

# Island Business

MAY | JUNE 2026

features | interviews | articles | news  
including Isle of Wight Chamber  
member news and events

**SEASAFE – SAVING LIVES,  
SOLVING PROBLEMS, AND REDEFINING  
SAFETY AT SEA FOR SIX DECADES**

**Gurit**

**EXPO**

**Jack Thompson**

**Isle of Wight College**

**International Trade  
Conference**



# Financial freedom...

with our **make it happen** loans for your business dreams

**Loans that help your business thrive**

From start-ups to expansion, equipment, and cash flow

At **Cherry Godfrey**, we help businesses **make it happen**. Whether you're launching something new, investing in growth, or bridging a cash-flow gap, our personalised business loans are designed to give you the freedom to focus on what you do best.

Cherry Godfrey Finance (Isle of Wight) Limited. (Registered in England and Wales: Company No 12841120). Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN: 947446). Registered Office: No. 32 High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, United Kingdom, PO30 1SR.

**Call us today**  
**01983 303344**  
[cherrygodfrey.com](http://cherrygodfrey.com)

**Island Business Magazine**  
Published by the Isle of Wight  
Chamber of Commerce

**Editor**  
Amber Beard  
amber.beard@iwchamber.co.uk

**Sales**  
Amber Beard  
amber.beard@iwchamber.co.uk

**Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce**  
Unit S1, Branstone Business Park,  
Stockmans Close, Branstone,  
Isle of Wight. PO36 0EQ  
Telephone: 01983 520777


**Designed & Printed by**  
Meridian3.co.uk


While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of Island Business magazine the publishers do not accept any liability or provide any guarantee that the information is accurate, complete or up to date. The publisher and its employees and contractors have used their best efforts in preparing these pages and this publication but make no warranty of any kind, expressed or implied, with regard to the information supplied. The views of contributors do not necessarily represent those of the IW Chamber of Commerce. The IW Chamber of Commerce and its employees and contractors shall not be liable in the event of incidental or consequential damages in connection with, or arising out of, the providing of the information offered here. Contains material sourced from responsibly managed forests, certified in accordance with the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council).

 isleofwightchamber

 @iwchamber

 Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce

 Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce

 Please recycle this magazine



## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Welcome to this latest edition of Island Business Magazine, arriving as the Island enjoys those first real stretches of sunshine, with longer days and a landscape looking at its spring best. There's a renewed sense of energy in the air, and it's reflected in the stories we share in this issue.

We're pleased to feature Gurit, whose continued focus on sustainability and Green Impact sets an important benchmark for responsible industry, alongside an interview with the College's new Principal, Fidelma Washington, as she steps into a role that will help shape the Island's future workforce. We also celebrate an impressive milestone for SeaSafe, marking 60 years of dedication, innovation, and service.

Across all of this runs a common thread: the strength of our business community. Chamber membership continues to offer real value, from advocacy to visibility, but perhaps most importantly, connection. Those connections come to life through our events programme, and with the EXPO fast approaching in July, it promises to be a key moment to come together, share ideas, and showcase what makes Island business so distinctive. So, if you haven't booked your stand, don't delay!

As always, thank you for being part of Island Business. Do keep sending me your news stories, ideas for features, and your ads. Enjoy your magazine. ■

**AMBER BEARD**  
**EDITOR**

## CONTENTS



08 GURIT



16 SEASAFE

02 NEWS

08 GURIT

10 EXPO

15 JACK THOMPSON

16 SEASAFE

20 IOW COLLEGE

22 CIARAN O'DONNELL COLUMN

25 INTERNATIONAL TRADE  
CONFERENCE

26 NETWORKING UPDATE

28 IW LOTTERY

30 EVENTS

36 PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

**IW CHAMBER'S  
VISION**

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



## EPC surveys launched by Silver Arch

Island-based property specialists Silver Arch Group has expanded its growing portfolio of professional services with the launch of Commercial Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) surveys across the Isle of Wight.

The new service supports commercial property owners, landlords, and agents in meeting their legal obligations while improving the energy efficiency of their buildings. In addition to standard commercial EPCs, the company is also offering 'As Designed' and 'As Built' EPCs for newly constructed properties, required to demonstrate compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations.

A commercial EPC, also known as a non-domestic EPC, is a legal requirement when a commercial property is sold or let. The certificate assesses a building's energy performance on a scale from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient), considering elements such as heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, and overall construction. It also provides practical recommendations to help reduce energy consumption, lower running costs and minimise carbon emissions.

EPCs are valid for 10 years unless significant changes are made to the building. Failure to provide a valid certificate when required can result in substantial financial penalties.

Silver Arch Group delivers professional property compliance and surveying services across the Isle of Wight. Working with a large number of local agents, landlords, business owners, and holiday let owners, the company has a strong focus on accuracy, customer service, and regulatory knowledge. ■

## Safeguard joins UK telecare body

Safeguard Technologies is strengthening its position within the UK's growing telecare sector after it was approved for membership of the Telecare Services Association (TSA), the professional body for technology-enabled care.

Safeguard was also invited to attend the TSA's flagship International Technology Enabled Care Conference at the International Convention Centre, where national providers, technology partners, and healthcare organisations explored the future of digital care services. Membership places Safeguard Technologies alongside established UK operators working to recognised standards, as the sector continues to evolve through digital transformation and increasing demand for independent living solutions.



## Sports Awards prove a big hit with businesses

Island businesses showed they are all about supporting good causes at the IW Sports Achievement Awards in March.

Isle of Wight Chamber members, large and small, sponsored categories at the 51st awards ceremony, with WRS being the headline sponsor for the second year. The packed event at Medina Theatre saw 26 awards presented to sportspeople across the age spectrum, with nominees ranging from seven-year-old gymnasts to 92-year-old bowls players.

Teams and schools also featured, and the Island Games Association presented their own awards to Sophie Beardsall, double gold medallist in golf, and the young sailing team. The event was organised for the first time by the new IW Sports Awards CIC, with proceeds going to the grant fund of the IW Sports Foundation. More than £1,000 was raised in the raffle, with many Island businesses donating prizes. David Jackson, from WRS, presented Trevor Thorne, of Shanklin FC, with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Claire Beasley, director of the awards, said: "We had so many positive comments about the evening and look forward to doing it all again next year. We are always looking for more sponsors so we can continue giving back to the Island sportspeople who represent the Island so amazingly." ■

As the only independent Isle of Wight-based provider supplying personal alarm and GPS-enabled devices, the business is focused on ensuring local residents and organisations have access to high-quality telecare solutions, while also offering greater choice across both in-home and "out and about" safety devices.

Sandra Knowles said, "This is an important step for us as a business. It not only reflects the standards we operate by, but also ensures we are aligned with national developments in a rapidly growing sector. There is a clear shift towards more flexible, personalised solutions, and our role is to bring that level of choice and innovation to the Isle of Wight."

Safeguard Technologies is now looking to develop partnerships with care providers, housing organisations, and local stakeholders as demand for technology-enabled care continues to grow. ■

## Cowes Fringe reveals 2026 line-up

Cowes Fringe has announced its 2026 programme, featuring a diverse mix of theatre, music, comedy, family entertainment, and creative events across nine performances and experiences from 22-24 May.

Leading the line-up is a gala evening with acclaimed actor Sir Derek Jacobi, who will appear in conversation with Richard Clifford. The event will raise funds for Mountbatten Hospice and includes a charity auction and a live performance from singer Jennie Vacher.

Music remains central to the festival, with a tribute to Chas & Dave by Rabbit Rabbit and a new theatre production, *The Cavern Club Story*, celebrating Liverpool's iconic music venue.

Theatre highlights include *Cult Figure*, marking the centenary of Kenneth Williams, and *Ubu | King of the Isle of Wight*, a bold reinterpretation of Alfred Jarry's classic satire.

Family audiences can enjoy *Sing & Dance the Musicals*, showcasing young local talent, while creative workshops led by costume designer Karen Robb will invite community participation through a quilt project and sewing competition. The programme also features luxury tasting experiences pairing chocolate with wine and spirits.

Organisers said the festival blends world-class talent with local creativity, offering something for all audiences. ■



## Thump Studio unveils brand evolution

Thump Studio, an Isle of Wight-based brand and design studio, is preparing to launch a new website following a period of reflection and repositioning.

After receiving a Silver award from the World Brand Design Society in 2025, founders Katie and Sam took the opportunity to step back and re-evaluate how their studio and work are communicated. While the recognition marked a significant milestone, it also prompted a deeper question: how can design go beyond aesthetics to create genuine emotional connection?

This thinking has shaped a refined direction for the studio, centred around the

idea of 'defining brands with heart'. The upcoming website reflects this shift, not just in how Thump presents its work, but in how it articulates the value of thoughtful, strategic branding in an increasingly fast-paced and automated world.

As more businesses look to stand out in meaningful ways, Thump's evolution highlights a broader movement towards brands that feel more human, intentional, and emotionally resonant. The new website is set to launch this spring, marking a new defining era for the studio and its continued focus on purposeful, connection-led design. ■



## Prestigious award for County Press reporter

Isle of Wight County Press reporter Zach Saunders has won a prestigious national award from the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), recognising excellence in reporting across the UK.

Zach, who was shortlisted as one of three finalists, secured the News Journalism of the Year title, an honour awarded to reporters demonstrating outstanding breaking news coverage, original journalism, and stories with meaningful public impact.

