

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2025

Island Business

features | interviews | articles | news

includes Isle of Wight Chamber member news and events

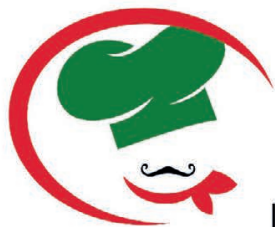
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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

I always feel that autumn is a bit like the beginning of a new term, as the summer is firmly behind us and there's lots to look forward to as the evenings draw in. Here at the Chamber, the team has been beavering away to bring members some great networking opportunities in some new venues and with some new ideas; think yoga and a Chamber Challenge to look forward to. As well as those, we have our annual lunch with the Bank of England at the IW College and mince pies (yes, we're embracing Christmas too in this issue), and networking at Café Isola coming up in November.

Talking of Christmas, it's the perfect time to support your fellow members by buying your gifts, whether personal or corporate, locally, supporting one another, and keeping our island economy

buoyant. We've started you off with a few ideas, but there are loads of businesses with wonderful offers for experiences and treats. So, let's keep it local.

I was delighted to be shown around the Vikoma facility in East Cowes recently, where, for over 50 years, it has been building world-leading technology safeguarding marine and industrial environments worldwide. A fascinating afternoon and an island company to be proud of; read about it on page 22.

Please remember to send me your news, success stories, and anything else that you think I should know about. This is your member magazine, so do join in. ■

AMBER BEARD
EDITOR

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IW CHAMBER'S VISION

To bring the Island business community together. Helping organisations of all sizes achieve more than they could alone.

IW Homes & Interiors Show success

Exhibitors, visitors, and industry professionals alike contributed to the vibrant atmosphere across the two-day IW Homes & Interiors Show last weekend. Workshops, demonstrations, and sales were particularly well-received, with many visitors choosing to attend both days to make the most of the experiences on offer. Feedback from both exhibitors and attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with exhibitors reporting excellent engagement and sales opportunities, and visitors praising the variety and quality of the event.

Building on this year's success, organisers are already looking forward to expanding the show for next year, promising even more to discover, experience, and enjoy. The dates for the IW Homes & Interiors Show 2026 will be announced soon, and early bookings for exhibitor spaces are now open.

"We are thrilled with the response to this year's show, in every corner there was a palpable sense of excitement and discovery," said Hannah Wilson, Director. "Our vision was to create a luxurious, aspirational space that seamlessly brings together the best of homes and interiors with opportunities to learn, connect, and be inspired. The support of our exhibitors and sponsors is what makes the event possible, and we are already excited to be growing even more inspiring workshops, demonstrations, and interactive experiences even further for 2026." ■



Third think tank held



"Vulnerability is not about winning. It's not about losing. It's about having the courage to show up when you can't control the outcome." Brené Brown

The third IOW Business Think Tank, held on 17th September, explored Relationship-Focused Leadership. Alison, Ed, and Zoe challenged and encouraged island business leaders to consider whether embracing vulnerability could create an unexpected competitive edge. Research proves that when leaders dare to show vulnerability, staff confidence soars, trust deepens, and engagement transforms.

Sound counterintuitive? That's exactly why thirty Island business leaders voted to explore it. "The magic happens when leaders deliberately step into that uncomfortable place," says Alison Thorogood. "That stretch, choosing vulnerability, is where the best results come from."

Here's the uncomfortable truth: Are your relationships at work building your business, or silently undermining it? Ed Grey said, "In today's unpredictable environment, your

competitive advantage isn't just your product, it's how well your people work together. And that starts with leadership."

The IOW Business Think Tank is a confidential space where Island leaders tackle real challenges and learn together. The fourth and final Think Tank of 2025 is on Wednesday, 10th December. ■

New owners for Red Funnel

Njord Partners, a leading investment manager with a strong track record in revitalising UK businesses, is pleased to announce the acquisition of Red Funnel. Over the past five years, Red Funnel has faced challenges. Significant indebtedness has severely limited Red Funnel's ability to invest, but this milestone transaction creates a strong foundation for enhancing the service and delivering an outstanding experience for Red Funnel passengers.

Njord Partners brings a strong track record of investing in and supporting growth at UK businesses, helping companies excel by strengthening their operations and improving products and services. It has particular expertise in the hospitality and maritime sectors, with portfolio companies including Valiant Pub Company, Ambassador Cruise Line, and Geoquip Marine.

Fran Collins, CEO at Red Funnel, said, "Our priority is to ensure Red Funnel operates sustainably and responsibly for decades to come, delivering high-quality, reliable, and friendly services across the Solent. As a lifeline service provider, it is essential that our partners deeply understand our business and share our values. Njord Partners has a strong track record of building enduring relationships with owners, management teams, customers, and stakeholders."

Jakob Kjellberg, Founding Partner at Njord Partners, commented, "We are excited to support Red Funnel's next chapter, restoring its financial health and empowering its people to deliver the reliable, efficient service that islanders and visitors deserve." ■



Rare habitat returns

Seagrass seed planted earlier this year in the River Hamble has taken root and is beginning to thrive, marking a historic return for one of the UK's most threatened marine habitats.

In April, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's marine team planted more than 2,000 seagrass seeds using innovative methods. Just a few months later, healthy plants are now growing, flowering, and producing new seed in the estuary - the first signs of a potential comeback for a habitat lost from the Hamble since the late 1920s and 1930s.

Tim Ferrero, Senior Specialist, Marine Conservation, at Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, said, "Standing in the Hamble and seeing seagrass growing again was a truly emotional moment for me. This river hasn't seen seagrass for almost a century, but now, for the first time in living memory, it's back. To witness those tiny shoots flowering and even producing new seed gives me so much hope."

Seagrass meadows are vital nursery habitats for marine life including pipefish, cuttlefish and thornback rays. They can also capture carbon, burying it down in the seabed and making them one of the most important natural solutions to the climate crisis. ■



WRS announces strategic partnership

WRS, an award-winning POS systems provider, has announced a new partnership with Lloyds Merchant Services, one of the UK's leading payment providers. Together, the two companies will deliver an integrated point-of-sale payment solution for hospitality and retail merchants, combining WRS's innovative POS technology with Lloyds Merchant Services' secure and reliable card processing.

The partnership enables businesses to benefit from fully integrated POS and card payment processing for faster service, delivering a quick, secure experience for customers while

providing flexible solutions that can scale from single-site operators to large, multi-site locations.

"Our partnership with Lloyds Merchant Services strengthens our commitment to providing complete, future-ready solutions for our clients," WRS Project Director, Tom Scovell, said. "By bringing together our leading POS technology with trusted payment services, we're helping operators deliver the seamless experience today's customers expect."

Under the new partnership, both companies will benefit from a joint route to market that unlocks new opportunities and provides options for additional future solutions.

Justin Schuil-Brewer, Head of Partnerships at Lloyds Merchant Services, added: "We're thrilled to be working with WRS to launch a truly end-to-end solution that removes everyday pain points and delivers a one-stop platform that empowers growth." ■

Garden party gives WightAid coffers major boost

"That's what we call a garden party." This was the message from WightAID after it celebrated with a fundraising event in the garden of Geoff and Amy Underwood. On the day, more than £40,000 was raised for the charity, which has given out



more than £700,000 worth of grants since it began.

Guests enjoyed music from The Optimists and Oli Rivers and presentations from First Act, Daisy Chains, and Alzheimer's Café - three organisations that told partygoers how WightAID had supported them. The three groups were further rewarded with new donations from WightAID that were presented on the day by businesses who are long-term supporters of the charity.

Deon Redpath, of WightFibre, one of the companies that made the presentations, said, "The Isle of Wight is a beautiful location, and we are very lucky to call it our home. However, amongst our community are those who are less fortunate and don't have the opportunities that we all take for granted.

