

Report on Meetings of Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group (IWRUG) June/July 2026

Ordinary Meeting 27 June 2026

The main information given/issues discussed were as follows:

1. The recent collision between two trains on the mainland could not happen here, because Island Line's safety system would ensure that, if a train went through a red signal, its braking system would automatically come into operation.
2. A Chinese-made electric bus is currently on trial on the Island. Members discussed its virtues and shortcomings.
3. Transport issues raised in the State of the Island debate held on 12 June.
4. Possible implications if or when transport functions are devolved to the new Combined Authority.

Public Meeting 18 July 2026

There was a public meeting on Saturday 18 July. It was attended by Simon Moya (Southern Vectis), Mark Dunn (Island Line), Stewart Chandler (IWC) and about 30 other people, including IWRUG members and members of the public. There were fewer members of the public than usual, possibly because there were several other events going on at the same time, including IW Pride and Ventnor Fringe. I am going to suggest that they hold it at a different time of year, since there is always so much going on at this time.

The following updates were received from the three speakers:

Southern Vectis:

1. Passenger numbers are stable, though went down during the heatwave.
2. The new Havenstreet service will start in September. It will go from Ryde to Newport (and back) via Havenstreet. Thanks to a contribution from the Stewartry Railway, it will operate seven days a week, instead of six as originally planned. Further details will be available in due course.
3. The Newport town service will probably be increased to every 30 minutes in the autumn.
4. The electric vehicles are working well. The Chinese-made pilot is proving more efficient and has air conditioning, so future vehicles will probably be sourced from there. The shortage of seats downstairs is recognised and solutions are being considered.
5. New government regulations will require onboard announcements to include diversions.

Island Line:

1. Passenger numbers are increasing and are now higher than pre-Covid but the effect on operational costs is reduced because of no fare increases this year.

2. The work on Ryde Pier, which involves removing rust and protecting against future rusting, is scheduled to finish in April next year. It is currently on schedule. Mark apologised for the noise.
3. There will be various short closures over the rest of the year, in order to undertake various maintenance and improvement work.
4. The aim is still to eventually operate a 30-minute service. Some of the improvement work will facilitate this by reducing journey time.
5. One of the improvement works is to open platform 1 at Ryde St Johns. This is primarily for emergency purposes but the possibility of using it all the time (thus resolving the problem of the footbridge) is being considered.

IWC

1. Bus Improvement Plan funding will enable various improvements, including continuation of the increased frequency on routes 5 and 8, the new Havenstreet service, and the review and upgrading of shelters and other bus infrastructure.
2. All traffic lights are also being reviewed and upgraded where necessary.
3. The RNIB is reviewing all bus services from the point of view of passengers. With a sight impairment.
4. Realtime information (visual and aural) is being trialled at two locations, with a view to gradually extending elsewhere.

Questions

Following the presentations, members of the public asked questions about various issues, several of which had been raised at previous meetings. They included:

1. Lack of service to Branstone Farm, including poor quality of footpath to nearest bus stop.
2. Lack of service (other than 24) along Perowne Way.
3. Location of flags at bus stops (impact on queuing).
4. Extra stop in Church Litten for incoming buses on routes 2/3.
5. No train to connect with arrival of last Fastcat.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be at 11.15 am on Saturday 19 September.

Diana Conyers
July 2026