Speaking after receiving the award, Zach described it as 'an incredible honour', and highlighted the importance of local journalism. He said the recognition reflects the trust placed in reporters to hold institutions to account and tell stories that matter to the community.

County Press editor Lori Little praised his achievement, describing him as a dedicated and talented journalist whose work consistently meets a high standard. She added that the award is not only a personal success for Zach, but also a proud moment for the newspaper.

Zach joined the County Press in 2021 as an apprentice and has since built a strong reputation for delivering impactful front-page stories focused on key issues affecting Islanders. ■

## New business acquisition for Cherry Godfrey

Cherry Godfrey has expanded its footprint on the Isle of Wight after acquiring the mortgage, life insurance, and general insurance client portfolio of Ward House Mortgages and Life in Ryde.

The deal transfers responsibility for servicing Ward House's existing clients to Cherry Godfrey, including mortgage advice, life insurance reviews, and general insurance renewals. The move ensures continuity for customers of the long-established, family-run firm, which has supported local residents for more than 35 years.

Founder Michael J Ward said stepping back from day-to-day broking made it essential to find a trusted successor. He described Cherry Godfrey as "a perfect fit" with shared values and a strong community focus. As part of the transition, Mr Ward will join Cherry Godfrey as a Non-Executive Director, helping to support clients and ensure a smooth handover.

Cherry Godfrey, which has operated for over three decades, provides mortgages, personal and business finance, and insurance services across several regions, including the Isle of Wight. CEO David Cherry said the company is committed to maintaining trusted advice and delivering long-term support, reinforcing its ongoing investment in the Island community. ■



## Lifeline expands Island operations

Lifeline has announced a new phase of growth on the Isle of Wight, driven by rising demand for locally delivered fire and security services.

The expansion includes the creation of three new jobs and further investment in infrastructure, strengthening the company's 23-strong Island-based team and its Security Centre in Newport. The move comes as businesses and homeowners increasingly seek reliable, locally accessible providers amid changes in the market and ongoing cross-Solent travel challenges.

"We are incredibly proud to be the Isle of Wight's local fire and security specialists," comments Managing Director, Mark Lee. "As our community grows and changes, so too does the need for reliable support delivered by people who genuinely care about the Island. We're proud of the customers we already serve and excited to welcome new customers on board, reflecting our long-standing commitment to fire and security, service, and local expertise." In recent weeks, Lifeline has reported a surge in enquiries, with many new customers transferring their maintenance, monitoring, and compliance needs to the company. A desire for greater stability, continuity, and a provider with strong local knowledge is driving the shift.

Established for more than 35 years, Lifeline is the only Isle of Wight-based provider to hold both NSI Gold and BAFE third-party accreditations, recognising high standards in fire safety and security. The company has also received national industry awards for excellence. ■

## Tech futures explored by Island students



Around 70 young people took part in the Isle of Wight FIRST Tech Challenge Scrimmage, an interactive careers event delivered by the Solent Careers Hub in partnership with BAE Systems.

The initiative offered students a hands-on introduction to careers in the technology sector, combining practical workshops with longer-term learning. Participants are part of an ongoing programme that includes workplace visits with local employers, weekly in-school project development, and a minimum of 15 hours of meaningful workplace experience by Year 10.

Held at BAE Systems' Cowes site, the event featured a range of activities designed to inspire and engage. Students explored robotics through a LEGO maritime project, took part in an engineering workshop, and joined sessions led by the South Coast Institute of Technology and Dinosaur Isle. A highlight of the day saw students designing and developing their own robots, supported by education leaders and the Bournemouth School for Girls robotics team.

The event was made possible through collaboration between educators, local businesses, and volunteers, with additional support for transport and logistics.

Organisers said the programme aims to build confidence, skills and awareness of future career pathways, helping young people better understand opportunities available on the Island. ■



# LET'S WORK TOGETHER



## Local experts, national strength

For over 30 years, Pertemps Recruitment has been proudly supporting Isle of Wight businesses with fast, flexible and dependable recruitment solutions. As 2026 moves forward, we continue to deliver the high-quality service local employers have trusted for decades.

Our experienced team knows the local market inside out and is passionate about finding the right people to help your business thrive. Whether you need short or long-term recruitment support, or you're planning for future growth opportunities, we're here to help. Let's arrange a discovery meeting to explore how outsourcing your recruitment could enable and accelerate that growth.

With a strong network of candidates actively seeking their next opportunity, we provide scalable workforce solutions you can rely on - 24/7.

- ENGINEERING • PRODUCTION • MANUFACTURING • MARINE
- LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION • OFFICE BASED POSITIONS



*Scan the QR code  
to learn more*

# Pertemps

## Tel: 01983 533235

— [www.pertemps.co.uk](http://www.pertemps.co.uk) —



# BRADING ROMAN VILLA

**ROOM  
HIRE**

The Garfield-Weston Room is ideal for seminars, presentations, and group sessions, and is fully wheelchair accessible. The Red Room is a unique space for private meetings, board sessions, and group gatherings.

To book:  
events@bradingromanvilla.org.uk  
01983 406223

[www.bradingromanvilla.org.uk](http://www.bradingromanvilla.org.uk)

Scan with your mobile



**RYDE SCHOOL**  
WITH UPPER CHINE

## Every day is an open day.

We are a day and boarding school for girls and boys, aged 2 - 18.

Book a visit - [rydeschool.org.uk](http://rydeschool.org.uk)

*An Island school with a global outlook*



## Island Community Awards gold winners

The Vectis Radio Isle of Wight Community Awards 2026 celebrated local achievement at a ceremony held at Caffè Isola in Newport, where more than 90 guests gathered to honour standout contributions across the Island.

Presented by High Sheriff Jacqueline Gazzard, the annual event recognised individuals and organisations making

a meaningful difference within their communities. Organiser Maggie Currie described the evening as “energetic and uplifting,” highlighting the strong sense of support among attendees.

This year’s gold winners reflected a wide range of community impact. Tim Gibbs of Yarmouth Pharmacy was named Village Hero of the Year, while John Steele of the Wroxall Community Association took Volunteer of the Year. Fundraiser of the Year went to Peter May for To Be In Her Shoes, and Colin Jackson was recognised as Sports Coach/Leader of the Year for his

work with Man v Fat Football.

Mindset Bros secured Community Project of the Year and went on to be crowned Overall Community Champion in the public vote. Creationz Dance Academy in East Cowes won Island School/Club Achievement, while Thomas Young of the Vectis Corps of Drums was named Young Person of the Year. Cheryl Burtwell received Good Neighbour of the Year.

The awards highlighted the dedication and impact of those strengthening Island life. ■



## Roach Pittis Appoints Family Head

Roach Pittis Solicitors has announced the appointment of senior solicitor Kathryn Mould as Head of its Family Law Department, strengthening its legal services on the Isle of Wight.

Kathryn brings more than 25 years’ experience to the role and is widely respected for her expertise in divorce, matrimonial finance, and complex matters involving children, including arrangements following parental separation.

Her appointment marks a significant step in the continued development of the firm’s family law offering, with a focus on delivering both professional excellence and compassionate client care.

Known for her pragmatic and empathetic approach, Kathryn will lead the department while supporting colleagues and clients through often sensitive and challenging situations. The firm said her leadership will further enhance its reputation as a trusted provider of legal services on the Island.

Commenting on her new role, Kathryn said she was delighted to join the team and build on the department’s strong foundations. She added, “I will always seek constructive, out-of-court solutions, while ensuring clients feel fully supported and confident when court proceedings are necessary.” Her appointment reflects Roach Pittis’ ongoing commitment to strengthening its expertise and client-focused approach. ■

## Sun Safety Campaign Honours Zoe

A new Island-wide campaign aiming to make every primary school on the Isle of Wight Sun Safe accredited has been launched by local entrepreneur Charlie Panayi in partnership with national charity SKCIN.

Created in memory of Charlie’s sister Zoe, who died from melanoma, the initiative seeks to embed sun safety education into schools and help prevent future cases of skin cancer. It builds on SKCIN’s established Sun Safe Schools programme, which promotes long-term behavioural change through curriculum learning, school policies, and community engagement.

As part of the campaign, every primary school on the Island will receive free resources, including sunscreen dispensers and educational materials. Interactive assemblies and activities will also be introduced to help pupils understand the importance of sun protection from an early age.



Charlie said, “My sister died from a cancer that is largely preventable when people understand the risks and act early. This is about education that changes behaviour early enough to save lives.”

While initially focused on the Isle of Wight, organisers say the campaign is designed to act as a model for wider rollout. There are ambitions to expand the initiative into mainland areas including Hampshire and London, supporting SKCIN’s national goal of embedding sun safety education across the UK. ■

## PATRON SPOTLIGHT GURIT

Gurit is not the obvious poster child for environmental stewardship. Known globally for advanced composites and engineering materials, it sits in a sector more readily associated with performance and precision than pollinators and pheasants. And yet, on the Isle of Wight, something transformative is taking root, quite literally.

## THE NATURAL, WILD EDGE OF INDUSTRY

Over the past three years, Gurit has been part of the Green Impact scheme, steadily progressing from bronze to gold, and now, ambitiously setting its sights on platinum. But this isn't a tick-box exercise or a corporate directive handed down from above. What's unfolding is something far more organic: a groundswell of employee-led change, rooted in place, purpose, and a growing sense of custodianship.

At the heart of it all is a simple philosophy, articulated by QHSE Manager, Geoff Day: do no harm. It's a deceptively modest ambition for a company of Gurit's scale, but one that carries weight, particularly given its proximity to sensitive natural habitats, including a Site of Special Scientific Interest along the nearby river. "We're very conscious," he explains, "that everything we do has to protect what's around us."

