

Serving the Island's



Town, Parish & Community Councils

The IWALC Bulletin

September 2022

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

Your IWALC Matters!!



Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

We were very sorry to hear about the passing of Her Majesty and she will be missed by us all. Her selfless attitude towards duty and service will always stay with us.

We would like to send our sympathy to the Royal Family especially King Charles III.

Long live the King

Message from the Chair



Welcome to the delayed issue of the September Bulletin. We were about to publish this issue when we received the sad news of the passing of the late Queen. Like everyone else, including the organisers of the Tour of Britain cycle race, we had to make some quick decisions as to whether to go ahead with this and various other planned activities. We decided to delay publication for a few days, both out of respect to Her Majesty and members of the Royal Family and to enable us to revise some sections to take account of the news. Among these revisions is a message from the organisers of the Tour of Britain race, thanking local councils for their support in preparing for the event.

This issue includes a report on our AGM, which was held on 28 July. Since I am again writing this message, you will not be surprised to hear that I was re-elected Chair! However, we have a new vice-chair: Anne Bamford, from Freshwater Parish Council. You will find some information about Anne below. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mick Lyons, the outgoing vice-chair, for his long service in that role. Although no longer vice-chair, Mick is still a member of the Executive Committee and will, I am sure, continue to play an active role in IWALC.

Among other items in this issue, you will find information about our forthcoming Open Day, which will be held in Sandown on Saturday 24 September. The purpose of the Open Day, which is open to all councillors and staff of member councils, is to provide an opportunity for councils to showcase their activities, share their experiences and network with each other.

September is a critical month for the future of Island planning. The long awaited and much needed draft Island Planning Strategy was approved at a Cabinet meeting on 8 September and will be considered at the next Full Council meeting. This meeting was scheduled for 21 September but has had to be postponed because of the mourning period.

Unfortunately, the final stages of the draft's preparation have not been easy, because of the difficulty of reconciling the Island's conflicting needs. There are two interrelated conflicts. One is that between preserving our natural environment and meeting housing needs. There is no easy answer to this. No one would dispute that our Island has a wealth of natural resources and that these have to be protected. This issue of the Bulletin includes information about a register of the Island's incredible number of natural and historical assets, recently produced by Arc Consulting, which highlights our incredible natural wealth.

However, as we have highlighted in previous issues of the Bulletin, we also have a housing crisis on the Island. There is an acute shortage of affordable housing, especially rental accommodation. As a Citizens Advice volunteer, I am only too aware of this. I see people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness almost daily. The combination of this housing shortage and the cost of living crisis is going to put many Island residents at risk this winter.

The other conflict is over where houses should be built. As the register of assets shows, there are valuable natural resources in all council areas. However, there is also a need for housing in all areas. Those opposed to building more houses argue that most of the houses being built are not the type of houses we need. This is true; but unfortunately, the only way to get significant numbers of affordable homes at present is as part of larger commercial developments.

IWALC is inevitably caught up in these conflicts. There are divisions of opinion not only between councils but also within them. Unfortunately, there was not time for us to establish a position on the final draft, particularly on proposed amendments regarding the location of housing. We would have had to consult all member councils and they in turn would have had to hold meetings to agree their position.

However, there is one thing on which most people agree: we urgently need a valid Island Plan. This was emphasised in IWALC's comments on the original draft and in the recent report of the LGA Peer Review team. Let's hope, therefore, that compromises can be made and an agreement reached when Full Council meets.

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 October edition will be September 30th - or thereabouts!! Thank you.

Annual General Meeting

IWALC's AGM was held on Thursday 28 July at the Riverside Centre. It was very well attended, with representatives from 25 of the 28 member councils present.

The main task of the meeting was to elect the chair, vice-chair and treasurer and representatives to the 15 external organisations on which IWALC is represented. Diana Conyers was re-elected as Chair and Anne Bamford, from Freshwater Parish Council, was elected Vice-Chair. Diana thanked Mick Lyons, the outgoing vice-chair, for his many years of service to IWALC. Sue Hardy was re-elected as Treasurer. A list of the representatives to outside organisations and their deputies is published below and is also on the IWALC website.

The other major item of business was to approve a revised version of the IWALC Constitution. The new version can be found on the website. Most of the changes are minor. The main ones are to move the AGM forward from July to June and to allow IWALC to hold remote and hybrid meetings when necessary. Unlike councils, IWALC is not bound by national legislation, which currently requires meetings to be held in person.

The meeting also included a report by the Chair on the previous year's activities, which is published below, and receipt of the organisation's accounts.

Meeting of Mayors and Chairs

Prior to the AGM, IWALC hosted an informal meeting of Mayors and Chairs of member councils. This was the first such meeting. The purpose was to enable mayors and chairs to share their experiences, in the light of the many challenges facing local councils today. The meeting began with a brief introduction by Gill Kennet, Freshwater Parish councillor and a previous IWALC Chair. Although attendance was relatively low, there was a lively discussion and it was generally agreed that such meetings should be held on a regular basis.

Future Meetings and Events

The next major IWALC event will be an **Open Day** on Saturday 24 September. This will be an opportunity for councils to showcase their projects and activities and share their experiences. It will be held at the Broadway Centre, in Sandown, from 11 am to 3 pm. All member councils have been invited to have a stand and all councillors and staff are invited to attend. For further details, contact Heather on heatheriwalc@gmail.com.

This will be followed by an **Executive Meeting** on Thursday 29 September and a **Topic Meeting** on 27 October. The Topic Meeting will focus on Road Safety. Further information on both meetings will be distributed in due course.

Meetings with Isle of Wight Cabinet

There have been two meetings with members of the IW Cabinet since the last issue of the Bulletin, both held online at 12 noon.

The first was on Thursday 14 July. A report of the meeting has already been circulated to members. Attendance was relatively low but there was a useful discussion on various topics, including the Council's Safety and Improvement Register, possible changes in the way the Council pays local precepts to councils, hedgerow cutting and the Council's housing company.

The second meeting was on Thursday 8 September. Most Cabinet members were there but unfortunately very few councillors attended. Topics of discussion were:

1. An appendix to the IW Council Constitution known as Protocol 16, which determines the relationship between the IW Council and local councils: IWALC was invited to suggest amendments.
2. The possibility of some councils taking control over car parks: Cllr Phil Jordan said this was unlikely; if the Council were to do this, they would probably have to transfer them all and local councils might not be able to enforce parking regulations.
3. Draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS): The current status of the IPS was discussed.
4. Delays in processing planning applications: Cllr Paul Fuller explained that the department is still understaffed and having to employ agency staff. A working group will soon be set up to consider the recommendations of the LGA Peer Review and IWALC's representative on the Planning Committee will be invited to join the group.
5. IW Council's housing company: This is currently in the hands of the legal department.

The low attendance of councillors was also discussed. However, Cabinet members were not concerned; they said it was quality not quantity that mattered!

The next meeting will be at 12 noon on Thursday 13 October.

Meeting with Bob Seely MP

There was no meeting with the MP in July or August. We were informed by the MP's office that there would probably be a meeting on 20 September, but in view of the Queen's passing, this now seems unlikely.

Training

On Wednesday 20 July, IWALC held a course on **Equality and Diversity** at the Riverside Centre. The session was delivered by Mandy Ainsworth, a lecturer at the ATP Apprenticeship College, and Emily Brothers, a Sandown Town Councillor with both lived experience and professional knowledge of disability rights. There were 12 participants, all of whom found the course very useful.

We have also held the first part of a two-part course on Basic Councillor Skills. This was designed particularly for councillors who have joined since the last course, which was held soon after the 2021 elections. However, all councillors and staff were invited to attend and take advantage of this opportunity to refresh their knowledge. The first session was held on Wednesday 7 September. Twenty participants attended the session, which was held at the Riverside Centre and delivered by Sue Chilton, East Cowes Town Clerk and an experienced IWALC trainer. The initial feedback from participants was very good. The second session was scheduled a week later, on 14 September, but has had to be postponed. Participants will be notified of the new date.

Although IWALC's training events are open to staff as well as councillors, it is not our responsibility to provide training specifically for staff. However, in view of the significant number of new clerks on the Island, discussions were held with the local chair of SLCC, the organisation responsible for supporting council staff, on the best way of assisting these new recruits. It was agreed that IWALC would facilitate an online training session for them, provided by Maxine Warr, former clerk of many local councils on the Island and a former IWALC County Officer. Twelve clerks expressed an interest in this. Since they were not all available at the same time, Maxine divided the group into two. The first session was held on 10 August. Feedback from participants has been very positive. The second session will be held on September 16.