Geoff Underwood, WightAID founder, added, "It was lovely to see so many friends, old and new, at the party, raising an incredible sum to enable us to keep supporting good causes across the Island." ■

Island animal charities to explore better collaboration



Representatives from several of the Isle of Wight's leading animal charities came together at the RSPCA Isle of Wight headquarters to discuss shared challenges and the potential benefits of closer collaboration.

Charities represented at the meeting included RSPCA Isle of Wight, Friends of the Animals, Owl and Monkey Haven, IOW Donkey Sanctuary, Badger Trust Isle of Wight, Wight Squirrel Project, and Cats Protection. The discussion focused on key issues affecting animal welfare on the Island, particularly, access to veterinary care and joint fundraising opportunities.

The meeting highlighted the value of pooling resources, sharing expertise, and working together to ensure that more animals across the Isle of Wight receive the care and support they need. Participants agreed that by collaborating more closely, charities can increase efficiency, support each other in emergencies, strengthen community engagement, and enhance fundraising impact.

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for January, with organisers expressing hope that additional Island-based animal charities will join the initiative.

"Bringing our charities together allows us to share knowledge, avoid duplication of effort, support each other and ultimately provide better care for the animals that need us," said Steve Backhouse, RSPCA Isle of Wight Branch Director. ■



Communities co-creating coastlines

A collaboration between eco-engineers Artecology and the University of Plymouth has shown that hands-on creativity, combining art, ecology, and clay, can transform urban coastlines for marine life.

Artecology, based in Sandown, is known for Vertipools: award-winning artificial rockpools that turn sterile sea walls into thriving habitats. Studies show they deliver a 247% uplift in biodiversity compared to plain concrete. Building on this, Artecology developed CoCreate, where communities handmade ceramic inserts for Vertipools. Using grog clay, schools and local groups across the UK are crafting detailed structures that support marine wildlife.

University of Plymouth Masters student Claire Beckley tested these CoCreated pools at Artecology's 'Science Beach'. In just four months, she recorded striking results. "We discovered that even in such a short window, the 'CoCreate' Vertipools supported over three times as many individual mobile organisms, such as barnacles, compared to controls."

Nigel George of Artecology highlights the wider impact. "Instead of mass production, this is production by the masses! Hands-on making methods create unrivalled complexity that translates directly into bioreceptivity. By uniting science, community, and creativity, CoCreate shows how everyone can help coastal wildlife, and wellbeing flourish. The power to make a difference is literally in our hands." ■



A fond farewell

After more than ten years, Mountbatten Isle of Wight and Mountbatten Hampshire have said a fond 'au revoir' to retiring CEO, Nigel Hartley, MBE. Staff, volunteers, friends and supporters gathered at a party in the John Cheverton Centre to wish him well in his next adventure, during an emotional week.

In speeches, he was called 'bold and edgy', and there was praise for his kindness, great leadership, including his open-door policy, which encouraged staff and volunteers to drop by for a chat, and also for playing a fundamental part in making Mountbatten a leading hospice, with a model of care so

successful that it has been regularly replicated.

For his part, Nigel urged staff, volunteers, and supporters to continue to fight for people's right to access dedicated end-of-life care, against a backdrop of financial insecurity and uncertainty. He said he would miss the camaraderie, friends with whom he has developed what a hospice looks like, including championing earlier access to care and extending the hospices' reach into the community, to ensure 24/7 support for those who need it most.

New CEO, Becky McGregor, led the tributes and officially took on the role on 1 October. ■



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Putting financial confidence in place

Simplex Accounting Limited, in partnership with the Isle of Wight College, recently delivered a unique two-day bookkeeping course, the only one currently available on the Island, designed to give local business owners, freelancers, and entrepreneurs the confidence to manage their finances.

Across two practical sessions, attendees learned how to organise records, manage receipts and expenses, set up simple systems, and use digital bookkeeping tools. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants saying the sessions finally made bookkeeping “make sense.”

Lucy Johnson, Founder of Simplex, explained, “Financial education is something we are really passionate about. Too often, business owners are left to figure things out on their own, and it can feel overwhelming. We wanted this course to give people clarity, confidence, and practical skills they can use straight away, and the feedback shows we achieved that.”

Feedback from the course was positive with one participant saying, “Lucy is very knowledgeable and approachable. It was a small group so very interactive, which is lovely.” Another added: “Lucy made me feel at ease, the course gave me more confidence in my own ability.” ■



Strengthening community bonds

New Carnival is celebrating the success of its Carnival Island Connections project, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. Over the summer, the project delivered seven creative workshops and brought spectacular giant puppets and costumes to 12 parades across the Island. It also enabled New Carnival to pay 10 performers for each parade, giving young performers valuable experience and helping emerging artists develop workshop delivery skills.

Phase 2 of the project began in September with a successful appearance at the Isle of Wight Steampunk Festival parade. The team will next appear at Mountbatten IOW's Bonfire Night on 8th November, the Newport Lantern Parade on 6th December, and Ventnor's Lantern Event on 13th December. New Carnival is also preparing for its own flagship winter celebration: Merry and Bright Festival of Light, in Ryde on Friday 5th December.

“Carnival has a unique power to bring people together,” Hannah Ray, CEO of New Carnival, said. “It's joyful, inclusive, and rooted in community; everyone can take part, whether they're creating, performing, or simply watching and celebrating. Projects like Carnival Island Connections show how creativity can strengthen community bonds and create shared moments of pride and joy.” ■

Island-based Company Supporting Independent Living

A new Island business is helping people remain active and independent for longer, with mobile-enabled wearable technology designed to provide reassurance wherever life takes them.

Safeguard Technologies is the first Isle of Wight based company focused on discreet wearable mobile devices. Unlike traditional services, which are often centred on housebound support, Safeguard's approach is about keeping people out and about, active and in the community with the confidence that help is always close at hand.

Their StaySafe Watch and StaySafe Fob feature GPS locating, incoming calling, fall detection, and a direct link to a 24/7 response centre. This means that wearers can continue to be independent while enjoying everyday activities – from shopping to walking the dog, while families and carers have peace of mind that assistance will be provided if needed.

By focusing on independence for the wearer, and peace of mind for their family, Safeguard Technologies is aiming to make a real difference to people's quality of life on the Island, supporting confidence, activity, and freedom for longer. ■



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The risk of cyber attacks are rising - could your business be next?

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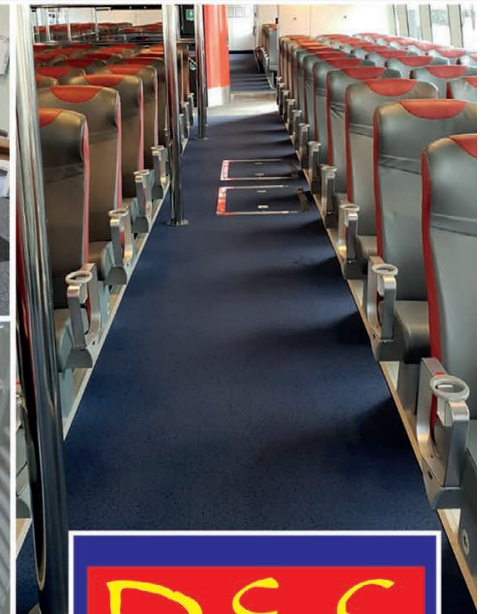
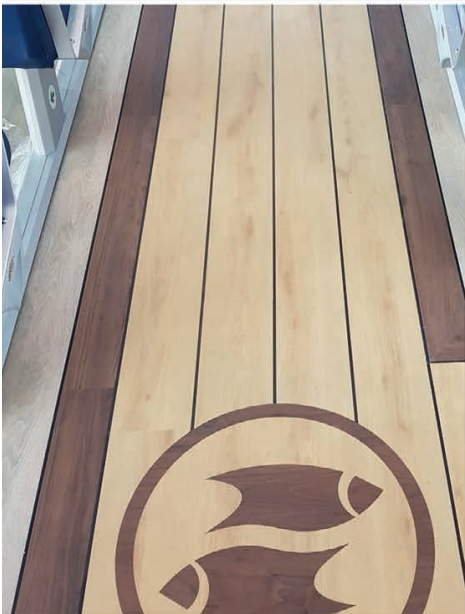
🕒 £15,300 - average cost to small businesses per cyber incident (UK gov, 2024).

