

Serving the Island's



Town, Parish & Community Councils

The IWALC Bulletin

November 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 November issue of the Bulletin!

As winter approaches, the main mood here, as elsewhere in the country, is probably one of uncertainty and apprehension. What will this winter bring? Will we survive? Health remains one of the main concerns. Will there be another surge in Covid cases? What about flu? Will the local NHS services be able to cope?

However, for most individuals and organisations, the main uncertainties are financial. We are all anxiously awaiting the new government's budget statement on 17 November. We have been warned that they have to make 'difficult decisions' - decisions that will inevitably affect us all. But it is not only the national government that has to make difficult financial decisions. The IW Council and local councils have begun the process of setting their budgets for the 2022/23 financial year and, with increased demand for services, reduced government funding and inflation, this will not be an easy task. And commercial and voluntary organisations face similar challenges.

In this situation, it is more important than ever that we all work together. With this in mind, IWALC will be holding a special meeting on Thursday 24 November, prior to the scheduled Executive meeting. The main focus will be on the coordination of activities to address the cost-of-living crisis, which is already affecting many residents and will inevitably get worse in the coming months. However, we will also look at other possible forms of cooperation, including planning enforcement. For further details, see IWALC News.

The IWALC News section also includes a report on our October 'topic' meeting, which focussed on Road Safety. The speaker was the IW Council's Road Safety Officer, Lewis Campbell. Some interesting statistics emerged from his presentation. For example, 27% of accidents in the last five years involved drivers aged 17-24 and 42% were caused by the 'fatal five' driver errors (speeding, distraction, failure to use seat belts, alcohol or drugs, and following too close), with 7.6% involving alcohol or drugs. His presentation also explained the challenges of improving road safety, which has to be addressed on three different fronts (engineering improvements, education and enforcement of road regulations) and involves three different organisations (IW Council, Island Roads and the Police) – and, of course, ourselves, the general public.

The reports from member councils also include some interesting news. For example, Ventnor Town Council has commissioned a film about local poverty entitled 'Family Voice', Ryde Town Council and Aspire have established a new post of Community Development Officer, Fishbourne Parish Council has a book club, and Newchurch Parish councillors have walked right round the boundaries of their parish! We will be showing the 'Family Voice' film at the special meeting on 24 November.

Cllr Diana Conyers (Chair)



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 December edition will be November 30th- Thank you.

October Topic Meeting

The meeting was organised and chaired by Anne Bamford, IWALC's vice chair. It was held at Newport Congregational Church, following the cancellation of our booking at the Riverside Centre. Despite the last minute change in venue, there were 18 participants, including two IW councillors, Phil Jordan and Paul Fuller.

The presenter was Lewis Campbell, the IW Council's Road Safety Officer. He had hoped to be accompanied by Stewart Chandler, the Highways Client Manager. However, Stewart had to cancel at the last minute.

Lewis gave a very useful overview of the topic. He provided a summary of road accident data. In the last five years there has been a downward trend in the total number of accidents but not in the number in which there were fatalities or serious injuries. Councillors were interested to know about the age breakdown of drivers. Apparently young drivers (i.e. those aged 17-24) accounted for 27% of accidents. This compares with 29% for those over 60. It was also interesting to learn that 42% of accidents were caused by the 'fatal five' driver errors (speeding, distraction, failure to use seat belts, alcohol/drugs and following too close), with 7.6% involving alcohol or drugs.

However, Lewis also warned about the interpretation of the data. For example, the main reason for the apparently high accident rate is that rates are measured in terms of the number of accidents per vehicle miles travelled and the average number of miles travelled is much lower here than on the mainland. Furthermore, since the number of accidents here is relatively low, a small increase in numbers can appear to indicate a major increase in accident rates.

He went on to explain that road safety issues have to be addressed in three different but interrelated ways: engineering improvements, which are the responsibility of the Council and Island Roads; education of road users, which is the Council's responsibility, and enforcement of regulations, which lies with the Police.

There was then a question-and-answer session. The questions, some of which had been submitted in advance, covered a wide range of topics. The main concern was with speeding, including progress with and likely outcomes of the Council's current speed review, inadequate enforcement by the police, and alternative means of controlling speeding, such as traffic calming, speed cameras and the role of Speedwatch. However, there was also considerable discussion about the way in which accidents are recorded, including the fact that only accidents involving personal injury are included and the failure to distinguish between accidents involving residents and those involving visitors. Lewis was assisted by councillors Phil Jordan and Paul Fuller in answering the questions and he offered to refer those he was unable to answer back to his colleagues. When we get these responses, we will forward them to those members who asked the questions.

IWALC would like to thank Lewis for a very useful session and Newport Congregational Church for letting us use their hall at such short notice.

You will find further information about the Council's road safety activities, including links to further useful information, under Other News.

November Executive Meeting

The next Executive meeting will be at 6 pm on Thursday 24 November at the Riverside Centre. We have received requests from several organisations, including representatives from the IW Council, to come and talk to our members. Since we don't have a meeting in December, we have decided to have an open meeting before the formal Executive meeting. This meeting will start at 6 pm and be open to all councillors and staff of member councils.

The main focus of the open meeting will be the cost of living crisis, especially the coordination of the measures being taken by the various statutory and voluntary sector organisations involved and the existing and possible future role of local councils. The session will begin with a showing of the short film 'Family Voice', commissioned by Ventnor Town Council and produced by Utility Films, which reveals the nature of poverty on the Island.

The meeting will also include a presentation by Ollie Boulter, the IW Council's Strategic Manager for Planning and Infrastructure Delivery, on plans to strengthen the Council's enforcement capacity.

There will be a short break with refreshments between the first meeting and the Executive meeting. Further details will be sent to members soon. In the meantime, please note the earlier than usual starting time.

Meetings with Isle of Wight Cabinet

The last online meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet was on Thursday 13 October. The focus was on highway issues and Scott Headey, Deputy Strategic Highways and Transport Manager, was there to answer members' questions. About 16 members attended, together with most members of the Cabinet. Questions ranged from improving pedestrian safety on rural roads to parking on pavements, speeding and whether local councils can undertake minor road improvements themselves if they have sufficient resources and get the necessary permissions. The answer to the last question was 'yes'. Regarding speeding, participants were informed that no action can be taken until the Council has the results of the current speed review. Mr Headey said that they should get the findings in November and a report will be made to Cabinet in Spring 2023.

The next meeting will be at 12 noon on Thursday 10 November. All councillors and staff are welcome to attend. Participants are requested to send questions in advance to Jill (jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com). It will be an online meeting via Microsoft Teams. If you haven't already received the link, please contact your clerk or Jill Webster.

Meeting with Bob Seely MP

The next meeting will be at 5 pm on Tuesday 8 November. If you haven't got the log in details, please contact your clerk or Jill.

Training

There will be no training events in December but we have two courses planned for 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. We have provisionally arranged to hold this on Wednesday 11 and Wednesday 25 January 2023. Further details will be circulated in the near future.

The second is a special course on First Aid, provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 18 January 2023. The course will be delivered 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. There will be a charge of £5 per person for this course. Members have already been asked if they would be interested in such a course and those who responded will receive further details nearer the time.

No one has yet responded to our request for members' views on other training needs. If you do have any views, please contact Jill (jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com).

A Comment by Cllr Peter Whiteman

Some times, I wonder why I am a Councillor.

Our job, as a parish councillor, is to help the community we represent, which I try to do to the best of my ability. I have not served on the IW Council but this may be a blessing.

The IW Council are still cogitating over the current review of the Island Plan and once again, they bring politics into their deliberations, instead of taking a balanced view of what is needed on our Island.

There is plenty of land within our Island that has extant permission, if you take a look around the Newport and surrounding area as an example, also other parts of our Island are just the same. The problem is that some developers sit on their hands to keep the land-bank safe and don't seem to want to build for need.

We all know that some developments are not a credit to the IW Council or the current Island Plan, as the large one in Newport under construction is a mixture of very little or no infrastructure. And units are crammed together which is no credit to the standard of house-building on our Island.