New Vice Chair for IWALC

I would just like to introduce myself as a new member of the IWALC team. It was a great privilege that I was voted in as Vice Chair and I am very excited about joining a very hard-working team of people. For many years I have been a parish councillor on Freshwater Parish Council. Over that time, I have really appreciated and valued all the training and information that our parish council could access from IWALC over the years. It did enable me to become a well-informed councillor and I have experience with a variety of chairmanship roles.

With more parish councils joining IWALC I feel that I have joined at a very exciting time. With all the experience that I have gained I am looking forward to taking an active role. I greatly admire all the energy Diana puts in and would like to support her as much as I can.

Cllr. Anne Bamford (Freshwater Parish Council)

IWALC Representatives to Outside Organizations

National Association of Local Councils (NALC) - Cllr Bob Blezzard, Deputy Cllr John Graney.

Southeast Regional County Association Forum (SERCAF) – Cllr Bob Blezzard, Deputy Cllr John Graney.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association – Cllr Bob Blezzard, Deputy Cllr Steve Cooper

Isle of Wight Council Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Cameron Palin, Deputy Cllr Ed Hopper

Isle of Wight Council Planning Committee – Cllr Giles Aldred, Deputy Cllr Ed Hopper

Isle of Wight Council Health and Wellbeing Board – Cllr Shirley Smart, Deputy Cllr Emily Brothers.

Isle of Wight Council Appeals Committee – Cllr Mick Lyons, Deputy Patricia Redpath

Local Access Forum (LAF) – Cllr John Hobart, Deputy Cllr Mick Lyons

Voluntary Sector Forum – Cllr Diana Conyers, Deputy Cllr Julie Hutchison

Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group – Cllr Emily Brothers, Deputy Cllr Diana Conyers.

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) – Cllr Nick Stuart, Deputy Cllr Steve Cooper.

AONB – Cllr Nick Stuart, Deputy Cllr Shirley Stables

Community Led Housing Board - Cllr Helena Hewston, Deputy Cllr Peter Whiteman.

Prevent Board- Cllr John Graney

Age Friendly Island – Cllr Anne Bamford, Deputy Cllr Alison Child

Our Natural and Historical Heritage

Ian Boyd, of Arc Consulting, with the help of a volunteer assistant, has compiled a register of sites of significant natural, scientific or historical interest on the Island, arranged by local council area.

You can download this register by going to the News page of the IWALC website: <http://iwalc.org/news.html>.

We would like to thank Ian and his assistant, Alex, for sharing this very useful information with us. If you need any further information about the register, please contact Ian on ian@arc-consulting.co.uk.

The direct link for the spreadsheet is <http://iwalc.org/documents/assets-register-2022.xlsx>

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.

Please note that most of the contributions from NALC, member councils and other organisations were submitted before the announcement of the Queen's death last week and therefore make no mention of this.

We will invite contributors to include any information about their response to the news in the next issue.

News from NALC

NALC has provided guidance on holding council meetings and notice periods during the period of national mourning.

For details see: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/2221-nalc-statement-on-council-meetings-and-notice-periods-during-the-period-of-national-mourning>

NALC Empowering Communities Hybrid Conference - 7 November 2022, London

7 November 2022 — 10.00 - 16.00

America Square Conference Centre, London, EC3N 2LB

Sponsored by BHIB Councils Insurance, Blachere Illumination and CCLA

The NALC Empowering Communities hybrid conference will take place at the America Square Conference Centre, London on 7 November 2022 and online.

Communities across the country need to be empowered. The government's levelling up white paper recognises the vital role local (parish and town) councils have in shaping those communities. There is a pressing need to create more councils, give them more powers to make a change and more funding to support those changes. The time for empowerment is now.

Joining one of the biggest one-day hybrid conferences in the local council sector will allow attendees to engage in a wide-ranging programme focussing on the hottest topics in the sector, such as civility and respect, climate change, community resilience, health, housing, levelling up, and representation. You will have opportunities to put your questions to speakers and panellists, visit a sector-specific exhibition, network with your peers, and share good practice.

Book here. <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-events/empowering-communities>

Chris Borg (NALC Policy Manager)

NALC secures Arnold-Baker discount

NALC has secured a 20% discount for member local councils and county associations off the purchase price of the new 13th edition of Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration. The purchase price will be £164.99, reduced to £131.99 with a NALC member discount. To purchase your copy, please contact Lewis Williams at lewis.williams@lexisnexis.co.uk or on 01133 571 578.

Civility and Respect Project

The Civility and Respect Project's training programme is proving to be very popular. The training on uncovering the issues for the public sector event on 12 September 2022 has sold out. But, not to worry, another date has been added for 19 September 2022, and tickets are available. To register, please email sue@haptc.org.uk, copying in your councillor delegate(s).

County officers' fortnightly meetings (July)

We were joined by Sarah Fishbourne, who is undertaking a review of the national village and community hall service provided by Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE). She explained the purpose of the review and sought input from county officers. She will be consulting other stakeholders before producing some draft proposals for ACRE. There was also an update and discussion about the previous day's National Assembly and Grand Reunion.

At our next meeting we were joined by Corinne Curtis from NALC's human resources partner Worknest to discuss the draft template contract. Following county officers' feedback, minor changes will be made before a final document is made available to all NALC members in due course. There was also discussion about experience with regional groupings of county associations and support for people living with specific health conditions.

NALC's Good Councillor Guides

We have had a few enquiries recently about how to get copies of NALC's Good Councillor Guide. Members can access these free online via the NALC website (see link below). You will need to log in to the website to do this. If you don't know the log in name and password, ask your clerk or contact Jill.

You can also access the more specialised Good Councillor Guides to neighbourhood Planning, Finance and Transparency, Transport Planning, Community Business, Cyber Security and Being a Good Employer through this link.

Paper copies are also available. But these are relatively expensive and have to be ordered through the County Officer. If you wish to order paper copies, please contact Heather.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/publications#the-good-councillor-s-guide>



News from Member Councils

Arreton Parish Council
Bembridge Parish Council
Brading Town Council
Brighstone Parish Council
Chillerton & Gatcombe Parish Council
Cowes Town Council
East Cowes Town Council
Fishbourne Parish Council
Freshwater Parish Council
Godshill Parish Council
Gurnard Parish Council
Havenstreet & Ashey Parish Council
Lake Parish Council
Nettlestone & Seaview Parish Council

Newchurch Parish Council
Newport & Carisbrooke Community Council
Niton & Whitwell Parish Council
Northwood parish Council
Rookley Parish Council
Ryde Town Council
Sandown Town Council
Shalfleet Parish Council
Shorwell Parish Council
St Helen's Parish Council
Ventnor Town Council
Wootton Bridge Parish Council
Wroxall Parish Council
Yarmouth Town Council

Fishbourne Parish Council

Following IWALC's Topic Meeting on Environmental Sustainability in June, Fishbourne Parish Council agreed at its July meeting that the Council makes should consider the environmental impact of every decision it makes.



Councils were also asked by the Editor of the Bulletin to report any plans they have for helping residents cope with the cost of living crisis. At first sight, one might think that this is not a problem for Fishbourne residents, since we are a relatively affluent parish. In fact, in a recent survey reported in The Telegraph, Fishbourne is (rightly or wrongly) ranked as the 'poshest' village on the Island! However, even in 'posh' Fishbourne, there are pockets of poverty and deprivation and some of our residents will be seriously affected by the cost of living increase, especially the soaring energy prices. The most obvious are the significant number of elderly people living in large houses.

The Council has already taken some measures to address the issue. We provide financial support to Aspire Ryde and Citizens Advice IW, and we run a monthly coffee morning, at which representatives from these two organisations are present to offer support. However, at this month's coffee morning, we decided that we need to do more. The first task will be to identify residents who are at risk.

Cllr Diana Conyers

Sandown Town Council

MEDALS MARK MERITIOUS MARINERS

Mrs Kay Marriott, the Island's High Sheriff, presented the crew of Sandown and Shanklin Independent Lifeboat with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, accompanied by Sandown Town Mayor, Cllr Paddy Lightfoot, with volunteers and family members of the Independent Lifeboat.



The medals, made of nickel silver which has been designed by Timothy Noad of the College of Arms, are awarded to members of emergency services and acts as a token of the nation's thanks to those who diligently serve the public; featuring an image of The Queen with the Latin inscription 'Elizabeth II Dei Gratia Regina Fid Def' which stands for 'Elizabeth II, By the Grace of God, Queen, Defender of the Faith'.

High Sheriff Mrs Kay Marriott said 'The selfless dedication and voluntary commitment of the Crew of the Independent Lifeboat, in Sandown and Shanklin, deserve this national recognition and the recent weather situation highlights the invaluable service they provide'.