👤 32% of UK businesses experienced a cyber attack in the past 12 months.

🌐 43% of cyber attacks globally target small and medium-sized businesses.

👤 90% of successful cyber breaches are due to human error or poor security practice.

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Film premieres at Wight Brand charity evening

On October 2nd, more than 200 guests attended the Wight Brand Film Premiere at Cineworld, Newport, celebrating the launch of The Island and raising funds for WightAID.

The film crowns two years of production by Steve Edmonds of TVMI, supported by Island businesses and organisations. Dignitaries, including Lord Lieutenant Susie Sheldon, MP Richard Quigley, and Council Leader Phil Jordan, joined project partners for the evening.

Guests enjoyed drinks and canapés before viewing a short introduction and the one-hour documentary The Island, showcasing Island life through ten local organisations: The National Trust, WightFibre, Red Funnel, Spence Willard, Yokogawa Marex, The Construction Collective, Bembridge Harbour, HTP Apprenticeships, Isle of Wight Distribution, and Vestas Wind Blades.

Following the film, a charity auction led by Christopher Scott and Malcolm Randall raised over £6,000 for WightAID.

The Wight Brand continues the legacy of The Wight Book, this time telling the Island's story on video through its YouTube channel and social media platforms. The film The Island can be viewed via the Wight Brand YouTube page. Steve Edmonds said: "The turnout this evening is absolutely fantastic. I feel privileged to be a part of it." ■



Ventnor Botanic Garden. What's new?

Situated on the Island's sunny southern coast and sheltered by the warm microclimate of the Undercliff, Ventnor Botanic Garden enjoys more sunshine and fewer frosts than the rest of the UK, creating the perfect environment for the collection of subtropical plants that flourish outdoors year-round.

Visitors can wander through landscapes that echo some of the world's most interesting regions, from the showy flowers of South Africa's fynbos to the bright Mediterranean terraces and the fresh greens of New Zealand. With over 22 acres to explore, every path reveals new colours, textures, and scents, including a first for the UK, the new outdoor citrus grove.

Holders of National Collections for Palm, Eucalyptus, and Puya, Ventnor Botanic Garden shows these amazing plants in a near-natural habitat. Many of the botanic garden's plants tell the story of climate change as explained on the interpretation walls in the Tropical House.

Adding to the experience of the tranquillity of the Garden, VBG hosts walk-in wellbeing classes, guided walks, art exhibitions, talks, and events. Families enjoy VBG's 'get off the path' ethos, kids' trails and the playground, while foodies love the seasonal menu and barista coffees in the Plantation Room Café and Terrace. The lovingly curated Puya Boutique is packed with treats and always has an answer for "what do I get for so and so?" Come along and see for yourself. ■

Vectis Refrigeration marks 10 years with a digital future

Vectis Refrigeration celebrates its 10th anniversary on 15 November, marking a decade of serving Island businesses with refrigeration, air conditioning, heat pumps, catering equipment, and facilities management.

Founded to offer reliable local service without mainland dependence, Vectis has grown from a single van into a trusted team supporting schools, hospitals, hotels, and manufacturers across the Isle of Wight.

Owner Will Overton says the milestone is as much about looking forward as back. "Like many owners, I've taken advice over the years. Lately, I've also explored tools like AI. Out of curiosity, I even asked it to map a £10m, 5 to 8-year exit plan. Impressive, but it reinforced one truth: plans are easy; delivery is hard."

Reflecting that mindset, Vectis has introduced a role focused on digital innovation and efficiency, rare for a company of its size. "A technology partner told me we're only the second firm they've met doing this; the other had 4,500 employees," says Will.

The goal: smoother workflows, stronger compliance, and faster response times. "Ten years in, we're proud of what we've built," Will adds. "But we're just getting started." ■



HEATHROW OPENS DOORS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES TO GO FURTHER – AT HOME AND ABROAD

Heathrow is expanding its support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with two major initiatives designed to help UK businesses grow — both domestically and internationally. The relaunch of its World of Opportunity grant programme and the creation of a new SME Academy underline the airport's commitment to opening access to global markets and its £1 billion annual supply chain.

Empowering Exporters Through the World of Opportunity

Heathrow's World of Opportunity programme has returned to help ambitious SMEs sell their goods and services overseas. The scheme offers £2,000 grants to 12 businesses to fund trade missions, research, and training to accelerate export growth. Winners also receive mentoring and access to the Department for Business and Trade's Business Growth Service network for expert guidance.

As the UK's largest port by value, Heathrow connects exporters to 92% of the world's economy, playing a vital role in driving British trade.

"The South East is home to entrepreneurs with enormous potential to succeed on the global stage," said Nigel Milton, Heathrow's Chief Communications and Sustainability Officer. "SMEs across the country produce outstanding products and services, and unlocking their ability to access international markets is vital for driving growth and supporting jobs. We want to enable even more to access the world of opportunity that is out there."

One of last year's winners, Opses Ltd from Poole, is already seeing results. The company, which develops technology for emergency vehicles, used its grant to exhibit at the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service

Authorities Council (AFAC) conference in Perth, Australia. The opportunity helped Opses expand its reach across Europe and begin exploring the North American market.

"Winning the Heathrow World of Opportunity grant is a huge boost for a business like ours," said Tim Hollis, Sales and Marketing Manager at Opses. "It gives us resources to grow and explore new markets around the world."

Trade Minister Chris Bryant praised the scheme for helping to "turn potential into reality" for UK exporters.

Applications for the 2025 World of Opportunity programme are open until 31 December. For more information, visit heathrow.com/world-of-opportunity.

Building Business Capability Through the SME Academy

Heathrow has also launched the SME Academy, a series of workshops helping small firms access the airport's extensive supply chain. The first session brought together 50 SMEs with Heathrow experts, business groups, and political representatives for practical sessions

on supplier processes, sustainability standards, and procurement requirements. Virtual workshops will follow, ensuring accessibility for businesses across the UK.

"Heathrow is committed to ensuring that both the airport and its supply chain grow and develop to create an extraordinary airport fit for the future," said Paul Doherty, Heathrow's Director of Procurement. "By aligning with Heathrow's values, suppliers will be better equipped to collaborate effectively and deliver sustainable outcomes."

The SME Academy also offers one-to-one mentoring from supply chain specialists, providing tailored support for firms looking to meet procurement standards. With 60% of Heathrow's current suppliers already SMEs, the programme aims to expand opportunities even further.

Craig Beaumont OBE, Executive Director of the Federation of Small Businesses, said: "Opening up procurement opportunities to small firms helps them grow and remain resilient. It's great to see the SME Academy opening the door for small firms to gain the skills and knowledge needed to access Heathrow's supply chain."

To explore opportunities to work with Heathrow or join the SME Academy, visit:

www.competefor.com/heathrow or www.heathrow.com/sme-academy ■



INTRODUCING THE CHAMBER'S NEW CEO – ROB JOHNSON

It's hard to believe that I've already been in post for nearly three months. Time has flown, but in that short period, I've had the privilege of meeting so many of our members, partners, and stakeholders, and I'm genuinely excited about the future of the Chamber and the opportunities that lie ahead for our business community.

Rob Johnson,
IW Chamber CEO



From the outset, my vision for the Chamber is clear: to help our businesses grow beyond the boundaries of the Island. We are fortunate to be part of the wider British Chambers of Commerce network, which gives us regional, national, and even international reach. That connection is one of our greatest strengths, and I see our role as ensuring that island businesses feel more connected, supported, and able to seize opportunities wherever they may be.