You look at the recent application in Gunville, which has recently been given permission on a green field site, and the local councillor is a member of the green party! Also, the existing estate roads will have to have yellow lines to restrict their parking. What's that all about?

Finally... I know of course, we desperately need housing, but the right balance needs to be struck between the need and appearance with infrastructure to suit the community.

Kind Regards, *Cllr Peter J Whiteman (Vice Chair, Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council)*

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.

News from NALC

NEWS FROM NALC: 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NALC's 2022 Annual General Meeting took place virtually on Tuesday 25th October. There were a total of 76 voting members present. IWALC was represented by Anne Bamford, (Freshwater), John Graney (Bradling) and Bob Blezzard (Newchurch). The meeting was chaired by Keith Stevens, the national chair from East Sussex.

The meeting commenced with a serious point of order being raised. A number of constitutional amendments had been put forward for consideration with only five days' notice having been given. These were rightly ruled to be out of order and were withdrawn from the agenda for consideration at a future date.

The 2021-22 Annual Report was received and approved with thanks being given to National Assembly members, staff, county associations and partner organisations for their work during the year. The meeting agreed a 3% increase in affiliation fees for 2023-24 which equates to 7.71p per elector capped at 1,978 for the largest councils. The draft 3 year budget to 2025 was received. It is worth noting that the figures in this document are indicative only and not binding on subsequent AGMs.

A motion from the Northamptonshire Association drawing attention to there being an issue with staff recruitment, retention and capacity of local councils was debated. The motion called for the engagement of a consultant to benchmark clerks' terms and conditions. Whilst supporting the sentiments of the motion, your delegates, in line with the steer from the last IWALC Executive meeting, did not support the engagement of outside consultants to carry out the benchmarking. One of your delegates pointed out that a benchmarking agreement with the SLCC dating back to 2004 already exists and all that is needed is for it to be updated. The motion was approved.

A motion to enshrine online voting and a modernised voting system into the NALC constitution did not reach the two thirds threshold required and was therefore not carried. The constitution therefore remains silent on electoral arrangements for internal elections and will therefore go back to the National Assembly for consideration as something more appropriate to be dealt with through standing orders.

The president, Baroness Ros Scott of Needham Market along with the vice-presidents all elected last year will remain in post until 2023.

The 2023 AGM will be held on 24 October next year. A straw poll was carried out to ascertain whether delegates want to return to meeting face-to-face or continue to meeting virtually. 36% wanted to meet face-to-face and 62% wanted to continue meeting virtually. It is likely therefore that the 2023 AGM will again be a virtual meeting.

Bob BLEZZARD November 2022

White Ribbon Day

NALC will support White Ribbon Day, a day to work towards ending violence against women and girls.

NALC would like to make a video to show male support for White Ribbon Day. We want as many men as possible from the sector to participate and send a video, following the instructions below.

- The video should be around 5 to 10 seconds long.
- Look at the camera and say, "I am supporting White Ribbon Day to help end violence against women and girls".
- The video should be filmed in landscape (holding your phone sideways).
- Record as many takes as you need.

We have a duty as a sector to show support for this important message, and the more contributions we have, the more significant impact you can make.

Please send your videos to daisy.petrov@nalc.gov.uk or to 07894 937 888 by 21 November 2022.



Fortnightly meeting with county officers

At last week's meeting with county officers, we were joined by WorkNest, NALC's HR partners.

WorkNest is currently updating NALC's Good Councillors Guide to Being a Good Employer and is consulting on improvements and changes needed to the guide.

WorkNest also presented services available through their partnership with NALC as additional support to county associations.

New Protocol on Councillor-Officer Relations

As part of the Civility and Respect Project, NALC has just published a new model protocol on relationships between councillors and officers. For details, go to:

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/2263-the-civility-and-respect-project-publishes-a-new-model-councillor-officer-protocol>

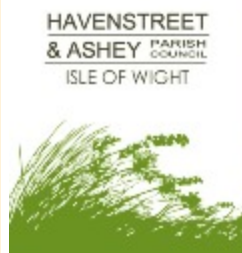
News from Member Councils

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

Havenstreet & Ashey Parish Council

Havenstreet & Ashey Parish Council has welcomed new Councillor, Mel Ballard, to the Council, following co-option, with plans for a new defibrillator in Ashey approved as part of a parish-wide set of initiatives.



Parish Chair, Sue Lyons said, 'We want to develop projects, within our limited resources, in partnership with the local community and make a real difference to residents' lives.'

Future plans include an environmentally friendly Christmas project, support of a community garden, developing the network of defibrillators and training in usage, and campaigning to improve road safety.

Mel, who has extensive experience working in schools and youth football, as well as a background in banking, added, 'I'm passionate about community engagement, and making a difference at grassroots - small changes can make a real, positive difference to people's daily lives.'

Richard Priest (Clerk)



Picture L-R H&A Cllrs Conrad Gauntlett, Mick Lyons, Sue Lyons, Mel Ballard and Karen Hull.

Ryde Town Council

Ryde Town Council is delighted to announce an exciting partnership with Aspire which has allowed us to appoint Alison Pearce to the brand new role of Community Development Officer for Ryde. This position is absolutely vital as it has a specific remit to help members of the community access the aid that they might require.



Alison started in the middle of October and is already working on a number of projects that we will be announcing in the upcoming weeks. The immediate scope of Alison's role is to help people and local organisations through the upcoming cost-of-living crisis this winter and the difficulties it will create.

Please regularly check our social media for more information.

Allan Bridges – Business Development Manager & Deputy Clerk

Fishbourne Parish Council

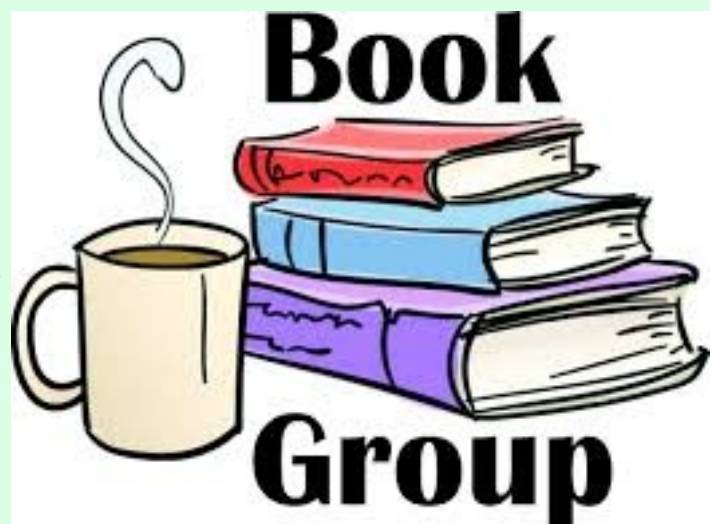
Fishbourne Book Group

Our first meeting was in March 2022 when a group of six enthusiastic readers met at Quarr Abbey with a view to creating a Post-Covid reading group. The choice of the Abbey as a meeting place was important as



we wanted to support the monastery after the financial impact of the pandemic. Every cup of tea and coffee purchased was going to help them recover sooner as we felt that the Abbey had become a wonderful community resource during the dark days of Covid when we were just allowed out to exercise. People in the parish and outside would often gravitate towards the woods and gardens of the Abbey and we felt very grateful that we could share in the serenity of the place. We also wanted to create a group which met during the day so that no-one had to be put off by having to go out in the dark winter evenings.

Our first book was "The Portrait of A Lady" by Henry James, which we all agreed was both fascinating and challenging. Since then we have met every month and the choices have been varied with both fiction and non-fiction selections. Our group has gradually grown to about ten members and we all enjoy our discussions and getting to know more about each other. New members are always welcome and it is a good way to meet new people. Our current book selection is a tribute to the late Hilary Mantel; "Beyond Black", a uniquely dark but engaging story of a psychic haunted by spirits of her past.



The group is easy to run and all communication is done by email, so I would recommend other councils to do the same thing as a community building exercise. If you can also link it with the establishment of a community library, as we have done in Fishbourne, it could prove to be a real asset to your local area.

