



IWALC

**Serving Town, Parish and
Community Councils. February '25**

County Officer's Report

February 2025

Julie Hutchison



This month's bumper Newsletter has its first ever theme feature under local news, which is Community Orchards and Allotments. Thank you to all councils to contribute to the Newsletter, it's great to see the work that is going on.

With the likelihood that Town, Parish and Community councils will be having elections this year, IWALC are particularly keen to let people know about the training we have lined starting this June. Suitable for for new councillors (and councillors in need of refresher training), in-person training allows space to ask any questions you aren't sure about and for conversations to take place. IWALC is always keen to promote diversity in our councils- with more diversity comes more representation of our residents. IWALC encourages members to join [Nalc's National Networks](#) where you will regularly have the opportunity to meet other councillors nationally online. Networks include Young Councillors, Coastal Communities, Climate Emergency, LGBTQIA and Women councillors for support and sharing projects / asking questions.

The last County Officers meeting welcomed [The Big Lunch project](#), a community project taking place from 7th - 8th June 2025. 10 million people took part in The Big Lunch last year, that's 1 in 7 people in the UK. Giving people the opportunity to meet locally and start conversations, The Big Lunch also gives the opportunity to raise money for charities. 3/4s of participants said that they felt the event strengthened their respective communities. Lunches were held in streets and parks up and down the UK, and their website gives lots of creative ideas for activities you can organise and take part in. If you are a council considering organising a Big Lunch, do get in touch, it could even be a feature for the June Newsletter.

Email countyofficer@iwalc.org to get in touch

IW Youth Council

Last month I had the honour of taking over as the role of chairman of the Isle of Wight youth council. As a council we said a very grateful goodbye to my now predecessor Lianne. Before January I held the role of Vice Chairman and secretary for Crime and safety, these roles for which I was elected to gave me much experience and inspiration for my chairship.

During the rest of the term of this youth council I will labour to lead and help the youth council achieve its aims, and to continue to work for the young islanders. I have many personal aims which I conveyed to the council at our meeting last Tuesday (04/02/25). My first and main priority is to implement my 3 point plan which reads as so; help the secretaries plan and start any projects they wish, I'm also working with the youth trust in order to strengthen our working relationship with the "Youth alliance". Finally I wish for the youth council to host fundraising events to help our island charities or create a youth provision to help our young islanders.

I am very grateful to have this role and I'm also excited to work with our MYP Adyin Gumus as the islands new Deputy MYP."

Kind regards,
Finlay Jay Diffey



We have received more reports about scam calls purporting to be from bank security and advising that transactions have been made on your account that you will know nothing about. The message will tell you to call another number which you believe to be your bank. They will then try to convince you that somebody is trying to defraud you (possibly even the staff at your local branch) and to protect your money you must move it to another account – of course they will give you the details of the account to use. This is a SCAM your bank will never ask you to do this, if you receive a call claiming to be the bank and you are concerned it might be genuine call 159 and give them the name of your bank and you will go through to your fraud department and can confirm if the call is genuine. NEVER move money on the advice of somebody on the phone.

We have been advised about a scam call received on the mainland which will probably occur here as well at some point! The call claims to come from the local Council Housing Department stating that they have been asked to contact council tenants having problems with their property. Of course this won't be relevant if you own your own property however for anyone renting this could be very believable. We aren't sure how this scam pans out but just remember never engage with anyone on the phone in this way. Ask them to put it in writing or use 01983 821000 and check for yourself

We are receiving repeated reports about scam texts claiming to come from the Household Support Fund stating that the recipient is entitled to support by clicking on a link – This is a SCAM – Scammers are taking advantage of the cost of living crisis and targeting the most vulnerable in our society. Don't click on links in messages.

Similarly messages claiming to be from the DWP around the removal of the winter fuel allowance. They state that you could be entitled to another benefit if you click on the link – this is a SCAM. It will give a deadline to respond thereby putting you under pressure and may convince you to go ahead but you will just be giving scammers all of your details and potentially access to your money.

Somebody has reported receiving an message claiming that their Facebook page has been disabled due to unacceptable content. Luckily upon carrying out some checks, including checking the sender email address which was a Hotmail address not an official Facebook one they realised that it was a scam. Do Not be panicked into carrying out actions that could put your online security at risk, take 5 minutes, think logically and ask somebody else for their opinion

Remember anything out of the blue is likely to be a scam check out the advice at

[Take Five - To Stop Fraud](#)

Take Five is a national campaign offering straightforward and impartial advice to help everyone protect themselves against fraud.

