



# The IWALC Bulletin

May 2021

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

**Your IWALC Matters!!**

## Message from the Editor

The long-awaited elections for local parish, town and community councils took place on 6 May – along with elections for the Isle of Wight Council and for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner. The votes for the local council seats were counted on Saturday 8 May and the results announced the same day. Over the next couple of weeks, the newly elected councils will be holding their first meeting, known as the Annual Meeting. The main task at this meeting is to appoint members to various posts, such as chair and vice-chair, membership of committees and representatives to external bodies – including IWALC.

Pending these Annual Meetings, councils are still in a state of limbo. Routine business continues as usual but councillors are limited in what they can do. Consequently, this issue of the Bulletin is subject to the same constraints as the April one. In particular, this introductory message is from the Editor rather than the IWALC Chair, the section on Local Council News has been omitted and the section on IWALC News is limited to basic factual information.

However, we have again added a special Annex. This month the Annex provides some information on the election results, including the names of the newly elected councillors. We hope you will find this both interesting and useful.

Jill Webster

**Contact - IWALC County Officer, Heather Rowell ([heatheriwalc@gmail.com](mailto:heatheriwalc@gmail.com))**

**Website - [www.iwalc.org](http://www.iwalc.org)**

**The Bulletin - Jill Webster - [jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com](mailto:jwebster.iwalc@outlook.com) - 01983 721483**

**Deadline for the June issue is May 31st - 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 print submitted articles.*

# IWALC News...

## IWALC Meetings

The next IWALC meeting will be on Thursday 27 May. It will be an Executive meeting. We expect to see a mixture of old and new faces at this meeting, since some of the previous executive members may no longer be councillors and some councils may elect new IWALC representatives. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking any outgoing representatives for their hard work over their terms of office.

## Training

IWALC will be organising training courses in Basic Councillor Skills and Chairmanship Skills, as follows:

Basic Skills for Councillors - June 23rd and June 30th (Probably via Zoom, but more details to follow)

Chairmanship Training - July 7th and July 14th (Venue to be confirmed, more details to follow)

Courses on Planning and Finance will be held later in the year.

*NB. Both the Basic Skills for Councillors and the Chairmanship Training consist of two sessions. Please register your interest with Heather as soon as possible.*

Although these courses are designed primarily for new councillors or those holding specific offices for the first time, they are open to all councillors and anyone who feels the need to refresh their knowledge is encouraged to attend. For further details, contact your council clerk.

This training will be open to all local councils. It will be free for IWALC members, while non-member councils will be charged £50 per person per course.

## Community Resilience Event

In the April issue of the Bulletin, it was mentioned that IWALC will be holding an event on 'community resilience' after elections. Although purdah restrictions and the elections themselves have limited the preparations for this event, some progress has been made. An outline proposal has been drafted and circulated to members, discussions have been held with Community Action (who have received funding to extend their own community resilience programme), NALC has confirmed its support and initial moves have been made to secure funding.

The event will focus on the role of local councils in building resilience at community level. It will look at the lessons learned from the experience of the Covid response and consider the way forward. It will take the form of a one-day face-to-face workshop. The date has yet to be determined and will depend, among other things, on the lifting of Covid restrictions.

For further information, contact the County Officer, Heather Rowell.

## Online Council meetings

Earlier this year the Government announced that, from 6 May, all council meetings must be held face-to-face rather than online. Councils are required to follow social distancing regulations in the meetings and must be open to the public. There was widespread concern about this among councils and in April the decision was challenged in the High Court. However, the Court upheld the decision and later clarified that, contrary to what had previously been thought, members of the public must be able to attend in person, not just online.

Since IWALC is not subject to this regulation, our next meeting on 27 May will be held online. However, at the meeting, members will discuss the format of future meetings.

## Latest News and Information from Bob Blezzard (NALC Representative)

### 1. RETURN TO FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

Now that the High Court judgment on remote meetings has been delivered it is clear that face to face meetings have to return and in places where elections have been held as on the Island, local council annual meetings have to be held no later than Monday 24th May. The recommendations for mitigating risk remain as set out in the April Bulletin. Councils may wish to consider adopting a scheme of delegation to allow decisions to be taken by clerks or chairs and clerks to reduce the number of meetings after the annual meetings. In any event it is recommended that further meetings are not held before 21st June when the restrictions are scheduled to be further relaxed and hopefully with the additional vaccinations we will be in a safer place. I have noted that some councils are requiring attendees to provide evidence of having taken a lateral flow Covid test before meetings. Whilst this can be seen as a sensible safety measure. Having listened to legal opinion I am of the view that it is not legally enforceable.

### 2. BUSINESS RATES ON PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The good news is that the Toilet Bill eventually became law before the Queen's Speech and business rates are no longer payable on public conveniences. The NALC Chief Executive, Jonathan Owen advised at a meeting today (13th May) that the provisions are backdated to 1 April 2019. Councils providing public conveniences should contact the Isle of Wight Council to obtain refunds.