For other information about the Council's activities, see our latest newsletter:

<https://www.fishbourneiow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Fishbourne-Parish-October-2022.pdf>

Cllr Cheryl Fontana

Ventnor Town Council

Report by David Bartlett (Clerk)



GOLD AWARD FOR VENTNOR PARK



South and South East in Bloom's Awards process this year has judged that the town's Park not only meets their Gold Standard (up from last year's Silver Gilt) but also rated it as both Best in Category and Best Overall Park 2022.

Also the Cascade retained its Silver Gilt award. Congratulations and thanks are due to John O'Conner's Stan Hayden and his team for their amazing year-round work that has earned this well-deserved recognition.

FAMILY VOICE

On Monday evening 3 October Ventnor residents demonstrated that the reliance of those among them at the sharp end of the cost of living crisis on the support of their communities was well founded as over 80 came to St Catherine's Church to see and discuss our Family Voice documentary.



In a series of very personal interviews with local residents from the town who now find themselves having to use the Ventnor Food Bank, Baby Box and even more recently the Ventnor Food Pantry along with Ventnor Town Council's food and fuel vouchers scheme to survive, it uncovers the level of poverty these residents face in the current climate.

The viewing of the 15-minute film fed into 30-minute discussions by 12 groups gathered round tables with the task of identifying three priorities for the town's response to the accounts of poverty by those residents actually now living with it and in the certainty that it is going to get worse and draw many more into it.

Post-it notes and A4 response sheets were on all the tables for individuals to record their own responses. We will of course study all this valuable feedback very carefully as a basis for future planning – and we'll be arranging other viewings of the documentary

WELLBEING CAFÉ'S LATEST TRIP

Organised by its Co-ordinator Terri, the Wellbeing Café members had a wonderful day out at the



Isle of Wight Steam Railway at Havenstreet last Saturday. Members dodged the initial rain showers to enjoy rides on the steam train, explore The Train Story – an undercover, interactive experience and exhibition of over 150 years of railway history, including Victorian and Edwardian carriages – and finally to watch flying displays of the Haven Falconry's birds of prey. Thanks go to Dave Forrester and team who privately-own the open-top bus and kindly provided this

transport for the day, driven by volunteer John Killick.

THANKS TO OUR BEACH SAFETY TEAM



Our new Beach Safety team members Beth Whitehead and Lloyd Wheatley joined us on 1 June and have done an excellent job along with our Maintenance Manager Brian Roberts in protecting and advising this year's beach users. Their time with us ended on Friday and they go with our sincere thanks and hope we might work with them again in 2023.

Ventnor Town Council cont'd

Welcome to edition 132 of our Clerk's Column circulated as usual to the 490 residents on our Residents' Forum email list and through the Chronicle's page 4.

ASSETS & SERVICES WORKING GROUP

The Group's meeting on Tuesday morning welcomed the plan for the repair of the Spring Hill Fountain and that the completion of the installation of CCTV at the new Toilets would also provide coverage of Spring Hill Garden. We agreed the lower of two quotations - £780 – for some tree work at Boniface Fields noting that the Isle of Wight Council would monitor the Ventnor Park Trees with the Town Council meeting half the cost of any necessary works. We were pleased to accept the offer from Ventnor Enhancement Fund to look at the best possible arrangements for the flower display on the central reservation before seeking a quotation for their watering. Finally, we agreed that the Beach Safety team for the 2023 season would be in place from 1 May to 31 August.

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday's meeting was attended by five members of the public concerned about the planned development of the old Central Stores site. The Committee did not support the application as *it is not compliant; the conditions clearly state that there is no Environmental report, there is no evidence of any Contaminated Land report.* It added *it is of great concern that major works have already begun on site.*

It supported the other two applications: a loft conversion at 4 Blendworth Terrace, Clarence Road and a replacement dwelling and garage at Bonchurch Shute's Ramblers.

NEW ROAD CLOSURES

Bath Road no traffic from 1am on Monday 31 October until 11.59pm on Friday 4 November or until the works are completed.

Woolverton Road no traffic from 00.01 on Monday 31 October until 11.549 hours on Friday 11 November or until the works are completed.

Mitchell Avenue for five shifts between 9.30am and 3.30pm between Monday 31 October and Friday 4 November traffic or parking.

NEW SCREENINGS OF FAMILY VOICE

We're keen that as many residents as possible see and discuss this hard hitting film, commissioned by Ventnor Town Council and made by local professional film and documentary makers Utility Films. Through very personal interviews with local residents from the town who now find themselves having to use the Ventnor Food Bank, Baby Box and Ventnor Food Pantry along with Ventnor Town Council's food and fuel vouchers scheme to survive, it uncovers the level of poverty these residents face in the current climate and the ever more desperate cost of living crisis.

So we've arranged for three more viewings in our Green Room this week:

7pm on Wednesday

5pm on Thursday

10.30am Saturday

**WE HAVE TO MAKE
A DECISION BETWEEN
FOOD AND ELECTRICITY**

Each will be followed by a discussion of how the town can respond.

THANKS TO THE CO-OP COMMUNITY FUND

The Fund's resources come from the 2pence deducted from each one pound spend by its customers on a range of selected items and distributed to registered good causes chosen by those customers.

We're delighted to hear this week that two contributions have come to Ventnor this week:

- o £2,623.93 for our Youth Club; and
- o £2,452.93 for our Wellbeing Café.

LITTER PICKERS PLEASE ...

The Mayor's request: A tidy, clean town is the goal... We have the tools... We need volunteers... Sunday 6th November at 9 am... Green Room Dudley Road... Refreshments afterwards... We would love more help.*



FROM MY TWITTER FEED THIS WEEK

- o The [Association of School & College Leaders](#) says 'school funding per pupil by the end of this parliament in 2024/25 will still be 3% below 2010 in real-terms, while college funding will be 11% lower, and school sixth form funding 27% lower.'
- o New research by the [Economic & Social Research Institute](#) shows 'reductions in UK to EU goods trade by 16% and trade from the EU to UK by 20% relative to the scenario in which Brexit had not occurred.'

MORE INFORMATION is available from the Town Council's website and @ventnor clerk

Sandown Town Council

Council Consults on Costs

Sandown Town Council have continued their commitment to consult residents on their budget considerations for 2023 onwards, with on-line and in-person events, as well as an outline of key projects delivered and summary of current costs circulated to all residents in the recent Sandown Guide publication.

Town Mayor, Cllr Paddy Lightfoot, said, 'We value the comments and contributions made by Sandown residents helping set priorities going forward, as well as engaging on how our limited resources are spent, and we also work on partnership projects to support the economic regeneration of the town, as well as the Bay'.

Key projects delivered in the last 12 months include the Lifeguard Station built as a base for Blue Flag Beach Safety Service, new equipment in Steven Jenkins Playground, new decorative lighting and hanging baskets across the town, and the start of the Eastern Gardens Toilet re-provision.

Deputy Mayor, Cllr Alex Lightfoot, added, 'We recognise the ongoing pressures on residents' finances, and want to maintain and improve the services we are responsible for, as well as champion the voice of the community – which is why we have taken forward the High Street Task Force initiative, using this approach to pull together a co-ordinated response, in partnership with other agencies, to the significant challenges facing the Town'.

In addition to the on-line survey available on the Town Council's website, there have been drop-in sessions at the Town Library and a public drop-in session at the Broadway Centre.

Paddy concluded, 'I'm really grateful to fellow Town Councillors for their help planning and delivering this programme of public engagement, and to all residents that have contributed to the discussion on how we prioritise the spending and use of our limited resources: we are committed to sharing the results at our November meeting, with responses helping shape our Budget in 2023 and beyond'.

Town Toilets Transformed

Sandown's latest toilet re-provision project, at Eastern Gardens, has started with the removal of the railings and preparation work for the siting of the new toilet block, including accessible toilet and showers.