SSIL Coxswain Mark Birch added, 'I've been fortunate to serve with the crew for over 25 years, and know first hand the time and professionalism that all put into providing this all year round voluntary service'.

Pictures Kevin Weeden

The history of awarding medals to mark Royal Jubilee's dates back to the Victorian period when the first medal was awarded to mark the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign.

Sandown Mayor, Paddy Lightfoot concluded 'It was a privilege to thank all of the crew and volunteers of the Lifeboat, as well as family members, for all that they do and, the Town Council, are working to increase our support of them'.

TOWN COUNCIL RECOGNISES BEACH SAFETY TEAM

Sandown's Town Mayor, Cllr Paddy Lightfoot presented members of the Sandown Beach Lifeguard Team with framed certificates recognising their contribution to Beach Safety in Sandown during 2023, as well as their part in securing the coveted Blue Flag Award for the second successive summer.

Paddy said 'This has been a very busy summer for the whole team, providing a 7 day service, and supporting the introduction of the accessible wheelchair initiative; and we wanted to say thank you to those for continuing to make Sandown a safe beach to visit and enjoy. '

Sandown Town Council has invested in the provision of buoys in the bay, the provision of litter bins on the beach, support to the Independent Lifeboat, opening of Pier Street Toilets for the Summer, and are in the process of replacing the toilets at Eastern Gardens with a purpose built facility with Showers and an accessible toilet.

Deputy Mayor Cllr Alex Lightfoot , who helped present the certificates, added 'This is very much a service that is being developed in a partnership between the Town Council, and Ryde Waterside Pool, and with the introduction of the Lifeguard Station this year, the service goes from strength to strength.'

Todd Miller, Beach Lifeguards Manager, concluded 'It has been a challenging summer in many ways, but the team have responded to the challenges and the support they have received in Sandown has been heartening and we have plans to develop the service further for 2023 onwards.'

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER VISITS SANDOWN

Sandown Town Mayor Cllr Paddy Lightfoot welcomed Hants & IW Police & Crime Commissioner Donna Jones, and deputy Terry Norton, on a fact-finding visit to Sandown, seeing first-hand the impact of anti-social behaviour on the derelict hotels on the seafront and in the Town.

Cllr Lightfoot said, 'We welcome the visit of the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the work of the Police, and Local Authority, to ensure derelict and vulnerable buildings are made secure and safe for residents, and more importantly owners are encouraged to take forward the developments that have proposed'.



Paddy added 'Sandown has experienced fires and other life-threatening incidents, putting residents and emergency service personnel at risk, and we know that Donna fully appreciates this, as well as the positive projects being undertaken at Sandham Grounds and with the Beach Safety Service'.

The Police & Crime Commissioner met local stakeholders and those involved in the community projects, as well as visiting other derelict sites in the Town. Paddy concluded 'We will continue to raise our concerns, and those of our residents, whenever we get the opportunity – as well as working to maintain and improve the services we provide, alongside other businesses in Sandown'.

BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/news/Beach-wheelchairs-available-for-hire>

Richard Priest (Clerk)



East Cowes Town Council

August saw the opening of The East Side Curve.

This striking new building is adjacent to the Town Hall in East Cowes.

The new building houses East Cowes Community Library and also offers a meeting room, ground floor Clerk's office and 3 fully accessible toilets (including 2 public toilets in Osborne Road).

Claire Gale (Asst Clerk)



Cowes Town Council

Whoever said August is a quiet month?! We started off with the Cowes Week sailing regatta and shoreside events, which brought the Royal Navy's HMS Severn as guard ship to Cowes; High Street decorated with flags and bunting and celebrations continued for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, with HRH Princess Anne undertaking a fleet and motor past review, transported by the charity 'Wetwheels Foundation', as part of the Solent Platinum Jubilee Celebration.



To commemorate sailor and boat designer, Uffa Fox, there were celebrations between 18th and 21st August 2022 on the Parade in Cowes. The celebrations were marking the 50th anniversary of his death and the sailing legend's life. Uffa Fox was one of the most highly regarded naval architects and an enthusiast of all aspects of sailing. He contributed to the Isle of Wight's history, being a passionate sailor and boat designer. Uffa Fox designed many sailing dinghies, keelboats and yachts, including the Airborne Lifeboat which saved the lives of many airmen during WWII. Uffa Fox was also friends with the Royal family and taught Prince Charles and Princess Anne how to sail.



Red Funnel celebrated their 160th Anniversary by planting 160 trees at a number of locations across the Island.

In Cowes, Northwood Recreation Ground has a newly planted Community Orchard, which is now bearing fruit. Cowes Town Council have been successful with a grant being awarded from Connect 4 Communities for the purchase of food vouchers for those residents identified as being most in need.

Councillor Michael Pater



Ryde Town Council

At the Full Council meeting dated Monday 5 September 2022 Mayor Michael Lilly presented motion 3/22:



That Ryde Town Council approves the following two pronged approach to supporting the Ryde community and residents through the cost-of-living crisis now but also work on a long-term solution to reduce energy costs in the future and meet net carbon targets as commitment to climate change and biosphere as per the Corporate Plan.

1. Establishment of a Ryde Warm Bank/Welcoming Place and Community Pop-Up cost-of-living crisis HUB in the Town Centre to help Ryde residents with the crisis from 1st October 2022 to 31st March 2023.
2. Work with Wight Community Energy, Basingstoke Energy Services and University of Portsmouth in gaining funding for an Audit and Action Research/Consultancy Town approach project that establishes the Town's energy needs, how much energy can be generated in the Town through solar, develop an action plan within the Ryde Place Plan, establish the cost and savings, and identify sources of future funding.

The motion was Approved in Principle and a Working Party is being set up to investigate the detail of the motion and the best, most cost effective and practical way to progress the proposal.

Allan Bridges - Business Development Manager & Deputy Clerk

Shalfleet Parish Council

Shalfleet Parish Council continued with looking at a new planning proposal for a woodland tourism and leisure project on the road into Yarmouth. A public planning meeting was held and the vote to object was loud and clear.



Shalfleet **P**arish **C**ouncil

A housing development, in Shalfleet comes under scrutiny again this month.

Ramifications with the legal semantics relating to a caravan park development has prompted us to take legal advice and support which we have submitted to the Planning Department.

The three village hall centres in the Parish are planning events to support the communities and coffee mornings and quizzes, which worked well before Covid, are underway.

Sally Woods (Clerk)

Ventnor Town Council



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO POVERTY

VTC's focus on poverty within the town dates back 10 years and has developed and supported a range of initiatives in response. The latest government Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that the half of the town's population have consistently become more deprived over the lifetime of the Index; Ventnor Central is touching the most deprived 10% nationally and Upper Ventnor is within the 20% most deprived.

The responses included:

VENTNOR FOODBANK

When the Isle of Wight Foodbank closed its Ventnor Branch in 2019 VTC supported volunteers in setting up the town's own. It is managed and run by local volunteers from its Baptist Church base and funded by local donations. No voucher or referral is required and over 1,000 people have used its services.

BABY BOX

Established as a local community project & charity helping families in need by providing nappies, baby food, clothing and other essentials. Supported by VTC and based – rent free - at the former Ventnor Youth & Community Centre in Victoria Street that VTC leases from the Isle of Wight Council.

NETWORK

Set up and funded by VTC this is an independent Job Club offering free internet access, employment advice, help with IT skills, help with writing and/or updating CVs and interview coaching. It's based at Ventnor Library in the High Street every Thursday morning.

As poverty has intensified and spread with prices of all essentials rising rapidly, VTC has either expanded some of its responses or supported new ones, including:

WELLBEING CAFE

Initially a once-a week group for a small number taken over by VTC when the Isle of Wight Council withdrew this extension of its mental health service it now meets three times a week and provides a safe space for people with anxiety, are socially isolated or have mental health problems in our Green Room area of Salisbury Gardens. It is run by a Co-ordinator employed by VTC for 45 members who decide on the activities, have an allotment, enjoy craft activities, putting and outdoor activities, arrange trips and on Fridays members prepare lunch.

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

VTC has expanded considerably the range of services provided in our Green Room, including: Mountbatten Hospice Volunteers, Citizen's Advice appointments, RNID Hearing Aid support, the National Autistic Society, RCS Employability, NHS Smoke Stop & Healthy Lifestyles, Ventnor Felting Group and Ventnor Artist's Collective workshops. It also offers free room hire for community groups and the voluntary sector.

COMMUNITY PANTRY

In June VTC supported Baby Box in setting up one of three new Community Pantries funded by the Isle of Wight Council from the Housing Support Fund in its old Ventnor Youth Centre base. Access to the community pantry is through membership, and for £5 a week, members receive over £15 worth of fresh, frozen, tinned and dry food.

