



The IWALC Bulletin

April 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 April issue of the IWALC Bulletin! And welcome also to our two new members: Bembridge Parish Council and Ventnor Town Council! I am delighted that they have decided to re-join IWALC. Twenty-eight of the Island's 33 parish, town and community councils are now members of IWALC.

The war in Ukraine continues to be the main international news item this month. However, closer to home, a major concern is the sharp rise in the cost of living, with increases in energy costs, council taxes and national insurance contributions all taking effect this month. It is therefore appropriate that this issue of the Bulletin includes a brief report on changes in our local council 'precepts' - that is, the proportion of council tax levied by local councils. The report shows that the increases vary greatly, but that the majority of councils are either not increasing it at all or increasing it by less than the current rate of inflation.

The draft Island Planning Strategy is back in the news this month. The draft has been revised to take account of the many responses received to last year's consultation and on 25 March councillors were briefed on the main changes. IWALC would like to thank the Isle of Wight Council for keeping us informed of the latest developments regarding this important document. Many of the changes are designed to facilitate the Council's objective of providing more homes for Islanders. They include the redefinition of 'affordable housing' to reflect what is affordable to Islanders, encouragement and guidance for local councils to undertake local housing needs surveys, and measures to make it more difficult to convert properties from residential to short-term holiday lets. For further details, see the report under IWALC News.

The problem of holiday homes and short-term holiday lets was the subject of discussion at a recent meeting of NALC's Coastal Communities Group, which I attended - see NALC News for a report on the meeting. As participants emphasised, it is not simply a planning issue. For example, there is also a need for changes in council tax legislation. Local authorities in Wales are allowed to charge higher rates of council tax for second homes but those in England are not. Maybe this is something that the Isle of Wight Council could raise through the Local Government Association's Coastal Communities Special Interest Group?

Diana Conyers



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 May issue is April 30th - thank you!

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...

Precept Increases

The table below shows the percentage increase in the precepts levied this financial year (2022/23) by IWALC member councils.

Council	% incr.	Council	% incr.
Arreton	0	Newport and Carisbrooke	2.5
Bembridge	2.8	Nettlestone and Seaview	0
Brading	0	Niton and Whitwell	5.0
Brighstone	-2.3	Northwood	48.0
Chillerton and Gatcombe	14.3	Rookley	0
Cowes	1.75	Ryde	2.5
East Cowes	0	St Helens	n.d.
Fishbourne	0	Sandown	5.0
Freshwater	5.0	Shalfleet	0
Godshill	4.9	Shorwell	50.0
Gurnard	1.0	Ventnor	6.3
Havenstreet and Ashe	0	Wootton Bridge	4.1
Lake	0	Wroxall	5.0
Newchurch	0	Yarmouth	0

The average increase is 5.7%, which is somewhat higher than the national average of 4.3%. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution. It is, in particular, important to note that:

- The largest increases are in smaller councils, where a relatively small increase in numerical terms can mean a large increase in percentage terms.
- In the two largest councils, Newport and Ryde, which together account for over a third of the Island's population, the increases are relatively small.
- Consequently, the average increase per resident is much less than the average per council.
- Some councils have had relatively low precepts until now; e.g. Northwood was much lower than those of the neighbouring parishes.
- Increases are usually to fund new projects or new or increased levels of service provision; e.g. Ventnor will be expanding its wellbeing café and beach safety service, Northwood will be funding a community centre, and Godshill the community shop.
- Local councils are having to take over or help to fund more and more services from the Isle of Wight Council.
- Councils are required to consult their residents on their budgets, so major increases are likely to have community support.

It is also important to remember that:

- The local council precept is a relatively small proportion of the total council tax; e.g. in Ryde, which has one of the highest precepts, it is only 7%.
- Most councils are increasing their precepts by less than the anticipated rate of inflation for the financial year, which means that in real terms they are decreasing them.

Note: These figures are based on information provided by clerks and and/or IWALC representatives. In certain circumstances they may be amended by the IWC. Final figures for all councils will be published by the government in due course.

Executive meeting

IWALC's Executive Committee met on 31 March at the Riverside Centre. At the meeting members:

- Welcomed Steve Cooper and Julie Hutchison, Ventnor Town Council's IWALC representative and deputy.
- Agreed to write to the MP Bob Seely, reminding him of the NALC Lobby Day issues raised at the meeting with him on 23 March. The letter has since been sent.
- Agreed to join the Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group (IWBRUG).
- Accepted the resignation of Shirley Smart as IWALC representative on the Isle of Wight Council (IWC)'s Planning Committee and elected Giles Aldred, IWALC's deputy representative for Shorwell Parish Council, to replace her.
- Agreed to write to Mike Bulpitt, Chief Executive of Community Action, asking for advice on how best local councils can support Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. The letter has since been sent.
- Agreed to ask at the next meeting with the IWC's Cabinet how best we can address road safety problems on the Island.

Meetings with Isle of Wight Council

The first meeting between IWALC and the IW Cabinet was held online (via Teams) at 12.30 pm on Thursday 10 March. Four Cabinet members (Clls Ian Stephens, Paul Fuller, Chris Jarman and Jonathan Bacon) and the chair of the Planning Committee (Cllr Michael Lilley) were there. The Leader gave her apologies. There were 10 IWALC participants, including councillors Bob Blezzard (Havenstreet & Ashey and Newchurch), George Cameron (Freshwater), Diana Conyers (Fishbourne), Simon Cooke (Ryde), Kerry Fosberry (Freshwater), John Graney (Brading), Dom Hicklin (Freshwater) and Shirley Smart (Newport & Carisbrooke), and Heather Rowell (County Officer) and Jill Webster (Communications Officer). Questions were asked on the following topics:

- Consultation on the next draft of the Island Planning Strategy (IPS): Cllr Fuller said that the next draft would be published before the end of the month and local councillors will be invited to attend a presentation for IW councillors before it goes to Full Council next month. It will then be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. There will be a further public consultation in May/June, in which comments will be sent directly to the Inspectorate.
- Poor quality of road to Carisbrooke Cemetery: Cllr Jordan said that Island Roads are now only doing routine maintenance; all heavy equipment has been moved off the Island.
- Review of IWC Transparency Code: Cllr Stephens said it was on their agenda but they cannot do everything at once.

There was also discussion about future such meetings, including who should be invited, the best time to have them, the format (face-to-face and/or online) and length. It was agreed that they should be open to all councillors and that other details would be discussed at the March Executive Meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday April 14th from noon until 1pm via TEAMS - the link will be circulated nearer the date.

Open to all Councillors and Staff from Member Councils.

You can send any questions to Jill beforehand (jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com) to ensure that the correct information is to hand - by 5pm on April 11th please.

Topic Meeting

The next Topic meeting will be at 7 pm on *Thursday 28 April* at the Riverside. The subject will be *Community Wellbeing*. The purpose will be to update members on progress made since the Community Resilience Workshop held in September 2021. There will be a number of speakers, including the new Chief Executive of the NHS Trust and representatives from Community Action's Resilience Project and the new Living Well and Early Help Service. Further details will be provided nearer the time.

Training

The next training event will be a *Code of Conduct course on Wednesday 4 May*. It will be designed specifically for local councils and presented by Sue Chilton, Clerk of East Cowes Town Council, who delivered last year's Basic Skills and Chairmanship courses. It will be a face-to-face session, held at the Riverside Centre from 6.30 to 8.00 pm. Bookings should be made through your clerk.

Future courses will include a session on *local plans*, presented by the Isle of Wight Council's Planning Team, and one on *Equality and Diversity*. Further details will be available in due course.

Draft Island Planning Strategy

As already mentioned in the Chair's introductory message, local councillors were invited to join Isle of Wight councillors for an online briefing on the current status of the draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS) on Friday 25 March.

We learned that the draft has been revised to take account of the many comments received. The main changes include:

- Recalculation of the annual housing target, resulting in a small reduction from 486 to 479;
- The redefinition of 'affordable housing' to take account of what is affordable to Islanders;
- Encouragement and guidance for local councils to undertake their own housing needs surveys; and
- Policies to support the Island's designation as a biosphere reserve, increase the pressure on developers to provide related infrastructure, and make it more difficult to convert properties from residential to short-term holiday lets.

The draft will be discussed at the IWC's Full Council meeting on 20 April and, if approved, the IWC will run a 6 week period of public representation (dates to be confirmed), after which the draft IPS, evidence base and any representations received during that 6 week period are then sent to the Planning Inspectorate. Residents who make a representation would also have the opportunity to take part in the public examination run by the Planning Inspectorate that would take place later in 2022 / early 2023.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum

IWALC's Chair, Diana Conyers, was invited to attend a workshop organised by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum in Romsey on 18 March. She was accompanied by Ian Lloyd, the IWC's Strategic Manager for Partnership and Support Services in Adult Social Care, Mike Bulpitt, Chief Executive of Community Action, and Trevor Nicholas, Chief Executive of Aspire. The purpose of the meeting was to look at lessons learned from Covid for future resilience planning. It was an opportunity for the Island to showcase our successful community-based approach and to hear about experiences elsewhere. The workshop was led by Andy Ferrier, Chief Executive of Test Valley Borough Council.