Sandown Deputy Town Mayor, Alex Lightfoot, said, 'Following extensive public consultation, and securing planning and consents from the local authority, the contractors are on site with the work likely to be completed well before Christmas'.



Picture - Cllr Lightfoot with members of Sandown Green Town Volunteers



Eastern Gardens re-provision, follows that of St John's, with both coin and card operated, with full accessibility and baby-changing facilities, and is covid-safe.

Cllr Lightfoot added, 'We are grateful for Green Town Volunteers for their help relocating the plants, and we hope to use the planters in a new project in 2023, once this major project has been completed and opened to the public'.

The project costs in excess of £200,000, and councillors are in the process of consulting on the 2023/24 Budget, including the possible re-provision of a further public convenience in the town.

Cllr Lightfoot concluded, 'This initiative sits alongside the provision of the beach safety service, installation of buoys in the bay, blue flag accreditation, as well as the other projects taken forward following our yearly consultation with residents'.

Richard Priest (Clerk)

Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council

Chillerton and Gatcombe are looking to have a warm space for residents this winter.

This is on the initiative of St Olave's Church, and using the premises of the Chillerton and Gatcombe Community Association.

The idea is to use The Gallybagger Inn during the day for residents who want somewhere warm and comfortable to go to. Well done to both organisations.

The Parish Council used the proceeds from its win in the Best Kept Village competition to throw a party with champagne and nibbles for all residents. An excellent time was had by all.

We continue to look for the opportunity to put our views to the consultation on speed restrictions on the Island. This review has taken a long time and a lot of necessary changes are becoming more and more urgent.

At our October meeting Chillerton & Gatcombe enthusiastically adopted the Civility & Respect Pledge.

Cllr Nigel Phillips (Chair)



Gurnard Parish Council

Report by Cllr Penny Acton



Gurnard has kept up the environmental focus this month: a demonstration on the beach against 'poo pollution' was supported by parish councillors who took the opportunity to consult on the Welcome Back Fund seafront benches. The Beach Safety Working Party is making progress and we hope we may be able to start water quality testing with the long term aim of building a strong data set for the main swimming area. A letter was sent to Bob Seely asking him to support the Climate and Ecology Bill.

On the last Saturday of half term a well-attended litter pick tidied up the village. I'm sure Plaza Ices' sponsorship (vouchers were given out to all attending 'wombles') had absolutely nothing to do with the great turnout of 40 people! Most were already out wombling before we thought to take the photo. Some TLC for the Community Orchard has been agreed and the Island group, Green Gym, is booked to help our wonderful Gurnard in Bloom volunteer with tackling some self-seeded and invasive Bay, Ash and Holm Oak trees in the planting along Worsley Road. We hope to increase volunteer participation generally in the village in future and this month has certainly shown people are willing to get involved.



Those who are worried about the rising cost of living and keeping homes warm have not been forgotten and we are in the process of compiling a list of 'warm spaces' which can be accessed in the village. This ranges from the Cyber Café to Circle Dancing, Friendship Afternoon tea with chair yoga to Circle Dancing with The Elephant Club. Some of the events we are listing require a small charge but all provide opportunities to meet new friends, support and a hot drink with something to eat.

Shalfleet Parish Council



Shalfleet Parish Council

Bouldnor Field - Councillors have agreed to purchase a new recycled seat. The goal posts have again been moved and nets taken off. If misused/vandalised again, the Parish Council would consider removing them. The Queen's

Canopy plaque has been installed. A number of trees forming the Queen's Canopy have failed. The Parish Council have agreed to replace these trees with a hardier species.

Defibrillator - Councillors have agreed to purchase a defibrillator for Wellow. The location is still to be finalised. The Parish Council have agreed to pay for some defibrillator training for residents.

New Inn, Shalfleet - The Community Asset nomination form for the New Inn has been completed.

Community Led Housing - Further progress was made regarding a possible site for housing. Quotes are being collected to obtain a survey of the prospective site. A grant-funding application has been successful.

Parish Council Lone Workers Policy was reviewed by the Councillors, and agreed it needed no alterations.

Substantial financial contributions have been made toward the Pavillion for Shalfleet CE Primary School and a new path for Wellow Literary Institute.

Amy Parkinson (Deputy Clerk)



Newchurch Parish Council

Report by Cllr Rosey Messing



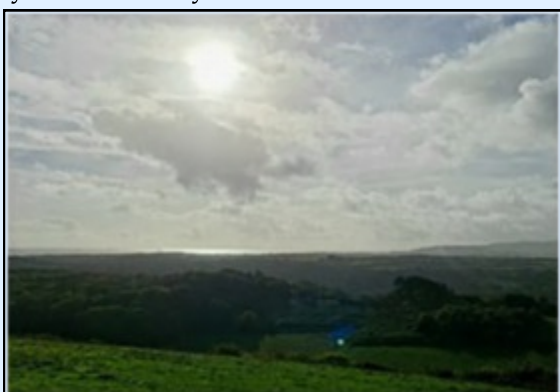
Current activities

At Newchurch PC, we've been exploring ways to improve communications and connectivity across our seven hamlets. We're about to publish Newchurch Network, a new parish directory, on our website, with a supply of paper copies in strategic places, also advertised on our six Parish noticeboards. To fund this, we've invited local businesses to advertise their services in the directory for a small donation. We're also looking into producing Newchurch Noticeboard - online and in paper form - a one-off to start with to gauge interest.

Beating the Bounds



On Saturday 22nd October, a party of parishioners Beat the Parish Bounds. It was a lovely day, apart from one short shower. As well as enjoying a walk in our beautiful Parish - fantastic views, hills, rivers, woodlands, fields - it was a great opportunity to chat - and make new friends. We started at Langbridge, headed up to Mersley Down and along to Brading Down, then down to Alverstone where we stopped for lunch in the Old School Hall. That part of the boundary was the hilly bit!



From Alverstone, we headed down the east side of the boundary, by Sandown Airport, and along Scotchells Brook and Ninham Withybeds - down through America Wood to Apse Manor. To avoid wearing waders and sporting machetes, and wading in deep mud, our route took us as near to the true boundary as could be safely walked.

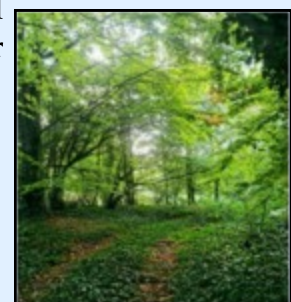


The boundary to the south of the Parish runs along the A3020, between Upper Hyde and Whiteley Bank, but there is no safe path there, so we headed west from Apse Manor, across the fields to Bobberstone, then on to Bathingbourne and up the west boundary, again having to avoid waterways - and fields of maize and brambles! From there, the homeward stretch took us to the Yar River Trail, and back to Langbridge.

Thanks

We are most grateful to Colin and Jenny Boswell for allowing access to their land to avoid the busy Downs Road, and to Alverstone Old School Hall for providing shelter from the rain and a comfort break. Also, thanks to Darrel Clarke at Rights of Way, and to Island Roads, for getting a long and very overgrown verge cut for us. And, a very special thanks to Jill Green, the Ramblers' Newchurch Footpath lady for all her help and support, and to Linda Maclennan for the super photos.

We hope to Beat the Newchurch Parish Bounds again next June. Watch this space!



Other News...

Isle of Wight Council

Funding available to provide activities

Grants of up to £3,000 are now available to help organisations deliver initiatives that support families, children and young people living on the Isle of Wight.



The Early Help Community Capacity Building Grant is available to local groups, clubs and enterprises through the Isle of Wight Council's Supporting Families Programme.

The funding is intended to help providers organise activities, clubs or groups for families, parents/carers and/or young people up to the age of 19 (up to 25 with specified additional needs).

Grants could be used to set up and run schemes such as parental, baby or toddler groups, teenage groups, family-based groups, mental health and welcoming sessions/hubs, peer support groups, outreach support and community-led groups and activities.

The grant application opens from Monday 31st October and organisations are encouraged to apply by 28th November 2022.

