, this means the precept can be kept at last year's level.



Interest was expressed in a village Environmental group which is great, perhaps the group can build on the work done by Green Gym volunteers on the Worsley Road beds as a starting point. The following item of news was also shared

Star Count 2023 is here!

CPRE's annual citizen science project aims to map the nation's view of the night sky and monitor light pollution across the country.

A star-filled night sky is one of the most magical sights the countryside can offer. Sadly, light pollution is leaving fewer stars than ever visible to the naked eye and causing problems for wildlife. Dates for this year's event: 17th-24th February. If you are interested look up CPRE Star Count 2023 on-line and sign up!

Planning

Planning applications raised the question about what sort of properties do we need/want in the village, the problems of too many cars and the need for more awareness of environmental issues.

Southern Water (SW) Free Water Butts

SW will be contacting households eligible for a free Smart Water Butt over the next couple of months and are also holding a 'drop-in' session at the village hall on 1st February. A councillor who is a member of the Beach Safety Working Group will be available at this meeting to make a note of any concerns parishioners may have about Gurnard Beach and front; concerns will be reported to the working party.

Disabled Access to Beach Huts

A design for handrails aimed at improving safety on the steps leading to the beach hut platforms has been accepted by IWC.

A new clerk for GPC

Councillors are very sad to be saying 'goodbye' to our wonderful clerk but wish her well for the future. We hope Katie's replacement will be in place very soon but she will be a hard act to follow.

Cllr Penny Acton

Sandown Town Council

RLSS - RYDE'S LIFESAVING SWIMMING SUCCESS



Sandown are celebrating the national success of their Blue Flag winning Beach Manager Todd Miller, recently awarded National Trainer Assessor status by the RLSS (Royal Life Saving Society), one of only 5 nationally to receive the Award at the December presentation, and possibly the only Islander to be recognised by the Award, Todd, who also manages Ryde's Waterside Pool, manages the Town's beach safety service, as well as services at leisure centres, holiday parks and beaches around the south coast, with the lifeguard service recently obtained Royal Yachting Association Trainer Centre status, enabling Todd who is a qualified RYA instructor, to train their Beach Lifeguards in house to achieve their Powerboat Level 1 & 2 and Personal Watercraft qualifications.

Sandown Mayor Paddy Lightfoot said 'Sandown and the Island are fortunate to have Todd spearheading Beach Safety services, and this recognition reflects the high standards Todd and the Beach Service provides for residents and visitors.'

Todd said 'I work with a great team in Sandown and Ryde, and we are always looking to improve and develop the standard of service we provide - and the talent that we have developed is evidence of this, and we are delighted this has been nationally recognised.'

Sandown's Beach safety service is working to develop provision, with Todd, to include additional accessible wheelchairs, improvements to the lifeguard station, walkie talkie network with concessionaires, and a possible jetski facility.

Deputy Mayor Alex Lightfoot concluded 'Todd is a credit to the Island, and his work with Sea Safe Sessions has enabled 100's of local young people to safely enjoy the sea and beaches around the Island - this award is worthy recognition.'

Richard Priest (Clerk)



Sandown Town Council & Lake Parish Council

COUNCILS COMBINE BACK OFFICE



Lake Parish and Sandown Town Council are embarking on an innovative initiative to share back office support, whilst maintaining their individual and independent statuses, to reduce future cost pressures and support shared commitment to a Bay Place Plan, and joint projects such as youth service provision.



Like Councils on and off the Island, Lake and Sandown are facing increased costs in providing community services, such as public toilets and grounds maintenance, which are likely to result in increases in the local precepts.

Lake Parish Chair Paul Brading said 'Like Sandown, Lake have consulted with residents and we know improved services, such as new public toilets at Lake Cliff Gardens and New Road are priorities, as is investment in Youth provision, and we need to ensure this investment is affordable now and in the longer term'.

Sandown Mayor Paddy Lightfoot added 'We want to balance the need to properly fund services, to meet the expectations of residents and visitors, and this back office initiative is part of that process and we have already secured external funding to support Warm Spaces in Lake and Sandown, as well as the Youth Initiative and Place Plan Project with Shanklin'.

The shared back office will enable a shared Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, as well as IT support, maintenance contracts, and other efficiencies. Paul and Paddy concluded 'Whilst maintaining our separate identities, we recognise we will have stronger voice together and make a bigger difference to our communities, just as we did jointly during the Covid Lockdown with our joint support network, and we are working to ensure this initiative keeps the forthcoming precepts as low as possible whilst delivering the improvements prioritised by the parishioners of Lake and Sandown'.

Richard Priest (Clerk)



Shalfleet Parish Council

Shalfleet Parish Council has become involved in a Community Led Housing project, instigated by a local landowner.



Shalfleet Parish Council

There is much to do before it is even presented as a Planning Application, including setting up a working-party and deciding on a developer. Valuable guidance has come from John Prickett.