On 31 March, Andy and his team came to the Island to hold a follow-up workshop, designed to explore the relevance of the findings of the Romsey meeting at a local level. Participants included representatives from four local councils (Cowes, Freshwater, Ryde and Sandown), Community Action's Local Resilience Coordinators and IWALC's Chair and County Officer. Andy and his colleagues were able not only to learn more about the Island's approach but also to experience its unseasonal snowfall!

Meeting with Bob Seely MP on 23 March 2022

About 20 representatives of local parish, town and community councils attended the March meeting with the MP, which was as usual held via zoom.

The MP began by reporting that:

- Vestas will be making new, larger wind turbine blades on the island, creating 50 new jobs
- Work on the new Ryde Interchange project will start in April
- A dedicated Roads Policing Unit will be established on the Island
- He is putting pressure on Wightlink to provide later evening crossings.

Cllr Bob Blezzard, IWALC's NALC representative, reminded the MP that this was NALC's Lobby Day. He read out the issues that NALC is raising this year, a copy of which the MP had already received. They are:

- Need for councils to be allowed to hold meetings remotely;
- Need for stronger sanctions about councillors that breach code of conduct rules; and
- Various legislative changes to address climate change.

The MP expressed doubts about the likelihood of the government addressing the first two issues. However, he agreed to take them forward if requested in writing to do so. On climate change, he expressed support in principle but said he didn't know enough about the specific pieces of legislation mentioned to comment. Again he agreed to take it forward if requested in writing.

He then answered questions on four main topics:

- Parliamentary boundary review: He reiterated his support for an east-west split but maintained his view that Ventnor should be part of the western constituency.
- Recent Norris Castle planning application: He said he will remain neutral until he hears English Heritage's views.
- Road safety: He expressed his support for a road safety campaign and agreed to raise this with the Police. He said that the causes of the high accident rate on the Island are not yet clear.
- Ukraine: He appreciated Islanders concern to support Ukrainian refugees but warned that many refugees may prefer to stay in countries nearer their homeland.

See also the MP's own report under Other News



Monthly 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 monthly Heads of Organisations meetings with Bob Seely,

Parliamentary Boundary Review 2023

As part of the second part of the public consultation on the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2023 I attended two of the public hearings in the South-East region. The first was the lead hearing at Crawley when the political parties were each given 30 minutes to outline their counter proposals for the region as a whole. I subsequently attended a hearing at Portsmouth when I know a number of councillors, and other interested parties from the Island, also attended.

What is interesting is that whilst there is strong support for an East-West split a significant number of organisations and councillors had, mostly independently of each other, come to the same conclusion - that the Boundary Commission's proposed split is not a good one - splitting off East Cowes, Whippingham and Fairlee from the rest of the Medina Valley and from the county town. IWALC did, of course, submit a comment objecting to any local council being split between the two constituencies.

What appears to be the favoured split has Wootton, Havenstreet and Ashe, Newchurch, Wroxall and Ventnor all forming the constituency boundary and being in the East Ward, with everything to the West being in the West constituency. This will result in an East constituency with 56,805 electors and a West constituency with 54,911 electors, a difference of just 1,894.

There is also a view that "East Isle of Wight" and "West Isle of Wight" are not the best names for the new constituencies and, whilst this complies with Boundary Commission guidelines for county seats, "Isle of Wight East" and "Isle of Wight West" is considered by some consultees to be better wording.

The secondary consultation period has now concluded and the Commission will reflect on all the representations received. If it is minded to change its proposals it will conduct a four-week written consultation on its revised proposals.

The Commission must then submit its final report and recommendations to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023. If a General Election takes place before then it will be held on the current parliamentary boundaries with the Island continuing to have one MP.

Bob BLEZZARD - April 2022

Would anybody be interested in forming a Women's Group?

NALC has a Women's Group. See this link for details-

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/1796-nalc-chair-hosts-historic-first-meeting-of-women-parish-and-town-councillors%20>

Cllr Julie Hutchison (Ventnor Town Council) is wondering if anyone would like to form a local Women's Group?

Please contact Jill (jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com) if you would be interested.

It was with sadness that we learned of the recent and sudden death of former Clerk, Sue Waters and we are sure you will join with us in sending our sympathy and condolences to Sue's many friends and family.

An Introduction to Cllr Giles Alldred

I became a parish councillor for Shorwell at the last elections, around a year ago, although I have been involved in fighting unsuitable and unsympathetic planning applications for much longer. As a parish councillor, I am really enjoying working for the community and area I grew up in, but I have been surprised by how much time, research and work has been involved. Part of this is down to the increasingly complex world we live in, and also to the greater pressures on limited space and resources we now have. Nowhere is this more true than in planning matters.

In my view, there is nobody better placed to understand the implications of development on a local area, or its community, than town and parish councillors. In a functional system, our views should be central in shaping the outcomes of planning decisions in ways that benefit our communities and protect our landscapes and built-up areas. It seems that we at local, rather than county level, are often left feeling that our views are simply ignored or overridden by the current development control system. When our efforts are matched up against the resources of a large developer who can afford a legion of planning agents and consultants to relentlessly push for approval for damaging projects, the planning process can often seem like a David and Goliath battle. But if there is wide consensus within the local community on an issue, backed up by strong material arguments, the battle is always worth fighting, and one I believe that can be won.

I have put myself forward as your IWALC representative on the IW Council's Planning Committee because I want to fight for planning decisions that respect the views of local people. I will seek outcomes that genuinely and robustly protect our unique environment and landscapes, whilst also ensuring island communities can thrive. I am determined to ensure town and parish councils have a real voice in planning decisions, and I will endeavour to hold the planning system to account whenever it fails to listen and respond to their views. I urge fellow town and parish councillors from across the island to use me as a contact to ensure their voice is heard at planning committee meetings.

The Isle of Wight is a remarkable and special place, and since childhood I have always loved the island and never wanted to leave. I now have two young children of my own and I want their Isle of Wight lives to be as special as mine. The ongoing challenge is to safeguard our island from unsympathetic development, and yet ensure their generation can afford to make a life of their own here, including having the option to rent or buy a genuinely affordable home when they are older.

Cllr Giles Alldred (Shorwell Parish Council)



News from NALC

NALC's Coastal Communities Group

On 21 March I attended an online meeting of NALC's Coastal Communities Group. This is a group of local councils concerned about issues specific to coastal communities.

The meeting began with a presentation by Emily Cunningham on the Local Government Association (LGA)'s Coastal Communities Special Interest Group. It has 57 members, including the Isle of Wight Council. It is currently campaigning on three main issues: coastal communities' need for support under the government's 'levelling up' policy; protection of the oceans; and climate change. NALC is planning to have a representative on this group.

There followed a discussion on priorities for the NALC Coastal Communities Group. It was agreed to focus on three main issues:

- Undertaking a survey of local councils to establish the main concerns of coastal communities;
- Working with the LGA's Special Interest Group in their 'levelling up' campaign;
- Addressing the increasing problem of second homes and its impact on housing for local people.

For more information on the Coastal Communities Group go to:
<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/national-networks#coastal-communities>

Diana Conyers



Annual NALC Lobby Day - 23rd MARCH 2022

This national event took place largely remotely and on the Island it was combined with the regular monthly meeting with Bob Seely MP. The headline issues we asked for Bob's support on are:

Remote meetings for local councils: Legislation is needed to make permanent the right for local councils to hold remote and hybrid meetings. The evidence suggests an increase in attendance by councillors and members of the public at online meetings particularly in remote rural areas. There are benefits to the climate as people do not need to drive to meetings and it is easier for councillors with caring responsibilities to attend.

Civility/standards in public life: NALC continues to ask for greater sanctions for councillors who seriously breach the code of conduct and is disappointed at the Government's recent lack of support.

Climate change: NALC has signed up to the proposition that there is a climate emergency and will therefore as a general principle support moves and policies which help mitigate it, including by making it conditional for energy saving and carbon neutral measures to be included in all relevant planning applications.

Bob advised that he detected no appetite for bringing forward legislation on the issues raised and asked for a letter on the subject in addition to the briefing note he was sent. Our chair Diana has subsequently followed this up by writing to Bob.

Bob BLEZZARD April 2022

Please note letter below from NALC which is for all Councils with an electorate of less than 6,000.



t: 020 7637 1865
e: nalc@nalc.gov.uk

w: www.nalc.gov.uk
a: 109 Great Russell Street,
London WC1B 3LD

11 MARCH 2022

All Smaller Local Councils

Dear chairs and councillors of smaller councils,

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has a committee specifically designated to smaller local (parish and town) councils - these are defined as those councils with an electorate under 6,000. The members who serve on the committee all come from small local councils themselves.