### 3. QUEEN'S SPEECH

I have had a briefing on the Queen's Speech from the SERCAF Legal Advisor who has reviewed the Government's briefing paper on the Queen's Speech which amounts to some 160 pages. Some of the proposed legislation will affect our sector. This includes the Planning Bill following recent consultations, although there are no details currently available in terms of what exactly is going into the Bill. This is something NALC will keep an eagle eye on. There is a Charities Bill which will be important for councils managing charities, particularly those where the charity is a recreation ground or other piece of land. The Bill will deal with the disposal of charity land. The Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill follows 59 separate consultations on having higher mobile phone masts. It is understood that the opportunity for landowners to make money from hosting masts will be diminished with annual payments reducing from around £5K to £750.

### 4. PETITION: MANDATORY PRINTING OF CAR REGISTRATION NUMBERS ON ALL DRIVE THRU PACKAGING

Our friends at the Kent Association are requesting support for a UK Government and Parliament petition to require all Drive Thru food outlets to be required to print car registration numbers on all food packaging. This is seen as a measure to reduce littering from vehicles. So far there are over 58,000 on line signatures and 100,000 is required to trigger a Parliamentary debate. Your support will be welcomed. Here is the link to the Petition on the Government and Parliament website calling for the mandatory printing of car registration numbers on all Drive Thru packaging, which has been signed by over 58,000 people. If the Petition has 100,000 signatures it will be considered for debate in Parliament – see

[https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/580772?fbclid=IwAR3or-1licyDK2gs9ohrc7Jb36vcmcQA4DzyLTRKU0-OwFAV7I\\_bxH2Ndyl](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/580772?fbclid=IwAR3or-1licyDK2gs9ohrc7Jb36vcmcQA4DzyLTRKU0-OwFAV7I_bxH2Ndyl)

## And finally.....

I am sure IWALC members will join me expressing their sadness in hearing that Diana Conyers was not re-elected to Ryde Town Council in the recent elections. IWALC has lost an excellent Chair with a clear vision for IWALC's role as the Island's County Association.

Personally I have really enjoyed working with Diana over the last six months, valuing her support, commitment and guidance.

I am sure that Diana will continue to be one of our valued supporters, and that members will want to join me in thanking Diana for her leadership and contribution, wishing her well for the future.

*Heather Rowell (IWALC County Officer)*

Along with thanking those Councillors who have not retained their seats in the recent elections, we must also include IWALC Chair, Diana Conyers who, to everybody's surprise, lost her seat with Ryde Town Council, and consequently, her role within IWALC.

In the six months since Diana took on the role of IWALC Chair, much has been achieved and much more has been planned to take IWALC forward in a positive manner to better serve the Town, Parish and Community Councils across the Island. Hopefully we will still be able to build on this momentum. Diana has asked me to say how much she has enjoyed her brief role as Chair, to thank everyone for their support and to wish IWALC well.

On a personal note, since returning to the IWALC fold at the start of the year, I've worked closely with Diana on the monthly Bulletin which we have seen go from strength to strength. IWALC will miss Diana's vast experience, knowledge and passion and I will miss working with her... please join me in wishing her well on whatever journey she chooses to take now. Thank you.

*Jill Webster (IWALC Publications/Communications Asst)*



**News, information and updates from across the Island follows....**

# Other News...

## The Isle of Wight Covid-19 Community Hubs

When the first Covid-19 “lock-down” was initiated on March 23rd, 2020 a shielding programme to safeguard our Island residents with significant health issues was put into place. Food boxes for people who were shielding at home were initiated from HM Government and distributed by the Isle of Wight Council.

Many people across the then came together to offer support to those people who were housebound through shielding or for other reasons. Within a very short time 27 geographically led Community Hubs were set up spontaneously by Island residents. The Hubs provided help and support to people in their communities. Those first few weeks of the lockdown were difficult particularly for many of our vulnerable residents. As the work of the community hubs rolled out volunteers helped with shopping, collecting prescriptions, offering reassurance by phone, arranging transport for people needing hospital appointments and just being a friend to help when it was needed most.

Cllr Michael Lilley from Ryde set up a regular meeting of the hubs to understand how things were working in the localities and to share ideas about how best to support Island residents. Almost overnight we all became expert Zoom users. Support was given to the hub meetings by Community Action Isle of Wight (CAIW).

At each hub meeting there would be an update from the IWC on the status of the virus on the Island, services that were available for help, what funding support was available, the number of shielded people being supported in the community and what help was available to the hubs. We also had the opportunity of sharing experiences, picking up on issues and working together to resolve them and having support from the Council

The number of Island people who came forward to volunteer to help others during the first lockdown was outstanding.

As lockdown finished at the end of July, life returned to some kind of normality and many people who had been furloughed due to businesses being closed were able to return to work. The demand for support reduced. The hubs continued as needed but we met less frequently. Then came the second wave and the Island went from Tier 1 to Tier 4 and once again the Community Hubs and volunteers were there to help.