In our latest round of Early Help Community Capacity Building grant, we were able to award funding for a further 13 new provisions on the Island. These additional provisions are providing targeted support for families most affected by the Covid pandemic who were not accessing community resources. These new grants will help provide free and subsidised groups to support families in the challenging times of this current economic crisis and promote emotional reliance, positive mental health and well-being. Effective early help plays a key role in ensuring positive outcomes for local children and families especially those in deprived or disadvantaged areas.

Teresa Brimble-Brennan - Supporting Families Project Officer

Isle of Wight Council have put together web pages to support Islanders with the cost-of-living crisis.

We know that many people who have never needed support before will need it this winter. Not all support is means tested; support is available that everyone can access.

We will be updating our web pages as more info becomes available.

Please contact digitalcontent@iow.gov.uk if you would like to tell us about a scheme we can include on the web pages.

Abi Fox (COVID-19 comms lead)

Isle of Wight Food Waste and Food Poverty Conference

The aims of the conference are:

- To bring together people who are supporting Islanders who cannot afford healthy food due to reduced income.
- To start conversations about how we can better work together.
- To develop an action plan to bring about change so we can support more people during this crisis. This can include discussion about a central hub that can store, sort and deliver food to other organisations for distribution.
- To start to develop a strategic approach to reduce the impact of food poverty and waste in the future.

Isle of Wight Food Waste and Food Poverty Conference Tickets, Fri 18 Nov 2022 at 09:00 | Eventbrite This is where you will purchase the Free ticket for the Event.

(<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/isle-of-wight-food-waste-and-food-poverty-conference-tickets-430835539697>)

Natalie Thomas

The way the Isle of Wight Council buys goods and services — 'procurement' — has been updated, following Cabinet approval.

Procurement should be an opportunity, not a hurdle according to the authority's new 2022-2025 Procurement Strategy. It highlights how the council will ensure the goods that it buys are as sustainable as possible, while supporting Island businesses and suppliers "wherever and insofar as overriding rules allow".

The strategy aims to do this by:

- making the process of working with the council as simple as possible;
- committing to a review of the council's procurement policy to ensure it maximises the benefit to Island-based local partners and businesses;
- structuring procurements in such a way that ensure they are accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises;
- assessing social value to identify community benefits that can be delivered through the contracts being procured by the council;
- providing a programme of support to suppliers to assist them with reducing their environmental impact.

The strategy sets out the council's procurement vision, aims and objectives over the next three years. It comprises four principal themes — Local Community Wealth Building, Climate and Environment, Commercial Approach and Skills and Capabilities. Each theme will be embedded in the way the council procures goods, services and works contracts to boost economic growth and help communities to recover from the COVID pandemic.

The new strategy also underlines the council's commitment to supporting the UNESCO Isle of Wight Biosphere Reserve and meeting its ambitious carbon neutral targets by:

- ensuring the goods that it buys are as sustainable as possible;
- where relevant, taking social and environmental factors into consideration alongside financial factors in making purchasing decisions.
-

Councillor Jonathan Bacon, Cabinet member for the environment, said: "We are committed to supporting the Island's economy and ensuring local businesses and suppliers have the opportunity to bid for council contracts. Our new procurement strategy aims to do just that while reinforcing our commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency and ensuring our procurement procedures provide high-quality services for residents and best value for money."

The Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership has been given a helping hand thanks to a £42,800 grant from the Isle of Wight Council's connect4communities programme, which previously awarded a £66,000 grant at the start of the pandemic.

This extra funding will allow The Gaslight Café at Sandown railway station to continue to serve free hot meals twice a week and provide a weekly delivery of fresh and non-perishable groceries to vulnerable families in the Bay area. With the cost of living rising and increased energy bills, the funding will ensure the cafe's 'Food on the Move' initiative can continue to run over the winter months.

Community rail manager, Bobby Lock, said: "We are thrilled to receive this additional funding from the council. It means Ali Smith, manager of The Gaslight café, along with her dedicated volunteers, can continue to support vulnerable families with their 'Food on the Move' initiative. This includes now being able to provide free hot meals, two afternoons a week at The Gaslight Café so we can help tackle loneliness and can also continue the delivery of food packages to local families. This support is so important for our vulnerable local families at what is a worrying time for them, as we head into a difficult winter."

Food on the Move was originally set up in March 2020 at the start of the COVID pandemic to deliver hot meals for isolated elderly people and vulnerable families. To date, more than 50,000 hot free meals have been served up and thousands of families have benefited from weekly food deliveries. Ali recently received a special recognition award at the Community Rail Partnership Showcase in Southampton, for going above and beyond with her dedication to tackling social isolation and poverty in the Bay area.

Laura Hales, the council's connect4communities project manager, said: "'Food on the Move' is a well-used and needed service in the local community and it's great to see the additional funding is helping those that need it."

The spring/summer 2022 connect4communities community grants have been allocated to community, charity and voluntary organisations as well as some town, parish and community councils that can support local initiatives tailored to local needs. If you wish to find out the latest information on The Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership and the Gaslight Café, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/bobbyiowCRP>

A new round of grant funding will support community-based schemes and activities that help to promote mental wellbeing and prevent mental ill health on the Island.

On World Mental Health Day, the Isle of Wight Council announced a further £50,000 will be made available through its Mental Wellbeing Small Grants Fund. The fund supports voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to deliver innovative local projects to support mental wellbeing.

It was launched earlier this year by the council's Public Health team, in partnership with Mental Health Champion, Councillor Michael Lilley, and Healthwatch Isle of Wight. Councillor Lilley said: "We are committed to supporting the Island's residents to look after their mental wellbeing. We have already awarded more than £50,000 to community groups on the frontline to support the most vulnerable in our community and will be doing this further in 2022/23. The cost-of-living crisis will be hardest for people who may already be vulnerable or on low incomes. It is more important than ever to look after both our own mental health and wellbeing and those around us, helping people get the right support at the time they need it. There are some fantastic grass-roots projects across the Island providing warm and safe places for those who need to get help, have someone to talk to and find out where they can get more support if they need it. We need to continue support to these projects and make sure our residents can have the future they want."

The fund was developed to make a real difference to people's lives through providing support for mental health and wellbeing in places and ways that Islanders really need them. Seventeen organisations received one-off grants of between £350 and £5,000 including Men Only Isle of Wight, who have established a Ryde hub offering non-judgmental support and a safe place for men in the community, and Sensory Space CIC to provide peer support and a safe space for parents with children with additional needs.

Meanwhile, the council's 'It's OK...' campaign continues to support Island residents by signposting people to local support and guidance. For further information, please visit: <https://www.iwmentalhealth.co.uk/> or <https://www.islefindit.org.uk/> which has lots of useful links to various services that are freely available to everyone.

Road Safety

"Go Wider of the Rider."

That's the message from the Isle of Wight Council which is urging greater consideration among drivers sharing the Island's roads with cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders.

In the past ten years, 103 injury collisions on the Island were the result of motorists passing too close to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Meanwhile, failing to look properly is the most common cause of cyclist/motorcyclist related collisions by a significant margin.

The 'Go Wider of the Rider' campaign was first installed in 2016 with the support of CycleWight to raise the profile of vulnerable road users. Back of bus messaging has been used as part of the campaign to promote the safe overtaking of cycles, motorcycles and horses.

Earlier this year the Highway Code was updated to improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses. Drivers now have more responsibility to watch out for people cycling, walking or riding a horse — while cyclists have more responsibility to be aware of pedestrians.

The new rules mean cars must leave at least 1.5 metres (five feet) room when passing bicycles — and revised guidance also says "it can be safer" for cyclists to ride two abreast, particularly in larger groups or when accompanying children or less experienced riders.

Cyclists are also now instructed to ride in the centre of the lane in slower moving traffic, "on quiet roads or streets, moving over to the left if a faster vehicle comes up behind them, but only if they can do so safely" and "at the approach to junctions or where the road narrows, where it would be unsafe for drivers to overtake them".