We would like to hear from you on the issues you would like us to address that are specific to small councils and to invite you to tell us what services NALC could consider offering to meet your needs. For instance, are there any specific issues you would like us to feed into NALC's online events, committee meetings or national network sessions which you would find particularly useful and/ or is there a particular issue you think we should be lobbying government about which we aren't currently?

In case you might find it useful, the committee has been considering the following subjects:

- practice regarding planning consultations
- carbon literacy
- identifying future membership needs for advice/guidance and providing feedback/input on NALC services
- practical issues arising from small councils having limited capacity
- sharing good practice, supporting NALC campaigns/big themes and helping develop the evidence base including through surveys
- improving good governance
- increasing take-up of the Local Council Award Scheme and CILCA

We hope you will consider this request as an agenda item at your next local council meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Please reply to policycomms@nalc.gov.uk by 30 April 2022

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Graham Ford
Chair
NALC Smaller Councils Committee



Civility & Respect

IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

The Civility and Respect Project is creating a video to showcase what civility and respect mean in the local (parish and town) council sector.

NALC, One Voice Wales, and the Society of Local Council Clerks want as many people as possible from the sector to participate and submit a video, following the instructions below.

- The video should be no more than 10 seconds long.
- Your email should include your name, position, and organisation (e.g. Cllr Jane Public, chair of Example Parish Council or Joe Public, clerk of Example Parish Council, or Jane Public, volunteer of Example Parish Council).
- Your video should include one sentence on what civility and respect mean to you.
- The video should be filmed in landscape (holding your phone sideways). There is no need to worry about the beginning and end of the video, as it will be edited.

Please send your videos to NALC at michelle.moss@nalc.gov.uk by 1 May 2022.

County Officer's Forum

The County Officer's Forum met last week, ably facilitated by its chair, Danny Moody from the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils, here's a summary:

- The focus of the meeting was on financial and audit matters to provide solid technical guidance and practical information to enable county officers to provide good advice to member local councils.
- Briefings were provided by the Internal Auditors' Forum, which now has 60 members, Mark Davies from NALC's partners CCLA and Howard Midworth from Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments who reported that the AGAR forms for the 2021/22 financial year had been distributed by the audit firms for completion by 30 June 2022.
- NALC's national financial advisor, Derek Kemp, also provided an overview of the updated 2022 edition of the Practitioners' Guide.



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.

Training

WHAT?

Code of Conduct

WHEN?

Wednesday May 4th from 6.30pm to 8pm

WHERE?

The Riverside, Newport - in the Little London Room

WHO?

Training is open to all Clerks, Councillors and staff.

HOW?

Please book your place through your Clerk, with Jill

COST?

Free for all Member Council staff and councillors.

£75 per person from non-member councils

BUT!!

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

BOOK BEFORE?

April 27th



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

A very warm welcome back to IWALC for Bembridge Parish Council and Ventnor Town Council - we look forward to working closely with them.

Fishbourne Parish Council

On Saturday 2 April, about 15 councillors and volunteers got together for a Spruce Up Day. We picked up litter throughout the parish and tidied up the beach. After two hours hard work, we met up for refreshments at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.



We were lucky with the weather – it was very cold, but dry and sunny and less windy than the previous two days. And we were pleasantly surprised to find much less litter than on our previous litter pick last September.

Most of the volunteers were from the parish. However, we were delighted to be joined by one from Ryde. She is a keen walker and had seen notices about the event on our parish notice boards and came to help. We would like to thank everyone who took part, including the Yacht Club staff.

Cllr Diana Conyers

Freshwater Parish Council



Freshwater Parish Council welcomed three new Parish Councillors in February-

Councillor Lindsay Becker
Councillor Kerry Fosbury
Councillor Dominic Hicklin

The Parish's project to replace the Gate Lane public toilets with improved facilities for the disabled has been delayed until after the Walk the Wight, which is taking place on 8th May this year. This is a major project for the Parish Council and our Councillors have worked hard to get the project this far. We are working with Stoneham Construction Limited and during the build we are providing portaloos for the public to use.

The Parish is continuing with its plans to develop and build a skate and pump track on the Stroud playing field. This project will replace our current skate park which is outdated and becoming more expensive to maintain. We hope that by updating the park and integrating it within the Stroud it will attract more users, making the Stroud an improved amenity space for the whole community.

We held our annual consultation day on 26th January this year in 2 sessions to allow as many people to attend as possible. The general feeling from our Parishioners was very positive and the sessions were well attended. Feedback was positive for both the Gate Lane toilet project and the skate and pump track project. We are hoping to increase the footfall next year by improving our advertising for the consultation prior to and on the day of the event.

The Parish is planning to update our Neighbourhood Plan and in preparation for this process we are going to be conducting a Housing Needs Survey. We believe that this will strengthen our Neighbourhood Plan by proving our mandate to the County Council when dealing with future planning applications.

The Parish has formed a Strategy group to assist with these matters and is led by Councillor George Cameron. We would be greatly assisted if any other Parish and Town Council who have already completed these processes, or who are also planning to update their Neighbourhood Plans were willing to share information and experiences with us. We would be pleased to receive any copies of templates used by individual Councils. We would also be pleased to receive feedback whether positive or negative in how your plans/assessments have been used in practice. If Councils feel that their plans/assessments are particularly strong in some areas of detail, or where they feel that the Plans have fallen short of what the County Council says is necessary for them to be valid and of real practical use in planning considerations.

Please direct all communications in regard to these matters to George Cameron using his Parish email - George.Cameron@freshwater-parish.org.uk

Ventnor Town Council

Trust The People will be running another free course on how to facilitate Peoples Assemblies, on 9th May.

I did it last year and really enjoyed it. It's all about increasing community involvement and giving people the skills needed to do this confidently.

The link is here <https://www.trustthepeople.earth/>

Clr Julie Hutchison



Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council



Platinum Jubilee Tree Planting for the Queen's Green Canopy

Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council and ER-MC have planted 48 trees for the Queen's Green Canopy.

The 7 standard Field Maple trees, planted next to the existing woodland in Vectis Field off Wellington Rd in Newport, each represent a decade of the Queen's reign in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee.

To help with assisting woodland spread, they have planted 40 additional saplings which are a mix of Field Maple, Willow, Beech, Hornbeam and Rowan to complement the existing trees in the area. They have also sown a wildflower seed mix specifically for woodland edge areas between the existing woodland and recreational area. They hope that their collective efforts will encourage the creation of an ecotone in this area, all of which will help improve biodiversity.

There are future plans to create more accessible routes through the woodland and clearing spaces to allow natural regeneration for a better ecosystem. Additionally, there are plans for an interactive 'brass rubbing' trail. *Lucy Bradley (Deputy Clerk)*

(Photo shows Cllr Joe Lever and Jack from ERMC.)



What's in a name?

I noticed at a recent Island Planning Strategy briefing there was the usual, regular reference to 'town and parish councils'. Of course this covers 32 of the 33 local councils on the Island, but omits ours.

Back in 2008 when our town was first emparished everyone expected the County town of Newport to become a town council, just as Ryde did. That would have given us the option of having a Mayor.

However, it was recognised by everyone on our new council that our parish boundaries spatially covered more greenfield than urban development. That's probably why we get more new housing development than anywhere else. So we decided to remain as a parish council for now.

Until 2019. Having added 'and Carisbrooke' to our name in 2018, in 2019 we then decided we wanted a name that reflected what we were about. We felt that neither parish or town council announced our aspirations. We learnt that we had the option of renaming ourselves as a community council. We all thought that was ideal. So now we are the one community council on the Island. And the inclusive phrase that should be used is 'town, parish and community councils'.

Until, of course, we get city status!

Geoff Brodie (Chair of Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council)

Arreton Parish Council

Arreton Parish Council is relieved that UKOG have decided not to appeal against the IWC Planning Committee's decision to refuse their application for an exploratory oil well in the Parish. At the same time, UKOG have withdrawn their application to the Environment Agency for an environmental permit to explore and appraise hydro-carbon minerals.



We have recently had a push on trying to increase the take-up by residents of our electronic newsletter and information service. The initial round of flyers was over two years ago and a second round has produced a good response. We will now be sending it to about a quarter of our households and we know that it does get passed on, so actual coverage is higher than that.

The cherry trees in St George's Churchyard will be coming to the end of their natural lives in a few years. With this in mind, we have planted three new ones to give them time to grow to a reasonable size by the time they are needed. We have also planted three in Gore Cemetery. It was not intended to be part of the Queen's Green Canopy but the timing is fortuitous.