FOOD AND FUEL VOUCHERS

In partnership with Ventnor Co-op, the Town Council has been able to provide several tranches of vouchers to families and individuals experiencing poverty. The vouchers could be used for groceries or fuel meter top ups. Thanks to funding from the Isle of Wight Council's connect4communities funding VTC issued almost £30,000 worth of vouchers of £25 per single person household, £50 for a couple and multiples of £25 for families.

FAMILY VOICE

In the Family Voice project VTC commissioned a documentary based entirely on the voices of residents actually at the sharp end of poverty. The documentary was launched at the September Town Council meeting and arrangements are being made for further showings of it.

David Bartlett (Clerk)

Newchurch Parish Council

Branstone Day

On 31st August all eight Newchurch Parish Councillors were present at the well-attended 'Branstone Day' event.



The Branstone Farm development is a brand-new community of homes and businesses, with the 42 residential units being 'affordable homes' for people with local ties offered for rent or shared ownership through Vectis Housing Association.

The Isle of Wight was awarded UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve status in 2019 and the Branstone development aims to put Biosphere principles into practice, shaping a better relationship between people, business and the natural world.

Applauding an affordable homes initiative, Newchurch PC voiced conditional support for the development from the outset, with two major concerns being firstly safety at the access to the site from the main Arreton road and secondly the need for a 'local tie' for residential occupants to be continued in perpetuity; the PC believes the latter of these two concerns has been addressed through appropriate legal agreements.

During the visit, councillors were particularly impressed with the designs of the houses and the quality of the building works, and the PC looks forward to welcoming residents and businesses alike to the Parish.

<https://www.islandecho.co.uk/first-branstone-day-hailed-a-success-as-development-prepares-to-welcome-first-occupiers/>

CLLr Roy Bevan (Chair)

Rookley Parish Council

Following the retirement of Clerk, Mike Taplin, from October 1st Rookley's new Clerk will be Valentina (Tina) Bailey...a name which will be familiar to many of you!



Wroxall Parish Council

Jackie Gallop is Wroxall's new Clerk, following the retirement of Mike Taplin.



Arreton Parish Council

The recent awful flooding in parts of Arreton has taken up a lot of the Parish Council's time.

The flood, which affected part of the main road through the village, was caused by a combination of extremely dry ground, recently harvested fields and a cloudburst of epic proportions.

Residents were not helped by drivers who insisted on driving through the floodwater at excessive speeds for the conditions, thereby causing waves that inundated the affected properties even more.

Island Roads have been out cleaning up, as have some of the local landowners whose fields border the road. However, residents are still having to move tonnes of silt from their properties.

Sheila Caws (Clerk)



Gurnard Parish Council

Most councillors have had a busy Summer but not one entirely focused on council business; there was no call this August for an emergency council meeting to consider controversial planning applications.

Instead all councillors were heartened that an appeal, against rejection of development outside the Neighbourhood Plan's settlement boundary, was refused. It helps to prove the value of the Neighbourhood Plan and will provide encouragement when the Plan requires up-dating.

It seems appropriate, with all the work and meetings held by IWALC focused on the environment alongside the frightening warnings coming from scientific circles about the cliff edge facing the planet, that our Environmental Policy is due for review at the next meeting; there is a lot to consider. The Beach Working Party members have made some progress with looking into water quality and the possibility of tests being carried out as has happened in East Cowes.

It is possible that the BBC Dispatches programme has actually been counter-productive however as they gave Gurnard a clean bill of health. At the moment the expense of testing is looking quite frightening at a time when so many people are having to tighten their belts, however the beach area was quite smelly after recent heavy rainfall and CSOs and water quality need to continue to be a focus.

Two councillors who attended a workshop with Southern Water were dismayed by the lack of awareness about the Island situation shown by those SW employees guiding discussion. Perhaps it is sustained pressure from local councils and other Island groups which has helped to change the Island MP's mind about holding water companies to account as seems to be the case to judge from a recent speech; let's hope he can maintain this view.

Considerable time has been spent looking at a GPC managed green site and through a process of compromise and tactful intervention by our Chair we hope that the Old School Meadow site can be managed to the best effect for both local residents and visiting users while making space for increasing biodiversity too.

There is a lot local councils can do and it helps when we can work together. The role played by IWALC in helping to share interesting practice and ideas from other local councils has been important.

Cllr Penny Acton



Other News...

Despite the cancellation of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race, we would like to thank Town, Parish and Community Councils for all of the support they have given to the organization of the event.

Gavin Foster (Robertson Foster Ltd)



Dear all

Everyone associated with the AJ Bell Tour of Britain would like to express our great sadness at the passing of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

We can also confirm that, in line with the cancellation of other major sporting events across the UK this weekend, the AJ Bell Tour of Britain race planned for Sunday Sept 11 will not now take place. This decision has been taken as a mark of respect for Her late Majesty and also in light of operational circumstances, including the understandable reassignment of police resource at this time.

The cancellation of Sunday's events means that all traffic restrictions, whether they be road closures or parking restrictions, will no longer apply. Road signs highlighting these restrictions will be collected over the weekend.

We would like to sincerely thank all our stakeholders for the support and co-operation you have shown in recent months. We remain in conversations with the event organiser, Sweetspot, as we look to the possibility of hosting a future race stage. Should that come about, the assistance and co-operation shown by everyone will stand us in very good stead.

I am sure you will understand the reasons for the cancellation and agree work undertaken so far, and the positive relationships established, leave us well prepared for future events. Pre-event publicity has also been very positive for the Island.

If you have any questions you can also reach us in the following ways:



touofbritain@iow.gov.uk



01983 823800



Tour of Britain, Neighbourhoods, IW Council, County Hall, Newport, PO30 1UD

Isle of Wight Day

Due to the death of her Majesty, The Queen, the decision has been taken to postpone Isle of Wight Day which was to have been on Saturday September 17th.

A new date will be announced shortly.

David Thornton



IW Walking Festival

Autumn edition, first 50 walks now live and bookable!

It's almost time to lace up your walking boots and get ready for the Autumn edition of the Isle of Wight Walking Festival, taking place from 8th to 16th October. The first 50 guided treks are now live and bookable!

Run by guided by volunteer walk leaders from groups such as the Isle of Wight Ramblers Association, the New Carnival Company, the National Trust as well as local businesses, there's plenty of walks on offer across the whole Island and for all fitness abilities.

To sign up for a walk or two head to isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk or if you would like to lead a walk yourself in your community, get in touch with the event organisers Sarah and Jo at walking@visitwight.org



News from the IWC

The deadline for Islanders to claim their £150 energy rebate has been extended. With more than 90 per cent of eligible residents having received the payment, the Isle of Wight Council is urging the remaining 4,400 households not to miss out. The closing date has been extended until 16 September to encourage a final take up of the £150 payment from government to assist with energy bills.



The council has also arranged two drop-in sessions to help guide residents through the application process. These will be held at Ryde Help Centre on Tuesday, 13 September, between 9am and 5pm, and County Hall, Newport, on Thursday, 15 September, between 8.30am and 5pm. There is no need to book an appointment. Residents are asked to bring a recent bank statement for the account they wish to deposit the payment.

Isle of Wight households have so far received a total of £7,551,900. The rules of the scheme are that each eligible household receives one payment of £150 paid to the person named on the council tax bill.

The letters sent out to people who pay by cash contain a unique code, enabling them to complete a short application online so payment can be made. The scheme also requires local councils to do fraud checking to ensure payments are made to the correct person.

Councillor Chris Jarman, Cabinet member for strategic finances said: “Our message is simple — don’t miss out! We know many people face huge difficulties with rising energy bills and that is why we are working hard to encourage households to apply for the support they are entitled to. The worst case is that unclaimed funds return to central government.”

Households who have not yet applied for funding can also go to the council website:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Benefits-Council-Tax-and-Business-Rates/Council-Tax-Services/Council-Tax/Energy-rebate>

The local authority has also been given government funding for discretionary pay-outs to assist those not eligible for an energy rebate under the main scheme. This is for households in council tax bands E-H in receipt of local council tax support, housing benefit or universal credit.

Further details can also be found here: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Benefits-Council-Tax-and-Business-Rates/Council-Tax-Services/Council-Tax/Energy-rebate>

There are than 5,000 Isle of Wight residents on lower incomes who are presently in receipt of local council tax support. In the context of the current cost-of-living crisis, the Isle of Wight Council is launching a consultation over the next two months to consider whether the scheme that supports these Islanders should be amended. The implications of changes to the scheme could affect both recipients of local council tax support as well as users of council services more widely and therefore will be open to all residents to participate.