Parishioners and interested persons are welcome to attend advertised meetings as per the Council web page and the written Village News.

An invitation has come from Shalfleet and Ningwood Primary School, for the spring, to talk to the children about the role and work of a Parish and Town Council. Children will be able to observe a Council meeting as well.

Cllr Helena Hewston

Other News...

Cost of living information from Isle of Wight Council

www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving
01983 823134

General help and support

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

0800 144 88 48 or Textphone on 18001 0800 144 8884
www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk

Debts and paying bills

Citizens Advice Money team.

01983 823898 ext: 2825

debtenquiries@iwcab.org.uk

www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk/money-advice-team

Buying food

www.iow.gov.uk/costofliving and tap on 'food' for more information.

Join a community pantry and for £5 a week, receive over £15 worth of food.

01983 296592 East Cowes Community Pantry

07961 959003 Ventnor Community Pantry

01983 563732 Ryde Community Pantry

Connect4communities

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

connect4communities@iow.gov.uk

www.connect4communities.org

Benefits

Check whether you are getting all the benefits you can.

Citizens Advice Help to Claim line.

0800 144 8444

www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators

Energy bills

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

01983 822282

info@footprint-trust.co.uk

www.footprint-trust.co.uk

Pension Credit

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

0800 99 1234 or Textphone on 0800 169 0133

www.gov.uk/pension-credit

Paying for broadband and mobile phone

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

www.ofcom.org.uk/cheap-broadband



Feeling lonely

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

01983 240732

reception@lweh.org.uk

www.lweh.org.uk

In a crisis

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

01983 823859

www.iow.gov.uk/HelpThroughCrisis

Other useful contacts

www.helpforhouseholds.gov.uk

www.islefindit.org.ukh

www.gov.uk/helpforhouseholds

Multiply

Any Islander who is aged 19 or over and does not have maths GCSE at grade c or above can take part in free training courses. Multiply is a new programme to help adults improve their maths skills with free courses. The training could lead you on the first steps towards gaining a maths qualification or help you use maths to manage your household budget. Get more info our website.

Funding opportunities

National Lottery funding for Coronation events and activities

Funding is available of up to £10,000 for events and activities through the National Lottery Awards for All programme and you can encourage community groups to apply.

National Lottery Awards for All does not have a deadline, but it can take up to 12 weeks from the point of application submission to receiving funding, which means applications for the Coronation weekend should be made before the middle of February.

Funding criteria and terms and conditions are on this website.

As with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022, DCMS will be launching a Coronation website with resources and an interactive map. This will be publicised in their local government bulletin once available. You can subscribe to the bulletin here.

Grants available to help Island communities

Community and voluntary organisations and town, parish and community councils, should apply now for grants to help support those in need in their communities.

A total of £240,000 is available to support local initiatives helping to provide vulnerable families with food, utilities and keeping warm.

The deadline for applications is 1 March 2023, but the panel consider applications weekly.

Find out more and apply on the connect4communities website

The rural cost of living household survey

Research has shown that those living in rural areas face extra costs.

The Rural Services Network and Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group have launched a rural cost of living household survey to find out more about how rural communities are being affected during the current crisis.

Please ask everyone you know who lives in a rural area to complete the form.

Community and voluntary organisations, as well as town, parish and community councils, are being urged to apply for grants that will help them support those in need in their communities.

A total of £240,000 has been made available to support local initiatives helping to provide vulnerable families with food, utilities and keeping warm.

The latest community grants are funded by the Household Support Fund, provided to local authorities by the Department for Work and Pensions to support vulnerable households, especially with the cost of food and energy bills. In addition to the grants, the council is using the funding to develop a suite of supportive measures that aim to help residents who are struggling financially.

The deadline for applying for a community grant is 1 March 2023. Organisations wishing to find out more should go to the [connect4communities](https://connect4communities.gov.uk) website for the full guidance and application form.

For further information about additional support available on the Island, visit the council's cost of living web pages: <https://beta.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/cost-of-living/>

The Isle of Wight has ranked first place in the UK in an independent national review of care homes and home care.

The findings form part of the TrustedCare care quality league table that compares the performance of 47 counties over the past five years. The TrustedCare report ranks counties in order of the proportion of care homes and nursing homes within the county with a Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating of Good or Outstanding. On the Island, the percentage of registered homes rated Good or Outstanding rose from 70 per cent in 2017 to 97 per cent in 2022.

Laura Gaudion, the council's director of adult social services, said: "This achievement is a testament to the dedication, hard work and determination of our local care home and home care providers and their hardworking staff teams. We have been really fortunate to work in partnership with Mountbatten Hospice to create a programme of learning and development aimed specifically at raising the standard of care and support on the Island. This has paid dividends! "To have been recognised nationally for the hard work of all those involved in delivering care and support is an amazing achievement during these challenging financial times. We continue to work together to do everything we can to deliver the best outcomes for our residents."