Other than that, the day-to-day activities of setting a budget, managing a graveyard, contemplating the introduction of beavers to the area, trying to curb Island Roads' over enthusiastic hedge trimming, and keeping the residents happy (as much as possible) takes up our time. *Sheila Caws (Clerk)*

Nettlestone & Seaview Parish Council

Flower Planters In The Parish

The Nettlestone and Seaview Community Partnership have worked hard – in partnership with Care In The Garden - over the last few years to supply and maintain fifteen planters around the Parish. This work has also involved keeping the area around the benches at the bottom of Seaview High Street weeded at regular intervals. At March's meeting, the members resolved to fund this excellent work performed in the Parish by Care In The Garden, in addition to the work they perform on the Puckpool Park flower bed for the Parish Council.



Nettlestone Primary School Defibrillator

The Parish is fortunate enough to benefit from more than half a dozen defibrillators that can be accessed by the public around the clock. One of the most central devices was installed five years ago when the Nettlestone Primary School Community (with financial support of £400 from the Parish Council) raised the funds to position a defibrillator on the front of the school and have been maintaining it ever since.

The school approached the Parish Council for financial assistance with replacing the paediatric pads on the defibrillator and at this month's meeting, the council agreed to grant the funds to replace the pads and they have now been fitted to the defibrillator. *Brian Jennings, (Clerk)*

Gurnard Parish Council

Covid and other commitments decimated the ranks of councillors for the March meeting of GPC - probably much to the relief of some attending since it kept the meeting short!



The destruction of the wooded area on the Esplanade was covered by a report from Cllr Fuller. The SINC designation and WTPO on the site mean that IWC is following up with SGN and we hope something positive may come out of the destruction. In the meantime there is already water run-off occurring so Island Roads need to be aware.

PCSOs Steven Anker and Lisa Paul attended and updated that after two years of Covid enforced inactivity they are now able to restart the PACT meetings (Police and Communities Together) so neighbourhood concerns can again be discussed and appropriate agendas set.

The popular Cyber Café has been restarted at Gurnard Village Hall so more of the social context of the village is reviving. A councillor organised litter pick, sponsored by a village business to encourage participation, means Gurnard is once again very spick and span, however we are concerned this won't last. The Easter holidays are approaching, we hope more people will be out enjoying the village but all the bins on Gurnard/Cowes esplanade that Storm Eunice (18th February) removed are still not replaced, five weeks later, despite several requests from GPC to Island Roads.

The Cowes Peninsula LCWIP is approaching completion (at least in draft form). It is interesting to see the increase in numbers of people out walking and cycling; of course the sunshine we've enjoyed lately might have quite a lot to do with such activity, however if the goals of IWC Mission Zero are to be achieved then somehow local councils will need to help engage the hearts and minds of residents to this end.

Cllr Penny Acton

Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council

Has the Speed of Traffic on our Island Increased

As you get older and grumpier, and still able to drive on our Island roads, it gets more difficult to tolerate the standard of some people's driving.

The trouble is that we have an abundance of more powerful cars now. When I was a teenager, back in the 1960s, the top speed of most cars was around 60 to 70 mph, but with some tuning you could get 80 mph - and most of the old cars were made of heavy duty metal with chrome. However! Was the standard of driving better in my youth? If my dad was alive he would say no.

So, what do we do about speeding if you agree it is getting worse? In Chillerton and Gatcombe we surveyed all our residents with various ideas on traffic problems. And it was decided that all main roads and lanes in our villages should be 20 mph, with all roads leading into our villages down to 30 mph. These results have been put forward to Cllr Phil Jordan as a request under the October's Speeding Review. However! One thing that came out of our survey which surprised us, was that nobody wanted *Speed Watch* as they didn't want to be seen as a troublemaker.

Finally, I have lived in Shide for eight years and the traffic speed in and around our area is on the increase. Also, the noise levels have definitely increased.

I think we, as Town, Parish and Community Councils, should be asking the IW Council to do something about all areas, before any of our residents, pedestrians, and we must not forget our vehicles, won't be able to exit or cross our roads and footpaths without feeling unsafe.

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



Cowes Town Council

Sadly our report starts with the upsetting news that our former Assistant Town Clerk, Sue Waters, passed away suddenly and our thoughts are with her family at this very difficult time.

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is nearing completion and we eagerly await the report at the end of March.

The Cowes and Northwood Place Plan was promoted at the Community Day on 19 March. There is more promotion, engagement and planning required to bring the recommendations outlined in the Plan to fruition for the benefit of Cowes and Northwood residents and those who work in the area.

Arrangements are underway for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. We will be taking part in the official Beacon lighting ceremony, lighting a beacon on Cowes Parade, along with providing a professional singer and choir on the Bandstand to entertain those attending the event.

At our Town Council meeting on 7 April, Councillors will be considering providing a commemorative mug to all pre school and primary school children in Cowes. The mug has been designed specifically for the occasion by the Mayor, Councillor Paul Bertie (photo seen here).

Union Jack bunting will be on display throughout the High Street, Shooters Hill and Bath Road to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and to brighten the town centre throughout the summer season.

Summer planting is being arranged to provide bright displays of flowers throughout the town and at the main Cowes entry points.

With the clocks going forward and lighter evenings, we have many things to be thankful for and look forward to.

Kate Gibbs (Assistant Town Clerk)



Yarmouth Town Council

Yarmouth was granted its First Charter in 1135 by Baldwin de Redvers, Lord of the Island, in the reign of King Henry I.



The Charter resulted in the Town becoming the most important town and port on the Island; the men of Yarmouth ceased to be serfs and became free citizens.

Yarmouth will be part of the national celebrations Commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations by the lighting of a Beacon on June 2nd at 9.45pm on the Green, next to River Road Car Park.

The lighting will be preceded by reading the proclamation at 2.00pm in Yarmouth Square by a volunteer Town Crier.

Proclamation

Oyez Oyez Oyez

**Today in our nation - and throughout the Commonwealth
we are celebrating our glorious Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

Elizabeth - the second of that name -

**our most beloved Sovereign and Head of the Commonwealth for seventy years.
How apt that this should be the Platinum anniversary of her accession.**

**Platinum – that most noble of metals,
more precious even than gold.**

**And so it is in honour of this unique occasion
that beacons will be lit this evening
throughout the United Kingdom,**

**the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the UK Overseas Territories
and in all the Capital Cities of the Commonwealth.**

**Let it be known, in proclaiming this tribute to Her Majesty the Queen on her Platinum Jubilee,
that we are one nation and one Commonwealth.**

God Save The Queen

Medina Marching Band will be providing music for the Beacon lighting, which will be preceded by the Official Bugle call. Once the Beacon is lit, the band will play the National Anthem followed by three cheers for Her Majesty and the Loyal Toast. Bring your own refreshment, we suggest!

The Council has already planted a Queen's Canopy on the Recreation Ground in Yarmouth by planting 90 plants, to ensure at least 70 survive.

There are also plans to give all the children at Yarmouth Primary School some wild flower seeds, an embossed drinking flask and a commemorative book detailing the wildlife of the area, its history, landscape and people.

Cllr Steve Cowley (Mayor)



Other News...

Information from the IWC

Energy Rebate Update

On 3 February 2022 the government announced support to help households support to help households with rising energy bills including a one-off non-repayable £150 energy rebate to council tax payers in bands A- D. Eligible households for the £150 rebate will be identified and paid using council tax information. This payment is to support with the rising

costs of energy and is not a direct reduction in the amount of council tax you pay. Each household will receive one payment of £150.00 and the council must make this payment directly to the persons named on your council tax bill. The team are currently working to set up our system to make these payments as soon as possible during April/May. We are expecting to make payments to direct debit payers automatically, so no action is needed if you pay by Direct Debit. Those who do not pay by direct debit will be contacted in due course to provide bank details. An update and information on how to apply will be released shortly.



Local discretionary scheme to support households in need, but who are not entitled to the £150.00 payment.

We are in the process of setting up this scheme. More details will be provided as they become available.

A £200 discount on their energy bill this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain.

This will be paid back automatically over the next 5 years. This scheme will not be administered by the council.

Council pension fund has no direct links to Russian assets

The Isle of Wight Council has taken immediate steps to ensure pension fund investments do not include Russian assets following the illegal invasion of Ukraine. The authority moved swiftly to conduct a full review of its contracts and pension fund investments to make sure Island funds were not invested anywhere that could benefit the Russian regime.

The council, which administers the Isle of Wight Council Pension Fund as part of the Local Government Pension Scheme, worked closely with external investment managers to understand whether they were exposed, and if so to what extent. Following that investigation, the council can confirm it has no direct holdings in any Russian stock, or any materially significant investments in Russia-linked equities.

It has also been confirmed that none of the Money Market Funds, in which the council itself holds deposits, have any direct exposure to Russian companies. Similarly, the council does not have any direct contractual links with Gazprom Energy - one of Russia's biggest state-controlled energy companies - or any other Russian fuel supplier.

Community partners gear up to welcome Ukrainians to the Island

Community Action Isle of Wight working in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council is gearing up to welcome Ukrainians to the Island. The charity, which worked closely with the council to coordinate much of the community support during the pandemic, will be working with the authority and other partners to mobilise the support required on the Island. The first activity will be to gauge how many people may be arriving on the Island and to then begin co-ordinating the vital response and support required.