The results of the consultation form part of the decision-making process for setting council tax and the overall council budget next year.

The main options included in the consultation include:

- keeping the level of support as it is at 65%
- increasing the top level of support from 65% to 70%,
- increasing the level of earnings disregard from £25 to £30 per week.
- reducing the amount of support offered to low-income groups.
- Another new option in the consultation is to consider whether to decrease the non-dependant deduction from £2 to £1 a week. This would help claimants who have other adults living with them by over £50 a year.

Each of the options has a significant impact on the council budget. Higher levels of relief would require savings and cuts elsewhere. Lower levels of relief could lead to an increase in council tax arrears and lower levels of Council Tax collection.

Councillor Chris Jarman, Cabinet member for Strategic Finances said: "Nearly 4% of Islanders presently receive Local Council Tax Support. The cost-of-living crisis is having a profound impact on residents on lower incomes. The forecast is for this to continue and indeed become more severe due to further rises in utility costs. The council needs to ensure that it has a balanced budget and to cover its statutory responsibilities, it must also be mindful of the impact of Council Tax on already stretched household budgets. It is important that all Islanders have the opportunity to comment on the options as we start to make difficult decisions about council finances for 2023-4."

Any changes will relate to working age residents only. Those of pension age will not be affected.

It's not too late for groups and organisations to apply for grants that will help them support those in need in their communities. The Isle of Wight Council has increased the amount of funding available to £115,000 to support projects that will help families and individuals facing food and fuel poverty.

Since the scheme launched the council has received six applications ranging from £1,500 to £5,000 from organisations including East Cowes Town Council and Victim Support. Now more organisations are being urged to apply before the September deadline, with bids from town, parish and community councils particularly welcome.

Full guidance and the application form is available here (www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities/communitygrants-overview/community-grants-iow).

Councillor Debbie Andre, Cabinet member for children's services, said: "I'm glad we can offer funding to organisations who are helping families and individuals experiencing financial hardship. By working with partner organisations to deliver a range of schemes we aim to reach as many Island residents as possible. The rising cost of living is a challenge for most people, but it is especially difficult for low-income families with children, as well as pensioners, who might be struggling with food and utility bills. I would like to urge voluntary, charity and community groups across the Island to apply for a community grant and help to make a positive difference to the lives of local people."

The latest community grants are funded by the £1.13 million Household Support Fund, provided to local authorities by the Department for Work and Pensions to support vulnerable households, especially with the cost of food and energy bills.

Rising Energy Bills

For information and help with rising energy bills please check out the following-

IWC website (<https://www.iow.gov.uk/>)

The Footprint Trust - Energy Champions (https://footprint-trust.co.uk/?doing_wp_cron=1663079882.2155880928039550781250)

Future Isle of Wight (<https://futureiow.co.uk/>)

Age UK (<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/isleofwight/>)

Warm Up Wight - JJ Crumb (<https://www.jjcrump.com/warm-up-wight/>)

Scam Alerts-

Covid scams haven't gone away and they probably won't for some considerable time so please be cautious if you receive an email or text purporting to be from the NHS. This recent scam states that you have been in contact with somebody who has tested positive for the new Omicron variant and instructs you to send for a FREE PCR test. If you click on the link you will then be asked for your information and your bank details to pay for the 99p postage. Whilst this might seem a small amount you will have given the scammers all of your details and your card details which they can then use or sell on potentially taking all of your money. Remember – there is no longer any track and trace so nobody will know if you have been with anyone who has tested positive – NEVER click on links in text and emails.



One resident received a call from a company stating that he was in the wrong tax band and the company could save him money and could backdate the refund to 1991 and he would get a full refund of over £7000! All he had to do was pay £195.00 over the phone using his card. Fortunately the resident asked them to put it in writing which they obviously refused and he realised it was a scam. If you believe you are in the wrong tax band you can challenge it yourself – information can be found on the Government website Challenge your Council Tax band: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The council is currently processing energy rebates and report that a customer has had a text advising her to click on the link to apply – this is a scam you do not need to apply the Council any rebates will be issued automatically – NEVER click on links in emails and texts.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau is warning the public about the continued increase in reports about scams where criminals pretend to be someone you know (usually your children) on Whatsapp. Criminals will usually begin the conversation with “Hello Mum” or “Hello Dad” and will say that they are texting from a new mobile number as their phone was lost or damaged. They will then ask for money to purchase a new one, or claim that they need money urgently to pay a bill. The criminal will provide bank details for the payment to be made to, with some coming back with further demands for money.

How to protect yourself:

- STOP. THINK. CALL. If a family member or friend makes an unusual request on WhatsApp, always call the person to confirm their identity.
- You can report spam messages or block a sender within WhatsApp. Press and hold on the message bubble, select 'Report' and then follow the instructions.
- Never share your account's activation code (that's the 6 digit code you receive via SMS)

Action Fraud is warning the public about a sharp rise in reports relating to fake emails purporting to be from Ofgem, the independent energy regulator for Great Britain. The emails claim that the recipient is due a rebate payment as part of a government scheme and provides links for the recipient to follow in order to apply for the rebate. The links in the emails lead to malicious websites designed to steal personal and financial information

All the emails display the email subject header “Claim your bill rebate now”. Offenders are using the Ofgem brand logo and colours to make the emails look as authentic as possible. However, the emails ask recipients to “apply for an energy bill rebate before September 2020”, which is what prompted many recipients to realise the emails weren't genuine.

- We are all struggling at the moment and it might be tempting to try to claim a rebate but DON'T engage this is a SCAM

We have also been told that delivery scam texts are doing the rounds again they are requesting a shipping fee and asking you to click on a link – these are phishing scams designed to take your details which will be sold on to scammers around the world.

Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)



Community Action Isle of Wight

FREE online training courses are offered by the Community Resilience Project to people who live and/or work or volunteer on the Isle of Wight, thanks to grant funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF), distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF):

Community Action Isle of Wight



HM Government

In partnership with

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND

- **Introduction to storytelling for community groups and other organisation** (live online) - 22 September 2022 (10:00-13:00).
- **Time management skills** (live online) - 29 September 2022 (10:00-13:00).
- **Project management skills** training course comprising 4 x 3-hr online sessions (all four sessions must be attended to receive a certificate): 11, 13, 17 & 21 October 2022 (10:00-13:00)
- Two intakes of the **Motivational Interviewing** training comprising 3 x 3hr online sessions (all three sessions must be attended to receive a certificate):
Intake One: 3, 5 & 7 October 2022 (10:00-13:00)
Intake Two: 25, 28 & 31 October 2022 (10:00-13:00)

To book your place on any of the FREE courses listed above, please email: zodonnell@actioniw.org.uk

Zoryna O'Donnell (Volunteer Training Coordinator - Community Resilience Project)

More news from Community Action IW

Community Action's Resilience programme continues to develop its work across its five project localities, each combining a cluster of local councils with shared interests and challenges. The networks of mutual aid built up during through the pandemic remain important tools for local action especially with the mounting cost of living pressures on individuals and their communities.

There will be an opportunity to meet the whole Resilience team and learn more about their current and future work at the Hullabaloo festival in Sandown taking place on the 15th and 16th October at Browns Golf Course. The festival is completely free and features a host of activities, presentations and exhibitions, all themed around the Island's cultural life and natural environment. You will be able to find out more over the coming weeks on the event website <https://www.hullabalooiw.com/>

The Resilience team is awaiting funding news will extend its work for another 4 years, developing new opportunities to connect local councils with the Island's UNESCO Biosphere status.

Ian Boyd

Together for Mission Zero

Accelerating the Island's Journey to a Net Zero Community Join us on 21 Sept, Vestas, Newport

Together for Mission Zero Isle of Wight is a newly formed group that has come together as a response to our climate emergency. Our objective is to provide a platform from which our island community can deliver the mission zero targets as set out by the Isle of Wight Council in 2021. IOW Mission Zero Strategy 2021-2040

We are looking to engage as widely as possible across the island's communities and stakeholders, encouraging action at all levels. We recognize the importance of town and parish councils as a key layer between policy makers and individual community members, so we are very grateful to be able to introduce the platform through the IWALC. Our next event at Vestas, Newport, on 21 Sept will dedicate time to discussing the role of parish councils in making this transition happen and we welcome the IWALC community to join us there. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/action-towards-mission-zero-at-different-scales-a-focus-on-energy-tickets-398189665007>



Why this platform and why now?

In April 2022, the IPCC'S third report stated that it is 'now or never' if the world is to stave off climate disaster. A century of rising emissions must end before 2025 to keep global heating under 1.5C.