I have been chairing the Hub meetings over the last year and it has been a real privilege to have been part of what the Community Hubs and their volunteers achieved in caring for their communities

*Gill Kennett (Community Hub Chair)*



## A small reminder from Lord Lieutenant, Susie Sheldon...

The Lord-Lieutenant would like to know about people, businesses, charities, organisations that have gone that extra mile over the last year of the pandemic so that she can write to thank them. It may be people who have been instrumental in large projects, or it may be that really good neighbour who has quietly served the community with no acknowledgment.

Please send details to [iowlieutenancy@gmail.com](mailto:iowlieutenancy@gmail.com)

## Future Proofing Community Resilience on the Isle of Wight

We are delighted to share with you news that our new 18-month project – Future Proofing Community Resilience on the Isle of Wight commenced on 1 May 2021 thanks to grant funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF), distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF).



This project is being implemented by Community Action Isle of Wight in partnership with Aspire Ryde and West Wight Sports and Community Centre.

Bearing in mind the experience of the pandemic response on the Isle of Wight as well as research about the psychological impact of the pandemic and lockdown, and factors that help to strengthen mental resilience, we want to future proof community resilience on the Isle of Wight by adopting a trauma-informed approach to community building and by focussing on post-crisis recovery.

As part of this project, we will:

- Focus on the recruitment and retention of volunteers under the age of 50 and young people;
- Work to create opportunities for and supporting “whole family” volunteering, projects and activities;
- Continue upskilling volunteers through our training programme;
- Continue working with Parish, Town and Community Councils on community resilience planning which we started in our previous project;
- Focus extra support on three priority areas: Bay area, Newport Central and Cowes.

Our project team includes:

- Julian Wadsworth, Community Resilience Coordinator for the Bay area ([jwadsworth@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:jwadsworth@actioniw.org.uk));
- Kay Smith, Community Resilience Coordinator for the Cowes area ([ksmith@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:ksmith@actioniw.org.uk));
- Claire Kennard, Community Resilience Coordinator for the Newport area ([ckennard@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:ckennard@actioniw.org.uk));
- Adam Tucker, Community Connector/ Community Resilience Coordinator for the West Wight area ([adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk](mailto:adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk));
- Lucy Nicholas, Community Resilience Coordinator for the Ryde area ([lnicholas@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:lnicholas@actioniw.org.uk));
- Zoryna O'Donnell, Project Manager and coordinator for the South area ([zodonnell@actioniw.org.uk](mailto:zodonnell@actioniw.org.uk))

All roles in our team are part time – 3 days per week in priority areas and 2 days per week in other areas.

Over the next few weeks, we will be contacting our key stakeholders, including Parish, Town and Community Councils, to introduce our new project and to start working on the local action plans for each area – together with local communities, organisations and businesses.

We will aim to build on existing community plans and resources to help local groups and partnerships achieve their aims and to help individuals and families to better connect to them. Where there are fewer plans and resources, we will help to build both for the benefit of the Island's communities.

*Zoryna O'Donnell (Community Resilience Project Manager)*



## Breaking News from Ryde Aspire

We are beginning to get our groups up and running again.

Still in planning for some, but two certain ones are 'young at heart' - a two course meal for over 70s on a Thursday lunchtime for £3. And one that is proving very popular – 'Bacon butties and banter' on a Wednesday morning from 10am - this is largely aimed at getting men talking and to help support their mental health.

We will be adding others for a full weekly programme in the next couple of weeks which will be advertised on our Facebook page. (@Aspire Ryde)

*Trevor Nicholas (Chief Executive Officer)*



**ASPIRE**  
RYDE

KITCHEN TEAM ARE OFFERING

**BACON  
BUTTIES &  
BANTER**

VEGETARIAN OPTION AVAILABLE

WEDNESDAY MORNINGS 10 AM

—

BUTTY, CUPPA AND CHAT

## News from the Isle of Wight Council

Islanders may be eligible for a £500 grant if they need to self-isolate due to coronavirus. Residents on lower incomes can apply for the national Test and Trace Support Payment if they're unable to work from home while self-isolating and will lose income as a result. The one-off payments which do not need to be repaid are designed to help everyone comply with important self-isolation rules and stop the spread of COVID-19 while easing lockdown restrictions.

The scheme has recently been expanded to parents and guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate but need to take time off work to look after a child or young person who is self-isolating.

To check to see if you qualify for financial help, visit [www.iow.gov.uk/IWtestandtracesupport](http://www.iow.gov.uk/IWtestandtracesupport)

The website also includes details of a separate discretionary payment scheme run by the Isle of Wight Council. Self-isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have or might have COVID-19. It is different to lockdown and social-distancing. Residents are advised to prepare a plan for self-isolation. It is more than likely you will have little or no notice that you must self-isolate.