One of the things that has struck me already is the breadth of businesses we support: everything from ambitious startups to established firms looking to expand into new markets. We are well placed to help them all accelerate their growth. For startups, that may mean joining our courses, tapping into our Quest services, or using our HR, tax, and legal helplines to get the foundations right from day one. For larger firms, it could be leveraging our trade support, customs guidance, or introductions to international partners to take that next step.

Equally important is our role in encouraging entrepreneurship across the Island, particularly among young people. We're seeing exciting growth in creative industries and technology here, and there is a huge amount of intellectual property being developed that has both national and international potential. I want the Chamber to be a place where this new generation of entrepreneurs can feel supported, connected, and inspired to grow.

Of course, we can't achieve any of this in isolation. We are fortunate to work alongside other chambers, both in the UK and further afield, who face similar opportunities and challenges. By learning from them and sharing our own experiences, we can strengthen the support we provide here on the island.

We also have a strong calendar of events: from our Business Awards to the Expo, which continue to grow in popularity year on year. These events are not just celebrations of success; they are opportunities for connection, collaboration, and learning. Our membership itself is diversifying, with strong representation across different sectors, an increasingly younger demographic, and a welcome balance in gender representation. That mix is a real asset and something I'm keen to build on.

Looking ahead, I see the Chamber modernising and becoming more responsive. Feedback will be at the heart of what we do. Every event, every initiative, and every interaction with members presents an opportunity to listen, learn, and adapt, ensuring we meet the needs of a rapidly changing business environment.

We'll also be expanding the ways in which people can engage with the Chamber. While our brunches, lunches, and coffee meetups are fantastic for networking, we know there's also a demand for more active, experiential ways of connecting. That's why later this year we'll be launching the Chamber Challenge, a series of active networking events designed to combine fitness, fun, and business. We all know that healthier, more active people make for better workers, and this initiative is a creative way to support both well-being and business growth.

Finally, I want to emphasise the Chamber's role as a partner in shaping the Island's future. We face challenges, of course, but we also have enormous potential. By working collaboratively with local government, business leaders, and regional partners, we can ensure that this is a place where people want to do business and where they can do it successfully. My commitment is to work with all of you to help businesses of every size and sector thrive, to amplify our collective voice, and to ensure that the Chamber continues to be at the heart of our business community. ■



TOLCHARDS: A TOAST TO FIVE YEARS

It has now been five years since Tolchards Isle of Wight began trading on the Island, and we believe this milestone is the perfect time to reflect on our journey. From the start, our focus has always been clear: we are a business-to-business supplier, proud to support local hospitality and service industries with an Island-based team that understands and cares about our customers.

Our story began during the Covid pandemic, when family-owned Tolchards Ltd acquired two Nettlestone businesses: Eurovines, a specialist wine supplier, and Wight Cleaning Supplies (WCS). Under the leadership of Mark and Jane, the vision was straightforward yet ambitious: provide customers with the quality, range, and service they truly needed.

Within a year, the business relocated to a larger premises in Newport, enabling us to grow and expand. From there, the journey really began. Over the past four years, Tolchards Isle of Wight has become a trusted partner to restaurants, hotels, pubs, and many other hospitality venues. We are proud to stock over 600 wines on the Island, most of which are not

available through retailers, offering our customers competitive pricing, excellent quality, and exclusivity.

Building on strong relationships with suppliers, we have steadily expanded beyond wine. Our range now includes a full selection of keg and bottled beer, stout, cider, premium spirits, and soft drinks, ensuring our customers have access to everything they need from one reliable source.

As sales have grown, so too has our commitment to the Island. We have invested in both our team and our delivery fleet to ensure we can continue to provide fast, efficient, and personal service. Our cleaning division, Wight Cleaning Supplies, remains a vital part of our business, supplying not only hospitality venues but also schools, care homes, and a wide variety of local organisations. The addition of Emma Ball to our team marks an exciting new chapter for WCS. Emma brings great enthusiasm and dedication to developing this side of the business, helping us expand our product range and service reach across the Island.

At the heart of everything we do is our mantra: to deliver the best service and customer care on the Island. With our same-day delivery promise: order before 10 am, six days a week, we aim to be more than just a supplier. We are a partner dedicated to supporting the success of Island businesses. ■



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Manager at Isle of Wight
Tomatoes, and Joe, Level 3
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- ChamberLegal

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This stability directly benefits employers. When parents have access to dependable childcare, workplace absenteeism drops, punctuality improves, and productivity

rises. Businesses also retain talent, especially among working mothers, who might otherwise reduce hours or leave the workforce entirely due to childcare constraints.

Laurence Keynes, Demand and Supply Childcare Development Officer for Children's Services at the Isle of Wight Council, adds "In sectors facing skills shortages, wraparound care helps widen the pool of those available to work by removing a major barrier to employment. This care also supports economic growth

by enabling more parents to work and fosters community resilience, as local providers, such as childminders and schools, expand services to meet demand and therefore create jobs."

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MEMBER FEATURE

DIAMETRIC'S MANAGEMENT DUO REFLECT ON FIRST YEAR IN CHARGE



For new owners Phil Parker and Joe Newnham, the last 12 months at Diametric have been anything but ordinary. Yet as they reflect, it's clear this has paved the way for a stronger, more resilient future.

The pair both joined the company, which makes world-class badges, labels, and nameplates for some of the world's most iconic brands, in the summer of 2018. After six years of learning the business inside and out, they jumped at the opportunity to team up and take the company forward. In October 2024, they completed an internal Management Buy Out (MBO) and became the fifth leadership team in the company's 40-year history.

Their priority for year one was to ensure stability for staff and customers, though the first 12 months were far from straightforward.

"This year has been one of the biggest tests of the UK manufacturing industry since COVID," said Phil, Diametric Commercial Director. "We've been navigating shifts in government policy, global market uncertainty, and cyber-attacks taking down key customers."

The automotive sector has been a constant for Diametric since 1982, and today the company proudly works with some of the world's leading car brands, including Aston Martin, McLaren, Bentley, and Jaguar Land Rover. But with ongoing challenges in the motor industry, Diametric has had to strategically balance its workflow with more non-automotive clients, developing sales across multiple industries from medical and marine to broadcasting and breweries.

"Year to date, we've increased non-automotive sales," said Joe, Managing Director. "The whole team has been so resilient and played a major part in what has been achieved. The sales team has done really well in adapting and looking at alternative markets for growth, and the operations team has responded brilliantly to the requirements of our non-automotive customers."

After steadying the ship, Phil and Joe have their sights set on growth for Diametric over the next 12 months. "It has really pushed us to accelerate our plans for evolution," added Joe. "As a result, we've emerged stronger, more resilient, and feeling optimistic about the future."

With over 30 staff employed across its Hampshire headquarters and manufacturing plant on the Isle of Wight, the foundations are in place to achieve this. "We want to increase our capabilities on the island because it's such a rich engineering-based community," said Phil. "We plan to make investments before the end of this year, which will support that. Strategically, it's good risk planning for us and our customers, because global supply chains are becoming increasingly uncertain, so this will strengthen our hand even more."

Despite all the challenges the last year has thrown at them, Phil and Joe have no regrets. "It's a privilege to serve our customers and to work with so many amazing brands and products," said Phil. "We're also proud to be an employer that places strong focus on our values and looking after our staff and suppliers. We are both committed to continuing that into the future."

For more information about Diametric, visit www.diametric.co.uk



CHRISTMAS IDEAS

As the festive season approaches, many Island businesses are thinking about how to thank staff, reward loyal customers, and spread a little goodwill. Corporate Christmas gifting is an opportunity to show appreciation while supporting fellow Chamber members, keeping spending right here on the Isle of Wight.