Sally Ash joined us at our October IWALC Topic meeting and spoke about scams and how devastating they are to victims. If you would like for Sally to come and talk with you or your community, please email her at sally.ash@iow.gov.uk



Volunteer opportunities

Volunteers needed to support local children

Would you like to become a volunteer within Isle of Wight Council Children's Services?

People of all ages and backgrounds make for a richer volunteering team.

As a Children's Services volunteer you will

- Meet new people
- Improve your skills, knowledge and experience
- Complete online learning from your own home
- Have a DBS (police) check carried out free of charge
- Gain references
- Obtain experience for entry to social work
- Apprenticeship opportunities

Volunteer schemes include

- Community buddies
- Family champions
- Mentors
- Transportation
- Youth Justice



For more information about volunteering visit

iow.gov.uk/volunteers

 Isle of Wight Council

Yellow Brick Road Projects regularly present online training sessions known as Making Every Contact Count - Healthy Conversation Skills (commonly abbreviated to MECC). MECC is a behavioural method which enables individuals to use an alternative approach when working with people to address their health and wellbeing. It is about altering the way we interact with others to improve their self-efficacy, therefore helping them identify ways to improve their wellbeing.

The training we offer is presented online via a 3-hour interactive session in which you will discover:

- How you can support someone to explore their own health and wellbeing
- How using more effective responses can help people find their own solutions
- How you can support someone to think about their own behaviour change plan

[MECC Training - Isle of Wight Tickets, Tue 13 May 2025 at 12:45 | Eventbrite](#)

[Online EMECC Training for IOW Practitioners Tickets, Thu 22 May 2025 at 09:15 | Eventbrite](#)

Our **Ambulance Service** provides accredited **First Aid & Driver CPC courses** plus certificated Medical Emergency Training, for information please visit www.isleofwightambulance.co.uk The Isle of Wight NHS Trust Ambulance Service needs you. If you found someone unconscious and not breathing normally, would you know what to do? **Learning how to perform CPR and where your nearest defibrillator is** takes minutes but could make a huge difference and save a life. Could you become a guardian for your local public access defibrillator, do you need help registering your defibrillator?

Please contact the Isle of Wight NHS Trust Ambulance, Training and Community Response Services Tel. **534111**, email iownt.atcors@nhs.net or visit our website www.isleofwightambulance.co.uk to see what training courses we offer the public, businesses, and schools, learn about the support we can give to public access defibrillator guardians/sites.

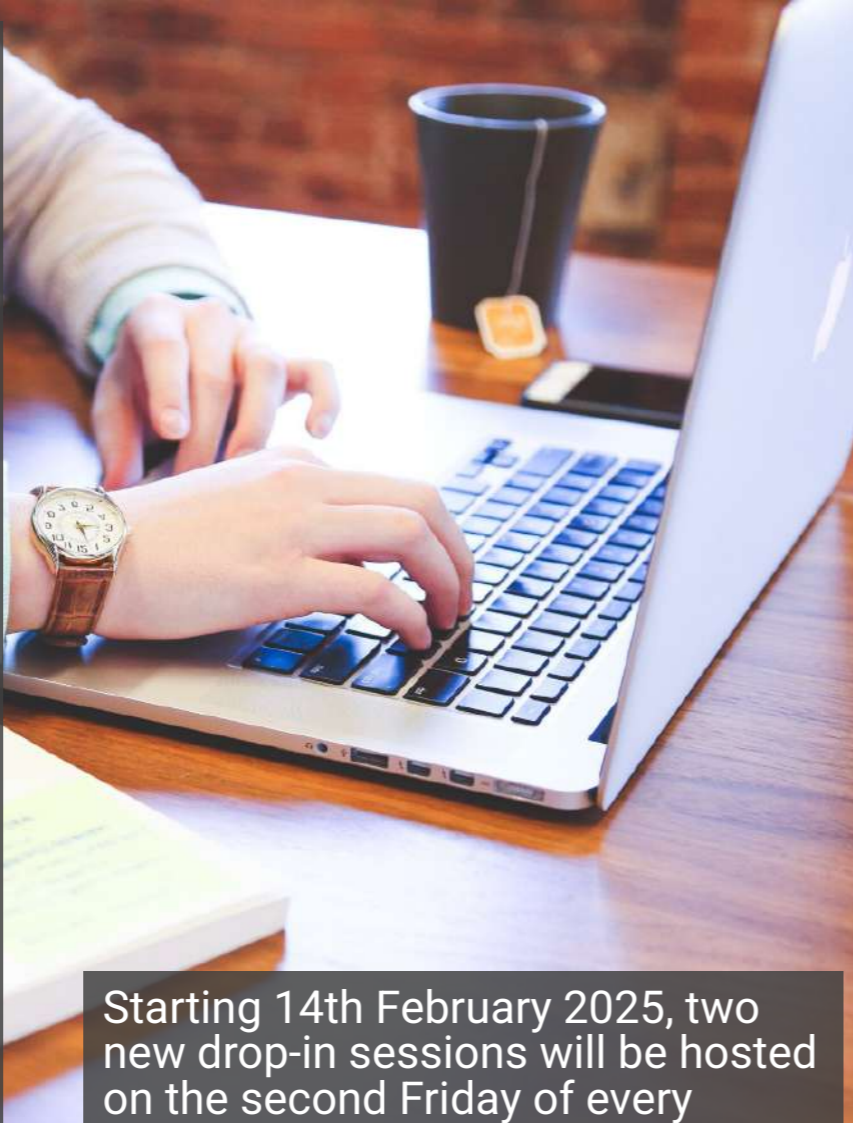
Useful links:

[How to do CPR](#)

www.thecircuit.uk

www.defibfinder.uk

A Brighter Future for Digital Inclusion
Age UK Isle of Wight has announced the expansion of its **digital support sessions** with the launch of two **new digital drop-in sessions**. This revival comes after the charity's extensive digital support service ended on the 12th of July 2024 due to the completion of fixed-term funding. Since the service closure in 2024, volunteers have continued supporting the community at Newport (2nd & 4th Thursday every month) and Ryde (2nd & 4th Wednesday every month) libraries and by delivering 1:1 home visits by appointment only. Older Islanders will have more opportunity to stay connected in the digital age, with new drop-in sessions.



Starting 14th February 2025, two new drop-in sessions will be hosted on the second Friday of every month:

- Parklands Community Café: 11AM - 1PM
- John Cheverton Centre at Mountbatten: 1PM - 3PM

Digital support volunteers will be ready to assist, whether you're a complete beginner or facing a specific challenge, drop-ins present an opportunity to chat to tech-savvy volunteers. The charity is actively seeking volunteers and exploring funding opportunities to enhance this service in a sustainable way. To access Age UK Isle of Wight's Digital Support, or enquire about volunteering, please call 01983 525282. Timetable of support sessions can be found [here](#)





PRE-LOVED PLANTERS

GIVE THEM A NEW HOME!

These planters are preloved and show some signs of wear, however they're still in good, useable condition.

We're seeking modest contributions for them, with all proceeds being reinvested into planting projects around the town.

✓ HIGH-QUALITY AMBEROL PRODUCTS ✓ STILL AVAILABLE ONLINE ✓ GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Planters will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. No holds. Collection from RTC offices by arrangement BEFORE 31st March 2025

 £80 <small>RRP £340</small> SQUARE PLANTER - 1M2 <small>2 available.</small>		 £100 <small>RRP £408</small> OCTAGONAL PLANTER - 1M2 <small>4 available</small>	
 £20 <small>RRP £65</small> PLASTIC HANGING BASKETS <small>16 available.</small>		 £1 <small>RRP £4</small> WIRE HANGING BASKETS <small>10 available</small>	
 £250 <small>RRP £811</small> 5-TIER PLANTER <small>1 available.</small>		 £200 <small>RRP £681</small> 3-TIER PLANTER <small>3 available</small>	

Interested? Contact us...

Ryde Town Council
 10 Lind Street, Ryde PO33 2NQ

annette.steed@rydetowncouncil.gov.uk
 01983 811105

Involving People Isle of Wight

is a service that aims to improve outcomes for Isle of Wight residents by involving them in the design, delivery and transformation of the social care services they receive. Our belief is that everyone on the Isle of Wight should be able to lead a happy, healthy life in their chosen community. We are working with Island residents, communities and stakeholders on a project that aims to ensure that every citizen has a voice in decisions that affect their lives and the services they receive. This project is called 'The Big Conversation'.



The BIG Conversation

What do we need?

People! The most important resource will be the Conversationalists who will listen to and record the information that Islanders will be sharing.

Involving People IOW hope to have many Conversationalists who will chat with people across the Island. This can happen in any situation, for example: community groups, workplaces, daycare centres, residential homes, support groups, cafes, foodbanks, supermarkets, libraries, or any event where residents feel comfortable sharing their stories, opinions and ideas.

Conversationalists will be Islanders from many different areas of life, and this can include:

Residents who are service users,
Councillors, Service providers,
People who lead or assist at support
Groups, Carers, Volunteers, Social care workers,
Council employees,
Any citizen who would like to be involved in the design and co production of Council strategies.