Councillor Karl Love, Cabinet member for adult social care and Public Health, said: "Even in times of financial challenges, the care sector has been hugely supportive and adaptive in the world, which is changed by Covid, we will continue to see greater use of technology and innovation to help people live independently."

For more information on TrustedCare please visit: www.trustedcare.co.uk

More than 120 residents have so far received free trees as part of a one-off giveaway offer by the Isle of Wight Council.

The scheme, run in partnership with Gift to Nature, proved hugely popular with all 500 saplings claimed within hours of its launch last month. Species such as crab apple, wild cherry, rowan, hazel and birch were available.

There are a small number of trees left over and the council will offer these to applicants who are on the waiting list on the same first come, first served basis as before.

Planting trees in the right place helps to improve nature, tackle air pollution and reduces the amount of carbon in our atmosphere, as well as having positive impacts on physical and mental wellbeing. The council's parks and recreation team has planted some 430 trees during the past two winters.

Meanwhile, across the Gift to Nature sites, with partners, around 300 trees have been planted by Natural Enterprise in the past 12 months.

The council is also doing its bit to support tree planting on a global scale. Through its contract with mobile phone provider, Nokia, some 1,750 trees will be planted as part of the company's 'Let's Plant Together' scheme.

It is hoped a similar scheme will operate next year when the council also plans to work with local organisations to plant more whips across the Island. Please contact sustainability@iow.gov.uk if you are interested in being involved.

Small Grants Funding to support Mental Wellbeing for Children, Young People and Families on the Island.

Up to £5,000 to improve mental health and wellbeing for Island residents.

All applications must be submitted by: 12 February 2023

This Mental Wellbeing Small Grants Fund has been developed in partnership by our Public Health team and the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) Mental Health Champion. The grants are to enable small organisations in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors to deliver innovative local projects.

The aim of this fund is to reduce mental health inequalities in children, young people and families mental wellbeing. Particularly those who may be disproportionately affected by cost of living pressures on the Island. These projects will be embedded in communities. They will be responsive to local needs. These needs will have been expressed by service users, people with lived experience and seldom heard groups. The outcomes to be realised by the grants must benefit children and young people aged up to 18 (or 25 years with additional needs) but may be supporting parents and carers in doing so.

This Grant will focus on under-represented and at-risk children, young people and their families such as:

- Neurodiverse/ people with learning difficulties.
- Parents in the perinatal period and the first few months of parenthood.
- Children in receipt of free school meals/living in deprived areas.
- Young carers.
- Teenage parents.
- Young people not accessing school or home education.
- Young people involved in youth justice.
- Looked after children.
- Children who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse and/or addiction at home /with their parents.
- LGBTQ+ young people.
- Young people with chronic long term health conditions that impact on their mental health.

Application process-

There is a total funding pot of £50,000 available for Financial Year 2023/24. Applicants can apply for one-off grant funding of up to £5,000.

We are welcoming applications from small groups who may not be able to access funding elsewhere.

Apply for a Mental Wellbeing Small Grant-

All application forms must be submitted by midnight 12 February 2023

Applicants can apply for one-off grant funding of up to £5,000.

If you are interested in applying for this funding, please visit www.iow.gov.uk/mentalhealth
Jessie Darroll (Public Health Practitioner, Isle of Wight Council)

This year the UK will mark the Coronation of King Charles III with a three-day bank holiday weekend.

To help Island residents celebrate the occasion, the Isle of Wight Council in partnership with Island Roads is simplifying the process for private residential street parties, so that organising an event is as easy and stress-free as possible. For anyone wishing to hold a street party over the extended bank holiday weekend (Saturday 6 May to Monday 8 May 2023), the council asks that applications are submitted by 24 February 2023. Residents can email eventtrafficmanagement@islandroads.com to request a street closure and an application pack.

For guidance including tips, ideas, advice and support on organising a street party, you can visit www.gov.uk

The Coronation will see people across the UK and the Commonwealth come together to celebrate. The Coronation programme will include the procession and service at Westminster Abbey on 6 May, the 'Coronation Big Lunch' across the country on 7 May (with a concert taking place in Windsor in the evening), and 'The Big Help Out' community activity on the bank holiday, Monday 8 May.

The Coronation Big Lunch

The Coronation Big Lunch, on 7 May, will encourage communities to come together, celebrate their connections and get to know each other better. It will bring the Coronation festivities into the heart of every community. More detail on getting involved is available on the Coronation Big Lunch website.

The Big Help Out

The Big Help Out, on 8 May, will provide an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of His Majesty's service and showcase the impact of volunteering within communities. People across the UK will be able to get involved and more detail is available on The Big Help Out website.

National Lottery funding

Community groups can apply through the National Lottery Awards for All programme for funding of up to £10,000 for Coronation events and activities

National Lottery Awards for All does not have a deadline, but it can take up to 12 weeks from the point of application submission to receiving funding, which means applications for the Coronation weekend should be made before the middle of February.