CORPORATE CHRISTMAS IDEAS – SUPPORTING ISLAND MEMBERS

Experiences over things

A growing number of businesses are choosing to give experiences rather than physical presents. Chamber members such as Robin Hill, Blackgang Chine, and the Wildheart Animal Sanctuary all offer gift vouchers and annual memberships – ideal for family days out that last well beyond Christmas. The Monkey Haven and Tapnell Farm Park also provide flexible corporate options and group packages, which can double as staff rewards or client thank-yous.

Gifts that give back

Many Island businesses are finding that the most meaningful gifts are those that make a difference. A donation instead of presents, or choosing to support a local charity, can have a real impact at Christmas. Chamber members such as Mountbatten Hospice, The Isle of Wight Foodbank, and the RSPCA rely on seasonal giving to continue their vital work. Some charities also offer corporate partnerships, volunteering opportunities, or gift vouchers that directly support their services – perfect for businesses wanting to align festive goodwill with community support.

Local producers also shine at Christmas. A hamper of Island goodies – think chutneys, cheeses, wines, and sweet treats from Chamber members such as Adgestone Vineyard, The Garlic Farm, or Goddards Brewery brings a genuine taste of the Island to any festive table. Businesses can customise hampers with branded packaging or a handwritten note for a personal touch.



Memberships and exclusives

Corporate memberships or sponsorship packages with Island attractions can deliver ongoing benefits long after December. Supporting a local arts venue, heritage site, or wildlife charity provides positive publicity and staff perks in one. Some members offer exclusive or behind-the-scenes experiences that can double as memorable client entertainment.

By choosing Chamber members, Island-based attractions, charities, makers, and services, businesses can celebrate Christmas in a way that supports the community they work in. Whether it's a hamper of Island produce, a family day out, or a charitable donation that changes lives, every local purchase strengthens our economy and showcases the best of what the Island has to offer. ■



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PATTER PRODUCTS: TURNING WASTE INTO WONDER

What started as a small hobby tinkering with scrap wood has grown into a thriving creative venture with an environmental mission at its heart. Patter Products, founded on the Isle of Wight, is the brainchild of Gavin Jones who saw beauty and potential in the bits most of us throw away.

"It all began as Patter Wood," he explains. "Everything was made from the bits that get thrown away: off cuts, pallets, broken tiles, anything that I could get my hands on." What began as evenings and weekends in the workshop alongside his nine-to-five quickly grew into something much bigger. In fact, it was his wife who nudged the project into the public eye, suggesting he take a stall at their daughter's Christmas fete.

That first step planted the seed, but the real turning point came when Patter Products branched beyond wood. A brief attempt at designing and selling T-shirts revealed a hidden truth: "Linking with another Isle of Wight company to print T-shirts opened my eyes to the level of waste in the fashion industry, as well as in our daily lives." Rather than being discouraged, he was inspired. After a few YouTube tutorials, Gavin discovered new ways of working with discarded plastic: safe, colourful, and full of possibility.

Soon, friends and family were collecting plastic on his behalf, and the workshop became a hive of inventive recycling. But as the piles of bottle tops, food containers and packaging grew, so did a bigger question: what if the work could go beyond repurposing, to actually reducing waste in the first place?

That shift in focus led him to The Final Straw Foundation, a charity working across the Solent to protect the marine environment by tackling pollution at its source.

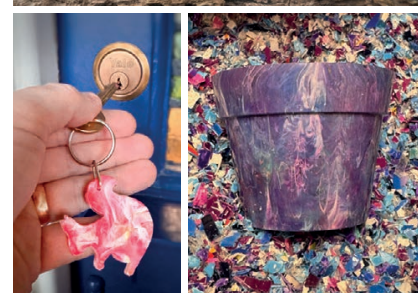
"Working alongside them has not only given me the opportunity to take this project full time," he says, "but also the resources to help educate the next generation through their curriculum-linked environmental programme, which they offer completely free of charge."

Today, Patter Products is as much about community as it is about craft. The call is out for individuals and companies to get involved, with a simple yet powerful invitation: donate

your plastic. "We can recycle any plastic with the 2 or 5 recycle symbol. To make it easier we are offering to drop off a bin for you to fill, include a poster with examples of what to put in it, and we can even come and collect it when it's full."

The fruits of this effort are already on display. Visitors to The Wildheart Animal Sanctuary, Robin Hill and Quarr Abbey can browse Patter Products' distinctive range. Quarr Abbey in particular has been a vital partner, not only collecting plastic but also stocking a brand-new line of Christmas decorations in their festive pop-up shop.

As Patter Products looks ahead, the mission remains clear: transforming waste into wonder while sparking conversations about sustainability. "If you would like to get involved, either by donating plastic or by us creating something for you, please get in touch," he urges. "If you would like more information on the educational offerings, we would also love to hear from you." For further information email: patterproducts@gmail.com ■





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ENGINEERING A CLEANER FUTURE

For more than half a century, Vikoma International has been shaping environmental protection from its base on the Isle of Wight. With a team of sixty working out of its East Cowes facility, the company designs and manufactures innovative equipment that protects marine and industrial environments across the globe.

At the heart of its work is oil spill response: containment booms, advanced skimmers, and recovery systems that can tackle everything from offshore incidents to wastewater treatment. It is specialist engineering with a global impact.

Vikoma's assembly area with oil skimmers and powerpacks in assembly

"Since our management buy-out ten years ago, we've been committed to investing, not just in our products, but in our people and our factory," says Managing Director Karen Lucas. "That focus has kept us competitive and agile, able to flex to meet customer needs." That philosophy is visible today in East Cowes, where Vikoma is expanding its site with a new workshop. The additional space will allow the business to adapt production to the changing mix of products on its order book, as well as future work. "The workshop gives us flexibility and the ability to grow while continuing to deliver for our customers."

As the maritime industry shifts towards low-sulphur fuel oils, new challenges are emerging. While these fuels bring environmental benefits, they behave very differently when spilled at sea, demanding new technology for recovery. Vikoma was one of only five European manufacturers invited to join IMAROS, a research project dedicated to finding solutions. After preliminary testing of existing equipment in Norway, the team set out on a development programme that led to the creation of the Komara Omni skimmer. "The next phase of testing had impressive results and showed us that our new design could recover a range of low sulphur fuel oils. The skimmer is also effective for traditional fuels, and this dual capability makes it a truly cost-effective and flexible tool for responders worldwide."

The Komara Omni was launched in September and has already been recognised as a finalist in the Tech for Good (Sustainability) category at the South Coast Tech and Innovation Awards 2025, a nomination that underlines both its innovation and environmental value.





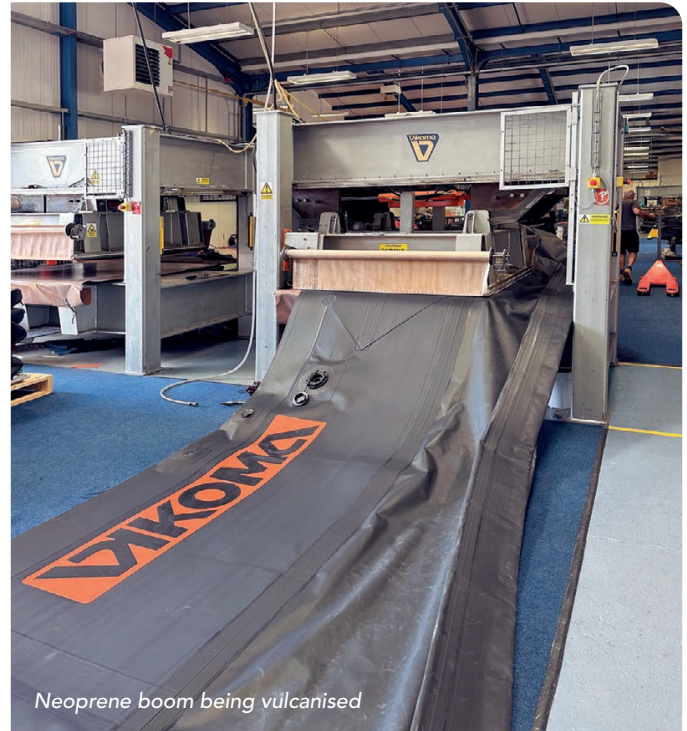
Vikoma's factory in East Cowes by the river Medina

But Vikoma's impact is not only felt overseas. It is also deeply rooted in the Island community, supporting schools, colleges, and local events, from science festivals to career fairs. Apprenticeships are central to this commitment, offering opportunities across the business. "Apprenticeships are a part of our DNA. Many of our apprentices stay with us, building long careers here. That continuity is something we're really proud of." The company also works closely with island suppliers and contractors, spreading the benefits of its success through the local economy.