What is the Big Conversation?

The Big Conversation is about listening to and engaging with local people to understand what makes them happy and what support they would like to help maintain and improve their well-being. It is about positivity and co-production and ensuring that Islanders feel that the Big Conversation is for them and is something they are part of.

Involving People IOW have been asked by the Isle of Wight Council to undertake this project, and the results that come from the Big Conversation will be shared with the council team and stakeholders to assist in the co-design and development of the Adult Social Care & Housing strategy: 'Living Happy, Healthy Lives'.



Methodology

Although surveys have a role to play in the research of citizens' views, they can be inaccessible to many and don't allow the opportunity to express the thinking and reasons behind the answers that are given. Involving People IOW want to support Islanders to have real conversations with real people, in situations where they feel comfortable and able to fully explain their feelings and needs.

We plan to have Conversationalists who will take the Big Conversation across the island and into different communities. Conversationalists will have positive conversations with people all over the Island to find out what matters most to them, with the hope that by talking to people in environments where they are comfortable they will be able to record their true views, feelings and ideas and find out what really matters to them and their communities. Gathering this information will help to create a shared vision of what people need to ensure they have a happy, healthy life, and will involve them in the shaping and delivering of this vision.

How will it work?

The Big Conversation will involve people in conversations about the things that keep them happy and healthy, about what is working well in their lives and can be grown or added to, and about creating and developing ideas that could improve their lives and the community they live in. Involving People IOW believe that having greater insight into what is working well will help to ensure that strategies and services are better able to respond to people's needs.



Ways to be involved:

Becoming a Conversationalist!

Providing a setting, group or event where conversations can take place!

Spreading the word about the Big Conversation!

Involving People IOW would love to hear from people and organisations who would like to be part of the Big Conversation. If you would like to be a conversationalist or you have a setting or event where people can have conversations, or if you'd just like to find out more about the project, please get in touch.

You can contact Involving People Isle of Wight by email:
involvingpeopleiow@helpandcare.org.uk
Or Telephone: 07967 326787

**FREE
EVENT**



VILLAGE HALLS EVENT

A Celebration of Village Halls & The
Unsung Heroes Who Keep Them Going

At Mottistone Manor

Saturday 22nd March 2025

11am-3pm

Get Involved Today!

To find out more contact volunteer@actioniw.org.uk
or text: Sandy Ciccognani on 07498470216



A Celebration of Village Halls & The Volunteers Who Keep Them Going

Join us for this celebration
of Village Halls on
Saturday 22nd March 2025

Nominate two dedicated
volunteers from your hall to
receive a free cream tea and to
be put forward for a Volunteer of
the Year Award.
Bring a display board with
information about your hall and
what goes on there.

Come and network with
volunteers from other village
halls. Now in its second year,
this free event, celebrating
village halls will take place at the
end of ACRE's National Village
Halls Week, on Saturday 22nd
March, at Mottistone Manor
(11am-3pm).

Community Action IW are
working with the National Trust
and Village Halls from across
the Island, together with
supporting partners to create an
event that will highlight how
important these community
spaces are and support the
volunteers who keep these
spaces going, even in
challenging times.

Village Halls can showcase what
they do and groups who use village
halls will be giving demonstrations.
There will be drumming and
singing; belly dancing and knitting;
cactus growing and bee keeping.
And it's not too late to suggest a
group who might like to take part!

Last year we had over 600
attendees.

The theme for this year's Village
Halls Week is Celebrating &
Supporting Volunteers, so we are
inviting each hall to nominate two
volunteers to attend a special
cream tea and mini awards
ceremony with the outgoing High
Sheriff, Graham Biss.

Please send in your two
nominations to
volunteer@actioniw.org.uk
together with details of how we
can contact these volunteers and
why you think they deserve a
special thank you. (You can of
course
nominate yourself too!)

Volunteer recruitment, community
engagement and networking
between Village Halls will also be
features of our event

Isle of Wight Council

Childrens Services – Volunteer Scheme.

Volunteering is open to everyone, We value diverse backgrounds

As a volunteer, you will meet new people, improve your skills and knowledge, complete online learning, undergo a free DBS check, gain references, and obtain experience for social work apprenticeship opportunities.

Our volunteering service is part of the Children's Social Services - Targeted Family Support Service. We offer various volunteering opportunities to support vulnerable children and families on our island. Volunteers receive ongoing support and reflective supervision.

Our volunteer schemes include:

Community Buddies: Befriending or mentoring children, supporting community activities, and assisting in group sessions.