Further details are available: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>

(Please see additional information from NALC about the Coronation on page 5)

Scam Alerts

Please be on the lookout for the following scams and don't fall victim to them-

- Reports of emails from the TV Licensing to say that your payments could not be taken and that you need to set up a new direct debit and asking you to click on a link to do so. This looks very genuine however if you click on the senders name the email address wont be a legitimate one. One of the residents contacted the TV Licensing team and they confirmed this was a scam. DON'T click on links in messages
- A facebook warning about calls from somebody alleging to work for Building Control demanding money – he apparently gets quite aggressive. This is predominantly aimed at people in the building trade but please be aware that Building Control staff will never behave in that way
- A couple of reports have been received from Island residents to say that they have received letters from Chartered Trading Standards Institute regarding investments purchased some years ago – we have checked with the Institute and they have confirmed that this is a scam and they wouldn't contact residents in this way. Scammers have used their good name as they know they are a trusted organisation



- A reminder about the Amazon Prime scam saying that you owe money – again this appears to be coming from an Island number – just because the number calling you starts 01983 doesn't automatically mean you can trust it – scammers will buy bulk numbers starting with any code and use them until they get blocked or removed
- A warning to Island traders – The councils Building Control Department have advised us that they work with a company called Building Control Communications (formally LABC Publishing) who produce a customer user guide which is funded through advertising. It appears that someone is contacting companies that have previously advertised and claiming to either be from IOW Building Control or from the Bailiffs and demanding payment for previous adverts. One local company has unfortunately fallen victim to this scam. If you are a business be very cautious about advertising with companies that contact you out of the blue to advertise with them.
- Despite the inclement weather we have received reports of cold calling on the Island – most recently somebody has been leafleting areas and then knocking on doors to try to buy gold, silver and valuables. Trading Standards strongly advises against engaging with anyone who operates like this and particularly allowing them access to your property. If you wish to sell any valuables we recommend contacting reputable auction houses or antique shops
- Be wary of any phone calls stating that they are offering free surveys in the area for government grants relating to insulation, solar panels etc. Do not engage with anyone who contacts you in this way

We are receiving lots of reports about doorstep sellers claiming to be ex cons and trying to sell household items. These have previously been known as Nottingham Knockers as this is where the scheme originated however the person at your door could be anyone so Trading Standards are warning you to avoid answering the door to them.

They will be trying to sell overpriced poor quality household items such as cloths, brushes, cleaners etc and are known to target elderly and potentially vulnerable residents, many of whom will buy something out of kindness or even intimidation. These "traders" can operate in teams and may well be gleaning information about the houses they knock on so that they can be targeted at a later date. They will pick up if you live alone, or if you go to get a purse full of cash for example.

- NEVER trade with anyone on your doorstep and NEVER allow them access to your property.
- If you don't know who's at your door don't answer it
- Using a door chain can help with feeling safe at home and these can be easily installed. The Blue Lamp Trust provides free home security visits and advice to vulnerable and elderly people on the Island
- NO Cold Calling Door Stickers can be used as a tool to prevent doorstep traders as it is an offence if a trader refuses to leave if a homeowner is displaying a sticker. These are available from trading.standards@iow.gov.uk

If a doorstep trader refuses to leave call the police on 101 and advise Trading Standards on 01983 823371

If you are in doubt about any communication you receive, letter, email, phone call, text, or facebook message then contact the organisation it purports to come from using a number or email address you have found yourself and check if they have sent it.

Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)





Age UK Isle of Wight Limited is the trading name of Age Concern Isle of Wight which is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales number 06057797 and Registered Charity number 1118711. Registered Office: 147 High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1TY.

Age UK

Digital Support & Conversation

Please find below the details the next round of Digital Support and Conversation dates and venues. We are testing different areas of the Island and you are welcome to attend any of them.

The focus is Money Matters: the benefits people are entitled to, support available and what to expect from online banking.

Date	Venue	Time
Tues 21st February	Falcon Cross Hall, Shanklin	10.00-12.00
Weds 22nd February	Beckford Centre, Cowes	10.00-12.00
Thursday 23rd February	Riverside Centre, Newport	10.00-12.00

Please book your place by calling 01983 301693 (direct dial). You do not have to bring a digital device. You can just come for the conversation and a hot drink! Attached is a summary of the information discussed in November.

I also wanted to let you know that I am leaving Age UKIW at the end of March and so these emails will stop. If you would like to receive information about the ongoing Digital Support and Conversation sessions, please contact the Digital Team on 01983 301693. Thank you for being involved over the last six years!

Helen Lewis (Age Friendly Island Officer (Engagement))



ASPIRE

Aspire Ryde Christmas Report 2022



Over the Christmas period Aspire Ryde offer many different projects and activities to help tackle loneliness, isolation, poverty and vulnerability. We rely on our many fantastic staff, volunteers and the kindness of people donating funds, food, toys and presents etc. etc. to achieve these amazing outcomes. With the current energy crisis our community's support this year has been more important than ever. Within this report are a few of the projects that helped people this Christmas.