Other key amendments include drivers turning into a road being required to give way to pedestrians waiting to cross. They are also now told not to cut across cyclists or horse riders going straight ahead when turning into or out of a junction or changing direction or lane, to avoid "left hook" collisions — and allow cyclists priority at roundabouts.

Another recommendation is for car users to reduce the risk of opening a door into the path of a cyclist by using the hand on the opposite side to the door, as that will often lead to them looking over their shoulder.

Councillor Phil Jordan, Cabinet member for transport and infrastructure, said: "It is important for the safety of Island road users, that due care and attention is heeded, in order to help minimise the potential for road traffic incidents. We urge all motorists to adhere to the Highway Code safe passing distances and thank our safe motorists who respect the space of other road users."

Tim Thorne, from CycleWight, added: "CycleWight are pleased that this campaign has been relaunched. If we are to get more people walking and cycling we do have to give people the confidence that they feel safe."

More information about the changes to the Highway Code that came in in January 2022 is available on the government website. *Lewis Campbell*



Road Safety - Useful links-

Hants Snap - Report an Incident | Hampshire Constabulary links to self-reporting tool for road traffic incidents, known as Operation Snap. Photographic and video evidence can be uploaded too.
(<https://www.hampshire.police.uk/police-forces/hampshire-constabulary/areas/hants-snap/hantsnap/hants-snap---report-an-incident/>)

You can also use the following link to report an incident without footage: A matter involving driving, vehicles or a road traffic incident | Hampshire Constabulary.
(<https://www.hampshire.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/us/a-matter-involving-driving-vehicles-or-a-road-traffic-incident/>)

We also produce digital magazines containing useful information, help and advice for road users. Here are the links to the digital magazines we have available:

- Young Driver's Guide
https://issuu.com/firstcar/docs/young_driver_s_guide_2022_6d0a51fa03cb74
- Parent Guide
https://issuu.com/firstcar/docs/parent_guide_2022_e3b4acd8286053
- RideOn - Motorcyclists
https://issuu.com/firstcar/docs/rideon_2022_3b945c1497d543
- FirstBike - Young / New Motorcyclists
https://issuu.com/firstcar/docs/firstbike_2022_0bac3c9bb7ee04
- DriveOn (Older Drivers)
https://issuu.com/firstcar/docs/driveon_2022_0f1ff241206a46
- Ultimate Guide to Cycling
https://issuu.com/firstcar/docs/ultimate_guide_to_cycling_2022_c3fa881e7ea07b

A new outreach service funded by the Isle of Wight Council will offer specialist help and support to those who are sleeping rough or without a settled home.

Launching on 4 November, the weekly drop-in at The Salvation Army Hall, in Pyle Street, Newport, enables people in housing crisis to speak face-to-face to those who can help. This will include specialist homelessness services such as the Salvation Army and the council's Housing Options Team and Inclusion Navigators, who work with people who are rough sleeping or at risk at being homeless. The sessions will provide a safe space in a warm and welcoming environment each Friday, between 10am and 2pm, for people to talk about the issues they are facing and seek guidance and further support if required. This includes those who are:

- sleeping rough;
- temporarily staying at someone's house (sofa surfing);
- in emergency accommodation;
- without a settled home.

Rachel Lee, service manager, Salvation Army IOW homelessness services, said: "Sleeping rough is a very harsh way of life; it is difficult, lonely and isolating — and very hard to get out of. Staff from the Island's specialist homelessness and housing advice services will be on hand each week to help people with basic housing and welfare enquiries."

The weekly drop-in can support with a variety of issues, including:

- support to identify suitable housing options;
- applying for welfare benefits and grants;
- getting services from specialist agencies, such as health and wellbeing;
- support to access debt and money advice;
- connecting with social, religious and cultural opportunities;
- support in managing mental health issues, or alcohol and drug issues;
- getting into work, training or education.

For more information, please visit: www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Homeless-Section/Concerned-about-someone-who-is-sleeping-rough/

FREE flexible courses for adult learners

Adults looking to improve their numeracy skills are set to benefit from new courses to be offered by the Isle of Wight Council from the end of the month. Multiply will offer people aged 19-plus who do not already have a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in maths, and need to improve their numeracy, free flexible courses that fit around their lives. Local employers are also being invited to work with the council, and their partnership with the Isle of Wight College, to design and deliver bespoke numeracy programmes for their workforce — at no cost to them. Led by the council's Adult Community Learning Service, the programme is being funded by a £666,000 grant from the Department for Education.

Welcoming the news, Robert Brindley, the council's adult community learning manager, said: "The additional government funding means we can provide a greater level of free numeracy support to our Island community. "It allows us to offer a person-centred approach, with courses being delivered flexibly around people's needs, whether that's at their place of work, in the evening, online, within the local community or offering more intensive and personalised support. There will be courses for beginners to more advanced courses such as functional skills qualifications. You will be able to learn at a pace that suits you. Our maths tutors will deliver workshops and support individuals in various towns across the Island."

The innovative programme will support those needing to take the first steps towards gaining a maths qualification as well as help people use maths to manage their household budgets. It will work with employers to cover specific maths skills required in the workplace and will also provide courses for parents wanting to improve their maths skills in order to help their children.

Councillor Debbie Andre, Cabinet member for Education and Lifelong Skills, said: "This is an excellent free opportunity for both individuals and Island employers who want to support their workforce to gain valuable math skills. Good numeracy skills may unlock job opportunities and lead to higher wages or prepare you for further study. They also help in everyday life, such as helping children with homework and budgeting money. I would therefore encourage any businesses or residents to take up this free offer."

For more information on Multiply, including how to book, please visit the council's adult community learning webpage: www.iow.gov.uk/Multiply

Employers interested in getting involved in the programme should contact Rob Brindley at (01983) 817280 or email multiply@iow.gov.uk

Rob Brindley

Scams to share with you this week –

- Be aware that fake parcel texts from various delivery companies are doing the rounds again. The scammers will be taking advantage of the fact that we are starting to think about Christmas and will be ordering more online. The text tells you to click on a link to pay a £1.45 shipping fee and then asks for your bank details – This is a SCAM Do not click on the link.
- We are receiving reports that residents are being contacted by companies who allegedly offer medical health buttons and services, this could be confused with legitimate companies such as Wightcare and lead to the resident agreeing to something that they neither want nor need and losing large sums of money. If you are contacted by one of these companies do not engage with them, speak to a family member, friend or you can seek advice from an appropriate IWASP partner
- More reports of scam calls coming from 01983 numbers. We are more likely to trust these numbers as we believe them to be local but if you don't recognise the number calling you let it go to answerphone. These particular calls related to money being taken from your bank account.
- Lots of reports of texts and Whatsapp messages that start "Hi Mum/Dad I've lost/broken my phone so I'm on a temporary number, they will then go on to ask for help paying a bill as they cant access their online banking – this is a SCAM – ring your child on their usual number and they and their phone will be fine.

Any scam texts can be forwarded to 7726 where they will be used as intelligence.

If you do give your bank details to somebody and then worry that this might not have been the right thing to do contact your bank immediately and they will be able to advise you.

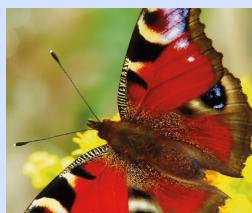
Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)



Resilience *at the Heart* of Isle of Wight Communities

The Community Resilience Team has been successful in gaining a further 4 years of funding from The National Lottery, to continue their work across Isle of Wight communities.

'Resilience at the Heart of the Community' is committed to continue efforts to recover from the covid crisis, generating a sense of hope, possibility and self-empowerment in our communities, helping them to thrive, not just survive. We want to continue our work in harnessing the determination, imagination and enterprise of Islanders to open new ways for local people to take positive action with others, share ideas, and build opportunities to develop skills and offer useful, stimulating and healthy experiences in the places where they live and work.



A key feature of our new project will be working alongside the cultural strategy, the UNESCO Biosphere designation and promotion of healthy and positive lifestyles. The new project will use these as hooks to stimulate participation and positive outcomes with communities on the Isle of Wight.