This awareness manifests in rigorous environmental controls, spill response training, containment systems, and regular monitoring, but it also extends beyond compliance into something more imaginative. Step outside the building and the shift is immediate. What was once a manicured, corporate landscape is being rewilded, gently but deliberately.

Lawns are no longer uniformly cut; instead, they are being allowed to grow, creating corridors for wildlife. Native species, hazel, blackthorn, and rowan, are being planted to support biodiversity. A wildflower meadow is in the making, even if it's currently in that awkward 'growing your hair out' phase. And perhaps most tellingly, wildlife is responding. Seven red squirrels have been spotted on site. Pheasants roam the grounds. A buzzard circles overhead. Ducks have moved in. These aren't staged interventions; they are signs of a habitat recovering, of nature being given space to return. "Just by doing simple things," says Site Manager, James Daws, "we've seen a real increase in biodiversity."



There's a joy in these observations. Staff pause at windows with their morning coffee, watching squirrels dart across the grounds. Others are more hands-on, feeding birds, planting trees, and building habitats. A 'green team' brings together employees from across the business, meeting regularly to drive initiatives and share ideas. It's not unusual for someone from customer service or production to spend an hour outdoors, tending to the woodland or helping with planting.

This is where Gurit's approach begins to feel distinctly human. Sustainability here isn't abstract; it's tactile. It's composting food waste in on-site hot bins, 1,500 litres' worth, turning leftovers into rich soil that feeds a small but growing kitchen garden. It's stacking deadwood into habitat piles, hosting Cub Scouts to build bug hotels, and experimenting with circular systems where waste becomes a resource.

And crucially, it's about people. "You want everyone to have ownership," Geoff notes. "That's really key." There's a recognition that environmental action and employee wellbeing are deeply intertwined. Time spent outdoors, away from screens and schedules, encourages not just biodiversity but balance. Informal walking routes, 'desire lines', are being formalised into pathways, encouraging staff to explore the space during breaks, to reconnect with something slower and more grounding.

This aligns closely with the broader ethos of the Isle of Wight Biosphere, and with the thinking of Ian Boyd, of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, who advocates for proportionate, place-based action. Gurit's efforts are not grand gestures but cumulative ones; small interventions that, together, create meaningful change.

There's also an honesty to the process. Not everything works first time. The wildflower meadow hasn't quite taken yet. Composting requires balance. Managing expectations, especially when a 'tidy' corporate aesthetic gives way to something wilder, is an ongoing conversation. But that's part of the journey. As Geoff puts it, it's about 'gently nudging nature into doing what it wants to do anyway'.



What makes this particularly compelling is the contrast. Here is a company rooted in engineering: precision, control, optimisation, embracing the unpredictability of nature. It's not abandoning its identity; rather, it's expanding it. Sustainability becomes another form of engineering: designing systems that are resilient, regenerative, and responsive.

And perhaps that's the real story. Not that Gurit is going green, but that it is redefining what that means in an industrial context. It's showing that even in sectors not typically associated with environmentalism, there is space, quite literally, to make a difference.

As the company pushes towards its platinum Green Impact award, the focus remains less on accolades and more on momentum. The wildlife doesn't care about certificates. What matters is that something is happening. That a patch of land is becoming richer, more alive. That employees feel connected to their work, to each other, to the environment around them.

And that, in the end, is the kind of impact that lasts. ■





## IW CHAMBER BUSINESS EXPO RETURNS FOR 2026 with New Layout and Expanded Speaker Programme



The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce has announced the return of the IW Chamber Business Expo for 2026, taking place on Tuesday 7 July at Ryde School, with headline sponsorship from WightFibre.

Following continued growth in 2025 — which saw the introduction of an additional marquee to accommodate 15 extra indoor stands and attracted over 600 visitors — the Expo is set to return with an enhanced layout and new features for 2026.

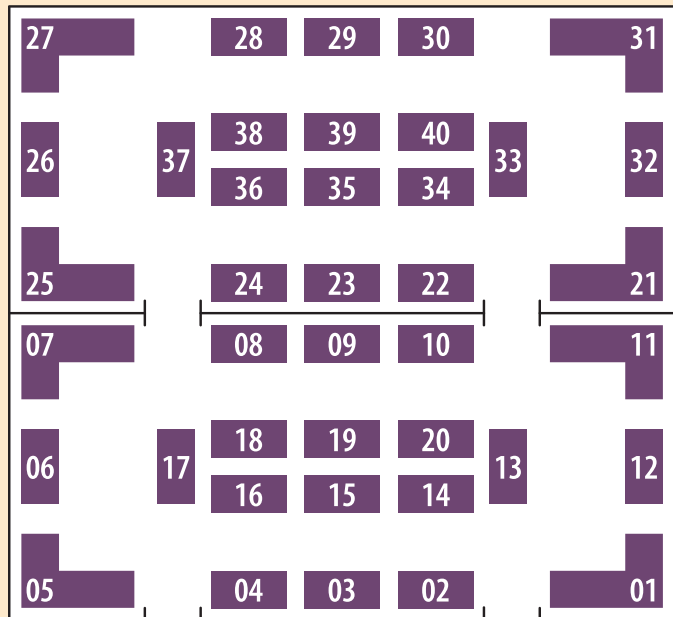
While remaining at Ryde School, the Expo will move to the opposite side of the field, enabling greater use of the outdoor space for external exhibition stands. The new location will also introduce the school's amphitheatre as a dedicated hub for high-quality speakers and presentations throughout the day.

Exhibition stands will be located across a smaller marquee and the school sports hall, creating an improved flow for exhibitors and visitors and supporting a more engaging event experience.

Rob Johnson, CEO of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, said: "The 2026 Business Expo showcases the ambition and talent of local businesses who are keen to connect and create real opportunities for growth."

The IW Chamber Business Expo has been running for over 20 years and continues to grow year on year; I'm particularly excited about our additional speakers this year sharing their expertise with our attendees."

Commenting on WightFibre's continued support, John Irvine, CEO of WightFibre, added: "WightFibre is delighted once again



MEDIA HOUSE AREA

MARQUEE ENTRANCE

MARQUEE ENTRANCE

to support the Isle of Wight Chamber B2B Expo, an event that brings our Island's business community together with the same spirit of connection that drives our full fibre network. Investing in our local community is at the heart of help create opportunities for businesses across the Island to grow, collaborate and thrive."



## Exhibitor stands for IW Chamber Business Expo 2026 are now on sale

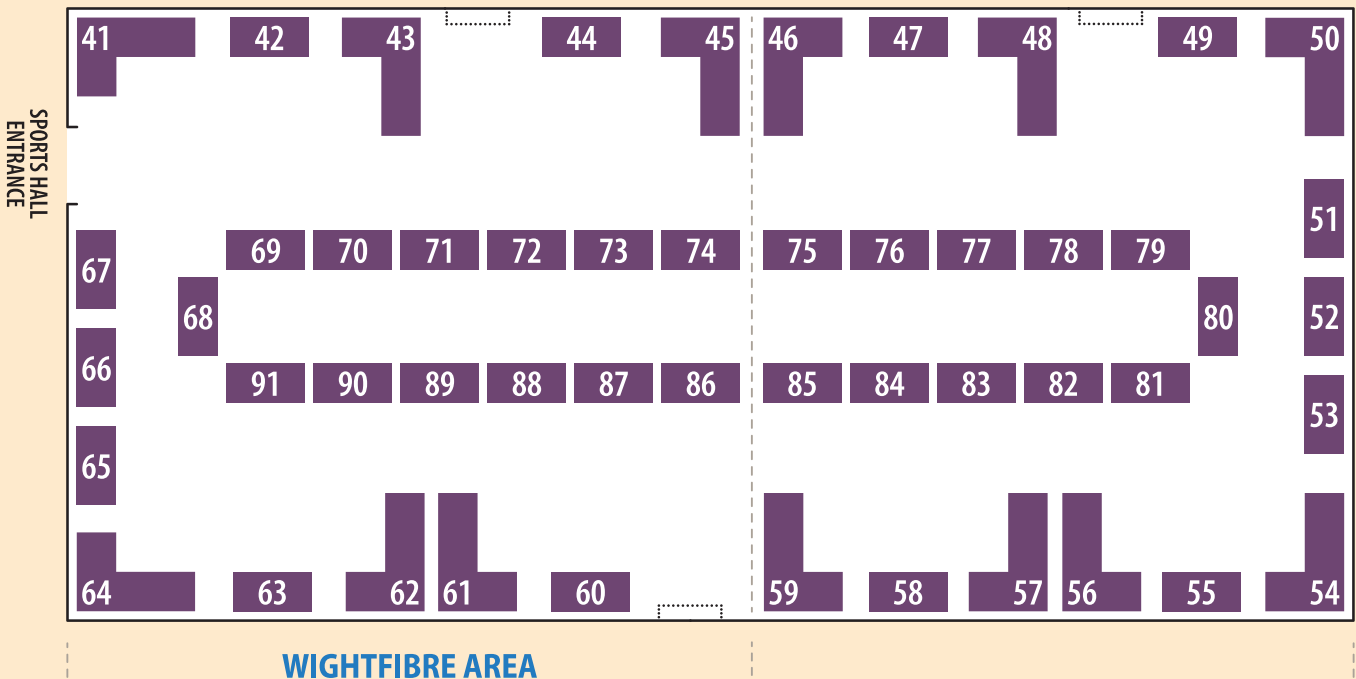
Businesses are encouraged to secure their place and not miss out on being part of the biggest day of business-to-business networking on the Isle of Wight.