Christmas Day at Aspire

With people's generous donations and volunteers giving up their time we helped provide 37 meals to individuals at Aspire on Christmas day. The atmosphere was amazing bringing together people of all ages from different areas of Ryde and surrounding areas.



 Living Well and Early Help Service



Throughout December our LW&EH team engaged with over 470 members of the community through groups, activities and information points. Therefore reducing isolation & loneliness promoting social interaction and community resilience.

Frozen Meals

Our amazing kitchen team prepared pre-frozen Christmas dinners for people who were unable to cook for themselves. We delivered over 40 meals to people within our community on Christmas Day. We also delivered our Warm Space throughout December serving over 400 meals in December alone



They also held over 330 face to face interactions with the community via the Mobile HUB which also delivered parcels, warm packs, heaters and food to some of the most vulnerable people within our community.

Feed a Family

Our initiative supported by Isle of Wight Radio aimed for businesses to fund 100 hampers, and spread some festive cheer! The appeal 'SMASHED' our initial goal of 100 hampers and saw us raise funds for us to provide over 500 hampers. We delivered 250 over Christmas and will deliver a further 250 in January 2023 to families in need.



Essential Hampers

The Aspire team managed to put together over 100 hampers containing food, toiletries and some goodies to ensure over 240 people could enjoy Christmas without worries about food and finance.

Toys and Presents

We also distributed over 100 toys to ensure children could enjoy the magic of Christmas when waking up in the morning. We gave 300 Free soft play sessions to parents who were having financial issues and helped distribute another 100 gifts for adults as we feel Christmas is a time for everyone.

We Also:

- Distributed over 3 tons of food from our 'Food stand' over the Christmas period with volunteers ensuring this was restocked daily.
- Supported and signposted over 20 families to other appropriate statutory and voluntary services over Christmas
- Delivered 585 places on our 'Food and Fun' Holiday Program
- Made over 320 welfare calls to community members
- Our Creative Hub performed Music at several events to spread Christmas Cheer
- And Much Much More....

Christmas Hampers

The Aspire team with support from Ryde Lions and WRS systems collected and distributed over 250 fresh food hampers containing everything and more a family would need to enjoy their Christmas Day meals.

Take a Coat Leave a Coat!

Through our five coat rails and a sign stating 'Need a coat? take one, want a help? leave one'. We have calculated that we have helped keep over 1000 people warmer this winter. We will be keeping the rails out all year round to enable people to keep warm whatever their circumstances



We Would like to Thank:

All of our staff and volunteers
IOW Radio
WRS Systems
Ryde Lions
Gavin at Isle of Wight Meat Co
Island Carpet Warehouse
Morrisons (Newport & Lake)
Co-op Food (Ryde)



Isle of Wight Walking Festival

The IW Walking Festival returns as bookends to Summer 2023

Visit Isle of Wight's annual Walking Festival will once again return this year. The festival is split across the Spring and Autumn seasons, with the spring event taking place from Saturday 13 – Sunday 21 May and the Autumn event from Saturday 7 – Sunday 15 October.

The popular IW Walking Festival, the only Walking Festival on the Island, will offer over 100 walks, across 18 days and for all ages and abilities. Mountbatten's Walk the Wight will once again be a flagship walk of the Spring event.

All the walks are hosted by volunteer walk leaders. If you would like to get involved and take a group on your all-time favourite trek, or leisurely ramble, please contact Sarah Alexander at walking@visitwight.org

For more information head to Isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk

Sarah Alexander



Time to get walking again!

With Spring on its way we start to think about getting out to walk in the beautiful English countryside again, but where to find new and interesting walks?

Walking in the Isle of Wight <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/wight> has loads of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John Harris (who maintains the website) said, 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in the Isle of Wight (part of the Walking in England website) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris

www.walkinginengland.co.uk and john@walkinginengland.co.uk

Citizens Advice

December was a busy month for the charity even with a little less demand between Christmas the New Year. Over 650 Islanders contacted us, including 232 with housing issues, 193 about benefits and 124 about support for food and fuel.

Support with submitting Personal Independence Payment applications continues to rise with over 50 people asking about that too. These are complicated forms to complete, and we have to make sure the very personal details being asked for are clear and describe the problems that a person faces on a daily basis. Successful applications can make a huge difference though and a recent client told us he had been awarded Enhanced Daily Living and Standard mobility at £116.85 per week . The total yearly amount for him is £6076.20. We have volunteers assisting clients to complete these forms and it's especially needed when the client has poor mental health.

We have a drive on at the moment to recruit more volunteers for this type of satisfying work , please do let your residents know to look at citizensadviceiw.org.uk to see how they can help; we have lots of interesting roles available.