In 2019, the Isle of Wight Council declared a climate emergency and in 2021 published the IOW Mission Zero Strategy.

Although committed to providing an enabling environment, the Isle of Wight Council alone is not in a position to deliver on this challenge. Delivery of the strategy will require changes to how we live and operate as an island across local businesses, policy makers, public services, utility and transport providers, educators, civil society, individuals etc

The TFMZ Isle of Wight platform was formed in 2021, with support from the Isle of Wight Council, to build a network of action. We work closely with the council's Environment and Sustainability Forum and TFMZ is also connected with and supporting the activation of nine hubs. These are being formed as a direct outcome of the Mission Zero Strategy and target specific challenges within certain segments such as land use or transport.

The awarding by UNESCO of the island's biosphere status provides an overarching framework for our mission zero actions within its wider people, culture and environment scope.

How does the TFMZ platform work?

It is intended to be a peer- learning "space" where anyone with ideas can come, and with the help of the community feel encouraged and empowered to make change happen.

In practical terms, we run networking events, a facebook page, and support the many subsequent meetings and interconnections that are generated from them. The Together for Mission Zero website is due to be launched this autumn.

We are also currently mapping and looking to support:

- Island mission zero projects;
- Who needs help or connection with like-minded groups or individuals;
- Who has an idea they need to get off the ground;
- Who has skills or resources that can contribute to any mission zero activity. etc.

The next event at Vestas on 21 Sept will build on two previous successfully events in Quay Arts in March 2022 and Café Isola in June. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/action-towards-mission-zero-at-different-scales-a-focus-on-energy-tickets-398189665007>

What does this mean at Parish and community level?

While many solutions are in the hands of big decision makers, we can all can make a difference within our work, own households and immediate community. Local councils and community groups are arguably the first organizational level at which we can reach to help bring about the changes we need.

We believe there is an opportunity for TFMZ to connect with IWALC members to:

- Highlight how decisions made at parish and community level can steer change in the direction we need
- Support and promote work they are doing for climate change.
- Encourage the connections and influence of parish and town councils to promote more community ction.
- Better understand the challenges that our communities face with making necessary lifestyle changes, so we can initiate activities to help

Getting involved

Success is reliant on building critical mass of active participants, and we need as many people as possible to get involved in whatever form they can to contribute to the change.

Please join us at Vestas (Stag Lane, Newport) on 21 Sept, where we will dedicate part of the agenda to discuss the role of town and parish councils in the transition. You can reserve your place here - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/action-towards-mission-zero-at-different-scales-a-focus-on-energy-tickets-398189665007>

We are also encouraging people to access the Facebook page Together for Mission Zero IOW (facebook.com) and contribute to the dialogue. https://m.facebook.com/groups/3150728461883192/#_=_

Also please feel free to contact us directly– I can be reached on tristan.harris@portinateconsulting.com

Tristan Harris

Chamber of Commerce

IW Chamber Business Expo 2022

The IW Chamber's flagship networking event is back at the Lakeside Park Hotel in Wootton on Wednesday 14th September 2022 for a packed day of business opportunities.

Be part of the biggest day of the year for business networking! Doors open at 10am and it's free entry for visitors until 4pm.

Join us for a day of top-quality business-to-business networking, all welcome members and non-members.

Sponsored by WightFibre, with supporting sponsors All Things Printed, Fortis Energy, Island Roasted, Get Set Solent, Hillbans Pest Control, PC Consultants, Vectis Business Link and Vehicle Consulting Solent..

Don't miss the opportunity to take part in the Island's biggest business networking event.

It's the biggest day of the business calendar, full of potential opportunities for you to grow your business base and meet like-minded people.

Find out more via <https://www.iwchamber.co.uk/event-directory/expo/>

Emma Spinelli



Monthly Report from MP Bob Seely

Parliamentary Recess

Parliamentary recess means I have more time to get out and about and catch up with Islanders in person which makes a nice change from talking to people through a screen.

I chatted recently with some of the leadership team at the IW College in their very smart new business centre. They have some fantastic plans for both The Isle of Wight College and Cecamm. It was great to hear about how they are spending government money to benefit Island students. Over the past few years, the college has received several million pounds in government investment. They are doing a fantastic job in putting bids forward and I've been pleased to be able to help by making their case for further funding to ministers.



I also caught up with Superintendent Jim Pegler, IW Chief Inspector Alex Charge and Police & Crime Commissioner Donna Jones to discuss policing on the Isle of Wight. We discussed how some of the ways they record crime can appear to drive crime figures up, but I was pleased to hear that burglary and criminal damage is low on the Island and that, in overall terms, the Island compares favourably with mainland areas for detecting crime.

I visited a few Island businesses including the Island Riding Centre which has been providing activities for children throughout the Summer through the government-funded Holiday Activity and Food Programme.

I also popped by Calbourne Water Mill to hear about their exciting future plans. It was fascinating to see how the milling process works and to view all the wonderful products they make. I have always been a big fan of the Water Mill porridge and incredibly good jams! I am delighted that the family remains committed to preserving the Mill for future generations and I'm keen to assist them however I can.

I was also pleased to attend the launch of fabulous new Briddlesford Red cheese made with milk from the farm's Guernsey cows.

In addition, I attended the Campaign for Real Ale Awards in Northwood, chatting with publicans, brewers and real ale drinkers. I'm fully aware of the impact of rising energy bills on pubs and businesses and I'm exploring what can be done about it.

I also caught up with the team working on the Spitfire restoration project in Sandown. Excellent progress has been made since my last visit. They are really keen to get young people engaged in this work and they are also using apprentices to make some of the parts. I am keen for young Islanders to become engaged in this so I will be working with the team to ensure our secondary schools and colleges are given the chance to get involved.

I met up with Keith Greenfield and Dean Murphy from Wightlink to hear more about the government-funded works to upgrade the old Ryde tramway pier to a pedestrian walkway. It was good to hear that Wightlink, Island Roads and the Isle of Wight Council are working well together on the new Ryde Transport Interchange scheme.

Cost of Living

The government has put in place a £37 billion support package to help with the Cost of Living.

On the Island around 18,300 families will now be eligible for a means-tested benefit Cost of Living Payment and around 17,300 individuals will be eligible for a disability Cost of Living Payment.

Eligible families should now have received an initial payment of £326 and will receive a further payment of £324 this Autumn.

In addition to the £650 Cost of Living Payment, all domestic energy customers in the UK will receive a £400 grant to help with energy bills, and those in Council Tax bands A-D in England will get an extra £150, which has already been sent to many households. This brings support for millions to £1,200 by the end of the year to ease Cost of Living pressures.

On top of that, nearly one in ten people will get the £150 disability payment this Autumn, and over 8 million pensioner households could get an extra £300 from Winter Fuel Payments in November and December.

Payments from the Household Support Fund comes in addition to this, which was recently extended through to March 2023 with £421 million additional funding. It is now worth £1.263 billion, and combined with £237 million for devolved nations, means this support package now stands at £1.5 billion. The Household Support Fund is designed to help low-income households in England with food and energy bills, and is distributed by local councils.

The Government has allocated the Island £1.1 million from its Household Support Fund to support Islanders with the cost of living.

Some of this allocation is available to Islanders through Citizens Advice Isle of Wight. The charity can receive applications for assistance from families or individuals who are experiencing hardship and struggling to pay utility bills, especially for gas and electricity.

A simple test of eligibility is to see if you are spending more than 10% of your income on fuel bills. Add up all the income coming into your home and divide by 10, if that figure is less than what you are paying for fuel Citizens Advice IW can consider how to help. This usually means all, or parts, of outstanding bills may be paid off. Please visit <https://www.islehelp.me/> or phone 01983 823859 and leave a message to speak to the charity.

You can also read more about the government's Cost of Living support and what is available here <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

Sewage

The Government is taking action to significantly reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows, and it is the first government to do so.

Water companies are now required to deliver the largest infrastructure programme in water company history - £56 billion capital investment over 25 years to tackle storm sewage discharges.

The Government has set out its plans as follows:

- By 2035, the environmental impacts of 75% of storm overflows affecting the most important protected environmental sites will have been eliminated.
- By 2035, there will be 70% fewer discharges into bathing waters.
- By 2040, approximately 160,000 discharges, on average, will have been eliminated with approximately 320,000 discharges, on average, eliminated by 2050.

As the Government's ground-breaking Environment Bill was being debated, I talked to Southern Water and persuaded them of the need to act – and act BIG.

As a result, the Isle of Wight is now one of Southern Water's national 'pathfinder' sites which means we will see multi-million-pound investment work taking place to significantly reduce sewage and storm overflows into the seas around the Island.