Sustainability runs through everything Vikoma does. An early sponsor of the Green Impact scheme, the company earned a Platinum Award for its efforts and continues to push forward with new initiatives. Solar panels now power the factory, and a scheme is in development to share surplus electricity with local residents at a lower cost. "Our aim is to make a positive difference not just globally, but right here on our island."

From pioneering oil recovery technologies to nurturing future talent and investing in the Isle of Wight community, Vikoma embodies the balance of global influence and local engagement. With its new workshop opening and the Komara Omni already proving its worth, that dual commitment to innovation and community only looks set to grow.

To find out more about Vikoma's work: www.vikoma.com



Neoprene boom being vulcanised



Komara Omni under test in Norway

Looking Ahead: IW Chamber in 2026

New formats, fresh energy, and even more ways to connect

As 2025 draws to a close, the IW Chamber is already gearing up for an action-packed 2026. From breakfast meetings to fitness classes, the year ahead promises something for everyone.

Breakfast, Brunch, and Coffee & Cake

Our much-loved monthly breakfast events are getting an upgrade. From October 2025, they'll run for two hours, finishing at 9.30 am, with the addition of 30-second introductions and regular speakers. It's the perfect way to make new connections before you've even finished your coffee.

Brunch networking remains a bi-monthly highlight, while the ever-popular Coffee & Cake sessions return to Caffè Isola. Mark your calendars for February, May, September, and November, four chances to enjoy a slice of conversation alongside your cappuccino.



Get-Fit Networking

2026 is the year the Chamber gets active! Our new Get-Fit Networking series blends business with wellbeing. January kicks off with a four-week yoga programme at 1Leisure, followed by spin classes in February. And that's just the start – with everything from morning yoga to paddleboarding, these events promise fun, fitness, and fresh business connections.



IW Chamber Challenge

The IW Chamber Challenge brings members together in friendly competition, with points up for grabs at every stage.

Whether you're a contender for the crown or just looking for some active fun, every participant will see their efforts count on the leaderboard.

The first challenge launches in February, so keep an eye on January's Island Business for the full announcement.



IW Chamber Business Expo 2026

The Island's biggest day of B2B networking is back. The IW Chamber Business Expo 2026 will take place on Tuesday, 7th July, once again bringing hundreds of local businesses under one roof for a day of opportunity, discovery, and connections.

2026 is shaping up to be one of the Chamber's most dynamic years yet, with more chances than ever to connect, compete, and grow together. Keep your eyes peeled to see our exciting plans to make Expo 2026 the best yet!



www.iwchamber.co.uk

TOP MOPS EVENT SERVICES: A FIRST YEAR ON THE WORLD STAGE

Founded in 1998, Top Mops has built a reputation for reliability and professionalism for over 27 years. 2025 marked a brand-new chapter with the launch of our dedicated Event Services division, and what a debut year it's been.

From the fairways of the Scottish and Senior Opens to the Royal Windsor Horse Show, from global concerts by Coldplay, Robbie Williams, Guns N' Roses, Oasis and Black Sabbath to festivals including Download, Parklife, Forbidden Forest, Creamfields and In It Together, our teams have already shown that Isle of Wight expertise can deliver on some of the UK's biggest stages.

The Isle of Wight Festival was another milestone, marking not just our 18th year on site, but also the first with Event Services officially in place. It's a proud moment that reflects both continuity and change: nearly three decades of Island experience combined with a bold step into a fast-growing national sector.



But our first year in events has been about more than scale. From day one, we set out to raise standards in sustainability. We've eliminated 'forever chemicals' across our services, stayed 100% bleach-free since 2019, and now use more than 95% GreenTick certified products. By cutting single-use spray bottles, we save 35,000+ plastics a year, while our battery-powered iMops use 75% less water and 90% less energy than traditional equipment. Our fleet strategy prevents more than 102,000 kg of CO² emissions annually.

Beyond the venues and arenas, we've also taken our responsibility to the shoreline — hosting two beach cleans in partnership with the Marine Conservation Society, where we're now proud to be corporate members. And we're working towards ISO 12121, the international standard for sustainable event management, alongside ESSA accreditation.

This first year of Event Services has shown what's possible when ambition meets responsibility. For Top Mops, it's about more than cleaning: it's about supporting world-class events, protecting the environment, and doing the Island proud.

With a growing team, including the addition of our second mainland contract manager, Liv, and a clear focus on greener solutions, Top Mops Event Services is ready to take its next steps in 2026 and beyond. From Isle of Wight roots to international stages, this is just the beginning. ■

RPL CONSTRUCTION CELEBRATES MILESTONES IN AWARDS AND SERVICE

RPL Construction is marking a year of achievements, with recognition at the prestigious Master Builder Awards and the celebration of a long-serving team member's remarkable career.

The company was shortlisted in two categories at the 2025 Federation of Master Builders' Master Builder Awards (Southern Counties region), held in Winchester this July. Though they did not take home the trophies, the nominations themselves were a significant accomplishment.

In the Large Renovation Project category, RPL's transformation of The Burlington Hotel in Ventnor into Hygeia stood out. The £2.5 million project delivered eight apartments and a house while carefully balancing heritage with modern design. "From stabilising collapsed retaining walls with advanced engineering solutions to managing complex logistics on narrow local roads, our team rose to every challenge," Head of Contracts Mark Lounds said. "The result is a coastal landmark that harmoniously blends heritage with contemporary living."

The second nomination highlighted Head of Contracts, Mark Lounds, for Outstanding Builder of the Year. His leadership was praised as 'steady and inspirational', guiding RPL through challenges while encouraging a culture of teamwork, integrity, and excellence. Mark's commitment to apprenticeships, mentorship, and community engagement was also recognised as vital to the future of the construction industry.

Alongside industry recognition, RPL also celebrated the remarkable service of Contracts Manager Paul Sames, who recently marked 23 years with the company. Paul began as a groundworker, making an immediate impression when he spotted an error in the site layout. Told to 'stop moaning and just sort it out', he did exactly that, setting the tone for a career defined by diligence and determination.

Rising through the ranks to become Contracts Manager, Paul has earned a reputation for his superior work ethic, conscientious approach, and willingness to go above and beyond. An impressive 90% of his projects come through repeat clients or word of mouth, a testament to the trust he has built over two decades.

Reflecting on these milestones, RPL Managing Director Samara Lamb said, "Being shortlisted for these awards was a proud moment for our company. It recognised both our commitment to craftsmanship and innovation in projects like Hygeia, and the dedication of individuals like Mark and Paul, whose leadership and hard work embody the very best of our industry." ■



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Go for Growth

The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce is partnering with Go for Growth once again this year to ensure businesses across the island have access to help, advice, expertise, support, and training, funded by the council. In addition to providing businesses with one-to-one specialist advice, Go for Growth

is running a series of workshops through to 10th December.

In the new year, there will be two full-day summits: one on sales and marketing automation, and the other on the practical use and implementation of artificial intelligence by small business owners.