On another note, Citizens Advice IW relaunched our community directory website Isle Find It. A new feature identifies any Warm Space open on a particular day. Just go to events and click on the filter (looks like a little funnel) and choose Warm Spaces

Paul Savill BSc (he/him)
Chief Officer Citizens Advice Isle of Wight



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

COOKING SAUCES
PASTA
BAKED BEANS
TINNED PULSES
CEREAL
TEA
PET FOOD



Monthly Report from MP Bob Seely

Local Government Finance Settlement

This month I secured an important commitment to reopen the review of the Isle of Wight Council's funding settlement.

Officials will continue to gather evidence about the additional costs of providing public services on the Island. A further £1m grant for the Council has also been confirmed in the 2023/24 Settlement.

Wightlink Timetable Improvements

I am delighted FastCat services are being extended starting Monday 27 March 2023. The announcement follows a hard-fought campaign for later FastCat services, by both myself and many members of the community.

Wightlink and South Western Railway have also worked with me to make improvements to timetables on the Lymington-Yarmouth route. From March, many more journeys between Lymington and Yarmouth will connect much better with national rail services.

Bed-Blocking Solution

A £2m grant to support patient discharge from St Mary's Hospital has now been received.

This has enabled the Council to use Bluebell House Residential Care Home on the Island to care for those who are well enough to leave hospital. The additional capacity is helping free up hospital beds; meaning faster treatment and fewer delays for those admitted to hospital.

Planning Changes

On 26 January I led an important debate in Parliament on the future of Planning Policy.

The Government again assured me that the Island will be eligible to use exceptional circumstances in calculating its housing need. I have long campaigned to ensure that we build a sustainable number of primarily affordable homes for Islanders, in existing communities. This is what the changes I have secured will deliver.

I outlined to Government the need for stronger compulsory purchase powers to allow the Isle of Wight Council to purchase long-term empty and derelict buildings, such as the Grand Hotel in Sandown.

I continue to seek answers from the Government on the use of Camp Hill and will continue to press for a positive decision going forward.

Post Offices

I recently met with Cllr Lightfoot & Ventnor Sub-Postmaster Andy Smith to learn more about how and why sub-post masters are struggling.

Post offices and sub-postmasters are a key part of our local communities. We need to support them more. I will be taking Andy's ideas to ministers and the post office and pushing the Government for reform.

Freshwater Anti-Social Behaviour

I have met with Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Donna Jones, to discuss this issue. We are working together to address the issue through policing and youth activities. More to follow.



Youth Trust Visit

The Isle of Wight Youth Trust is an independent organisation providing support and mental health services for young Islanders and their families. I visited the trust earlier this month to learn more about their work and the work of the Isle of Wight Youth Trust Youth Taskforce.

I heard from the young people there about the challenges they have faced and their plans for the future. I challenged the group to develop a plan, which I will support, to address some of the issues they raised.

Update of Information on the Alternative Fuel Payment from Bob Seely

- Households that use alternative fuels (such as liquified petroleum gas), instead of mains gas, to heat their homes, will receive support in the form of a one-off payment of £200 from the Government, known as the 'Alternative Fuel Payment' (AFP).
- According to the Government, most households eligible for the AFP support in Great Britain will receive payment automatically via their electricity supplier in February 2023, with no need to take any action (see PQ 112123 [on Alternative Fuel Payments], 9 January 2023 - <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-16/112123>).
- Those households who will need to apply for the AFP because, for example, they do not have a direct relationship with an electricity supplier, will be able to do so in February 2023, via an online gov.uk portal. There is no further information on this at present.
- It is anticipated that a customer helpline will be available to assist customers who do not have online access; more information is expected later in 2023 (see 'Vital help with energy bills on the way for millions more homes across Great Britain and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK', 19 December 2022 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vital-help-with-energy-bills-on-the-way-for-millions-more-homes-across-great-britain-and-northern-ireland>).

Bob Seely

SWAN Advocacy

(Thank you to Freshwater Parish Council for sharing this information with us)

My name is Cherie Gallin and I work for a charity called SWAN Advocacy. We provide several free and confidential advocacy services including the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service. This service is funded by the Isle of Wight Council and a legal right for all patients on the Isle of Wight wishing to make a complaint regarding NHS services.



I am just emailing you as a follow up to see if there is anything more that we can do to ensure that residents know how to access our service. This is particularly important as the service was run by The Advocacy People prior to 1 April 2022 and we would like to ensure that residents are not contacting an advocacy service that is unable to assist them.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about this as I understand that you are the Parish Clerks for Freshwater Parish Council. I was wondering if you have an information resource for your residents and would be willing to include our information on it. I was also wondering if we could include information on a future edition of a newsletter if you have one.

I appreciate that this is a lot to request but it would be very helpful, and we would like to ensure that all communities on the Island have the opportunity to benefit from our services.