Family Champions: Supporting families below the social worker intervention threshold with tasks like paperwork, budgeting, and attending appointments.

Mentors: Guiding young people in independent living, supporting projects, and mentoring for exams.

Transportation and Drivers: Transporting children to school, contact sessions, or appointments.

Youth Justice Referral Order Panel: Participating in panels, guiding children in reparation activities, and volunteering in restorative justice projects.

The Isle of Wight Council values our volunteers' contributions, which significantly impact individuals, teams, and services. Volunteering with us offers opportunities to enhance your skills and meet new people. For more information or to request an application form, email volunteers@iow.gov.uk.





Community Comes Together for Pre-Loved Clothing Sale Supporting Isle of Wight Foodbank

The Isle of Wight Foodbank is excited to announce the success of its pre-loved clothing sale held on February 1st, which attracted 85 enthusiastic supporters from the local community. The event raised an impressive £695, helping to provide essential food supplies to those in need across the island.

Attendees browsed through a diverse selection of quality second-hand clothing, with many discovering unique finds while contributing to a worthy cause.

Visitors could also sit down, have a chat and enjoy tea and cake. The turnout highlights the community's commitment to supporting their neighbours who are facing food hunger.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who participated in the sale," said Lisa Matthews, Operations Manager. "The generous support from our community enables us to continue our vital work at the Isle of Wight Foodbank."

The next pre-loved clothing sale is scheduled for March 1st, and organisers are optimistic about another successful event. The Isle of Wight Foodbank invites everyone to join in the effort to raise funds and support local families in need. For more information, please contact Lisa Matthews



Hovertravel extends HoverBlue discount to more ticket types

Hovertravel has announced the expansion of its free HoverBlue discount, offering Isle of Wight residents savings across more ticket types. The enhanced HoverBlue scheme now includes discounted fares across a wider range of ticket types, including Day Return, Period Return, and Single tickets, applicable to Adults, Children, Seniors, and Students.

These competitive fares are designed to provide substantial savings for local residents, making travel more accessible and affordable.

Loretta Lale, Head of Marketing & Digital Development at Hovertravel, commented: "We are committed to offering competitive fares for islanders. By expanding our HoverBlue program, we aim to make travel more affordable for our local community, ensuring that residents can take full advantage of our services."

To benefit from these discounts, Isle of Wight residents can sign up for a free HoverBlue card on Hovertravel's website.



WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW TRUSTEES

Help make a difference on the Isle of Wight!

**INTERESTED? GET IN TOUCH BY MARCH 1ST FOR MORE INFORMATION OR AN APPLICATION PACK:
INFO@FOOTPRINT-TRUST.CO.UK**

BE PART OF SOMETHING IMPACTFUL!

MP for West Wight Richard Quigley

It's been a busy but exciting start to the year. As of 6 January, my team are now in place, and they've been helping provide even greater support to constituents. Topics they've already assisted constituents with have ranged from Visa issues, housing, and dentistry. The latter is something which I recently raised in the Chamber and was subsequently granted a one-on-one meeting with the minister to discuss. So, I used the follow-up meeting to re-emphasise how much of a dental desert Isle of Wight West really is, but also to highlight the opportunities for using the Island for dentistry trials.

Since being elected, I've made it my mission to champion the Island in Westminster. I provide regular updates

on social media, but nothing beats the opportunity to hear from and engage with constituents in person. I've held several open Q&As recently including at the Isle of Wight Youth Trust's annual Youth Conference, talking to Islander for Europe, and taking questions from users of Northwood Warm Space. I'll also be continuing with hosting regular in-person surgeries this year. And now my team are in place, we're looking at how we can host pop-up surgeries out in the community. Do get in touch on 01983 244980 or richard.quigley.mp@parliament.uk

Over the past few weeks, I have met with residents and organisations to hear their views. Local voices matter. I welcomed the House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee to the Island so they could hear first-hand about the work our local organisations - including Care in the Garden, Age UK Isle of Wight and Healthwatch - do.

Our Island is unique in so many ways, and the findings from the visit will contribute to an upcoming national report regarding adult social care.

At the opposite end of the age spectrum, I spoke with young people at the Youth Trust Conference. I heard a range of views covering a variety of topics, and it is vital that young people have a voice both at a local and national level.

I also visited St Catherine's School—students I met spoke highly of the school and how they felt included and listened to.