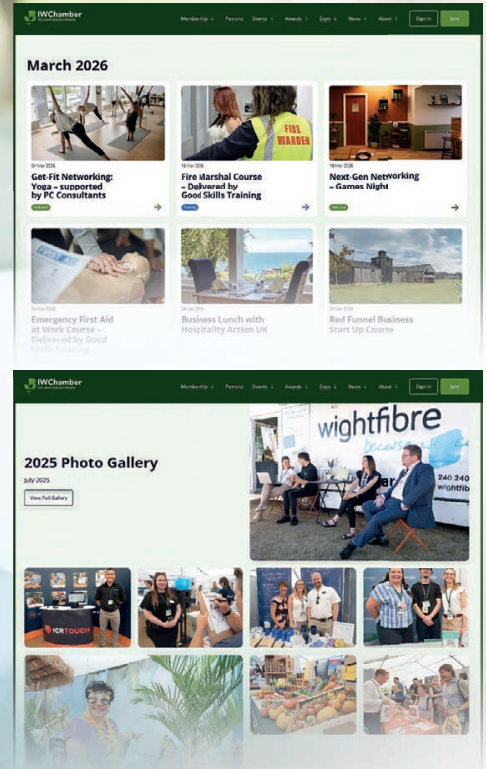
Bookings must be made via the IW Chamber website:

<https://www.iwchamber.co.uk/event-directory/expo/>

Businesses interested in exhibiting are invited to review the Exhibitor Manual, select their preferred stand locations from the floorplan, and submit a completed booking form. Bookings will be confirmed by the Chamber's Expo Team.

For further information or exhibitor enquiries, please contact: [Expo@IWChamber.co.uk](mailto:Expo@IWChamber.co.uk)





## IW CHAMBER

The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce has officially launched its brand-new website, marking a significant step forward in how it supports and connects the Island's business community. Designed with both new and established businesses in mind, the upgraded platform offers a modern, user-friendly experience that reflects the Chamber's core mission: helping Island businesses achieve more together.

## NEW CHAMBER WEBSITE TO STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT ISLAND BUSINESSES

The new website has been carefully developed to make it easier than ever for members to access the Chamber's wide range of services. From professional advice and training opportunities to networking events and promotional tools, the platform brings everything together in one accessible digital hub. It also streamlines how businesses can engage with the Chamber, encouraging greater collaboration across the Island.

As the recognised voice of Island business, the Chamber understands that a thriving local economy depends on strong support networks. The new site reinforces this by making it simple to connect with other members, promote services, and even apply for initiatives such as 0% business loans. By enhancing accessibility and engagement, the website plays a key role in supporting long-term economic growth across the Isle of Wight.

Rob Johnson, CEO of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the importance of this milestone. "The Chamber's new website and member portal look fantastic. It's another step we have taken to modernise and connect the Island's business network, making it simple to discover the great value the Chamber offers members."

To bring this vision to life, the Chamber partnered with NOSY Design Agency. Known for its strong ties to the local community, creative expertise, and commitment to sustainable business practices, NOSY

was a natural choice for the project. The collaboration not only ensured a high-quality digital product but also demonstrated the Chamber's commitment to championing local talent and supporting sustainable growth on the Island.

For Matt Greg, NOSY Founder, the project carries a personal significance that reflects the Chamber's real impact on local businesses. He said, "It's been over 7 years since I first attended an Isle of Wight Chamber networking event. I was incredibly nervous, having just quit my job and decided to start a business."

Matt credits the Chamber with playing a pivotal role in his journey, from accessing a 0% business loan to delivering training, exhibiting at events, and even winning awards. Reflecting on the website launch, he added, "Now, seven years down the line engaging with the Chamber, we have just launched their brand-new website. It is a milestone I feel proud of."

The launch represents more than just a new website; it is a renewed commitment to empowering Island businesses and strengthening the community that drives the local economy forward. ■

[www.iwchamber.co.uk](http://www.iwchamber.co.uk)



# THE NEXT PERSON YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS MIGHT BE NINETEEN.

Or 24... or 16... or 21...

Some of the best people arrive bright, capable and **ready to learn.**

Apprenticeships give employers a practical way to bring in young people, shape skills around the job, and grow talent in the direction the business actually needs.

Talk to the Island's workplace training experts about apprenticeships – for both new and existing staff.

INCENTIVE 01.

**UP TO £2,000** FOR ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS  
HIRING A 16-24 APPRENTICE\*

INCENTIVE 02.

**NO EMPLOYER NI CONTRIBUTIONS**  
FOR ELIGIBLE APPRENTICES UNDER 25\*

INCENTIVE 03.

**95-100% GOVT FUNDED TRAINING**  
ACROSS LEVEL 2-5 PROGRAMMES



# ROACH PITTIS

LEGAL NAVIGATION

EST. 1873

## GET THE EXPERT LEGAL ADVICE YOU NEED

Residential Conveyancing / Commercial Property / Wills, Trusts,  
Tax & Probate / Debt Recovery / Leases / Company & Commercial  
Agriculture & Estates / Development / Property Litigation

60-66 Lugley Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5EU

T: (01983) 524431 E: [info@roachpittis.co.uk](mailto:info@roachpittis.co.uk) W: [roachpittis.co.uk](http://roachpittis.co.uk)

CELEBRATING

# 150 YEARS

1873 - 2023

**lifeline**  
alarms & security  
services



Visit us  
online



### Why Risk It?

**CCTV Systems are one of the most effective methods in the fight against crime.**

HD Images, Remote Smart Device Control and Viewing,  
24 Hour Monitoring, Insurance & Police Approved.

Lifeline are award winning specialists in securing properties  
across the Isle of Wight.



The Island Security Centre, Riverway, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5UX

01983 521621

[info@lifeline-security.co.uk](mailto:info@lifeline-security.co.uk)

[lifeline-security.co.uk](http://lifeline-security.co.uk)



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT JACK THOMPSON

When Jack Thompson opened the doors to its High Street store in July 2023, it marked more than just a new retail venture; it signalled the revival of a long-vacant space in the heart of Cowes. Number 9 High Street has since been carefully restored, with the help of skilled local craftspeople, into a welcoming and design-led destination that reflects both creativity and community spirit.



## DESIGN, RETAIL AND ISLAND ROOTS



For Jack, an established interior designer, this was his first step into a physical retail environment. Having previously built a successful freelance career working on home renovations, the move required significant investment, not only in sympathetically restoring the historic building, but also in developing the infrastructure and sourcing carefully curated stock. The result is a space that blends retail with design inspiration, encouraging customers to reimagine their own interiors.

From the outset, Jack approached the business with an 'Island first' mindset. Wherever possible, services and suppliers were sourced locally, helping to build meaningful relationships across the Isle of Wight's business community. This ethos continues to shape the store today, particularly through collaborations with a wide range of Island makers. Products created in partnership with businesses such as the Isle of Wight Biscuit Company and Isle of Wight Jam Co. sit alongside items developed with smaller artisans, including Soap & Anchor, ChilliWinter Candles, and IOW Bees, bringing a distinctive, locally rooted offering to the shelves.

Support from the Chamber lottery loan has been instrumental in enabling this growth, creating employment opportunities while allowing further investment in locally made products. Collaborations also extend into hospitality, with Jack providing floral design contracts for venues including Smoking

Lobster and RT Café Grill, as well as working with a variety of independent retailers and businesses across the Island.

National recognition has followed. Jack's work has been featured in leading publications such as *Period Living*, *Country Homes & Gardens*, *Coast*, and *25 Beautiful Homes*, helping to showcase not only his design style but also the depth of talent found on the Isle of Wight. Features in *Cosmopolitan's* UK travel guide and *Hampshire Life* have further positioned the business and the Island as a destination for design-led living.

Community engagement remains central to the brand. Working in partnership with Spence Willard, Jack Thompson has co-sponsored events like Cowes Fringe and the Literary Festival, helping to attract high-profile names, including Cath Kidston MBE and Chantal Coady OBE, to the Island. Alongside this, the business regularly hosts collaborative events supporting local charities, reinforcing its commitment to giving back.

Looking ahead, the launch of a new website will allow the brand to expand its reach beyond the Island while continuing to champion locally made products. With growth rooted in collaboration and community, Jack Thompson's High Street store stands as a strong example of how independent businesses can thrive by staying true to their place. ■

[www.jackthompsonandco.com](http://www.jackthompsonandco.com)

# SEASAFE SYSTEMS AT 60

## BUILT TO SAVE LIVES – DESIGNED TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

There's a certain reassuring solidity to a SeaSafe lifejacket. Not just in the way it inflates, automatically, instinctively, but in the story stitched into every seam. This year marks 60 years of the Isle of Wight-based manufacturer, and, as owner Jeremy Dale OBE puts it, it all began with a simple realisation that 'falling in the water wasn't the best idea. And if you did, you wanted something to be safe'.

SeaSafe has built a strong reputation for innovation and reliability in marine safety apparel, becoming particularly renowned for its pioneering Pilot coats featuring integrated lifejacket systems. From those early days supplying marine pilots, the company has grown into something far more complex, but the principle hasn't changed. The original jackets had to be inflated by mouth; today's inflate automatically, light up, and can even transmit a wearer's location. "The product has moved on," Jeremy reflects, "but that's primarily where we came from."