I look forward to hearing from you and discussing this further. You may email me or telephone me on the number below. (Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 9am to 5pm)

Cherie Gallin (Supervising Advocate) (Pronouns: she/her)
T: 07704 664701 E: Cherie.gallin@swanadvocacy.org.uk

The Isle of Wight Society is now open for submissions for the Conservation Awards 2023.

Entries are invited from Town and Parish Councils for building and landscape projects where restoration, renovation and conservation are involved.

Please see the IOW Society web pages for further details and examples of previous winners.

Entries close 1st March 2023.



I am contacting you today to introduce myself and our company to you as a new supplier able to offer RoSPA Playsafety Outdoor Operational Playground Inspections and maintenance.

I recently met with the clerk at Sandown town council regarding some repair work required in the skatepark they look after, during which she went on to explain the problems she has with getting these inspections and also the required maintenance done, as there are no local island companies offering this service, which leads her to having to try and persuade mainland companies to come over and undertake the work, which they are reluctant to do and as a result their services come with huge delays and large costs.



So, On the 7th of February I will be undertaking the RoSPA Playsafety Outdoor Operational Playground Inspection Training Course and as an additional level of competency I will be taking the exam which will put me on the Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII).

As a company we have taken this decision because we feel that not only with our knowledge, skills and accreditations in engineering but also our extensive list of contacts and suppliers that we can provide a complete, professional and reliable service for the all town and parish councils island wide.

Our proposal would be to not only take away the stress of trying to organise these inspections with companies that perhaps aren't so keen to make the trip over to the island but then also ensure any work required is done in a timely fashion.

So I thought a fantastic way of getting this message out there would be to contact yourselves in the hope that you may pass the information on to any of your members that it may be applicable to.

More than happy to answer any questions anyone may have, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Luke Adams – Project Manager

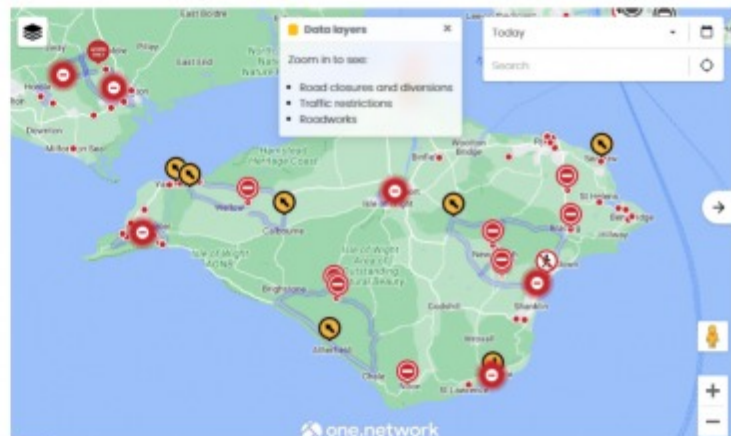
TEL: 01983 209030 MOB: 07312088199 www.dmrengineeringiw.co.uk

Find out about roadworks in your area

One Network is an online tool which allows you to see where roadworks are taking place on the Isle of Wight.

It provides details of current work and that planned up to 14 days in the future. It covers work not just by Island Roads but by all utility providers.

To view the map, visit www.islandroads.com and click on 'Current Works' or scan the QR code below.



The map contains live roadworks information, including:

- Details of the organisation responsible for the works (Island Roads, utility company, road closure for public events etc)
- Reason for works
- Duration of works
- Traffic management information (traffic lights, road closures etc)
- Diversion route

The tool is user-friendly, up-to-date and free to use – designed to help you plan your journey.



Spotted a problem on the Island's highway network?

Did you know you can report issues quickly and easily online via your PC, smartphone or tablet?

Visit www.islandroads.com and click on the yellow 'Report it Online' button at the top of the homepage.

Reporting online allows you to see if an issue has already been reported and how it is being resolved.

You can also report something new and track the progress of our investigations and any work scheduled.

Alternatively you can visit Fix My Street directly <https://fms.islandroads.com> or download the Fix My Street App for Apple and Android. Or simply scan the QR code below.



Southern Vectis

Road-works, leading to closures and diversions, are currently affecting a lot of our routes, and we continue to try and work around these, causing the least inconvenience to our customers.

We're busy planning our summer timetables for May to September this year. We're not expecting any major changes, just the usually tinkering to help improve punctuality.

Passenger numbers remain stable at an average of 85% of pre-COVID figures, with commercial passengers (people who pay a fare) strong at 95%, but concessions (elderly & disabled) still concerning at only 75%.

The Council have been supporting us with concessionary reimbursement at pre-COVID levels, and this is what has enabled us to continue running our routes at pre-COVID levels. We're in discussion with the Council about reimbursement from April this year, and hopefully they can continue to support us, and routes can continue at their current levels.