To date, the focus of the government's efforts to accommodate those fleeing the war-torn country has been on providing visas to those with immediate family members in the UK. However, under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, people can now also apply to sponsor someone to help fast-track their entry into the UK.

To help support the process, Community Action Isle of Wight has established a dedicated email ukraine@actioniw.org.uk and a phonenumber (01983) 539374 which will operate from Monday to Friday, from 10am – 4pm. This email and number is also there for any Ukrainians on the Island needing help and support.

Apprenticeships fair returns

The Isle of Wight Council held its first in-person apprenticeships fair for young people in over two years during the half term break. The event, hosted by the Isle of Wight College and in partnership with Solent LEP, was attended by 300 young people and parents who received the latest information about the wide range of apprenticeship opportunities available both on the Island and further afield.

Education providers supported the event, offering information about career and apprenticeship pathways from intermediate qualifications right through to degree level, including the Isle of Wight College, HTP Apprenticeship College, UKSA, CLC, local sixth forms and the Southern Universities Network (SUN).

Young people were also able to speak directly with employers about the skills and qualifications they look for when recruiting, and the apprenticeship opportunities available, including GKN Aerospace, the Isle of Wight NHS Trust, police and Armed Forces.

Planning for the council's popular Careers and Jobs Fair in October half term is now taking place and more details will be available soon: www.iwight.com/islandfutures

Renewed council support for armed forces community

Cabinet has approved the renewal of the Isle of Wight Council's adoption of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) this week. The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge to acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.

Renewing the pledge will make sure that council continues, through its flexible working policy, to:

- advertise employment vacancies through the Family Forces website;
- grant ten days special leave for Reservists and Adult Cadet Instructors;
- have in place a Guaranteed Interview Scheme – subject to having the required qualifications, and
- encourage and support staff considering joining the Reserves and maintain links with the local reserve unit.

The Isle of Wight Council originally signed the AFC in 2013 and is already signed up to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for which it holds the silver award and is intending to go for the gold award this year.

Footpath Upgrade Complete

The project to upgrade a busy Isle of Wight footpath has now been completed. The work to widen and upgrade the path between Mews Lane and The Riverside Centre making it suitable for use by cyclists, pedestrians and the mobility impaired has been delivered by Island Roads on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. The six-month scheme is part of the council's ongoing work to encourage greater use of cycling and walking by creating high-quality shared-use paths. It was financed by money secured by the council from the government's Active Travel 2 and Local Transport Plan programmes.

The new shared-used path is around 1.3 kilometres long upgrading what was a largely gravel track to a smooth all-weather surface. Throughout the route, the new, more durable path, has been widened to create a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians away from the busy main road. Material recycled from other Island road improvement schemes by local company Wight Building Materials was also used within the project.

There are improved access points along the path at Halberry Lane, Gordon Road, Victoria Road and The Riverside Centre — and additional land drains and gullies have also been installed at certain locations to help reduce the flooding to which the existing path is currently prone. Bollards and fencing to prevent vehicles using the path have been implemented where required.

The Isle of Wight Council is to offer free licenses for the StaySafe Lone Worker app.

After a successful bid to the Home Office, the council will work in partnership with Shaping Portsmouth and Portsmouth City Council to issue over 300 licenses to women working in the hospitality sector on the Island and in Portsmouth. The app is available to businesses such as pubs, restaurants and shops as part of a new bid to help women feel safer. It is able to track their movements and connect them to a call centre while travelling home at night. The user will be able to log when they leave work and then again when they reach home, with their whereabouts picked up by a Milton Keynes based control centre to ensure they reach their destination. If they feel unsafe along the way, the user can tap to be connected to a call handler to speak to while they travel, and if the situation escalates the handler can then contact the police and give them accurate co-ordinates.

The free app offer is in place for the hospitality sector to use the available licenses until March 2023. If you would like to sign up your business to the StaySafe app offer, email- contactus@shapingportsmouth.co.uk.

New Isle of Wight sensory support service set to launch

The Isle of Wight Council is working with local organisation Sight for Wight to provide a new sensory support service for Islanders with sight and/or hearing loss. The new service, Wight Sense, will provide specialist sensory support for local people including assessments, individual home based visits, mobility training, practical help and advice and help for people to remain independent and confident in their daily lives. Wight Sense will be providing support to those living with hearing loss, sight loss or anyone living with any level of loss of both of these senses.

Sight for Wight will continue its work of 155 years in supporting people living with sight loss with the same activities, newsletter, information and support that it currently offers but will now also be providing this additional service through the Wight Sense team. There is no minimum level of sensory loss required to access the service, so anyone with failing sight or hearing can contact the service for support. The service is happy to receive self-referrals or a referral from family, friends or any professional who is working with a person who may benefit from this specialist support, with the person's consent.

Wight Sense delivered by Sight for Wight, based in Carisbrooke Road, Newport, will start operating the new service from 1 April 2022. People can get in touch by calling: (01983) 240222, email: info@wightsense.org.uk or visit: www.wightsense.org.uk

More Scams from Trading Standards.

- Lots of reports this week about white vans travelling around the Island knocking doors trying to clean roofs. It seems they are targeting elderly residents. If somebody knocks your door and tries to carry out work on your property please turn them away. They will be rogue traders who will do a poor job or sometimes nothing at all if they think you can't check out the roof – and charge a large sum of money for the privilege. Unfortunately some of our most vulnerable may not be online and have access to this information so if you are aware of somebody near you that might be targeted by these criminals please share this information with them to prevent them from becoming victims of doorstep crime. No Cold Calling door stickers are available from trading.standards@iow.gov.uk
- We have seen this scam being reported through the Friends Against Scams social media and although there have currently been no reports on the Island it won't be long. Reports in other parts of the country indicate that the latest scam is in connection with the Government's announcement about the £150 fuel rebate that residents may be entitled to. Scammers are calling, claiming to be the Council Tax department asking for your bank details so they can pay the £150 into your bank account – DO NOT give them any information if you are entitled to the refund and pay by DDR it will be paid directly into your bank account. If you don't pay by DDR you will be sent a cheque. NEVER give out your bank details to anyone you don't know over the phone.



Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)

News from IW Chamber of Commerce

IW CHAMBER BUSINESS AWARDS 2022 sponsored by WightFibre



Nominations announced!

The nominations have been announced for the Isle of Wight's most prestigious awards. The IW Chamber Business Awards 2022, sponsored by WightFibre, will be presented at Cowes Yacht Haven on Friday May 6th. The ceremony will be hosted by award-winning comic magicians Griffin and Jones; the awards will be presented for the first time since 2019.



In total 39 Isle of Wight businesses are nominated, with 52 nominations, in 15 categories. The awards submissions were judged by a panel of 20 impartial experts, largely off-Island, with some based internationally.

IW Chamber Chief Executive, Steven Holbrook comments: "What a vibrant and exciting shortlist! More than ever, our nominations reflect success across a really wide and diverse set of businesses. The standard of submissions this year was incredibly high and it is fabulous to see so many businesses engaging with our awards, across all sectors.

"Although 2021 was a far from typical year, the way that the Island's business community adapted – and in many cases thrived – has been remarkable. The judges had some real headaches and getting nominated this year is an incredible success. For the businesses that didn't make it, some will have missed out by the tiniest of margins against terrific competition. Every business that submitted an entry will receive feedback on request, once the awards have been presented.

"We're thrilled to be able to bring the IW Chamber Business Awards back for 2022. Moving the awards to May, away from our traditional November slot will also change the feel of the evening, as we will all be arriving in daylight, in warmer weather. We're very excited about our hosts Griffin and Jones who will be bringing the flavour of the Edinburgh Fringe to the ceremony; we will also welcome DJ Archie Easton, formerly of the Cuban Brothers, who will get the after-show party started in style. We're all set for a spectacular show."

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

For a full list of all nominations and to find out more please click on this link

<https://www.iwchamber.co.uk/news/nominations-announced/>

Emma Spinelli

MP Bob Seely (IWALC Bulletin Update 01.04.22)

Marine Protected Areas

Last month I supported Chris Grayling MP in making the case for a new law to limit the damaging practice of bottom trawling in Marine Protected Areas.

Super trawlers can hugely impact on marine life, so it is important that a legal framework is put in place to ensure Marine Protected Areas are truly protected.

I was very happy to support Chris as one of the supporting signatories.



Education Investment Area

Following the news that the Isle of Wight has been designated by Government as an Education Investment Area, I am keen to make sure that this works for the Island. I am therefore pleased to say that the Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi, has accepted my invitation to visit the Island, to see the excellent work already taking place.

Arts Funding

Good news for Ryde - the Government, through its Culture Recovery Fund, has allocated over £2million to the DepARTment project that will see the former Elizabeth Pack department store transformed into a cultural and creative space for Islanders.