Islanders are being urged to consider how they would access food, who would walk their pets, who may be able to go shopping on their behalf, and whether they're able to work from home.

People can call the Isle of Wight Coronavirus Helpline on (01983) 823600 for support with food and medicine. They can help if you don't have friends and family to support you.

For more information on self-isolating and other COVID-related advice, please go to [www.keeptheislandsafe.org](http://www.keeptheislandsafe.org)



Mrs Caroline Peel, who has just stepped down as High Sheriff, has been appointed a Deputy-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight.

In her role as High Sheriff 2020/2021 she was very involved in supportive work during the Covid-19 Pandemic. She also built up the High Sheriff's Trust to enable it to focus on providing monetary support to the organisations who have been working with the more vulnerable and isolated members of the community. Quite apart from her outstanding work as High Sheriff during this last difficult year Caroline Peel has a long history of work for the voluntary sector.

She was born on the Island and has maintained her family links here all her life while working in the charity sector as well as co-running a property management company in London.

She is actively involved with the RNLI on the Island, being President of the Bembridge Guild, and Vice Chair of the RNLI Isle of Wight Board. She served as Commodore of Bembridge Sailing Club 2010/11. She has played an active supportive role with Ventnor Botanic Gardens.

The Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, Mrs Susie Sheldon said: "I am delighted to welcome Caroline Peel to the Lieutenancy team where her in depth knowledge of many sectors of the Isle of Wight community will be invaluable".

More Island businesses will be able to access further grant funding from (Wednesday 14 April) as the Isle of Wight Council launches its latest Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme.

The government has allocated the council a further £852,000 of discretionary funding to support businesses severely impacted by COVID-19, but which are not eligible for the previously announced Restart Grants.

This could include businesses in the supply chain for non-essential retail and the hospitality sector, businesses operating from domestic rated properties such as bed and breakfast accommodation and the self-employed not operating from premises, such as taxi drivers and mobile personal care (hairdressing etc).

As before, applications are via a downloadable application form available on the council's website. Detailed guidance about the scheme is also available on the website.

The ARG scheme is separate to the Restart Grants for ratepaying businesses announced in the government budget of 3 March.

The first payments have been made to more than 600 Island businesses and will continue to be paid to all those eligible over the coming weeks.

For businesses which have previously received a government COVID-19 business support grant during 2021, the payments should be made automatically via existing details held by the council.

Businesses that did not apply online for the recent Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) funding (launched in January) will need to complete an application form which is now available on the council website.



Further communications will be issued in good time before the 30 June 2021 deadline to ensure all eligible businesses have received their Restart Grant — and if not, what they need to do.

The Restart Grants for ratepaying businesses were announced in the government budget of 3 March.

The support is aimed at non-essential retail, hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses in England who receive a business rates bill.

They are paid via local councils:

- Up to £6,000 to non-essential retail business premises, to help them reopen safely.
- Up to £18,000 to hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business premises, which may open later under plans set out in the government roadmap and will be more impacted by restrictions when they do reopen.

Businesses must have been trading on 1 April 2021 to be eligible to receive funding under this scheme.

For further information, visit <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Public-Health-Coronavirus-COVID-19/Businesses-and-employers>

## **More News and Warnings from Trading Standards**

- Reports of scam texts and emails purporting to be various difference mail providers, claiming that you need to pay extra for a package or asking you click on a link which could install malware onto your device – the companies all involved state that they would never contact you in this way (how would they know your phone number?) and would put a card through the door.
- Reports that the National Insurance scam has been using an 01983 number – please don't believe that just because it appears to be a local number that it is genuine, numbers can be purchased and are frequently cloned
- A message purporting to be from Google to say that your phone has viruses and you have to click the link to repair the problem – Don't – this is a scam
- There appears to be an increase in reports of banking texts and some residents are reporting that these messages are being followed up by phone calls stating that there is a fraud on your account, they may even draw your attention to the number they are dialling from – it will be the banks number – again these can be cloned. Hang up do not engage with these criminals and call your bank on a number you have found yourself to ensure that your account is secure
- Lots of reports in the past few weeks about rogue traders. Whether they are looking to carry out work on your property or buy gold or jewellery from you our advice remains the same – Do Not trade on the doorstep you will be conned out of money and if they are carrying out work it is likely to be of poor quality and the price they quote at the beginning will escalate during the process.



Remember-

- scam texts can be forwarded to 7726
- Scam emails can be forwarded to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)
- No cold calling stickers are available by emailing [trading.standards@iow.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@iow.gov.uk)

Whilst we are still not visiting scam victims or carrying out talks to community groups in person Trading Standards are able to deliver scam talks over zoom. These can be tailored to suit your needs and can be as interactive as you would like.