FREE BUSINESS WORKSHOPS AT BUILDING 41

5 November
Customer value proposition and journey mapping
with Ross Findon

Clarify the value you offer and map your customer journey to improve engagement, conversion, and loyalty.

12 November
Online visibility and SEO in an AI world
with Ross Findon

Get up to speed on modern SEO and learn how AI is changing how small businesses can boost online visibility.

19 November
Business finance fundamentals
with Sally Casterton

Gain confidence with the numbers. This session covers key financial principles every small business owner should know.

26 November
Building a sales funnel & closing deals
with Tash Rebuck

Design a simple, effective sales funnel and learn techniques to close more deals—without the pushy tactics.

3 December
Automation and productivity tools
with Gemma Pybus

Discover free or low-cost tools that can automate admin, improve marketing, and save you hours each week.

10 December
Your business plan on a page
with Gavin McWhirter

Wrap up the year by creating a clear, focused business plan using the Business Model Canvas.

Each workshop is free to attend (just a £2.50 booking fee) and led by a specialist with real-world experience in helping businesses grow. Whether you need to sharpen your digital strategy, improve sales, streamline operations, or get your finances on track, there's something here for you.

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Register for these workshops by scanning the QR code.



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SAVE THE DATES: TWO BIG EVENTS FOR SMALL BUSINESS IN 2026

We're kicking off 2026 with two high-impact events designed to help small business owners stay ahead of the curve and work smarter, not harder.

Whether you're looking to supercharge your sales and marketing, or understand how AI can reshape your business, these summits bring together industry experts, practical workshops, and local business voices, all in one day.

Wednesday 21 January 2026
Sales and Marketing Automation Summit

Discover how to streamline your marketing, generate leads more effectively, and automate key parts of your sales process. Ideal for business owners who want to grow without burning out.

Wednesday 18 February 2026
AI Summit for Small Business

From chatbots to smart content tools, this summit will demystify artificial intelligence and show you how to make the most of it, ethically and affordably. Bring your laptop as we will be running a practical exercise that will save you time and money.

Both events will take place at Building 41 and feature expert speakers, real-world case studies, and hands-on learning opportunities. More details coming soon. Places will be limited. Save the date in your calendar now!



Connected: The Chamber Networking Update

Richard Winter reflects on a summer and autumn full of events and connectivity



As winter tightens its grip and frost begins to edge the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce looks back on a season rich with activity. Yet even now, as days grow shorter, there is a sense of warmth when reflecting on the golden glow of late summer. In August, members enjoyed an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the Vestas wind turbine factory, a reminder of the innovation and ambition that continue to drive the Isle of Wight's place on the world stage.

September signalled a change in the seasons, but not in pace. The month started with an inspiring breakfast at the Wildheart Sanctuary Trust, where members had the opportunity to share breakfast with the bears, Benji and Balu. CEO Lawrence Bates shared the story of local businesses working together to sustainably house these two beautiful European Brown

Bears, which provided a remarkable backdrop for business networking. That same week, WRS hosted a corporate golf day at Westridge Golf Course; invitees from across the country, with various skill levels, networked amidst friendly rivalry. The day's most talked-about moment was when the Chamber's Carl Joyce won the nearest-the-pin contest, despite never having played golf before.

September also included the informal and popular Coffee & Cake networking event at Caffè Isola, a relaxed gathering that once again demonstrated the value of casual connections. Meanwhile, at the Chamber's offices, the Red Funnel Business Start-Up course provided aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools and confidence needed to launch their ventures.





In October, as the leaves began to change colour, the Chamber's programme carried the same energy. Early morning frosts meant that Members welcomed a hearty cooked breakfast with networking at the Fishbourne Inn, with a new, longer format and time for introductions. The following week, Members were treated to a glass of bubbles overlooking Sandown Bay, from the terrace of the recently completed Breakwaters building – a striking addition to the Island's coastal landscape.

Looking back, the late summer sun may feel far away, but the Chamber's calendar has carried its warmth into the colder months. Looking forward, there is much to anticipate. As 2026 edges closer, businesses across the Island can expect fresh opportunities, new collaborations, and the Chamber's

continued support in navigating challenges and embracing growth. Seasons change, but one thing remains constant: the Island's business community, connected through the Chamber, continues to shine brightly.

2026 is going to be an exciting year for the Chamber; join us in January for Yoga networking sessions sponsored by PC Consultants. Learn more on page 32. ■





SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND WIN BIG WITH THE ISLE OF WIGHT LOTTERY



Go Taxi:

Driving Forward with Isle of Wight Lottery Support

As director of We Go Local Solutions, the company behind Go Taxi and Go Eat, when Kevin Barton set out to launch the Isle of Wight's first taxi booking app, Go Taxi, he knew he needed the right support to make the idea a reality. The business, which grew out of his earlier food delivery venture Go Eat, took a decisive step forward thanks to a loan from the Isle of Wight Lottery.

"We had a £10,000 loan to purchase the first two electric vehicles for our taxi fleet, which basically enabled us to do that and get started," Kevin explained. "It was hugely beneficial to us. Following that, we've since grown, we've doubled the fleet since then and have several other vehicles."

The app itself was designed to modernise the way Islanders book cabs, providing an Uber-style service that connects passengers to nearby drivers. "We originally started as a traditional taxi booking app where we connect local independent taxi drivers on one platform. That solved one problem, but didn't solve the other problem, which was actually reliability and service. So, we decided to purchase a fleet of our own vehicles and wanted to have them as electric."

The first vehicles were sourced locally, reinforcing his commitment to supporting Isle of Wight businesses. "It just basically fitted in with the whole ethos of what we were trying to achieve, which was to facilitate and provide a service to the Isle of Wight."

Kevin highlighted both the practical and community-focused benefits of the loan. "Obviously, there's the interest-free part, which is huge for anybody looking for finance. But it fitted in with the ethos of us; supporting the Island, buying the vehicles from an Isle of Wight company we met through the Chamber. It just all came together."

The application process itself was, in Kevin's words, "very straightforward and it is smooth and accessible for anyone. "We're looking to reapply. Essentially, to grow the fleet even further, expand the business, and provide even better service. I have recommended the lottery loan to other people as a good option for finance."

With community backing, a clear vision, and a sustainable approach, Go Taxi continues to drive forward, proof of what local support can achieve. ■

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Maximise Your Membership

Thursday 6 November & 4 December 2025

IW Chamber of Commerce Office, Branstone Business Park

10 am - 12 pm

IW Chamber members – FREE

Want to unlock the full value of your Chamber membership? We're here to help.

Based on feedback from our members, we're introducing monthly 'Maximise Your Membership' sessions – an opportunity to meet the Chamber team, ask questions, and discover how to get the most out of your membership.

Time slots: 10.00 – 10.30 am | 10.30 – 11.00 am | 11.00 – 11.30 am | 11.30 am – 12.00 pm

Format: Each half-hour session can host up to 4 businesses, ensuring discussions stay focused and relevant.

Whether you're new to the Chamber or simply want to refresh your understanding of what's available, this is the perfect chance to explore benefits such as networking, advice services, savings, and promotional opportunities.

To book your slot, email Rich or Carl

Richard.Winter@IWChamber.co.uk

Carl.Joyce@IWChamber.co.uk

Networking Breakfast at the Seaview Hotel

Friday 7 November 2025

The Seaview Hotel

7.30 – 9.30 am

£18 per person

Join us for an excellent networking opportunity at The Seaview Hotel, with a hot breakfast and a great start to the business day, networking with other Chamber members.

Members' Business Lunch with The Bank of England

Thursday 13 November 2025

Isle of Wight College, Newport

11.30 am – 2.00 pm

IW Chamber Members – £20 per person

We are inviting IW Chamber Members to get the inside track on the UK economy from the Bank of England, as we welcome guest speaker Florence Hubert for our annual IW Chamber briefing. Florence will outline projections for economic growth and inflation as well as taking questions from members. Make the most of this exclusive opportunity to hear expert insight into economic policy at the UK's central bank. Our 2-course lunch will be prepared by the talented professional cookery students at the Isle of Wight College.