Walk through the workshop, and that evolution is everywhere. Rolls of fabric are hand-cut to order. Components are stitched, assembled, and tested on-site. Nothing feels mass-produced, because it isn't. "Everything's made on site, and virtually everything is bespoke."

That word, bespoke, sits at the heart of SeaSafe's identity. Rather than forcing customers into standardised designs, the company has built a modular system that adapts to individual needs. "We've got three different versions of backs, and then the customer decides on the front. It's a radical approach in an industry dominated by offshore manufacturing and high-volume output."

Jeremy Dale OBE



In fact, SeaSafe now stands almost alone. "We are the only privately owned, 100% manufacturer of life jackets in the UK," Jeremy notes. Where others have moved production to the Far East, the company has stayed rooted on the Isle of Wight, not out of nostalgia, but necessity. Small-batch manufacturing demands flexibility, and flexibility has become its strength.

That same mindset has driven the company's expansion beyond lifejackets. Today, it produces man-overboard recovery systems, lifeboat components, and specialist inflatable equipment for defence and emergency services. Often, projects begin not with a product brief, but with a problem. "They come to us and say, 'We've got a problem, how can you solve it?'" Jeremy says. "Give me a problem, and I'll sort it out."

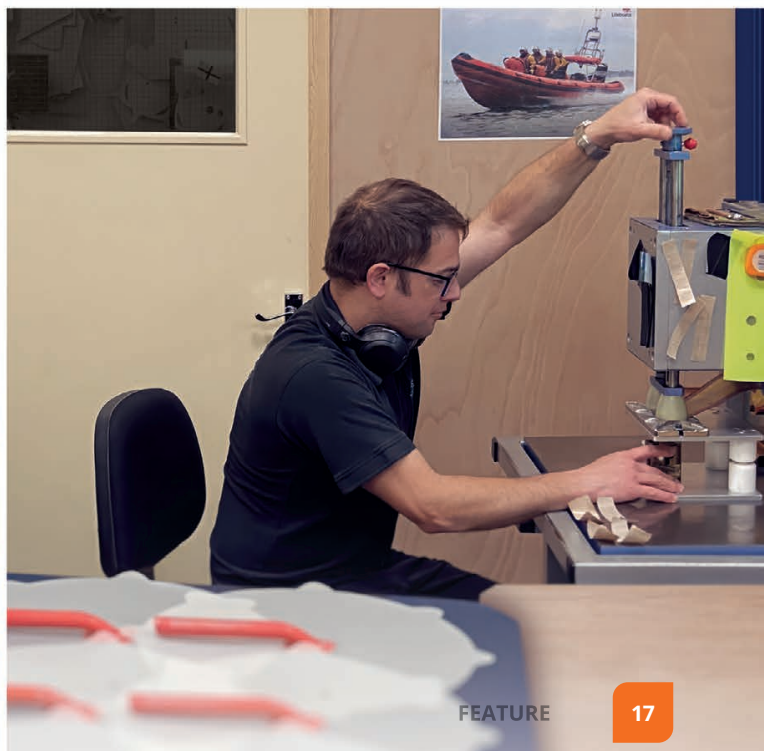
Sometimes the results are unexpected. A design by an 18-year-old student evolved into a globally used rescue device. Requests from superyachts lead to highly customised solutions. Even materials are reimaged, from estate tweeds to repurposed heritage coats, transformed into entirely unique lifejackets.

Behind it all is a small, loyal team with around sixteen people, many of whom have spent decades with the company. "As a rule, I don't allow people to leave unless they go out in a box," Jeremy jokes, only half in jest. Skills are nurtured, not demanded; loyalty is built through trust and longevity.

It's this combination, craftsmanship, adaptability, and people, that has carried SeaSafe through six decades of change. Particularly in the last twenty years, the business has had to evolve rapidly, filling gaps left by disappearing UK manufacturers and responding to an ever-shifting market. Jeremy's philosophy remains disarmingly simple: "The answer to the question is yes. What's the question?"

Sixty years on, that spirit of curiosity and problem-solving continues to define SeaSafe. Because at sea, there's no room for compromise and no substitute for something made properly, by people who understand exactly what's at stake.

[www.seasafe.co.uk](http://www.seasafe.co.uk) ■





No Bull Noni

## FOR WHEN YOU'RE HIGH FUNCTIONING ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT RED LINING ON THE INSIDE

This is 1:1 work designed to help you understand how you actually operate, rather than who you think you should be.

No fixing. No pretending. No 'hustle' required. We work with your system, not against it.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT FIXING YOU.  
IT IS ABOUT OPTIMISING HOW YOU FUNCTION.

### THE CPR METHOD™ Connect. Process. Reset.

We start with the basics most people ignore. Sleep, nutrition, and how your body is actually functioning day to day. If the system is not running well, nothing else holds.

From there, we look at what is driving your patterns. Your internal narrative, your habits, and your physiological responses.

It's rarely a lack of drive or capability holding you back. It's when your system is overwhelmed, and life starts to fragment. This work brings it back together.

You will learn to think clearly under pressure, understand your patterns, build habits that hold, and work in a way that is steady, sustainable, and effective.

I bring 22+ years of experience and the lived reality of building a business through genuine adversity. I do not just coach. I work alongside you.

YOU LEAVE CLEARER. CALMER.  
BACK IN CONTROL.

### BOOK A CLARITY CALL: 30 minutes, no charge

*For those ready to understand how they actually operate and make changes that hold.*

1:1 Sessions | Isle of Wight & Online

[nobullnoni.co.uk](http://nobullnoni.co.uk)  
07769 721625



## SUPPER WITH THE BEARS

Wildheart Animal Sanctuary's Bear Lookout will play host to the next **Charity Supper Club on Friday, 12 June.**

In celebration of the Sanctuary's 50th anniversary year, chef Paul Thorley and co-organiser Mark Henry will welcome 50 guests to the latest edition of the popular event, with all money raised going to the animal charity. A seasonal, locally sourced menu will be on offer to guests with tickets priced at a minimum donation of £80 per person.

As well as an evening of delicious food, there will be a raffle, and guests will be treated to unrivalled views of the Sanctuary's newest residents, Benji and Balu, who were rescued from Azerbaijan last year.

The charity's Head of Community, Events and

Partnerships, Lorraine White, said, "We are so grateful that Paul and Mark have chosen the Sanctuary to be the beneficiary of their next Charity Supper Club. As an organisation, we have come a long way over the past 50 years, and we're now at the forefront of animal rescue, rehabilitation, and conservation. We have much to celebrate, and this is a great way to mark the occasion. It costs nearly £2m a year to run the Sanctuary, our animals call home, so fundraising events like this are essential to ensure we can continue to provide a safe, peaceful, forever home for many years to come."

Since their inception in 2021, the Charity Supper Club events have become a sell-out success, raising more than £20,000 for Island charities. ■

Charity Supper Club  
in aid of  
wildheart animal sanctuary  
isle of wight  
12th June 2026  
From 7pm  
BOOK TODAY!!



**SILVER ARCH**  
FACILITIES SOLUTIONS

**Commercial Cleaning & Facilities Management**  
www.silverarchfacilities.co.uk

## Reliable Office Cleaning & Facilities Management

We deliver professional office cleaning and facilities management across the Island for businesses that want consistency, reliability, and peace of mind.

**Services Include:**

- Commercial Property Cleaning and Upkeep
- Planned & Emergency Maintenance
- Gas & Electrical Services
- Emergency Lighting (Flick Tests)
- Legionella Risk Assessments
- Floorplans
- Commercial EPCs
- 24/7 Emergency Call-Out Service
- PAT Testing
- Grounds Maintenance
- Internal & External Window Cleaning
- And More...



📞 01983 218339

✉ admin@silverarchgroup.co.uk



### Boutique serviced office suites in a beautifully restored Grade II listed building.

- Private office suites
- All-inclusive monthly fee
- Gigabit fibre broadband
- Kitchens, meeting room & garden

**St Thomas' Chambers**

147 High Street, Newport

01983 684725

info@stthomaschambers.com



**WIGHTLIFE**  
GROUP

**WHEELER & LAI**  
CHARTERED SURVEYORS

As she prepares to take on the role of Principal at Isle of Wight College, Fidelma Washington brings more than two decades of experience, deep institutional knowledge, and a clear vision for the future. Having progressed through a wide range of leadership roles since joining the College in 2004, she is uniquely positioned to lead its next phase of development.

Fidelma spoke with Amber Beard about her priorities for the College, her perspective on the Island's skills landscape, and how stronger collaboration with employers will be key to supporting economic growth and opportunity across the Isle of Wight.

**What attracted you to lead the College?**

Having worked here since 2004, stepping into the leadership role felt like a natural progression. Over the past two decades, I've had the opportunity to work across a wide range of roles, from support area manager through to Chief Operating Officer, which has given me a comprehensive understanding of how the College operates.

What has kept me here is the constant sense of change and challenge. Although I've been here for over 20 years, each role has brought something new, and I've effectively worked across every department. That breadth of experience meant I felt well-positioned to take on this next step.





I'm particularly keen to engage more directly with students and hear their perspectives, which is something I'm looking forward to in this role.

### From a strategic perspective, what are your priorities moving forward?

Our starting point is delivering the existing strategic plan through to 2030. That remains our core commitment to governors, employers, staff, students and the wider Island community.