I have also spent time in Ryde over the past weeks, visiting The Department and seeing how the development of the building is progressing. I also visited Ryde Library and Help Centre. I look forward to re-visiting both once the re-development works have been completed

MP for East Wight Joe Robertson



IWALC Training

(Refresher and new councillor)

If you're considering becoming a Town, Parish or Community councillor at the May elections this year, IWALC have a training schedule that starts this coming June to help you on your journey.

All training will be held at the Riverside Centre in Newport in the evening, which offers accessible facilities. Training is free to all member councils and staff, (there is a fee of £75 per delegate to non member councils). Attending in person gives people the opportunity to meet other councillors and potentially make new friends. IWALC now offers hybrid meetings, so if you are unable to attend in person then you can remote in via Zoom. We also send out training notes.

The schedule starts in June with;

June 25th - New Councillor training

July 30th - Ethics

September 24th- Planning

October 29th - Finances

November 26th - GDPR

LOCAL NEWS

Cowes Community Orchard

In 2021 the Town Council discussed installing a community orchard to provide free fruit to our residents and a number of potential sites were identified. Unfortunately, discussions with landowners did not see the project develop.

Shortly thereafter, the planting of a community orchard at Northwood Recreation Ground was considered as a potential project by the IW Council under the Planet Aware initiative. The Town Clerk registered the Town Council's interest. Representatives from the Town Council met with the IW Council's Tree Officer at Northwood Recreation Ground to identify a suitable location and agree the size for the community orchard. The south-west corner of the main field was deemed suitable, pending sample bore holes to look at the ground's structure, and the project progressed. The Town Council entered into a Licence with the IW Council for the use of the land for the community orchard and agreed to maintain the trees following installation.

The Town Council were then made aware that Red Funnel were looking to plant 160 new trees to celebrate their 160th birthday. Cowes Town Council agreed to share the trees with East Cowes Town Council, settling on nine fruit trees for the creation of a community orchard, and a number of ornamental trees for other areas of Northwood Recreation Ground. The fruit trees are self-pollinating and consist of apple, cherry, pear, plum, nectarine and walnut trees.

The IW Council's Tree Officer offered to plant the trees and supply stakes and ties, supported by our Tree Wardens.

The trees were planted in April 2022, with a plaque being presented and unveiled by Red Funnel to officially open the community orchard. A little later, the Town Council also added their own plaque, advising members of the public that the orchard is for them to pick their own fruit.

The community orchard measures 35ft x 42ft, with the trees being planted at 10-12ft intervals to form a triangle, bordered on two sides by existing hedging.

The trees continue to be monitored by our Tree Wardens, who inspect them regularly and water them in dry weather. The young trees are flourishing and we look forward to seeing them fulfil their purpose.

Images: Cowes Community Orchard & Cowes Town Council's Plaque



Nettlestone Sophie Watsons Garden

Summary 2022 - 2024

Since 2022 'Open Spaces' volunteers have been working on a project to increase the biodiversity of this public garden (a Parish Council managed green space), with particular emphasis on the number and variety of insects.

Initially, inspired by the 'No mow May' initiative, a regime was introduced to leave large areas of the garden uncut in the summer months. This regime has continued - with areas of mowing being modified following public consultation. A survey was organised in 2024 to generate base data on species diversity.

From 2025

The next phase of this project is the introduction of wild flowers. Research has been undertaken to determine which species and method of introduction would be most suitable for this space.

Annual wild flower seeds require bare soil, preferably recently dug. Accordingly, turf has been removed from a 5m square patch and it has been dug over in preparation for the wild flower seeds to be scattered. It is hoped that in the summer this patch will contain **a colourful, pollen and nectar rich habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Each year hereafter further patches of bare soil will be created to allow seeds (and wild flowers) to gradually disperse across the garden.**

Rooting for Change: Traditional Orchard vs. Food Forest

Community food growing is thriving on the Isle of Wight, with different approaches taking shape. Godshill is planning a food forest, Grow Gurnard is creating a fruiting boundary, and Old School Meadow's orchard is being revitalised. But what's the difference between these methods?

Orchards: A Variety of Approaches

An orchard is any site with at least five fruit trees spaced within 20 metres of each other, growing in permanent grassland with low-intensity management. Some, like Pan Country Park, offer foraging opportunities while maintaining a balance with nature. Others, like Old School Meadow in Gurnard, are evolving community spaces. Volunteers have been restoring the orchard, planting new trees, and hosting pruning workshops to ensure its future.

Meanwhile, Grow Gurnard is developing a fruiting boundary—a hedge of fruit-bearing trees and shrubs designed to benefit both people and wildlife.