This funding will not only support arts and cultural activity in Ryde, which will help to enrich lives, it will also contribute to the regeneration of the town.

One of the first things I did when I became the Island's MP was to persuade Arts Council England to name the Island as a priority investment area. That means they now look more favourably on applications from Island projects. I am delighted that this is bearing fruit.

We're looking forward to seeing the Arts Minister visit the Island this month to talk about more support for Island arts and culture as part of getting a better deal for the Island.

SEND Funding

In more good news, the Island is set to receive nearly £1.3m for capital investment in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision on the Isle of Wight over the next two years. I look forward to hearing from the Isle of Wight Council about how this money will be spent.

UKOG

I was pleased to hear that not only has UK Oil & Gas (UKOG) announced it will not appeal against the refusal of planning permission for oil and gas exploration at Arreton, but also that UKOG has withdrawn its application for an environmental permit for the site.

Thank you to everyone who came together to fight against this proposal.

Bob Seely

Help from Southern Water

Our Priority Services ensures that people in special circumstances can access water services – such as an audio bill, or extra support if there's disruption to your water supply. To ensure we always know who needs Priority Services, we keep a register. We can add you to our Priority Services Register if you, or someone in your household:



- Are at a pensionable age with additional needs such as limited mobility
- Have a disability or chronic illness
- Have mental health challenges
- Have a medical condition that means you need additional help (whether long or short term)
- Have difficulty seeing, hearing or communicating
- Require assistance with your water account or want a little extra security in protecting your account

Services we offer:

- Our Priority Services ensures that people in special circumstances can access water services – such as extra support if there's a disruption to their water supply
- Have your bills sent to a friend or relative, or register a unique password
- Large print, braille bills, CD or digital bills
- Talking bills (have your bills explained to you over the telephone)

Call our free-phone helpline on 0800 027 0800 from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday or alternatively apply on-line at <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/account/extra-help-and-support>

Please see below for the three types of support available-

Hardship Fund

There are three different types of support available –

- Bill Reduction Up to 50% one year bill reduction for customers who have hit temporary hard times.
- Debt write-off of up to £2000 for customers who have managed to get back on track with payments but will never be able to repay their debt.
- Grant of up to £1000 to make improvements to a customer's home (this might be the purchase of white goods that a customer cannot afford to replace, repairs to heating or water systems that they cannot afford, etc.)

Eligibility criteria:

Bill reduction:

- Household income is greater than current Essentials threshold (£21,000). Ø Customer expenditure significantly outweighs income due to a temporary shock – such as bereavement, main earner's loss of employment, sudden additional caring responsibilities.
- Customer fully expecting circumstances to improve.

Debt write-off:

- Customer is making regular payments that cover (or nearly cover) current usage.
- Customer has a significant debt (over £500) that has accrued due to circumstances outside of their control (such as financial abuse by a partner, mental health breakdown, prolonged absence from work).
- Customer is unlikely to be able to ever clear the debt.

Grant:

- Customer faces significant financial hardship with no support network.
- Although paying their water bill, customer cannot afford basics (such as proper food, clothes or heating).
- Customer already benefits from a reduced bill.
- There is something that can be done to provide long term benefit (such as a replacement washing machine or a plumber to fix a leaky toilet) or assistance in a crisis (such as food vouchers).

Application process: Please contact myself direct on 07775 407017 or email me at stuart.bailey@southernwater.co.uk. Alternatively you can contact the Southern Water Affordability Team on 0800 027 0800 or by email at cs_affordabilityteam@southernwater.co.uk

For the application form, please go to -

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund>

To summarise, Southern Water are offering a number of ways you can save money on your water bills and you may even be entitled to extra support if you, or someone in your household are either elderly, disabled or have certain medical conditions.

The additional support and services we have to offer are as follows:

Essentials tariff

Do you need help paying your water bill?

- You may qualify for a minimum 20% discount if your household income is less than £21,000 per annum (not including Personal Independence Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance)
- If someone at your address receives Pension Credit, you'll automatically be accepted onto the tariff and receive a 20% discount

WaterSure tariff

- Could look to cap your metered water bill if you have to use additional water usage due to a medical condition, or there are three or more children under the age of 19 years old living at home

NewStart

- A payment matching scheme to help you pay off your Southern Water debt

Water Direct

- Jobcentre Plus may consider paying us amounts directly from your benefits on your behalf

Call our free-phone helpline on 0800 027 0800 from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday or alternatively apply on-line at <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/account/help-paying-your-bill>

In addition to all of the above, Southern Water have now partnered with Hants Citizens Advice, SEN and Portsmouth Water to deliver a 'Home & Well' project. This remote service offers discharged patients a holistic review of their finances, including utility bills, supported by Citizens Advice Hampshire's trained Advisers. This will ensure they are managing their finances and maximising the benefits that utility companies offer, including bill management, energy performance advice and water tariff review. Patients will also be helped to register for Priority Services from their electricity network operator and water supplier – this will allow them to receive additional support should they experience a power cut or loss of water supply.

Free water saving home visits visit - [southernwater.co.uk/GetWaterFit](https://www.southernwater.co.uk/GetWaterFit)

Stuart Bailey (Vulnerability Liaison Officer (Hants & I.O.W))

Walking in England - Time to get walking again!

At this time of year we start to think about the mud drying up and 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 hundreds 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 (the custodian of 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
john@walkinginengland.co.uk

Public Services students go the extra mile(s)!



"The students were amazing"

- Curriculum Manager, Vykke Gill

Public Services students to take on 3,480 mile run for Ukraine

We couldn't be more proud of our Public Services students who have given hours of their own time over the last few weeks to support the collection for Ukraine co-ordinated by MAD-Aid. The students have been there come rain or shine and haven't finished yet! Over the next two weeks they will be undertaking a virtual #RunToKyiv challenge, for which they will each run or ride 60 of the 3,480 miles which represent the distance to the capital of Ukraine and back. They hope to be sponsored by friends, family and the public at £1 per mile to raise enough money to fund the next truck of donations, which costs around £3,500.

Vykke Gill, Curriculum Manager said:

"Our Public Services students have volunteered to sort, pack and load donations to Ukraine. We started off at the True Vine Church in Newport. The students were amazing!! They worked so hard and not one moan or groan. They were a true and positive representation of the Isle of Wight College. They are continuing to collect and sort donations and will be continuing to help the cause further. They have a sleep out arranged as well as a virtual run to Ukraine and back, to raise money to get the donations sent to the destinations. Tutors Jono, Bryan and myself are all very proud of them."

Students are fundraising using a crowd funding page: bit.ly/RunToKyiv. You can follow their progress on the college's social media channels.



The Blue Lamp Trust

Hampshire Constabulary wanted to share an update with you from our partners, [The Blue Lamp Trust](#), of which our Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney is a Trustee.



The Blue Lamp Trust runs a scheme, which it has done so throughout and now beyond the current COVID pandemic, called the Bobby Scheme. It provides **free** home security visits, long-life smoke alarms and advice to vulnerable residents in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, particularly the elderly and victims of burglary and domestic abuse.

A full crime prevention and fire safety survey is carried out by one of their specialist trained, police-vetted, fitters. They will provide both general and specific crime and fire prevention advice to improve resident home safety. When appropriate their fitters will fit items such as locks, spy-holes, door chains and smoke alarms, etc. This service is completely free.

The Bobby Scheme can also supply and fit police approved key safes for a small donation.

The Bobby Scheme is free to those who are vulnerable due to age (over 65), circumstance, disabled, or a victim of household crime.

Anyone can make a referral including individuals, friends, family, doctors, social workers, etc. via the Blue Lamp Trust website - <https://bluelamptrust.org.uk/bobby-scheme-landingpage/> - or by ringing 0300 777 0157.

Roads Policing Unit returns.

Residents on the Isle of Wight are set to benefit from an enhanced roads policing service thanks to the re-introduction of a dedicated team. This follows a review by the Constabulary with the support of Police and Crime Commissioner, Donna Jones. The Commissioner has committed to an additional 600 police officers across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight by 2023. As part of the officer uplift commitment for the next financial year, additional roads policing posts are being created across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This gives the force the capacity and flexibility to invest in this specialist area of policing on the Island.

As part of austerity measures introduced in 2016, specialist armed response vehicle (ARV) officers posted to the Isle of Wight also carry-out specific roads policing duties. They work alongside Response Policing officers to support the force's commitment to road safety, and are supported by officers based on the mainland when necessary. Under the new proposals an additional unit of two dedicated roads policing officers will be established on the Island that will complement the ARV and Response Policing capability.