A key priority is ensuring our curriculum aligns closely with employer needs. It's vital that what we deliver is not only relevant but co-designed with employers. Without their input, there's a real risk of missing the mark, so strengthening that collaboration is essential, particularly as we plan for the next academic year.

We also need to continue improving teaching and learning standards. Every student, whether young or adult, should have a high-quality experience. I'm particularly keen to engage more directly with students and hear their perspectives, which is something I'm looking forward to in this role. Another important focus is developing higher-level skills on the Island. Where possible, we want to create clear progression pathways, so students don't need to leave the Island to advance their education.

Alongside this, we must ensure the College remains an attractive place to work and study, supported by continued campus development and inclusive, inspiring learning environments. Financial sustainability is also critical; we are the Island's only general further education college, and ensuring we remain strong for the long term is essential.

### How do you see the College positioning itself within the Island's wider economic strategy?

The College is central to the Island's economic future. Our role is to equip students with the skills needed to contribute to the economy and address local skills shortages. That includes not only vocational training but also core skills such as English and maths, which remain essential for employability.

We also play a key role in higher-level skills development through partnerships with universities, including the University of Portsmouth, Southampton Solent University, and others. These collaborations help ensure students have strong progression routes.

Importantly, we are not just delivering qualifications, we are developing people. Employers consistently tell us they value wider skills such as professionalism, teamwork, resilience,

and reliability. Those attributes are just as important as qualifications when it comes to employment success.

We also support adults looking to retrain or change careers, which is increasingly important in a changing economy.

### Where do you see the most pressing skills gaps on the Island?

There are several key areas. Construction is a major one, with demand across all trades and at multiple levels, particularly as development continues on the Island. Engineering is another priority. Many experienced professionals are approaching retirement, and we need to build a pipeline of new talent. At the same time, the sector is evolving rapidly with technologies such as AI and robotics, which require new skill sets.

Health and social care are also critical, especially given the Island's ageing population. While it can be a challenging sector, there is a significant need and opportunity, particularly at higher skill levels. Other important areas include logistics, unsurprisingly for an Island economy, and hospitality, which underpins the visitor economy.

### How does the College respond to the evolving needs of employers?

The key is alignment and collaboration. We must ensure our provision reflects what employers actually need, which means working closely with them to co-design our curriculum.

We also continue to invest in facilities and specialist equipment, such as through the Institute of Technology at CECAMM and the DfE Transformation build which will provide an industry standard learning environment for students across a range of vocational areas enabling us to deliver cutting-edge training. Equally important is ensuring we have staff with the expertise to teach those skills effectively.

### How do you approach talent retention on the Island?

Encouraging people to stay, or return to the Island, is a shared responsibility. As a major employer, we have a role in promoting the Isle of Wight as a great place to live and work.

Many young people leave to study or gain experience elsewhere, and I would absolutely encourage that. However, we want to ensure that those who wish to remain have the opportunity to do so, particularly through access to higher-level education locally.

If we can develop higher-level skills locally, we can also help ensure that people can build successful careers on the Island without needing to leave.

### How important are apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications to the Island's future?

Both are hugely important. Apprenticeships offer a valuable route where individuals can earn while they learn and avoid significant student debt. On the Island, employers tend to show strong loyalty to their apprentices, often retaining them once qualified, which is incredibly positive.

At the same time, we need to strengthen higher-level technical skills to remain competitive. Developing homegrown talent allows local businesses to thrive and compete more effectively. There are exciting times ahead. We know what needs to be done, and we are focused on delivering it, working together to make a positive contribution to the Island we are proud to call home. ■

CIARAN O'DONNELL

# THE CHEQUE BOOK



The accountant sits in a beige meeting room with maroon cushioned chairs that circle a wooden table. He is joined in the room by his client and a tax inspector. It is 1995 and the meeting room at the Tax Office smells a little stuffy from the meetings it has held before theirs.

They are here because the accountant's client failed to disclose a number of bank accounts and income he has received for tax. Since the discovery was made by the taxman, it has been an uncomfortable relationship for the accountant and his client who has since given his assurance this won't be repeated.

The purpose of the meeting is to agree a settlement for the unpaid taxes and draw a line under the matter and also the breach of trust. Throughout the investigation, the accountant feels he's handled the matter professionally, something he can also sense from the inspector sitting opposite him.

After a recap of the missing bank accounts and undeclared income, the inspector presents a schedule of the taxes due with interest and penalties on top – it's a six figure sum, a significant sum of money during the early years of the Celtic Tiger economy.

The accountant and his client closely review the schedule from top to bottom and with no objections the inspector agrees the matter will be closed if the final settlement is paid immediately.

The accountant knows that paying the sum will not only close the matter, it will keep his client's name out of the annual Tax Report that contains the names and tax penalties that is published in the national press and closely scrutinised by the public and media.

The accountant and client nod at each other. The client, silver haired in a fitted grey suit and bright red tie, takes out a cheque book from his briefcase. As he writes out the cheque, a moment of silence descends on the room. The silence is slightly awkward as the accountant and inspector avoid any small talk. Both choose to shuffle their respective bundles of paperwork into neat piles in readiness for the meeting concluding and looking forward to getting a breath of fresher air outside.

The client writes out the six figure sum in the box and then spells it out in words

filling both lines on the cheque. He dates and signs the cheque and hands it to the inspector.

The accountant breathes an internal sigh of relief that the matter is concluded – overcoming the breach of trust with a client that had previously assured him all his income was declared.

The cheque handed over, the client and accountant pack away their pens, papers and calculators and close their briefcases with a loud click.

They both sit patiently and look on whilst the inspector completes his paperwork, speedily ticking boxes on his forms, scribbling comments, turning pages, signing and initialling his official documents.

The inspector then attaches the cheque with a paperclip to his stack of papers with the top page listing the client's bank accounts, including the accounts recently discovered and now disclosed.

The inspector pauses and, using his pen as a pointer, cross checks the sort code and account number on the bottom of the cheque to his list. He then glances from the list back to the cheque, looks up at the client and calmly says

"This cheque is for a bank account which isn't on the list." ■

*Trust takes years to build,  
seconds to break —*

*Warren Buffett*



The Isle of Wight College

Your Future Starts Here

# Thinking of your next career steps? Online learning might be for you!

**FREE**  
Level 2 Courses\*

## Popular subjects:

- Certificate in the Principles of Dementia Care
- Certificate in Understanding Autism
- Certificate in the Principles of the Prevention and Control of Infection in Health Care Settings
- Certificate in Understanding the Safe Handling of Medication in Health and Social Care
- Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health
- Certificate in Lean Organisation Management Techniques
- Certificate in Customer Service
- Certificate in Special Education Needs & Disability

\*Funding is subject to students meeting set eligibility criteria; this will be provided prior to the start of any course.

SCAN ME



## Find out more!

### E-mail

[distancelearning@iwcollege.ac.uk](mailto:distancelearning@iwcollege.ac.uk)

### Website

[iwcollege.ac.uk/course-areas/distance-learning](http://iwcollege.ac.uk/course-areas/distance-learning)

# Employer Standards for Careers Education

## Shaping the workforce of tomorrow

A free online tool that helps you have more impact with young people, teachers and parents.

The recommendations and tailored resources save you time and help you learn from best practice.

Solent  
CAREERS HUB

CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY



### How it works

- Complete the self-assessment in just 25 minutes
- Receive real-time results
- Compare with industry peers
- Track your progress
- Gain insight and ideas to improve

### You will receive

- An evidence pack underpinning each Standard
- Inspirational case studies from other businesses
- Curated resources to improve the quality of your careers education outreach

## Strengthen talent pipelines

## Close skills gaps

## Increase diversity in the workplace

Scan the QR code to find out how the tool can benefit your business





IW CHAMBER  
**Business Awards 2026**

The Isle of Wight Chamber Business Awards celebrate the very best of the Island's business community, shining a spotlight on innovation, resilience, and outstanding achievement. The awards not only recognise success but also provide a powerful platform for businesses to raise their profile, build credibility, and unlock new opportunities for growth.

Many past winners and finalists have gone on to achieve even greater success, using the recognition as a springboard to regional and national acclaim. Among them is PC Consultants, one of the awards' proud sponsors, whose journey reflects the lasting impact of participation.

"Awards are woven into the fabric of our success story and journey as a business. The Chamber awards have been transformational, marking the milestones that define who we are, differentiating us from the others, and launching us toward even greater recognition on the national stage."

Jonathan Thornton,  
CEO of PC Consultants



Being a member of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce is a great business decision!

# Join the CHAMBER!

IW Chamber members have access to these four essential services – all included in your membership fee. Plus many more benefits are also available.

[www.iwchamber.co.uk](http://www.iwchamber.co.uk)

Call 01983 520777

- ChamberHealth & Safety
  - ChamberHR
  - ChamberTax
  - ChamberLegal
- DON'T DELAY  
JOIN TODAY!**



# British Chambers of Commerce CONFERENCE

The Driving International Trade Conference 2026, hosted by the British Chambers of Commerce at the QEII Centre, brought together global policymakers, diplomats, and business leaders at a time when international trade is both a major opportunity and an increasing challenge for UK businesses.

Set against a backdrop of global uncertainty, shifting tariffs, and geopolitical tensions, the conference reinforced just how critical trade will be to unlocking future UK growth.

Rob Johnson attended on the IW Chamber's behalf, commenting, "A standout takeaway for me was the sheer impact that even modest trade growth could have, a 2% increase in international trade would add 0.6% to UK GDP, nearly half of the government's overall growth target. It really brings home how central trade is to the UK's economic future.