If you are part of a group or if your Town or Parish Council would be interested in hearing more about scam awareness and how to keep residents safe please contact Sally on [trading.standards@iow.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@iow.gov.uk)

We would also like to recommend that all Town and Parish Councillors watch a short video raising awareness around scams and doorstep crime <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

We would love to hear from you if you would be interested in joining IWASP (Isle of Wight Against Scams Partnership) please email me ([Sally.Ash@iow.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.Ash@iow.gov.uk)). *Sally Ash (Fair Trading Officer)*



## Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce



Since the pandemic hit the IW Chamber has been unable to hold regular face to face networking events however, with virtual meetings and regular updates the Chamber has been a vital voice during these uncertain times. From

one-to-one meetings with both members and non-members in desperate situations, to forums with the Island's MP, the Isle of Wight Council and Visit Isle of Wight, the Chamber has represented the needs of Island businesses.

Through the British Chamber of Commerce network and our productive relationship with Bob Seely MP we have lobbied Westminster on behalf of our business community and we have also helped Island firms to access and unlock funding packages that have kept them afloat. Members have also of course been able to continue to make unlimited calls Chamber HR, Chamber Health & Safety, Chamber Tax and Chamber Legal to gain advice and guidance from experienced advisors and have been able to access vital documentation. The resilience of the Island's business community is remarkable and in a community like ours the importance of face-to-face networking cannot be underestimated. Our high value business networking events will return soon and are in the planning stages, so please look out for news about them.

This tough year has forced us all to adapt and sometimes to take difficult decisions. It has been a year of learning and great change. We have all been living through a moment of history, unlike anything most of us have ever experienced and all organisations have been impacted by Covid-19. However, many businesses have grown and gone from strength to strength and this should be celebrated.

Island Business Magazine, published but the IW Chamber, is making a return so please look out for copies and read news about all the Island businesses that have grown, invested, celebrated, won awards, appointed new staff or marked a milestone.

For more details about the IW Chamber please visit <https://www.iwchamber.co.uk/>

*Emma Spinelli*

## News from Citizens Advice

At Citizens Advice IW we were delighted to see the appendix of local councils attached to last month's IWALC Bulletin. It prompted us to do some mapping of our own to see where our volunteers and Advice First Aiders are based and it has shown there are some wards where we need to focus attention.

Our Advice First Aid project continues to grow. The concept of having key people in the community, like local councillors, armed with the knowledge of where to access great information and advice to help people they come into contact with is really popular. We seem to have daily requests now from across the country asking for details of how it works.

Our charity will be sending letters to each council, as we do every year, to update on how we have helped your residents and this year we will include the volunteer make up that we know about. I would be glad to hear from any councillor who would like to become a point of contact with Citizens Advice IW. We can share anonymised information and discuss opportunities to work more closely.

You can email me at [pauls@iwcab.org.uk](mailto:pauls@iwcab.org.uk) and you can see what we are doing at [citizensadviceiw.org.uk](http://citizensadviceiw.org.uk)

*Paul Savill (Chief Officer)*





## **How can people get involved with Age Friendly Island?**

The voices of older people are at the heart of the Age Friendly Island project. There are a number of ways you can get involved to influence change to ensure the Age Friendly agenda is at the forefront of policy, business decisions and development.

### **Attend a Public Forum:**

Open to all members of the public who have an interest in improving lives of people over the age of fifty. Join us to discuss issues relevant to your life. The agenda is set by the attendees and relevant speakers are also invited.

*“Everyone has the chance to speak, and we bounce ideas off each other. I have learned a lot about the problems facing those with physical disabilities and the experiences of people older than me. The forums are very friendly, and Helen offers a hot drink on arrival.”* A Forum Attendee.

During COVID-19 these meetings are held online, happening every six weeks via Zoom. Next meeting is on 8th June, 3:30-4:30pm.

### **Older Person’s Steering Group:**

Made up of 6-12 older people who meet every month to champion the voices of older people. They shape decisions around how the AFI project is run and what activities the programme engages in. The function is to support, challenge and engage.

To become a member of this group, you need to be:

- Over the age of 50
- A resident of the Isle of Wight
- Be willing to advocate for members of the community who may not be able to do so themselves
- Offer challenge and support to how the Age Friendly Island Programme develops.

*Helen Lewis*

### **For more details, please visit Age Friendly Island:**

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/isleofwight/our-services/age-friendlyisland/older-islanders/> or get in touch: Helen Lewis, Age Friendly Island on (01983) 525282 or email: [helen.lewis@ageukiw.org.uk](mailto:helen.lewis@ageukiw.org.uk)

## **A Report for IWALC from MP, Bob Seely**

*I would like to extend my thanks to Diana Conyers for her service as Chair of IWALC. She has been extremely active in her role on Ryde Town Council, representing Binstead Ward since 2017.*

*Personally, I have greatly enjoyed chatting with her on our regular calls and have always appreciated her thoughtful comments and advice.*

*I hope Diana continues to take an interest in developments in Ryde and wish her well in future endeavours.*

### **Objections to Greenfield Housing**

Last month I objected to plans to build 50 new homes on greenfield land in Freshwater (to the East of Birch Close).