The scheme to improve the environmental condition of Isle of Wight rivers and beaches is the single largest scheme by Southern Water in Britain.

The plans set out by Government today will build on that further. We are going to reverse fifty years of increasing environmental pollution.

Solving this problem is not going to be a quick fix. Government must strike a careful balance between environmental ambition and the impact on bills, but, thanks to new laws, the water firms are now under increasing pressure to fix this issue.

I have made sure the Island is a priority and we will see improvements here first.

Joint Ferry and Rail Tickets

I am aware that Islanders are keen to be able to purchase through-tickets at ferry terminals for onward rail journeys. As a regular commuter myself, I understand the desire for this.

I raised the issue with Wightlink's Chief Executive, Keith Greenfield, who said he was keen to provide ticket machines at Ryde and Yarmouth terminals to enable this.

Unfortunately, there apparently is red tape within the DfT preventing this from happening, which is very frustrating.

I have raised the issue with the Secretary of State, Grant Shapps, to see what can be done.

Parliament Week

If you know of a school or organisation who would be willing to take part in UK Parliament Week – 14-20 November 2022 please do share this link with them! Thank you.

<https://www.ukparliamentweek.org/en/sign-up/>

Bob Seely MP





WELCOMING NEW PRINCIPAL, ROS PARKER

After 18 years' exceptional leadership of the Isle of Wight College, Debbie Lavin CBE has stepped down from her role as Principal and, as the new academic year begins, the college community are pleased to welcome Ros Parker OBE as their new Principal.

Ros has a wealth of experience in the further and adult education sector, most recently as Principal of Southend Adult Community College, where, in 2021, she was awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for her substantial contribution to services in adult education and the community. Prior to that she was Principal of Prospects College of Advanced Technology (PROCAT) in Basildon.

Dr Nick England DL, Chair of Governors, said:

"The college is benefiting from a multi-million pound government investment in training equipment and modernising our campus buildings. This is alongside the recent opening of our Skillslabs Business Centre and the award of University Centre status. Ros will play a key role in taking forward our plans to ensure we continue to meet the skills needs of island employers and to ensure we provide all students with high quality training and education".

"I am delighted to be relocating to the island and starting my new role. This is a very exciting time for the Isle of Wight College, with the introduction of T Levels and new courses such as e-Sports this September. I am looking forward to meeting new and returning students over the coming weeks, as well as local employers and wider stakeholders".



Red Funnel

Jean's House open day

Red Funnel's Charity of the Year, Young Lives vs Cancer, hosted an open day in July at Jean's House, a home from home close to Southampton General Hospital.



Red Funnel, with the support of Albert Harrison & Co and Wenlock Spring, donated a variety of goods ranging from sweets and canned goods to toiletries and games, which were gifted to Jean's House for the open day by Red Funnel members of staff.

Young Lives vs Cancer was announced as Red Funnel's 2022 charity of the year in January. Red Funnel continues to support Young Lives vs Cancer, with ongoing fundraising campaigns such as customer donations, sports competitions and volunteering.

All funds raised by Red Funnel will help Young Lives vs Cancer to support children and young people, from babies up to the age of 24 years old.

Tree donations

As part of Red Funnel's ongoing 160th birthday celebrations, Red Funnel gifted 160 trees to 11 different partners around the Isle of Wight.

Red Funnel donated four Carpinus Betula trees at The Island Learning Centre and a further 22 trees at the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, to offer all visitors at both venues the chance to enjoy the new outdoor areas.

Fran Collins, CEO of Red Funnel, said: "We are extremely proud to partner with the community to contribute to such an important aspect of what makes the Island so unique: its scenic spaces and biodiversity. To celebrate 160 years of serving the Isle of Wight, we wanted to thank local businesses and residents, like the team at the Island Learning Centre and the Steam Railway, for all the amazing work they do. By donating these trees, they will really help to help create green spaces where people can relax and reflect."

The project brings together Island partners and residents to look back on Red Funnel's history and to plant the seed for the next 160 years.

Sustainable staycations

Red Funnel has been part of the conversation around the increased cost of flying and holidaymakers concerns about the climate leading to more and more staycations.

The closer to home people stay, the smaller their carbon footprint, making staycations the best choice for the environment. The 'staycation' boomed during Covid times and now, as we re-adjust to a post-pandemic world, those looking for sustainable holiday options are still embracing the trend, opting to explore what is on their doorsteps rather than booking holidays abroad.

Josey Page (Account Executive)



Wightlink



It was wonderful to carry so many happy holidaymakers across the Solent during the summer months, especially as we've enjoyed such great weather, but now it's time to take a bit of a breather as the youngsters return to school and autumn is just around the corner.

We hope you managed to get a break in the last few weeks to make the most of our beautiful Island or travel further afield. Thank you if you chose to travel with Wightlink over the summer.

Ways to save on Wightlink fares

This autumn looks likely to be challenging for many people because of the cost-of-living crisis. We thought we would update you on how you can save money on our ferry fares.

Your copy of Wightlink's Island Link brochure will arrive on your doormat in mid-October containing discount vouchers and a useful list of how to save money on Wightlink tickets, together with the latest news and information about our services.

Islander fares are always cheaper than fares from the mainland with further discounts for senior citizens, disabled people, children, students, apprentices and teachers. Many large organisations such as the NHS and 'Blue Light' services offer discounts for their staff or members.

Here's a summary of some of the most popular Wightlink discounts, you can see all of them on this webpage, if you scroll down to the bottom: <https://www.wightlink.co.uk/island-link#discountsmore-ways-to-save>

- Season Tickets: Unlimited foot passenger travel, from £5.22 per day. Book online
- Multilink Passes: With a Multilink Pass you can travel for as little as £23.95 for a car and up to 7 people. Buy online
- Mylink: Discounted foot passenger travel to the mainland and 15% off standard hot drinks. Sign up online.
- Healthcare: 50% discount on vehicle and foot passenger fares for Islanders travelling to the mainland for NHS-arranged appointments. Book in advance on 0333 999 7333 or on the day of travel at a Wightlink Customer Service Point. You will need your appointment letter when collecting tickets.
- Discounted Fares Scheme: Eligible low-income households can access travel to the mainland on foot and by cars and motorbikes through a fixed price discount. See our discounts and offers section online for more details and how to apply.
- Tesco Clubcard: Book online.
- Motorhomes: Owners can save up to 35% on off-peak sailings, based on a 7m motorhome., Book online.
- Afternoon Flyer: Depart after 12:00 and return by 04:30 the following day. Fares from £15.20 (adults) Book in advance online.

Investing in our ships

We started 'refit season' early this year as all of our eight-strong fleet need to be taken out of the water for dry-docking before spring 2023.

The first ship, Wight Sky, will travel to Falmouth in early September. The last one to head to the dockyard for essential maintenance will be Victoria of Wight in February. Pictured, an archive photo of a FastCat refit.



Harbour station unveiled

Wightlink's new-look Harbour station is now open again after major repairs and renovations. We are sorry the work took longer than expected and some customers were inconvenienced. It's because we found more issues to deal with inside the 19th century building. Thanks for bearing with us while the terminal was completely rebuilt. Contractors have now arrived at Ryde Pier and their transformation of the old tramway into a modern walkway will start in September and is expected to be completed in the spring.

Changing Places

Our first Changing Place toilet for disabled people will open at our Portsmouth car ferry terminal next month, the second will be built next year on Ryde Pier. Please pass the word on to anyone you know who may need this invaluable facility.

As Gunwharf port is operational round-the-clock, it will be available 24/7.

Ferry history

And finally, while clearing out an old shipping container at Gunwharf, we came across some copies of an excellent history of Wightlink's three routes going right back to the 19th century. Solent Seaways was written by ferry expert John Hendy.

If readers of this bulletin would like a book, please drop a line to karenwoods@wightlink.co.uk with your postal address.

Karen Woods (Communications & PR)

Island Roads

Nine new electric cars drive Island Roads' green ambition



Island Roads has taken charge of nine new electric vehicles. The continued switch by the company to electric vehicles wherever possible is part of its strategy to achieve a 40 percent carbon reduction within seven years and ultimately, by 2050, become completely carbon neutral.

The purchase of the nine latest electric vehicles - six Renault Kangoo's and three Nissan E-NV200s – will be complemented by plans to introduce up to a further ten electric vehicles next financial year.

Island Roads, which has been using electric vehicles since 2013, is initially looking to replace vans that are used within the business to make a high number of short local journeys, such as vehicles used by highway inspectors.

The charging infrastructure at Island Roads' HQ at St Christopher House, Dodnor, and also the winter maintenance depot at Stag Lane has recently been upgraded ready for the new arrivals.