Networking Brunch at Isle of Wight College

Wednesday 19 November 2025

IW College Restaurant, Newport

9.00 – 11.00 am

£20 per person

An ideal opportunity for informal networking at The Isle of Wight College. If you're new to networking, our Brunch is the perfect way to get connected with like-minded businesspeople. Attendees will all get the chance to give their minute-pitch to the room at this event.

Our brunch will be prepared by the talented professional cookery students at the Isle of Wight College.

Coffee & Mince Pie

Wednesday 26 November 2025

Caffe Isola, Newport

3.30 – 5.00 pm

IW Chamber members – FREE

Non-Members – £10

Our regular Coffee & Cake networking session at Caffe Isola goes festive! Join us for afternoon networking with a mince pie. It's a superb way to meet other members informally, in the great setting of Chamber patrons Caffe Isola. If you're new to networking, it's a brilliant way to get started and promote your business.

Island Business Drop-In

Thursday 27 November & 18 December 2025

IW Chamber of Commerce Office, Branstone Business Park

10 am-12 pm

FREE to attend

We want to meet you!

On the final Thursday of every month, the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce opens its doors to Island businesses. These are casual drop-in sessions where you can come and network with us, learn more about the Chamber, and what we do. Whether you are an IW Chamber member or not, this is the perfect way to start your networking journey.

Booking is not required – just drop in!

Festive Networking Breakfast at The Royal Hotel

Friday 5 December 2025

The Royal Hotel, Ventnor

7.30 – 9.30 am

£18 per person

Join us for a festive networking opportunity at The Royal Hotel, with a hot breakfast and a great start to the business day, networking with other Chamber members.

Networking Breakfast at The Chequers Inn

Friday 9 January 2025

The Chequers Inn, Rookley

7.30 – 9.30 am

£18 per person

Join us for an excellent networking opportunity at The Chequers Inn, with a hot breakfast and a great start to the business day, networking with other Chamber members. After breakfast we will have a presentation from David Cherry, CEO of Cherry Godfrey group.

Get-Fit Networking: Yoga – supported by PC Consultants

Tuesday 6, 13, 20 & 27 January 2026

Medina Leisure Centre, Newport

11.30 am – 1 pm

IW Chamber Members - £12 + VAT (includes all 4 sessions)

To kickstart the year, we are teaming up with 1Leisure to bring you a programme of 4 Yoga sessions. Every Tuesday through January, the IW Chamber will have its own private yoga studio and instructor available to members. Following the session, participants will have the opportunity to stay behind and network. We strongly encourage participants to commit to the full 4-week programme to see maximum benefits, as the sessions will be progressive, to encourage learning, improvement, and wellbeing.

Go to www.iwchamber.co.uk or
Email chamber@iwchamber.co.uk

Training Courses:

Fire Marshal Course – Delivered by Good Skills Training

Monday 24 November 2025

YMCA, Shanklin

9.00 am – 12.30 pm

IW Chamber members – £68 +vat per person

This Fire Marshal Course, delivered by Good Skills Training, is a half-day course designed specifically for those who have been designated with the responsibilities of Fire Marshal or Fire Warden. The course will look at the legal responsibilities of both the company and the individual. By the end of this course, learners will understand what their duties as a fire marshal are.

£68 + VAT per person (this includes the certificate and manual)

This course is delivered by Good Skills Training.

To book your place, please email carl.joyce@iwchamber.co.uk

Emergency First Aid at Work Course – Delivered by Good Skills Training

Tuesday 25 November & Monday 15 December 2025

YMCA, Shanklin

9.00 am – 4.00 pm

IW Chamber members – £78 +vat per person

This one-day course is designed to give delegates the knowledge, skills, and confidence to help those who have become unconscious and those with minor injuries. The Emergency First Aid at Work Course also looks at the responsibilities of the Emergency First Aider. On successfully completing this course, attendees will be confident, safe, prompt, and effective emergency first aiders.

£78 + VAT per person (this includes the certificate and manual)

This course is delivered by Good Skills Training.

To book your place, please email carl.joyce@iwchamber.co.uk



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Specialising in sports event management, venue design, sponsorships and brand activations, Xplor is based on the IOW but backed by global experience – including delivery on the Olympic stage. They now bring that expertise home, helping local businesses create impactful, memorable experiences.

To find out more visit www.xplorevents.co.uk

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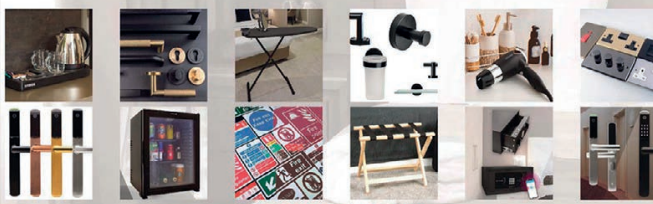
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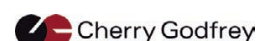


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Sign up today!

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Thursday January 22nd – 9.30am – 4.00pm

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I am a passionate advocate for the Isle of Wight and in particular the Isle of Wight Business Community and I am extremely pleased and excited to be taking over the Presidency from Jonathan Thornton, who has done a fantastic job of advocating for the Island.

IW CHAMBER'S MISSION

To provide value and benefits for our members through listening, representation, support and collaboration.

IW CHAMBER PRESIDENT

Building a Stronger, Inclusive Isle of Wight Chamber

By Alison Colley, IW Chamber President

Being the first female President of the Chamber in its history, or certainly in the last 30 years, represents the positive changes that we have seen in the Chamber in the last 10 years. The Board is more representative of our business members, more inclusive, and transparent.

When I joined the Chamber as a fresh-faced new business owner in 2013, there was certainly a different demographic on the Board, but one thing that was true then and remains now is the positive welcome I received and the support from fellow members for my fledgling business. I can truly say that my business would not have been as successful without the support of other Chamber members.

Sometimes I hear people suggest that the Chamber is a 'closed shop' or that 'outsiders are not welcome', but my experience has been the exact opposite. Getting involved, attending events, and engaging with fellow Chamber members is the best way to alleviate this, and so I would urge you to make the most of your membership: attend events, network with other businesses, and take advantage of the support on offer. Even if you are not looking for customers from within the membership, the knowledge exchanged and, frankly, the sanity check that comes from engaging with other business owners is invaluable.

During my tenure as President, I want to ensure that the Chamber continues to be inclusive and diverse, as with diversity comes fresh ideas and perspectives. I am also keen to ensure that there is transparency within the Chamber at all levels so that members know what is happening and have a voice in the future of the Chamber.

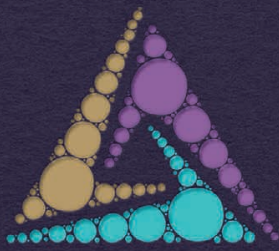
We all know that these are challenging times economically and socially, but here on the Island, we have a unique strength: our community. In my 30 years as a resident, I have seen time and again how Islanders support one another, and how our choices directly shape the local economy.

How as Chamber members can we do this?

- **Engage with the Chamber** – attend events, stay in touch, and send your feedback to the Chamber team.
- **Spend your money locally** – where possible, source local products and services for your business.
- **Promote your business and the positive things** that you are doing in this magazine – send your news story to Amber.
- **Be Kind** – even in the most difficult of times or with the most polarised views, it costs nothing to be kind.

This is a time of significant change for the Chamber, with new team members, a refreshed Board, and a new CEO at the helm. With so much fresh energy, we have a real opportunity to make the Chamber the best it can be for every member, from multimillion-pound companies to brand-new one-person start-ups, just like I was 12 years ago.

Together, we can build a Chamber and an Island economy that is stronger, more inclusive, and ready for the future. ■



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