The privacy that the residents of Colwell Road currently enjoy will be removed by the construction of these dwellings.

The houses proposed are not for Islanders. They are predominantly three- and four-bedroom houses which the Island has in abundance and the vast majority are not affordable to Islanders who need homes.



### **Investment in Isle of Wight College**

The Isle of Wight College is one of sixteen across England set to benefit from the Government's £1.5 billion FE Capital Transformation Fund which aims to rebuild and transform college estates. Bids put forward earlier in the year to upgrade facilities are now being considered by the Department for Education with funding expected to be awarded this Autumn.

### **Sandown Bay Dredging**

I have received assurances from The Crown Estate (responsible for granting dredging licences) that marine aggregate dredging activity off Sandown Bay is not impacting on the coastline.

The Crown Estate say there is evidence to show that the aggregate deposits on the seabed are relict deposits of sand and gravel left by ancient rivers and as such are 'immobile' - meaning their extraction would not cause significant changes to the coastline.

I have been advised that the dredging activity is fully licensed with regular monitoring surveys undertaken in accordance with Marine Management Organisation requirements.

I was also provided with a report published in 2019 by the Southern Coastal Group which concluded that erosion in the Bay area in the years leading up to the report was largely due to record-breaking major storm events and higher mean sea levels.

### **Protecting Our Green Spaces**

I am calling on town and parish councils to designate open spaces as town or village greens to protect them from development.

The 'Grant a Green' campaign, led by national conservation body Open Spaces Society, is another way green areas can be protected from unnecessary development.

The threat of overdevelopment on the Island is very concerning. We are seeing planning applications coming forward almost every week on greenfield sites and although I am opposing these, we need a long-term plan to ensure our natural spaces are protected from harmful development.

I have committed to tackle this issue head-on. The first thing I have done is to lobby Government to see our housing target reduced. I am also working with the Council to make the case for exceptional circumstance for the Island so that we are not bound by national targets.

Secondly, I am seeking additional protections for our green spaces. I have set out to the Government my vision for the Island to have the UK's first 'Island Park' which would see the Island gain unique protection status somewhere between that of an AONB and National Park.

Thirdly, I want to work with the Isle of Wight Council to ensure we make the best use of brownfield land for new housing and regeneration schemes.

One of the ways local town and parish councils can help to save our green spaces is to apply to have their open areas registered as town and village greens and I encourage them to do so. We need to work together to fight against unwanted development that is harmful to our natural environment and reduces our quality of life.

*Bob Seely (May 6 2021)*

*Bob continues to hold fortnightly Zoom meetings with Town and Parish Councillors. However, as the dates and times are subject to his diary/workload, confirmation will come from his office, through County Officer, Heather Rowell*



## 2021 Nestlé Professional Toque d'Or® competition

Last month I reported that five of our **hospitality and catering students** had successfully completed the opening round of the hospitality industry's most prestigious competition, the [2021 Nestlé Professional Toque d'Or®](#).



National heats took place on 15<sup>th</sup> April where participants were tasked with delivering a high-end meal or cocktail, via the Olio food app, with a focus on local produce and sustainability.

I am delighted to say that, from over 1,000 entries, **two of our students have made it through to the competition final**, which will take place in London, from 28<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July, where the 12 finalists will have to face 'Master Chef' style challenges.

Naturally we wish them both the very best of luck.



---

## Local people trained and ready for construction work

Over the past couple of months, the college has been promoting free training courses for adults.

**The college has been working with Hampshire County Council and CITB (the Construction Industry Training Board)** to train unemployed people in construction skills, enabling them to gain their Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card so that they are site ready for employment.

Katie Anderson, one of the college's Employer Engagement Officers, has been running the project and is proud to announce that **48 people have successfully been trained through the programme**, despite the COVID-19 restrictions which could have hampered progress.



Katie said: "This project has been an excellent way to help unemployed people gain employment, and to support employers to recruit a skilled workforce. We have managed to overcome the barriers posed by COVID-19 to ensure that learners gain their industry knowledge and skills".

For information please email [AEB@iwcollege.ac.uk](mailto:AEB@iwcollege.ac.uk) or phone 01983 526631 quoting 'AEB'.



---

## UK photography competition - "Your People, Your Places, Your Things"

Three of our **BTEC Photography Level 3 students** have been **Highly Commended** in a **London Metropolitan Photography Competition**.

This was a national competition, open to all further education providers across the UK.

All three have done incredibly well in having their work recognised at a national level.



## **Grant Information from Southern Water**

Southern Water are pleased to be able to announce the launch of our new Customer and Community Grants scheme. From our website you can explore two different levels of community funding available:



- Level 1 – Registered charities can apply to become one of our five regional charity partners applying for funding between £10K-£20K. Closing date for applications 30th May.
- Level 2 – Registered and non-registered charities, community groups, social enterprises, CIC's and can apply for funding in a quarterly cycle of decision making for grants throughout this year for funds between £1K-£8K. Closing dates on the website for each funding cycle.