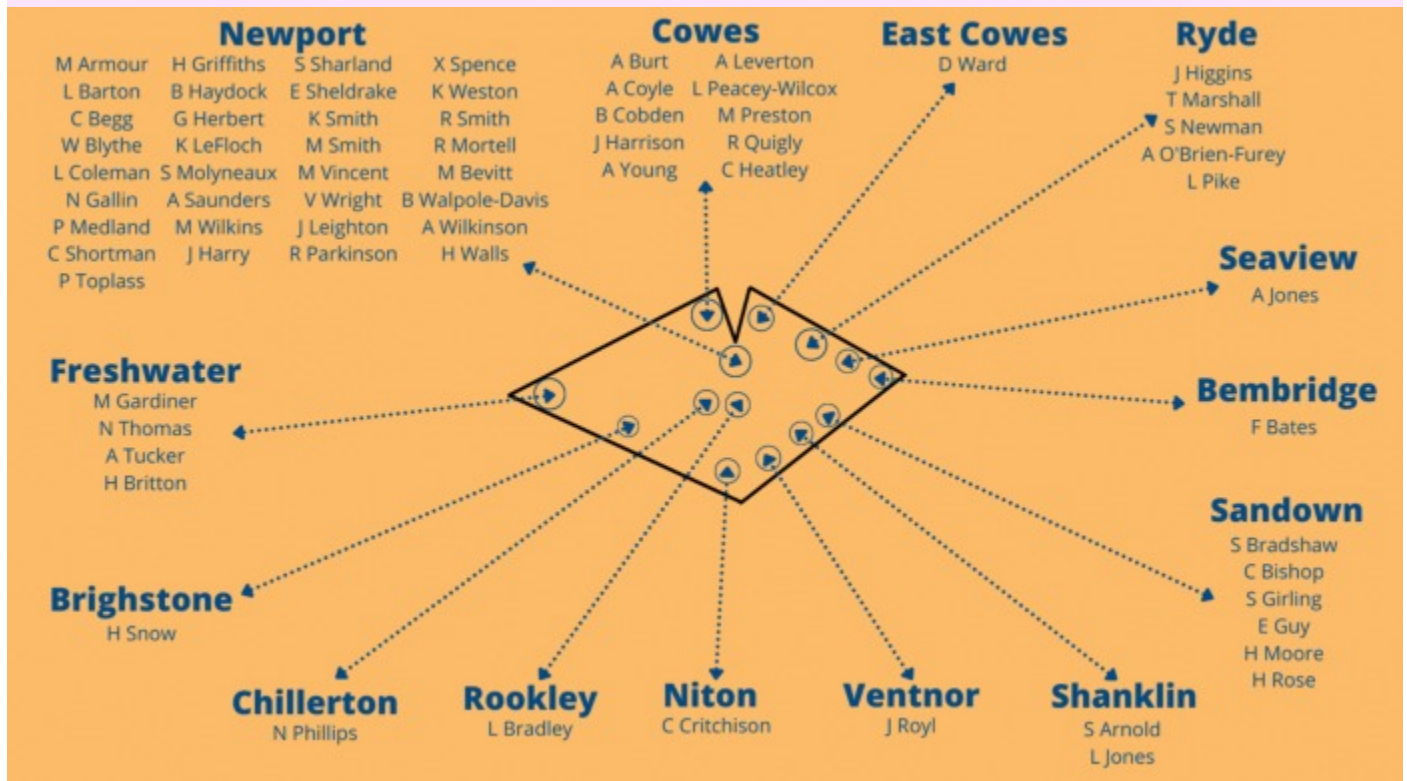
Police and Crime Commissioner, Donna Jones, said: "I am grateful to the members of the community and elected representatives who have contacted me about the issue of road safety on the Isle of Wight. I was elected to be a voice for residents and will always listen and work to find the best solution when community concerns are raised with me. I am delighted that my commitment to recruit additional officers has meant that the resources are available to enable the Constabulary to reintroduce a dedicated Roads Policing Team on the Island and improve safety for all road users. I would like to thank ACC Tim Metcalfe for listening to the community and working with me to achieve a positive outcome."



Assistant Chief Constable Tim Metcalfe, Head of Joint Operations for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Constabulary and Thames Valley Police said: "We are committed to ensuring our roads are safe for motorists on the Isle of Wight, and this has been led by the efforts of the dual-skilled ARV officers who also carry out roads policing duties. For some time we have been actively considering options to develop and enhance this capability. I am pleased to say that the current officer uplift, and the commitment from our Police and Crime Commissioner, now gives us the ability to invest in, and re-introduce a team of dedicated roads policing officers on the Island. As a police service, it's important for us to constantly review our operating models in line with demand information, and listen to our communities and partners. I have every confidence that this additional resourcing for the Isle of Wight will help to keep road users safe and improve the service we provide to our communities on the Island."

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice IW is seeking funding for a new apprentice role to maintain our digital content on what will be a new look Islefindit website the charity is developing. If you have any ideas on where I could get a little match funding for this role, I would really appreciate it. I am looking for £10,000 in total. The website will be the “go to” online place for our Advice First Aiders (AFAs). Here is a map of where our fully trained AFAs are based.



The number of AFAs is growing and we are pleased to say our first face to face training for new AFAs will take place in Newport Methodist Church 1000-1500 on Friday 22nd April. If you would like to see AFAs in your wards, please email Simon simonb@iwcab.org.uk . If you can't make that date other training opportunities will still take place online.

Thank you to Freshwater Parish Council who have donated £864 to our charity, this is the average annual cost of supporting a volunteer adviser, different from an AFA, which was highlighted in the letter of December 2021. If the letter didn't arrive and you would like a copy emailed to you please let me know just contact pauls@iwcab.org.uk

Thank you, Paul Savill (Chief Officer)



Isle of Wight High Sheriff's Trust

Film resource supporting mental health and well-being

I am certain the last 2 years of the pandemic have been an unbelievable challenge for many - not least children and young people.

As the Island's High Sheriff I have been encouraged to see how children and young people have dealt with the pandemic but acutely aware of the significant deterioration in mental health. I am sure your organisation has already gone a long way to tackle this but wanted to offer some extra help. At very least to get a conversation started.



Encouraged by the NHS and IOWC the IW High Sheriffs Trust have commissioned these short films focusing on young peoples well being and mental health. These films aim to get a solid message through in an attractive and digestible format for use on platforms children & young people prefer to use - so much better than blocks of text on a web site !

Wave Project <https://youtu.be/5tTshsh8hKQ>

Youth Trust https://youtu.be/vBkuZiYCs_k

Isorropia Foundation https://youtu.be/_utEobznbgg

The films have been carefully curated and the content driven by young stakeholders - for example the Youth Trust youth council. The three separate films have been added to by breaking down into edited 'bite size' snippets to widen the appeal - these short versions will be available soon.

Please feel free to use and distribute these films as you see best. Your feedback would be most welcome.

Kind Regards, *James RW Attrill DL*

(Tel : 07833088420 Web : www.highsheriffiw.co.uk)

Donate : <https://www.justgiving.com/highsherrifstrustiw> Twitter : @HighSheriffIOW)

Visit Isle of Wight

In less than six months, the Isle of Wight will host the final stage of the UK's most prestigious cycle race, the Tour of Britain. It will be the first time the iconic race would have ever been hosted on the Island and the event will offer an amazing sporting spectacle for visitors and locals alike, seeing 19 of the world's top teams and 100 pro riders race across the Island's varied and picturesque landscape.



The Island leg of the race - stage 8 - takes place on Sunday 11 September and starts in Ryde. It will cover a wide range of the Island's towns and villages and offer plenty of opportunities to get involved. Visit IOW will be in touch in the coming weeks to share more information and ways you can support and be a part of this special sporting event.



Digital Support



Informal and friendly community-based 'IT help' drop in sessions

Ventnor Library

1st & 3rd Tuesday
of the month
11:00 - 12:30

Ryde Library

2nd & 4th Wednesday
of the month
10:30 - 12:00

West Wight Community Centre

Tuesdays
10:30 - 12:00

Newport Library

2nd & 4th Thursday
of the month
10:30 - 12:00

Brading Youth & Community Centre

2nd Monday of the Month
11:00 - 13:00

Registered Charity Number: 1118711

Call: 01983 525282

Email: digital@ageukiw.org.uk

Visit: ageukiw.org.uk



Free Support is shared between the group and donations are welcome.

Due to unforeseen circumstances sessions may not always run as advertised.

Digital Support Workshops



Learn new skills, gain confidence and meet new friends at our digital support workshops. Sessions are gently paced and lead by our dedicated Digital Facilitation Officer.

Booking essential. Spaces strictly limited. Call (01983) 525282 or email digital@ageukiw.org.uk

Date	Time	Venue	Topic
Weds 4th May	10.00-12.00	Bembridge Library	Socialising Online
Mon 9th May	11.00-12.00	Zoom	Using Public Services Online
Tues 10th May	10.30-12.30	Ventnor Library	Socialising Online
Mon 16th May	11.00-12.00	Zoom	Online Scams (IWASP guest speaker)
Weds 18th May	10.00-12.00	Bembridge Library	Online Safety
Mon 23rd May	11.00-12.00	Zoom	Online Banking (Barclays guest speaker)
Tues 24th May	10.30-12.30	Ventnor Library	Online Safety
Mon 30th May	11.00-12.00	Zoom	IT Troubleshooting

Hovertravel awarded part of Government's £1 Million accessibility grant

Hovertravel has been awarded a grant to improve accessibility for its customers. The grant, launched last, October was aimed specifically at lifeline ferries and seaports serving the Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly.