We will continue to champion community and voluntary activity at a local level and as a way of building skills, confidence and networks, for individuals, organisations and communities across the Island.

The UNESCO Biosphere designation celebrates the unique environment and ecosystems of the Isle of Wight and has 3 core purposes:

- To protect and enhance biological and cultural diversity.
- To use these special qualities of place to build better lives for the people who live there.
- To share information and opportunity to participate in the Biosphere project.

Over the proposed 4 year duration the project will deliver the following outcomes:

- Support geographically focused work across the Island to build community capacity and infrastructure to help residents, community groups and Town and Parish Councils achieve their aspirations for their local area.
- Support the delivery of Island wide aspirations around the environment, culture and health by generating engagement and participation of local groups in activities and projects which help deliver these outcomes.
- Strengthened individual skills, knowledge and confidence to support community capacity and resilience at the local (Parish/village) level.
- Strengthened organisational community capacity, strategic planning and partnership working at the local (Parish/Village) level.

The Community Resilience Team will continue to be that consistent resource that works alongside communities to deliver on their plans and ambitions for the future.

News from ARC Consulting

Become a Seagrass Spotter and help Global Conservation and the Island's Biosphere!

Project Seagrass is an international charity working to protect and restore one of the most important coastal habitats on earth, the seagrass meadows that comprise a quarter of a million square kilometres of marine habitat in over 130 countries. But despite the scale of their distribution, seagrass ecosystems are under increasing threat of damage and destruction as a consequence of coastal development, marine pollution and industrial fishing. In the UK we have lost over 90% of our seagrass meadows in the last century, and this decline continues.



The project has teamed up with WWF (the Worldwide Fund for Nature) to form Seagrass Ocean Rescue with a significant focus on The Solent, one of the best remaining locations for seagrass in the country, especially the Island's north coast. Here there are important opportunities to test new ideas for the propagation and spread of the seagrass species *Zostera marina* and to disseminate these techniques to conservation projects around the world, helped by the Island's status as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

Project Seagrass has worked hard to make connections with local stakeholders and volunteers, including collecting seagrass seeds and surveying new sites. One way that everyone can participate is via the special app that's been created to build up a better understanding of seagrass distribution, with the help of Cardiff and Swansea Universities. You can download the app for free and access through the website <https://seagrassspotter.org/> where you will learn how it works and how to take part. Seagrass Spotter participation will expand the number of people studying seagrass from a handful of scientists to hundreds and potentially thousands of 'citizen scientists', everyone from anglers and SCUBA divers to dogwalkers and families on holiday at the beach!

It would be of great help to the project, and to the understanding of seagrass ecology around the Isle of Wight, if parish councils were to try out the app themselves and pass on to anyone in their networks who might be interested.

Project Seagrass will also be running more advanced 'Seagrass Watch' training sessions and a symposium in early 2023 as well as active volunteer days next Spring. Please do contact Claire Hector at Arc if you would like any further information, Claire@arc-consulting.co.uk

The Isle of Wight Biosphere Website – Can you help?

The Isle of Wight AONB team is in the process of creating a new website for the UNESCO Biosphere with the help of Sandown-based organization, The Common Space. The website sets out the geography of the 900km² Biosphere Reserve as comprising three components: the Solent Shores, the Atlantic Coast, and the 33 Parishes. The parish network covers every part of the Island's land surface and so is an ideal way to collate and describe features of natural and heritage interest, creating a new and different way to promote the Island's 'hidden treasures'.

Do you have suggestions from your parish that you would like to send in? The project team is looking for places that are safely accessible (or at least visible) from public rights of way or other public realm, and which capture something of the identity or distinctiveness of your area. This might be special views, historic remains, habitats and wildlife, buildings and architecture, place names and curiosities, stories and legends. Contributions can be any size, from scratched icons on a church wall to entire vistas! Please send your suggestions, with location details and photographs if you have them, to ian@arc-consulting.co.uk. Thank you for your help.

Ian Boyd

News from Aspire Ryde

We have taken delivery of our new Mobile Hub for Living Well and Early Help service and will soon be out and about in communities providing support around the Eating, Heating and Meeting agenda.

We would be very happy to hear from Town, Parish & Community Councils if there are specific geographical areas they'd like us to support, particularly where there may be a large elderly and potentially isolated population.

Trevor Nicholas



Items MOST NEEDED

November

- SPONGE PUDDINGS
- LONG LIFE FRUIT JUICE
- SQUASH
- CUSTARD
- POT NOODLES
- BREAKFAST BARS
- LAUNDRY DETERGENT
- SHAVING GEL
- MEN'S DEODORANT

Thank you

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

Thank you

Report from MP Bob Seely

Health

Some good news on the health front.

First, the Government has confirmed they will build a new, £10 million Community Diagnostic Centre on the Island. The diagnostic centre will allow Islanders easier access to diagnostic tests. I will work with others to ensure the centre is built as quickly as possible.

Second, work starts soon on improvements to St Mary's Hospital. This is the culmination of three years' work by the Trust and myself and I am delighted we are now seeing the project through to its culmination.

Third, I've discussed the Island's vaccine rollout with the Integrated Care Board (ICB). There were minor delays in the first two weeks of this year's rollout. However, we have caught up and now are making good progress. There are approximately 750-vaccines administered to Islanders per-day. As of last week, nearly 50-percent of Islanders considered 'vulnerable' have been vaccinated; all over-60s & anyone with underlying health issues should be vaccinated by mid-December.

Fourth, I have twice written to Health ministers to ensure the Island receives its share of the £500m Adult Social Care Discharge, which will help get medically fit folk out of hospital, back home and into care.

I've also written to the new Health Secretary, Steve Barclay MP, regarding three issues: the critical incidents at St Mary's, unavoidably small hospital funding and dentistry.

Transport

I've discussed Minimum Service Levels with Transport Minister Kevin Foster MP. I will submit amendments to the Transport Bill to ensure Island ferries are required to run minimum service levels during strikes. This will protect essential transport services from disruption.

Education

I have written to education ministers to support the Isle of Wight Council's bid for a new, Island-based Special Educational Needs school. I am delighted the Council has applied for this project; having talked with many Island parents, we clearly need more specialist school places.

Environment

I am awaiting news from ministers regarding changes to 'burial at sea' law. This will help Police identify body parts when they (very rarely) wash up on our beaches after storms. This is important, especially for families who have disappeared relatives.

I also met with the Wildheart Trust to discuss their campaign to ban breeding between exotic felids and domestic cats. This practice is dangerous, and the Savannah hybrids risk being illegally trafficked. We have a strategy to amend the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. I am working with other members of Parliament to achieve this.

Bob Seely MP



Message from Donna Jones - Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight



I've launched a survey to gather your views on whether I should increase the level of council tax which you pay in support of policing, to ensure continued investment in Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary.

I know this is a very difficult time financially for the country, and potentially for you as an individual, and I am conscious that any rise in your council tax to support policing will come at the same time as other costs are also increasing.

However, it is also a difficult time for funding your police force; police are not immune to the cost of living crisis and therefore the 2023/24 budget is being set against the backdrop of a challenging economic environment with general inflation, pay costs, utilities and fuel costs all rising.

For example, the cost increase for police officer pay is over 5%, and general inflation is running at 10%; our forecast increase in government grant is only 1.1%, so this creates a funding shortfall for next year.

One option available to me to reduce the funding shortfall is to increase the police council tax.

The maximum I am allowed to increase the council tax by on a Band D property for 2023/24 is £10 per annum (a 4.2% increase, significantly below inflation), which is an increase of 83p per month. If I increase by the maximum, for residents in property Bands A-C the increase would equate to **less than 83p a month**, and for properties in Bands E-H it would be more than 83p per month.

The survey proposes a range of options up to **the £10 maximum per year** which is **83p per month**.

If you are not sure which council tax band your property is in, you can check at www.gov.uk/council-tax-bands. If I don't increase the council tax for 2023/24, I will need to work with the Constabulary to implement savings, with an inevitable impact on the overall service level which can be provided. I see first-hand day in day out the vital work which the Constabulary undertakes to keep the residents of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safe, and I would not wish to see this compromised.