Applications are via the forms on our website (please note the forms must be completed in one go and all questions are visible to enable preparing the information) and you will also find FAQ;s for each category.

We welcome applications from regional charities and community partners who would benefit from financial support to deliver sustainable projects that are aligned with our company purpose, which is – to provide Water for Life to:

- **enhance health and wellbeing**
- **protect and improve the environment**
- **sustain the economy**

The following list shows some examples of the types of projects which we are looking to support:

### **Enhance health and wellbeing**

- Supporting mental health services
- Promoting healthy lifestyle choices
- Supporting access and enjoyment of blue/green spaces
- Championing diversity in our communities and reducing social isolation

### **Protect and improve the environment**

- Re-wilding projects, encouraging bio-diversity and wildlife
- Supporting clean beaches and promoting safe water use
- Protecting rivers, ponds and streams
- Encouraging sustainable watering practices for our communities

### **Sustain the economy**

- Championing better equality and inclusion in our communities
- Reducing barriers to employment across all age groups
- Raising aspirations and mentoring projects for young people
- Supporting those experiencing hardship as a result of the pandemic

We will be running a series of virtual seminars to help applicants understand the funding criteria and application process and decision making timelines on:

### **Virtual Community Grant Application Seminars:**

- Tuesday 18 May - 2pm -3pm
- Monday 24 May 4pm -5pm

If you have any further questions or to sign up to the seminars please contact-  
[community@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:community@southernwater.co.uk)

Many thanks and good luck with your application.

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

## Changes to Southern Vectis Timetables

We continue to work hard to attract customers back onboard, with current usage at around 70% of normal. As well as all the extra cleaning etc that has been in place for some time, we continue to add resources where possible to offer additional capacity.



Whilst our popular Needles Breezer and Coaster services started in early April, we will be introducing our summer timetable from 30th May.

The new timetable includes the below improvements:

- Route 1 - unchanged other than an additional round trip on Sunday early mornings
- Routes 2 & 3 - we've completely revised the timetable for the Summer period, with additional running time and a step back at Ryde. This in order to improve punctuality during the busy summer months
- Route 4 - we've made reliability adjustments to the timetable, and also added an additional journey from Ryde to East Cowes on Monday to Saturday evenings and an additional journey from East Cowes to Ryde on Saturday evenings only
- Route 5 - we've made reliability adjustments to the timetable
- Route 8 - we've made reliability adjustments to the timetable, plus the extra summer only short journeys between Newport and Sandown will start earlier than usual this year, starting from the timetable change rather than end of June. Also, the first Sunday bus from Sandown to Newport will back-start in Ryde, and some extra journeys will run on Monday to Saturday evenings compared to current timetable
- Route 9 - we've made adjustments to the timetable, and a step back will be scheduled in Ryde between certain times, to improve the reliability of this route
- Route 32 - will operate Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays
- Route 37 - The 1500 journey from Ryde will become a Saturdays and School Holidays only journey. On Schooldays, the journey will operate earlier at 1430, and will terminate at Greenmount Primary School
- Downs Breezer - reintroduced from Saturday 29th May 2021
- Shanklin Shuttle - reintroduced from Saturday 29th May 2021, with revised timetable

*Richard Tyldsley (General Manager)*

## Hovertravel adds to timetable

From Wednesday 5th May Hovertravel is adding extra flights to its weekday timetable. The additional flights are 1545 from Ryde and 1600 from Southsea, on Monday to Friday only.



Julie Horrocks, Head of Ground Operations at Hovertravel explains: "We always monitor our passenger numbers and flows in detail and, over the past year, this has been even more crucial as we responded to the pandemic and the needs of the local community. Hovertravel has the advantage of being hyper-flexible and we can add flights in very quickly as demand dictates. We also review the data for trends and we can see that, with school children returning home and regular travellers starting to leave work, the hour around 1600 is becoming busier. These new additions to our timetable will add capacity exactly when it is most needed and demonstrate that Hovertravel is doing all it can to support a sustainable recovery."

Hovertravel's booked service returned on 1st May so customers should book online to guarantee their seat and make sure they have scanned their ticket in the terminal five minutes before departure. Having a booked service will allow Hovertravel to monitor demand and deliver the best possible experience as the nation returns to work and leisure activities. Customers appreciate the benefit of being able to guarantee their seat on their chosen flights as Hovertravel's service becomes busier and we want you to make the most of our booking facility and the associated Manage My Booking functionality.

Booking online is the best way to buy and book your tickets, and helps to make your journey contactless. You can also manage your booking online for any changes you might want to make and there is a guide on how to use your online account on our website.