Neil Chapman, managing director of Hovertravel, explains: “Our HoverCare initiative has been a huge success and we are just one of two transport companies in the country to have been awarded Leader status in the government’s Inclusive Transport Scheme. We know, however, that we can always enhance and evolve. We also engaged with its stakeholders, including Isle Access and members of its user group (HUG), to incorporate their feedback on the bid items to be submitted. We applied for a broad variety of facility improvements, including a Changing Places toilet at Southsea, an enhanced exit to the pad at Southsea, assistive technology for our website and a lift for our terminal at Ryde. We are also upgrading our hearing loops, the handrails on our hovercraft craft and have a stock of mobility aids at each terminal. Several of these facilities have already been completed and now open for our customers, with just two projects to be finished over the summer. “



Hovertravel’s Senior Management Team created a working group for the bid application process with input from across the company; including engineers, operational staff, pilots, marketing, finance and HR. This group reviewed the complete journey experience, from researching online to booking, time spent in terminals and onboard and onward connections.

Robert Courts, Maritime Minister, added: “This funding will tangibly improve access to this life-line ferry link, which is vital to keep communities linked with the mainland. We are committed to help people to travel with confidence as we continue to build back from the pandemic.”

Neil continues: “We are delighted to have received this funding from the Government and their support at all levels for supporting our accessibility initiative is greatly appreciated. I must also extend my personal gratitude to Isle Access, Euan’s Guide and the members of the HUG who contributed enormously to our successful submission.



As with all our HoverCare initiatives we will continue to be as open as possible about our accessibility approach, including ways to share best practice with other organisations, opportunities to spread awareness of the issues involved and how to showcase the lessons learnt. “

Our Changing Places Toilet and an additional accessible toilet are open at Southsea now.

Stephen Forster (Creative Director)

News from Red Funnel

Maritime Accessibility Fund

Red Funnel has been awarded funding from the Department of Transport to support upgrades to its accessibility services for passengers. The grant comes from the Department's new Maritime Accessibility Fund,

and Red Funnel has been generously granted just over £296,000 to help develop and improve its fleet and shoreside infrastructure. Red Funnel has secured this grant through its ongoing work with Island partners, including commitments and engagements with accessibility-focused charities and groups.



Upgrades to support the accessibility of the fleet are due to start imminently and will take place during each vessel's regular scheduled annual maintenance throughout 2022. The work will focus around key areas including:

- The creation of more designated accessible seating
- Upgrades to emergency signage on board and improvements to each vessel's PA system
- The installation of push button, self-closing, automatic sliding doors across its vehicle ferries, to give easier access for all passengers
- Upgrades to all vehicle ferry terminal toilets

Columbine Building renovations

Ahead of major investment into the iconic Columbine Building in East Cowes, Red Funnel has reached an agreement with the Isle of Wight Council that will facilitate the installation of windows in the southern elevation of the building, saving the Isle of Wight Council a significant amount of money. This will improve the aesthetic of the building and create greater opportunities for local employment. Red Funnel will also be contributing £35,000 towards the costs of work on the elevation.

Ministerial visit

Red Funnel was delighted to welcome Maritime Minister, Robert Courts MP, to its Southampton terminal in March. His visit to the Isle of Wight to meet coastal businesses linked to the Government's announcement of a £4 billion injection into the UK's regional shipbuilding industry.

Isle of Wight Independent Lifeboats donation

Red Funnel has raised over £42,000 for Isle of Wight Independent Lifeboats, a collaboration of Freshwater Independent Lifeboat, Sandown & Shanklin Independent Lifeboat and Ryde Inshore Rescue, as part of its 2021 charity of the year partnership.

Isle of Wight Story Festival

Award-winning and internationally acclaimed illustrator of The Gruffalo storybook series, Axel Scheffler, was spotted on board the Red Jet service, travelling to the Island for the annual Isle of Wight Story Festival. Axel delighted passengers with a surprise book signing, handing out free copies of the best-selling children's book series to families on board. CFO Graham Barnetson was in attendance at the literacy festival representing Red Funnel at the annual Island event.

Josey Page (Account Executive)

News from Wightlink

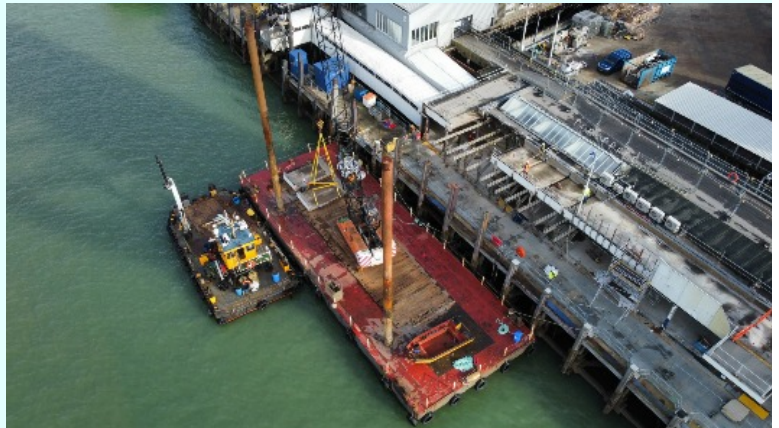


With Easter around the corner, we are preparing for another busy summer and hoping for good weather. Bookings are looking healthy and our ships and FastCats are back from refit and are ready to go.

Unfortunately, Covid is still with us. Over the last few weeks several key colleagues have tested positive for the latest Omicron variant. Although we always try our best to find cover at short notice, some sailings had to be cancelled and we were forced to postpone the introduction of the summer timetable to concentrate resources on our key services. We are sorry that some customers were moved to other crossings at this time.

We have recruited more seasonal members of staff, many of them Islanders, and they will be deployed at ports and on ships, once fully trained and qualified. Although the Government's Covid travel restrictions have ended, we are still asking customers to wear a face covering in crowded areas, to help keep everyone safe. Hand sanitiser continues to be available and thorough cleaning is still a high priority.

We were pleased to receive almost £300,000 from the Department for Transport's Maritime Accessibility Fund to improve our facilities for disabled travellers. Most of the money will be spent on two Changing Places toilets for people who need extra space while using the loo. One of them will be at our Portsmouth terminal in Gunwharf Road and will be open 24/7. The second will be at Ryde Pier. We are also installing new accessible ticket machines at all ports, improving intercoms for disabled people arriving at Ryde Pier and Portsmouth Harbour and buying motorised wheelchairs for port colleagues to use to help customers.



Our £1.5million structural works at Harbour station are taking longer than expected. If you have travelled by FastCat recently, you'll have seen we have now had to remove the terminal roof as well as the floor but we intend to restore ramp access to the railway station by June. Harbour station is more than 100 years old, so you can imagine it's been a big job.



Last month, a group of travel and tourism students from the Isle of Wight College exchanged their classroom for our hybrid ferry Victoria of Wight to find out more about our environmental policies at first hand. Captain Sam Mitchell welcomed the young people onboard, explained how the ship combines battery power with conventional engines and encouraged them to consider

careers in maritime.

Sales of our Wightlink 2022 charity desk calendar raised £500 for the good cause nominated by the colleague who took the photo chosen for the front cover. Engineer Phil Sherring chose the Injured Jockeys Fund to receive the money - he's a keen fan of horse racing. Phil's picture shows Wight Sky with the modern sailing ship Golden Horizon which was seen in the Solent last summer.

Karen Woods (Communications & PR)



News from Southern Vectis

With the removal of COVID restrictions, passenger numbers have improved slightly and we're now seeing around 80% of pre-COVID passenger numbers using our buses.

We've so far been able to operate our routes at pre-COVID levels with support from the DfT and the councils, but the latest, and last round of, funding ends in September. Whilst we're seeing some positive signs, we're still a long way short of pre-COVID figures and between now and September, we need to attract as many customers back on-board as possible.

Like most businesses, we were hit particularly hard by COVID absences in March and that resulted in a short period of reduced service levels on a couple of our routes, as we simply did not have enough drivers available. Thankfully, this has now eased somewhat and we hope absence levels will continue to ease in the coming weeks.

Our summer timetable starts on 29th May and I'm glad to say that there are no major changes to mention, just a few minor timing adjustments to improve punctuality. Our popular, seasonal open-top Breezers, Coaster and Shanklin Shuttle will all be operating again this year, and the now regular route 27 to the West Wight and Tapnell Farm has now been renamed 'Summer Links' to make it part of our seasonal family and differentiate it from the regular network buses.



Richard Tyldsley (General Manager)