But what also came through clearly is that we're operating in a much more complex global environment. With increasing uncertainty, changing trade relationships, and ongoing barriers to market access, businesses need more than ambition; they need practical support, stronger international partnerships, and clearer routes into new markets."

The strength of the speaker line-up reflected that global perspective. Andy Haldane, the new President of the BCC, spoke about the importance of building depth and diversity in trade relationships, while insights from the US and India Ambassadors, the Deputy German Ambassador, and HM European Trade Commissioner Ceri Morgan highlighted both the opportunities and the realities of trading internationally today.

There was also a strong message about the role of diplomacy and collaboration,

ensuring UK businesses are better supported on the ground, with access to expertise and networks to help them navigate this increasingly complex landscape.

"Overall, the conference reinforced a clear message: if the UK is serious about growth, international trade must be at the heart of that strategy, but unlocking its full potential will require coordinated action between government, business, and global partners." ■



## IW CHAMBER NETWORKING

Richard Winter reflects on how the Chamber's diverse networking programme is proving popular with members.



Above: Julia from AMP our Q1 survey winner

## CONNECTED: THE CHAMBER NETWORKING UPDATE

April marked my first full year at the Chamber, and in that time, I've watched the team develop a diverse networking diary. Breakfast and Brunch remain core parts of the monthly calendar, with members bringing positive energy into the new venues.

The Chamber recently celebrated our biggest networking breakfast in recent years, with nearly 60 delegates attending, hosted at the award-winning Luccombe Hall Hotel. It shows that members still enjoy this classic format. Brading Roman Villa welcomed guests for a packed morning, guarded by resident soldier, Centurion Carlius Chamberius. And, saved networking at Ventnor Botanical Garden for the perfect time of the year, with spring providing a vibrant backdrop for another busy breakfast.

The Chamber has also been actively reaching out regionally by hosting an event for the Portsmouth & South Coast Business Week. The event brought delegates together from both sides of the Solent at the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary. The appetite for cross-Solent connection was palpable, and the Chamber is eagerly looking to expand this programme, collaborating with other Chambers on the South Coast.

Alongside these, the Chamber has also successfully developed new events, with the aim of engaging as many business sectors as possible – not everyone wants to network over food. So, every Wednesday in March, members

gathered early at Ventnor Botanical Gardens for a morning yoga session, followed by networking on the decking, overlooking the beautiful gardens and coastline. Made possible thanks to sponsorship from PC Consultants.

Feedback shows that members have wanted to get involved in the evenings. With this in mind, the team developed 'Next-Gen Networking' sessions for professionals under 35 to network with their peers. The initial event in February had incredible interest, which has been given a programme of its own. NOSY Design Agency generously hosted a games night in March, followed by the Business Suite at the College in April.

For members over 18, the Chamber celebrated Wightlife Group's refurbishment of St Thomas' Chambers in Newport. Paired with the Isle of Wight Distillery, members enjoyed an evening of gin tasting in a stunning historic setting.

The Island is heavily reliant on the tourism and hospitality sectors. These industries are often operated by small, hard-working teams. The Chamber recognises that they need focused support, which is why Hospitality Action UK was invited to Luccombe Manor. The charity presented on how they can support staff, advise managers, and open doors to essential emergency grants.

Your feedback through the Quarterly Survey continues to inspire and improve the Chambers services. Julia,





from AMP, was the Q1 winner and took home a mixed case of wine thanks to the generous sponsorship from Tolchards Drinks. To get involved with the Q2 survey scan the QR code:

This year has seen exceptional change at the Chamber, and many of those plans and projects are starting to come to fruition, led by the membership. As we head into the bustling summer season, the networking diary is packed with more networking opportunities, exciting new venues, and the Island's biggest networking event, Expo '26. The Chamber team looks forward to seeing you at an event in the future. ■



Scan the QR code to get involved with our Q2 survey





**SIGN UP TODAY!**

[ISLEOFWIGHTLOTTERY.COM/JOIN-NOW](http://ISLEOFWIGHTLOTTERY.COM/JOIN-NOW)

## LONG-STANDING LOTTERY SUPPORT PAYS OFF



Spring has brought an extra reason to celebrate for Billie Fitzsimmons from Freshwater, the lucky £5,000 winner in the Isle of Wight Lottery's Spring draw. Having played for seven years, Billie's long-standing support has truly paid off, proving that dedication and a little patience can make all the difference. Delighted with the win, Billie plans to put the prize towards exciting house renovations and a well-deserved family holiday abroad, turning dreams into reality. Speaking about the experience, Billie said, "I have played the Isle of Wight Lottery for many years now, as I have had friends play and win money, and as they say, you have to be in it to win it, and it's great that it's local. I will be spending the money on a holiday for my family and doing some work on our new house." A fantastic win for a loyal player. ■

## ROUSE CONTINUES ITS WINNING STREAK

Rouse Limited is delighted to continue as a Bronze Patron of the IW Lottery. We want to support this initiative because, as part of the Island community, both as a business and as individuals, we know we are in a position of privilege to be able to help.

Rouse Limited has grown organically over more than three decades and has always endeavoured to engage with fellow business owners, understanding the challenges they face day-to-day. So, whether it's working with Island businesses through our service provision or supporting local charities and community groups, we love being able to give something back to the community.

By becoming a patron of the Chamber's IW Lottery, we can also support the Island economy in general, through the boost given to businesses when the IW Lottery grants them funding.

The lottery prizes and the benefits of being a Patron are very attractive, so we would urge other businesses to support it in any way they can. To further encourage you to participate and prove that this is a genuine win-win opportunity for all, we are happy to announce that Rouse Limited has won £1000 prizes to date. Rouse Limited's additional commitment to the IW Lottery is that, to boost our support for the Island business community, any winnings we receive are automatically returned to the 'pot! ■



# £118,000

PAID OUT IN PRIZES EVERY YEAR

★  
JUST £1  
PER  
WEEK  
★

YOUR £1 A WEEK ISN'T JUST A GREAT WAY OF WINNING PRIZES!

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ALSO GO TOWARDS CREATING AND SUSTAINING JOBS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

ISLE OF WIGHT  
**LOTTERY**

★ JOIN NOW ★

# NETWORKING EVENTS & TRAINING COURSES

Go to [www.iwchamber.co.uk](http://www.iwchamber.co.uk) or  
Email [chamber@iwchamber.co.uk](mailto:chamber@iwchamber.co.uk)

## NETWORKING BREAKFAST at The Birdham Hotel & Restaurant

Friday 1 May 2026

The Birdham Hotel & Restaurant

7.30am – 9.30am

£18 per person

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

## FIRE MARSHAL COURSE Delivered by Good Skills Training

Thursday 21 May & Wednesday 24 June 2026

Unit S5, Branstone Business Park

9.00am – 12.30pm

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  
[megan.barrett@iwchamber.co.uk](mailto:megan.barrett@iwchamber.co.uk)

## EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK COURSE Delivered by Good Skills Training

Tuesday 5 May, 2 & 23 June, 14 July 2026

Unit S5, Branstone Business Park

9.00am – 4.00pm

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  
[megan.barrett@iwchamber.co.uk](mailto:megan.barrett@iwchamber.co.uk)

## NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Friday 5 June 2026

Venue TBC

7.30am – 9.30am

£18 per person

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

## COFFEE & CAKE NETWORKING at Caffe Isola

Thursday 21 May 2026

Caffe Isola

3.30pm – 5.00pm

IW Chamber Member rate: FREE

Non-Member rate: £10+VAT

Join us for afternoon networking and 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.

## NETWORKING BRUNCH

Wednesday 17 June 2026

Venue TBC

9.00am – 11.00am

£20 per person

An ideal opportunity for informal networking. 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.



The Birdham



# IW CHAMBER NEW MEMBERS

## BOOKKEEPING FOR BUSINESS One-Day Course

Wednesday 10 June 2026

All Day

£150+VAT per person

Who is this course for? This one-day course is aimed at small business owners who manage their own finances, and anyone looking to build practical bookkeeping skills, whether you're starting out or want to feel more confident with the numbers.

### What you'll cover:

- The fundamentals of bookkeeping and why accurate records matter for compliance, tax, and business decisions
- Key financial concepts: assets, liabilities, revenue, and expenses
- How to read and interpret financial statements - balance sheet, profit & loss, and cash flow
- Double-entry bookkeeping: debits, credits, and how they work in practice
- Recording transactions, managing accounts payable and receivable, and bank reconciliations
- An introduction to VAT, payroll, and business tax obligations

**What you'll leave with:** The confidence and practical skills to handle your bookkeeping effectively, whether you're managing your own business finances or considering a professional role in bookkeeping or finance. This course may also give you the foundation to progress to an AAT qualification.

**About the trainer:** Lucy Johnson is the Director of Simplex Accounting, a modern, paperless accountancy practice specialising in supporting small businesses. AAT-qualified and passionate about making bookkeeping accessible, Lucy combines real-world practice experience with a genuine commitment to education, mentoring students, offering work experience placements, and creating content that simplifies accounting for business owners. She brings the same practical, no-jargon approach to every room she's in.

## IW CHAMBER MEMBERS AFTERNOON TEA at Quarr Abbey

Wednesday 24 June 2026

Quarr Abbey

2.30pm - 5.00pm

Join us for a fabulous networking opportunity, enjoying afternoon tea in the grounds of Quarr Abbey. A hugely popular annual event, it's a unique chance to engage with Chamber members whilst enjoying the peaceful surroundings of the Abbey. There will also be an option to take an exclusive guided tour of the ruins.