*Stephen Forster (Creative Director)*



## Updates from Wightlink

*The FastCats are back as Wightlink gears up for summer*



Wightlink resumes its FastCat foot passenger sailings between Portsmouth Harbour and Ryde Pier Head from Thursday 29 April 2021. It will be an hourly service with two catamarans operating on school holiday weekends and during the Isle of Wight Festival.

Wightlink's car ferry summer timetable will come into effect on Monday 17 May 2021, in line with the next proposed Government easing of Covid-19 travel restrictions. Hotels, restaurants and attractions will open for business on both sides of the Solent from that date.

Sailings on the Portsmouth-Fishbourne car ferry route will be re-timed to depart every 40 minutes between 05:00 and 19:40 to even out traffic flow and improve punctuality. The Lymington-Yarmouth route will step up to hourly seven days a week.

Enthusiasm for summer breaks on the Isle of Wight is already growing. Wightlink says bookings for the school holidays are looking healthy, especially for weekend sailings.

"With summer on the horizon, we are delighted to step up our sailings and look forward to welcoming more Islanders and mainlanders who want to travel across the Solent," says Wightlink Chief Executive Keith Greenfield. "The Isle of Wight will be a popular choice for staycations and we will remain Covid-secure at all times with the highest standards of cleanliness. Mask wearing is still required. Our passenger numbers are currently reduced to allow social distancing but our ships and FastCats are spacious and comfortable with plenty of room. All of our usual cafés at ports and on board ferries are now open to serve refreshments but we ask customers to consume food and drink outdoors."

### *Commuters return to Wightlink's FastCats*

The first FastCat sailing of 2021 was the 05:15 from the mainland, the first return trip from Ryde at 05:45 had 16 passengers on board. The route was suspended on Christmas Eve 2020.

Regular traveller Steve Long was on the first departure from Ryde, on his way to work in Portsmouth. He has been commuting for more than 20 years. "It's great to be back and I'm sure the FastCats will be very popular this summer. I always enjoy crossing the Solent with Wightlink, the crew are friendly and it's a good start to the day," he says.

"We know it's been a long wait for our regular FastCat customers and we thank them for their patience. We are delighted that our Portsmouth-Ryde service is now back as demand for leisure travel increases," says Wightlink Chief Executive Keith Greenfield. "Both of our catamarans are Covid-secure at all times with the highest standards of cleanliness. Mask wearing is still required. Our passenger numbers are currently reduced to allow social distancing but our ships and FastCats are spacious and comfortable with plenty of room."



During the winter, both FastCats have undergone regular maintenance with dry-docking and refits at the Trafalgar Shipyard in Portchester to make sure they are in the best condition ready for a busy summer.

*Picture caption: Commuter Steve Long is welcomed back by Captain Graeme Bissett*

## **Red Funnel updates customers on timetable outlook for 2021**

In an effort to give its customers as much information as possible, Red Funnel is sharing its outlook on ferry timetables for the foreseeable future.

Based on the planned easing of national restrictions expected to take effect on or after 17 May, including the anticipated reopening of hotels, indoor hospitality, leisure and attractions, the operator will closely monitor demand for evening Red Jet services, with a view to extend the current timetable later into the evening.

Regarding the vehicle ferry service, the operator's timetable has been established to offer maximum availability at peak times, with only minor changes from previous (full) Summer schedules. Red Funnel is confident that the published timetable meets capacity requirements with good choice and availability for departure times and, as a result, is currently anticipating that its vehicle ferry timetable will run as planned until the Winter Timetable takes effect on 2 November.

Red Funnel remains committed to adding further sailings and increasing its service schedules as soon they can be delivered in a sustainable and viable way. The company endeavours to strike a balance between offering multiple options and ensuring availability to customers, while also ensuring it is operating efficiently to maintain resilience and mitigate the risks associated with the pandemic.

Fran Collins, CEO of Red Funnel, commented: "We appreciate our customers want as much information as possible to be able to plan their future travel, especially as the nation emerges carefully from lockdown, and we want to provide as much clarity as possible on our services and share our outlook as best we can. We're delighted that we've been able to increase our timetable in line with demand, but we continue to monitor requirements very closely.

We endeavour to run a timetable that meets the needs of the vast majority of our customers, but we regret that in some cases, our timetables may not meet the preference of some travellers. For this we're very sorry and I encourage anyone in this situation to get in touch and share their experience and feedback with us."

Red Funnel's current vehicle ferry timetable reflects its '2-boat' service, whilst Red Falcon is undergoing routine maintenance include the installation of a new engine crankshaft. The operator's '3-boat' service will resume on May 13.

The Red Jet is currently running 12 daily crossings from each side of the Solent, Monday to Friday, with 11 crossings each way on weekends.

For current ferry timetable information, see: [www.redfunnel.co.uk/en/isle-of-wight-ferry/timetables/](http://www.redfunnel.co.uk/en/isle-of-wight-ferry/timetables/)

*Donna Gudowski*

redfunnel.co.uk



**RED FUNNEL**  
THE ISLE OF WIGHT SPECIALIST