However, I know that any increase in the amount you pay must be considered carefully. I also hear very loudly that you want to see more officers in your communities. That's why it's so important that you complete this short survey and have your say on continued investment.

With yours and the government's support, I am on track to have recruited 600 more police officers in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight by March 2023, hitting a 25% increase in police officers responding to emergencies and patrolling the beat.

Through this, I am making your police force even more local, visible and accessible. More police means more deployments, more crimes solved, and safer streets.

By completing this survey, you will really help us set the budget and the council tax precepts for policing for the next financial year. I want to hear your feedback so I can represent your views on where you want your money to go.

I have opened this survey for five weeks to hear from as many people as possible.

The survey will close at 11.59pm on Sunday 4 December 2022.

Thank you for your ongoing support and feedback.

[Click this link to take the survey.](#)

Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones

Southern Vectis

Our winter timetable is now in place and will run through until next May.

We reluctantly had to increase our fares last week due to the rising costs of operating our buses; our best value fares can now be found on our mobile app, which as well as tickets, offers real-time bus locations, service updates, and journey planning.

The £2 single fare cap announced by Government some time back has yet to be agreed, but the bus industry continue to discuss how it will work with Government, including how we will be reimbursed.

Our overall passengers' numbers are around 85% of pre-COVID, and the missing 15% is largely a result of increased working-from-home and less commuting, and concessionary (elderly and disabled) travelling less or not having taken up their free bus pass from the Council.

Whilst we have received support from Government and the local authority to maintain services at pre-COVID levels until April 2023, if demand remains reduced when this ends, we may need to reduce services so that supply meets demand. The routes most heavily at risk, are those that are heavily reliant on concessionary travel, as they have by far the worse passenger recovery rates.

Richard Tyldsley (General Manager)



Hovertravel

Hovertravel has announced that following a successful trial of 07:45 departures from Ryde on Saturdays since September, this earlier flight has been added permanently to its timetable.

Loretta Lale, head of commercial at Hovertravel, adds: "Having reviewed the demand for this flight, we are delighted to announce that this departure is now part of our normal timetable. As well as customers from the groups we expected such as weekend commuters and school children with Saturday activities, we have also seen customers looking to start their day trip on either side of the Solent earlier.

Hovertravel continues to investigate opportunities to enhance its service, including trialling additional flights outside the current timetable. When the demand is proven, such has been with our popular Portsmouth Football Club late night flights and these early Saturday mornings, we will not hesitate to provide the additional flights."

All our flights can be viewed on our interactive timetable and booked online at www.hovertravel.co.uk

Stephen Forster (Creative Director)



Wightlink



Wightlink notches up ten years supporting the Isle of Wight's most talented athletes

Wightlink is once again throwing its support behind the Isle of Wight Council's Talented Athlete scheme which provides practical help to the Island's most gifted sportsmen and women. The cross-Solent ferry operator has sponsored the scheme since it was established in 2013, providing athletes with discounted ferry travel to help them attend mainland training and events. Applications are being welcomed by the council from young people and adults who live on the Isle of Wight and compete at a regional or national level in their sport.

Full details of the scheme and how to apply can be found at www.iow.gov.uk/sportsunit or by emailing talented.athlete@iow.gov.uk.

Twelve-year-old cyclist Harrison Hendy is part of the 2022 scheme: "I feel very proud to be part of the Talented Athlete scheme which has really helped me to progress in cycling. The discounted ferry travel I receive through the scheme makes such a difference as I need to travel off the Island most weekends and sometimes mid-week to compete in races and events around the country. The physio support from top local companies is also helping me to stay strong and healthy as I compete at a higher level."

The Isle of Wight Talented Athlete Scheme is sponsored by 1Leisure, Wightlink, Love Running, Cowes Chiropractic Clinic, RMA Sports Injury Clinic, Physio Care (Isle of Wight) and Amanda Buggy Soft Tissue Therapy and Nutrition. Applications are being accepted by the council until Sunday 4 December, with successful applicants receiving support from Thursday 1 January 2023.

Wightlink launches eco-grant scheme for secondary schools

Isle of Wight secondary schools and colleges are invited to apply for a share of £10,000 from Wightlink's second Green Fund for Schools initiative to support environmental projects on the Island. The first scheme, launched earlier in 2022, supported 15 primary schools with cash grants for a host of projects ranging from energy efficiency and recycling schemes to the creation of wildflower meadows and reinvigorating school ponds.

Wightlink is now encouraging secondary schools and colleges to apply for funding for projects to be delivered next year. This time the emphasis will be on sustainable living and decarbonisation. Wightlink is committed to running a sustainable business, with 99 per cent of its waste recycled or used to produce electricity. Its hybrid energy ferry Victoria of Wight and other environmental measures have contributed to its carbon footprint reducing by 33 per cent since 2007. Most of the refreshments sold onboard and at its terminals are sourced locally with food miles from Island suppliers averaging just six.

The company also supports several biodiversity projects, partnering with wildlife charities and university researchers to preserve and improve habitats in the Solent.

Maggie Sanderson, Headteacher at St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School in Carisbrooke explains how the school used its Wightlink grant to create a wildlife pond within the school grounds.

"We purchased native plants to inject life into what was previously a puddle of water in a barren field. The pond now hums with dragonflies and other insect life such as water boatmen and pond skaters can be clearly seen. We are hopeful that the pond will be home to tadpoles in the spring as the new foliage encourages more wildlife into the area. The grant has not only enabled us to improve biodiversity at the pond, it has also created an additional learning resource for our children which provides study opportunities year round."

Applications should be made via Wightlink's website by Friday 2 December 2022 – full details can be found at www.wightlink.co.uk/community/fund

Karen Woods (Duty Media Officer)

News from Red Funnel

Red Funnel Proud to Support

Red Funnel has launched a new travel sponsorship programme for 2023 to support the talents of Isle of Wight residents.



Offering sponsored travel as part of the Island Ambassador programme, Red Funnel is looking to celebrate and enhance the many great achievements of the Isle of Wight community. Twelve Red Funnel Island Ambassadors will be selected for travel sponsorship over 12 months, aiding training, competition, performance, and events off-Island.

Fran Collins, CEO of Red Funnel, said: "We're dedicated to supporting the Isle of Wight community, recognising great talent demonstrated by Island residents across a wide range of sectors. Whether a musician, gymnast, photographer, performer, dancer, surfer, biker, show jumper, comedian or other, we want to encourage people's passions and support them as they move forward."

Applications for the programme is open to all ages and talents from Monday 10th October and closing on Friday 11th November 2022 at midnight. To apply, visit Proud to Support on the Red Funnel website where you will find all T&Cs and application for becoming an Island Ambassador, as well as future application for teams.

Nell Clare, Red Funnel Customer Services Assistant wins 'Employee of the Year'

Nell Clare, customer services assistant at Red Funnel was named 'Employee of the Year' in At the Maritime UK Solent Awards. Nell was recognised at the inaugural awards ceremony due to her outstanding and compassionate work in supporting medically vulnerable passengers with their ferry travel to and from the Isle of Wight.

The pandemic saw it necessary for Red Funnel to find a way to support vulnerable passengers and those with extenuating circumstances to remain in their vehicles during the crossing. Working with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Red Funnel agreed a special set of exemptions. Nell was, and continues to be, fundamental in supporting customers and facilitating this process which requires special attention.

Red Funnel Senior Leaders Connect with Island Residents

Red Funnel hosted a group of Island residents this month as part of it's newly improved Customer Forum. The Forum provided the opportunity for local customers to connect directly with Red Funnel's senior leaders including CEO Fran Collins and CFO Graham Barnetson.

Customers were able to raise questions and share feedback directly with Fran and Graham on a variety of topics including ferry service reliability, labour challenges, pricing, support for customers travelling for medical reasons, through to general customer service feedback, the Signature Lounge, the company's food and beverage offerings, support for disabled passengers and the Red Jet timetable.

Josey Page (Account Executive)