Godshill's Food Forest: A Natural Ecosystem

Unlike structured orchards, a food forest mimics woodland ecosystems, layering trees, shrubs, and ground cover to create a self-sustaining environment. "We want to grow food while supporting nature," says a Godshill project spokesperson. Food forests take longer to establish but require less maintenance over time, enriching soil and biodiversity.

Different Approaches, Same Goal

While orchards focus on fruit production, food forests embrace long-term regeneration. Yet, all these projects share a common goal—building food resilience and connecting communities through growing.

If anyone working on a Community growing space would like to join IoW Growing Community WhatsApp to share support, ideas and plants.

Network Ryde Youth Service's Allotment

Network Ryde took on their Quarry Road (Ryde) allotment in August 2020, a positive initiative during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the youth service discovered that many of their young people did not have gardens or access to outdoor space. They were lucky to receive funding from Sovereign Housing Association's 'Community Grants Programme' which helped to clear the plot, and have now transformed it into a workable area for growing and for nurturing the wellbeing of their young people.

It is widely recognised that spending time surrounded by nature has many benefits, both physically and mentally; a space initially overrun by nettles and weeds, is now home to raised beds, a shed, greenhouse, polytunnel, and a living willow dome and seating area. A testament to the hard work and collaborative efforts of the Network Ryde team, young people and volunteers who have shaped and evolved, as much as the plot itself.



Network Ryde have also made it their mission to recycle as much as possible, and are encouraging biodiversity, by planting wildflowers, making bird feeders and leaving areas uncut to attract wildlife. Over the years, the allotment has provided a diverse and inclusive environment for young people who are at risk of school exclusion and antisocial behaviour, a volunteering opportunity for Duke of Edinburgh's Award achievers, a Home Education space, and part of the Biosphere Festival 2024. Being part of the allotment community is also an integral element, and the youth service foster intergenerational links with fellow plot holders, who like to share gardening advice, spare seeds and plants.



Following significant Youth Investment funding, in July 2024, Network Ryde moved to new premises in the formerly known St. Thomas' Church. This has created an accessible kitchen, allowing the youth service to cook nutritious meals with their homegrown veg, and also opportunities to donate surplus produce to Aspire Ryde, their offerings becoming part of the menu for their community lunches.

About Network Ryde Youth Service

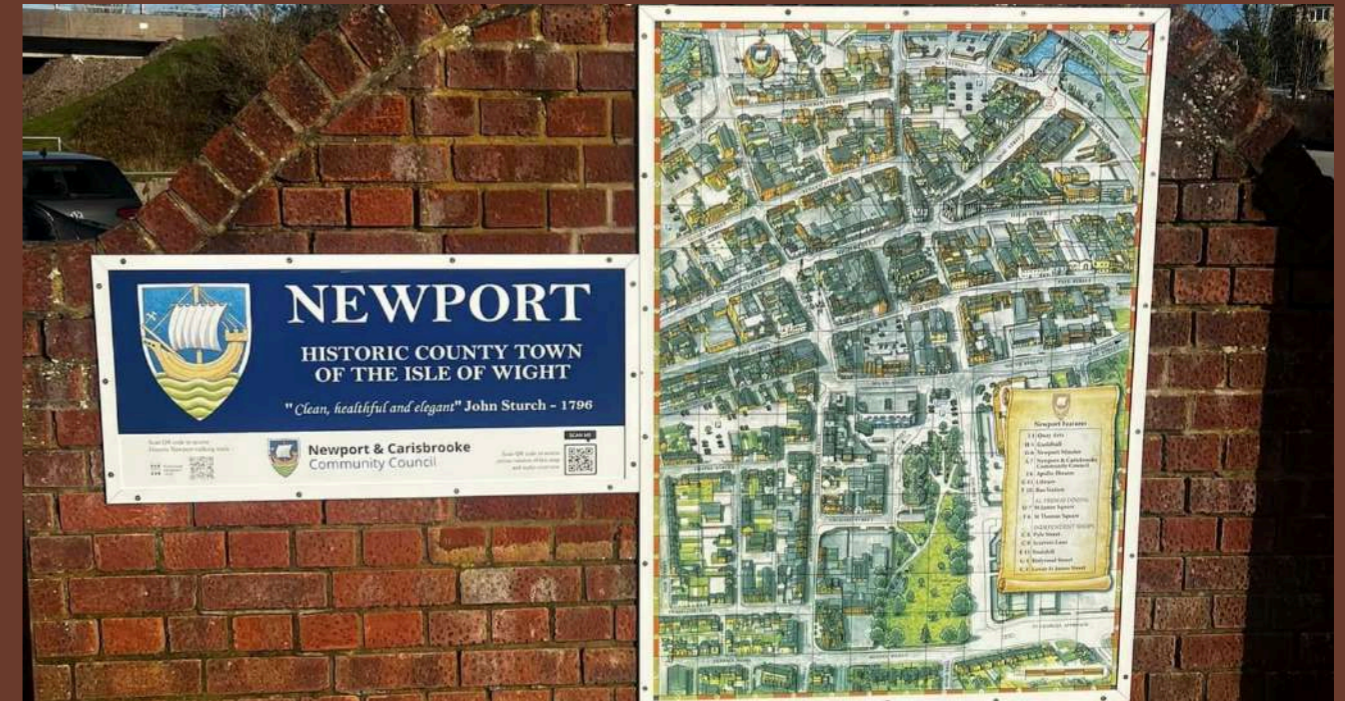
Network Ryde Youth Service is Ryde Town Council's Youth Provision. We offer young people aged 11-18 (Years 7-13 or home educated equivalent) a safe space to meet, socialise, and have trained youth workers who offer support, advice and guidance. All sessions and activities at Network Ryde Youth Service are provided free of charge and are suitable for young people (Island wide).
www.networkryde.co.uk