The £2.00 fare cap has been well taken up by our customers, and so far, it appears the funding we're receiving from the DfT for this is sufficient to cover the reduced revenue. There is still no word on any extension of the scheme, so we expect it to end at the end of March as planned.

Richard Tyldsley (General Manager)



Hovertravel

In February Hovertravel is supporting the island resident Portsmouth Football Club supporters with two late night charters for evening home game fixtures against Burton Albion on Tuesday 14th February and against Bolton Wanderers on Tuesday 28th February. As well as offering the fastest way home after the game, these charters include a coach transfer from the Fratton Park ground to our Southsea terminal. For the romantics amongst us that means there is also the opportunity to cross the Solent for a full evening with your date on Valentine's Day!



Our trial throughout December of delivering assisted boarding after all other passengers have boarded was very well received and we have now adopted this procedure permanently. The HoverCare seating in our terminals has also been moved to be in full view of our ticket desks. Additionally following feedback from a customer we now have arranged transport for HoverCare customers to and from the pier in Ryde when our services are cancelled.

Recognising that this time of the year is when we all like to plan our holidays and day trips, Hovertravel has launched a series of day trips combining coach trips to a broad variety of destinations and attractions with day returns from the Island in great value package deals. The Hover Days calendar has outings to suit all interests; whether you want to shop in the West End of London, see the royal residences at Windsor and Arundel, meet Peppa Pig or Chitty Chitty Bang Bang or enjoy an ice cream on the beach in Brighton.

Stephen Forster

Creative Director, SRF (Integrated Communications) Ltd



Red Funnel

Isle of Wight-based Aspire chosen by public as Red Funnel's Charity of the Year 2023

Red Funnel kicked off 2023 naming Aspire as its Charity of the Year following the results of a vote by the general public and Red Funnel colleagues.

Aspire is an award-winning community hub, operating services across the Island in partnership with the IW Council and other voluntary partners. The organisation provides support to the community in many ways, with a big focus on providing spaces in which people can meet, grow, and enhance their friendships and social networks, alleviating loneliness, and isolation.

Red Funnel customers can opt to make a donation to Aspire at the time of booking their ferry travel online or donate at most Red Funnel points of sale.

Fran Collins, Chief Executive of Red Funnel, said: "Over the next 12 months Red Funnel will work with Aspire on a series of ongoing fundraising and awareness campaigns. In previous years Red Funnel has helped its partners to fundraise through customer donations, sports competitions, and volunteering, and has raised over £300,000 in cash donations."

For more information about Red Funnel's Charity of the Year scheme and Aspire, please visit: <https://www.redfunnel.co.uk/coty> and <https://www.aspireryde.org.uk/>.

Red Funnel announces Island Ambassadors

Red Funnel has announced 13 talented Islanders who have been selected as Red Funnel's Island Ambassadors for 2023. These locals will be helped to showcase their skills far and wide in activities varying from dressage to kickboxing and even a dog sled racer.

Throughout 2023, Red Funnel will support the Island Ambassadors by aiding the transition from local to national competition and status with travel sponsorship.

Red Funnel will be following the successes of the Island Ambassadors and sharing their updates as they compete and perform at the top of their game, whilst promoting the Island on both mainland and international stages. Through the new Island Ambassador scheme, Red Funnel hope to celebrate and enhance the many great achievements of Isle of Wight residents, aiding their transition from a local talent to national status.

For more detail on the Island Ambassador programme, please visit: [redfunnel.co.uk/islandambassadors](https://www.redfunnel.co.uk/islandambassadors)

Josey Page (Account Executive)



Wightlink

Extra foot passenger sailings in February 2023 to support Isle of Wight schools



Wightlink will be operating extra late evening foot passenger sailings in February to support Isle of Wight schools to compete in the annual Dance Live! event at Portsmouth Guildhall. More than 900 pupils, staff and helpers will be crossing the Solent across six nights to take part in the regional heats of the competition.

The extra sailings between Ryde Pier Head and Portsmouth Harbour will be operated by a charter vessel on February 20, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28.

They will depart Portsmouth Harbour at 21:20 and 22:45 and Ryde at 22:00.

Although the sailings are scheduled to support the schools, everyone is welcome to travel on these crossings and should book in advance on the Wightlink website or App.

The Island schools taking part in Dance Live! will be the Isle of Wight Education Federation, Ryde School, Ryde Academy, The Bay Primary, Cowes Primary, Lanesend Primary, Medina House School and the Federation of Newchurch and Nettlestone Primaries.



“We wish our talented Island dancers the very best of luck in Dance Live! and hope to take many of them back to Portsmouth for the finals in April,” says Wightlink Chief Executive Keith Greenfield.

Wightlink has already announced extra late night FastCat services will resume from Monday 27 March when the summer timetable comes into operation. They will be the 21:20 and 22:45 from Portsmouth Harbour, returning from Ryde Pier Head at 22:00 and 23:10.

Karen Woods (Communications & PR)