Steve Ashman, Island Roads service director said:

“These new vehicles are a further positive step towards our wider aims of reducing our carbon footprint, but we are under no illusions there is much more to do if we are to achieve these ambitious targets. “Our approach is to, wherever possible, upgrade electric vehicles year on year as our existing fleet needs replacing. The vans we have just received will replace those brought in 2013 and are now at the end of their lives. In a multi-faceted business like ours there are many things to be considered, so change cannot be achieved overnight. But we are determined to achieve our carbon reduction goals in the coming years, and the ongoing introduction of electric vehicles as and when technology allows will continue to be a big part of that.”

Island Roads has also introduced environmentally-conscious measures elsewhere in the business, which were recognised last year when it was awarded a gold award from Green Impact, a United Nations award-winning environmental programme backed locally by the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce.

These steps include recycling 95% of the material from gully cleansing into re-useable aggregates, and the use of more than 25,000 tonnes of recycled materials in our road upgrade programme. Our head office at St Christopher House was built with energy efficiency and carbon reduction in mind as it makes use of photo-voltaic and thermal power, air source heat pumps and rainwater harvesting systems.

You can see more about Island Roads' sustainability by watching a short film here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj7nByhYkN8>

Belgrave Road Works Update

Work on the project to rebuild and re-open Belgrave Road is intensifying ahead of an Autumn completion.

After months of stabilisation work including the insertion of over 180 soil nails to anchor the ground across the site, Island Roads has begun to reconstruct the new reinforced concrete walls - a key milestone in the project. Later, stone masonry cladding will be fixed to the three sections of new walls to keep the appearance of the structure in keeping with the local surroundings. While the focus remains very much on completing the scheme to schedule so Belgrave Road can once again be open, the project continues to gain national interest from the civil engineering profession.



Earlier this month, a delegation from the Institution of Civil Engineers visited the site to study the location and learn about the solutions being applied. Island Roads senior project manager Jason Boulter said: “The Belgrave Road scheme is considered a pretty unique site within the industry and there is a lot of interest in how we are dealing with the local challenges. “The visit was a timely one as it came as this new phase of work in which we start to rebuild the new reinforced walls is really starting to take shape. Residents will continue to see progress as we work towards the substantial completion of the project in November.”

Once completed, the finished scheme at Belgrave Road will, as per our instructions, be returned to the same street layout (pavement and carriageway width) as it was prior to the wall collapse. Jason said: “Once again, we’d really like to thank the local community for their understanding and support during this work.”

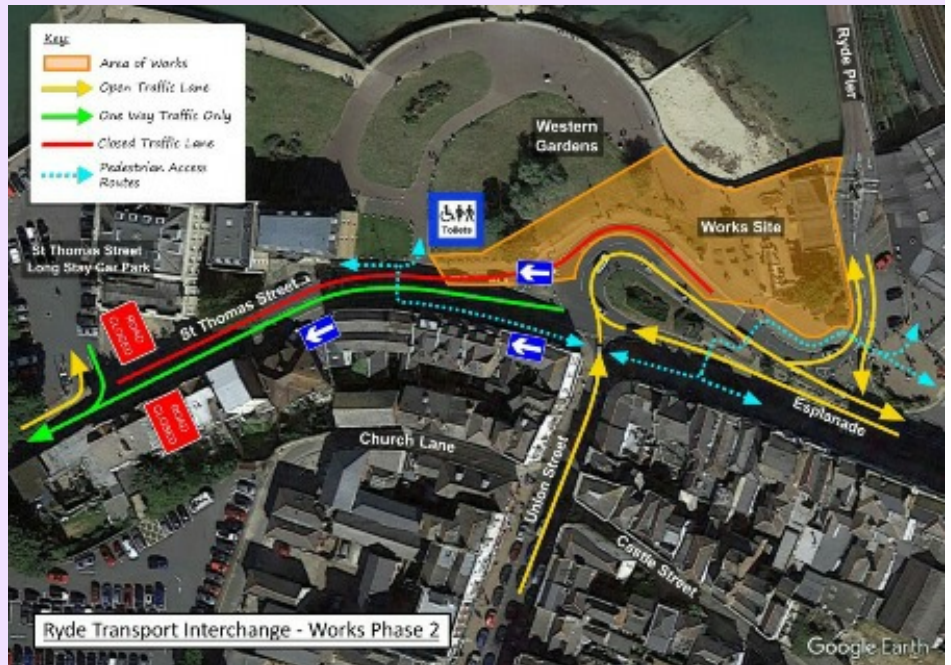
Cllr Phil Jordan, IW Council cabinet member for highways and transportation visited the site recently to witness the progress being made. He said: “It was really good to see a local company, Stoneham Construction, have been contracted to deliver the work, and it is clear they are doing a great job. The scheme is really now beginning to take shape and I look forward to the completion of the works.”

Picture shows Cllr Jordan on site with John Sunderland, Island Roads regional director.

Ryde Interchange Project -update

As you know, various partners including the Isle of Wight Council, Wightlink, Southern Vectis and the railway companies are currently collaborating on a scheme to provide better travel connectivity at the interchange as well as much-improved public space for residents and visitors.

Island Roads is working on the Isle of Wight Council element of the project. This work includes the creation of more amenity space, improved pedestrian and cycle links through the Esplanade area and a new layout to the bus station which



will enable buses to leave directly on to George Street rather than having to turn at the Dover Street roundabout. There will also be new street furniture and planting throughout the Esplanade. The work is being paid for using Government grant from the Transforming Cities Fund.

From September 11th work on the site began extending to create both a new vehicular access to the pier (which uses less amenity space than the current arrangement) and also a new shared use footway/cycleway alongside Western Gardens. This work will mean there will be some small temporary adjustments for traffic using St Thomas' Street and for pedestrians accessing Western Garden.

St Thomas Street The lower section of St Thomas' Street between the car park and the Esplanade will be one-way. Traffic will be able to travel up St Thomas' Street as normal but traffic coming down the hill will only be able to go as far as (and including) the lower St Thomas' Street car park. Therefore, cars wanting to access Ryde Pier and the Esplanade will have to use Union Street.

Western Gardens pedestrian access There will be a short diversion in place for people wishing to access Western Garden from the east (pier, bus station, Hovertravel etc). While work is ongoing, pedestrians will not be able to access the garden by walking along the current footway on the northern (seaside) section of the Esplanade. Instead, they will have to cross the road at the existing pedestrian crossing outside The King Lud and then cross again at the foot of Union Street to get to Western Gardens, which is also where the temporary toilets are located. The gardens will still be accessible from the usual approaches to the west.

There will be a short overlap between the completion of the current work at the Rose Gardens and Ryde Superbowl and the start of the new phase at Western Gardens and these works will be completed later this month.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your co-operation and support during this project.

Ryde safety scheme to strengthen Queens Road wall

Island Roads is to begin major work to repair and strengthen a section of wall in Queen's Road, Ryde, next month. The work along a 40-metre section of the retaining wall will mean Queen's Road will need to be made one-way (heading into the town) for up to ten weeks. Traffic leaving Ryde will have to do so via Argyll Street for the duration of the project. Urgent work is needed following the collapse of a section of wall that retains the highway. Without repair and strengthening there is a danger the footway and eventually the carriageway would be undermined.

"Given the condition of the wall, which will only get worse, it is important to undertake the repairs and strengthening as soon as possible," said Island Roads Senior Project Manager Jason Boulter. "The work will involve us rebuilding and strengthening the wall below highway level and then rebuilding the visible parapet wall above street level using traditional stone so it maintains the local character. Unfortunately, the scale and complexity of work is such that we will need to close one lane of Queen's Road – hence the need to make it one-way. We understand this will cause some inconvenience to local people but we do need to undertake his work to ensure Queen's Road continues to be safe for all users. We would like to thank residents in advance for their understanding and co-operation."

Residents will be able to access their homes with pedestrian access maintained at all times. The section of wall to be strengthened is in Queen's Road between its junctions with Binstead Road and Westwood Road. Work is currently scheduled to start on July 25 and affected residents will receive letters explaining more about the scheme.

Cllr Phil Jordan, IW Council cabinet member for highways and infrastructure, said: "I am acutely aware of the disruption caused by roadworks but I am confident that Island Roads will manage traffic flows as best as they can within the vicinity of the works. This is a case of urgent works needed to protect the safety of highways users, both road and footways. The site has been made safe for some time while a permanent solution has been designed and agreed but now that work has been done, it is very much time to act as we cannot allow this site to deteriorate any further. Please bear with us whilst the necessary works are undertaken and completed."

Samantha O'Rourke (Councillor Enquiry, Communication & Development Officer)