Ventnor Community Orchard has reached the exciting stage of tree planting. Representatives from St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy planted three different varieties of apple trees. One of these, a variety called 'Scrumptious', is an excellent early dessert apple with a fragrant honeyed flavour which should produce fruit in perfect time for the summer holiday for the children to pick and enjoy. The youngest children from Reception class struggled a little with the digging but enjoyed the experience, talking about the trees and resulting wildlife and how they would like to visit the orchard with their friends and families. Local residents came along on a drizzly Saturday morning to plant the rest of the trees: a Victoria Plum, a Crab Apple to attract bees to pollinate the fruit trees, and a heritage apple variety: Ashmeads Kernel. This delicious apple variety is still a popular choice after 300 years! Planting trees is a way for Ventnor Town Council to offset their carbon footprint and improve the biodiversity of the area. The trees have a range of different root stocks, meaning they will grow to different heights. This will provide a variety of different mini-habitats for a wide range of organisms to flourish from fungi to field mice. More trees will be planted in future years with exciting suggestions from local people including Quince, Damson, and soft fruit bushes. Watch this space!



Heritage Action Zone funding from Historic England has given Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council's Shaping Newport project the opportunity to install additional maps of Newport around the town at various entry points. The funding was used to install five more maps last week, following on from the first map installation which was funded by the Isle of Wight Chamber and installed in 2019.



There are now six town maps, located at Lord Lois Library, Newport Bus Station, Chapel Street Carpark, Post Office Lane and Quay Street. The map was created seven years ago by Alan Rowe and took six months to design. It highlights key locations in the town, like notable buildings including Newport Minster and the Guildhall, al fresco dining spots and independent shops and was produced by local business A.J Wells. There is an audio overview available, developed by local charity [Sight for Wight](#), and an online version is hosted on the Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council's [website](#). These are accessed via a QR code printed on the maps. Another QR code will take you to the Historic Newport Walks website <http://historicalnewport.org>, where you can access free historic walking trails around the town. Councillor Julie Jones Evans, cabinet member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure said: "Seeing this beautiful map now in 6 locations around the town, not only is useful for visitors but is also public art." "It's beautifully illustrated by Alan Rowe and printed in lasting high-quality enamel by King's Award for Enterprise recipients A.J. Wells who are based in the County Town." "Having the opportunity for funds from Historic England to produce 5 updated versions was something to be grabbed with both hands. Thanks also to Shaping Newport for making this happen

South & South East in Bloom

We're pleased to share that the South and South East in Bloom regions include six counties, including the Garden Isle. In the past, over 25 villages and towns on the Isle of Wight participated, supporting tourism and community participation, but now, sadly, only a few.

The Garden Isle has a lot to offer, and we believe villages, towns and communities deserve recognition for their appearance, local support, and contribution to the Island's economy.

We would like to reconnect with parishes, villages, towns, and even railway stations! Your involvement will help celebrate the spirit of the Isle of Wight's communities and showcase the island as a great place to live, work, and visit.

Our assessment visits are simple. Just show us what you're doing in gardening, how you're caring for the environment, and how you're building your community. If your community wants to get involved, we'd love to hear from you!

Our campaign manager can provide more information and help you reconnect with our Britain in Bloom regions. Please email kate@sseib.com or call the office at 020 8662 1021. We look forward to hearing from you!

Peter Holman – Chair South & South East in Bloom