## IW CHAMBER MEMBERS' TOUR OF VIKOMA

Thursday 14 May 2026

Vikoma, East Cowes

Full details TBC on our website

### Eat Wight

Kelly Way  
www.eatwight.co.uk  
eatwight@gmail.com  
07712430371



### M3MAS Limited

Tacis Gavoyannis  
www.m3mas.co.uk  
tacis@m3mas.co.uk  
07785314440



### Medina Electronics Design Consultancy Ltd

Neil Peers  
medina-electronics.co.uk  
neil@medina-electronics.co.uk  
07717375917

### Moore Barlow Lawyers

Julie Jaggin, Senior Associate  
moorebarlow.com  
julie.jaggin@moorebarlow.com  
01590 625838



### Thump Studio

Samuel Tinson-Wood & Katie  
Tinson-Wood  
www.thump.studio/  
hello@thumpstudio.co.uk  
07772583229



### Mentor Members Ltd

Nigel Cook  
mentormembers.co.uk  
hello@mentormembers.co.uk  
01983 681512



### Meaningful Planet

Nigel Falkowski  
meaningfulplanet.co.uk  
contact@meaningfulplanet.co.uk  
02045529816



### Wightworkers

Lauren Ellingham  
wightworkers.co.uk  
lauren@wightworkers.co.uk  
07400800045



**WANT TO JOIN THE CHAMBER?**  
Call the team on 01983 520777 or online iwchamber.co.uk

# Flooring for all your commercial needs



## The Island's CARPET & FLOORING SUPERSTORE

12 Hurstake, Riverway Industrial Estate, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5UU

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK • FREE ESTIMATES ISLANDWIDE • FREE PARKING

Mon - Fri 9am - 6pm, Sat 9am - 5pm, Sun 10am - 4pm



01983 533150

www.dscarpets.co.uk

Rugs

Luxury Vinyl Tiles

Wood & Natural Flooring

Vinyls

Carpets



**TOLCHARDS**  
ISLE OF WIGHT

Proud to supply quality wine and drinks to quality Island businesses

*Products supplied*  
Full composite drinks and a range of Catering & Janitorial Supplies

*Passionate about wine*  
Staff wine training and wine list design

*Same day delivery*  
6 Days A Week, Monday to Saturday  
Online account services  
Local depot on the Island, with an Island team

Mark Curran **07966 116127**  
markcurran@tolchards.com

Jane Karabasic **07377 338929**  
janekarabasic@tolchards.com

15 Manners View | Newport | PO30 5FA

**AFFORDABLE PRIVATE OFFICES**

Modern offices at Building 41, Cowes, with access to our vibrant coworking community. Ideal for businesses seeking a professional space with opportunities for networking and collaboration.

"For me, it's brilliant with a good office size and lots of well presented areas. It's an opportunity to network at the same time, which you wouldn't get in a traditional office."  
**Simon Harrison** | The Ear Specialist  
Building 41 Office Tenant

- Flexible Contracts**  
Have the flexibility of leaving with a 3 month notice period.
- Free on-site Parking**  
Free on-site parking for tenants, with EV charging on site.
- Full use of Facilities**  
Access to all facilities, including meeting rooms & coworking.
- 24/7 Building Access**  
24/7 access to Building 41 and offices.

More Info: [innovationwight.co.uk](http://innovationwight.co.uk) | 07976 009394 | [info@innovationwight.co.uk](mailto:info@innovationwight.co.uk)



**01983 822615**  
[WWW.WPRECRUITMENT.CO.UK](http://www.wprecruitment.co.uk)

**TEMPORARY, CONTRACT  
 & PERMANENT STAFF**  
 ALL INDUSTRIES SUPPLIED

*Recruiting for the Island since 1989*

EXPERT LEGAL ADVICE YOU CAN TRUST

**ELDRIDGES**  
 SOLICITORS

ESTABLISHED 1832

Accredited CONVEYANCING QUALITY SCHEME (CQS)

Accredited LEXCEL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT STANDARD

“youth trust”

Newport: 01983 524741 | Freshwater: 01983 752492  
 Email: [info@eldridges.co.uk](mailto:info@eldridges.co.uk) | [www.eldridges.co.uk](http://www.eldridges.co.uk)

**Rebecca Taylor** DC FMCA  
 McTimoney Chiropractor  
 07973 775097

**Rosie Fox**  
[www.holisticsanctuary.co.uk](http://www.holisticsanctuary.co.uk)  
 07714 310725

13 York Avenue, East Cowes, PO32 6AF



**This is an ad for winners!**  
 Be recognised for what you've achieved



Business awards are a powerful way to drive success, and I have been helping companies develop award winning entries for over 30 years.

**90% reaching award finals**, with **72% receiving awards** at regional, national and international level.

**Giving my clients a distinct advantage**  
[dalehowarth.com](http://dalehowarth.com)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

For just **£0.68 per week** with our membership

- Unlimited parking for a full year
- Free entry to the garden
- Access to Steephill Cove
- Access to the coastal path
- Exclusive special offers
- Invitations to special events
- Monthly newsletters

**BECOME A PART OF THE VBG FAMILY**



What's the Vision for Your Business?

**mentor**  
MEMBERS

Mentoring, support and a trusted sounding board to:

- ▶ Bring clarity
- ▶ Accelerate growth
- ▶ Build confidence
- ▶ Deliver real, measurable results
- ▶ Sharpen decisions
- ▶ From £100pm

[www.mentormembers.co.uk](http://www.mentormembers.co.uk)

**Book Your Complimentary Mentoring Conversation Today**

**MEDINA**  
 ELECTRONICS DESIGN CONSULTANCY LTD

Design • Prototype • Assembly • Test

- **End-to-End Design:** Concept to full life cycle development.
- **Rapid Prototyping:** Fast-turn-in-house assembly & testing.
- **Analysis & Debug:** Expert root cause analysis & hardware recovery.
- **Legacy Support:** Obsolescence management & reverse engineering.
- **Specialist Systems:** IoT, BMS, Remote Monitoring.
- **Custom Design:** Bespoke products, instrumentation & control.

Email: [neil@medina-electronics.co.uk](mailto:neil@medina-electronics.co.uk) Call 0771 737 5917

# IW CHAMBER PATRONS

GOLD | SILVER | BRONZE | LOTTERY

GOLD PATRON



## SILVER PATRONS

SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



## BRONZE PATRONS

BRONZE PATRON



artisan cafe, coffee roastery & retail

BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



Island Catering Equipment Co

BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



LOTTERY PATRON



# ISLE OF WIGHT LOTTERY BUSINESS START UP COURSE



DO YOU WANT TO BE YOUR OWN BOSS?  
ARE YOU LOOKING TO START  
YOUR OWN BUSINESS?  
**WE CAN HELP!**

The **Isle of Wight Lottery** has been supporting Island entrepreneurs and new businesses since 2000, helping to create and nurture hundreds of jobs.

Our **one-day course** is sponsored by Red Funnel and delivered by expert business mentors, designed to get you started with lots of useful, friendly advice.

We'll give you an overview of running your own business, operating as sole trader or company, bookkeeping, insurance, professional services, marketing and more.

The **Isle of Wight Lottery Business Start Up Course** is a great way to learn more about the world of business and how to get moving in the right direction. The informal environment is also a friendly place to ask questions and learn with like-minded people.

The **Isle of Wight Lottery Business Start Up Course** is sponsored by **Red Funnel**, who are proud to support new businesses and help to create new jobs and employment. The one-day course is only £16 to attend, which includes refreshments and lunch, thanks to the support of **Red Funnel**. The courses are presented by the **Isle of Wight Lottery**, as part of the Lottery's work to create and sustain employment on the Isle of Wight.

## Sign up today!

21st May - Caffe Isloa

25th June - Goddards Brewery

23rd July - Goddards Brewery

17th September - Caffe Isola

22nd October - Goddards Brewery

17th November - Caffe Isola

Visit: [www.iwchamber.co.uk/startmeup](http://www.iwchamber.co.uk/startmeup)

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY **RED FUNNEL**



# RED FUNNEL

THE ORIGINAL ISLE OF WIGHT FERRIES





## IW CHAMBER PRESIDENT

### Listening, Evolving, and Shaping Our Future Together

By Alison Colley, IW Chamber President

The Isle of Wight has always been defined by its strong sense of community, and our business community is no exception. From long-established employers to newly arrived entrepreneurs, every business and organisation plays a vital role in shaping our Island's economy and identity.

#### IW CHAMBER'S MISSION

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

In recent months, I, and other members of the Chamber Board have been speaking with many of you at events, visits, and informal conversations about the Chamber and its offering to members. One message has come through clearly: while the Chamber offers valued opportunities, there is more we can do to ensure every member feels supported, connected, and heard throughout the entire year.

This message was central to our recent Board Strategy Day, where we came together to reflect honestly on where we are as an organisation and, importantly, where we need to go next. Those discussions are now shaping the development of our new Chamber strategy, one that is firmly rooted in the needs and experiences of our members.

As President, I want to be clear that your experience matters, and the Chamber is for its members.

I recognise, as a business owner myself, that for many businesses and organisations, time and financial pressures are very real. Joining a network must deliver genuine value not just at events, but through meaningful relationships, accessible support, consistent communication and representation of the Island's business interests at a regional and national level.

Through our emerging strategy, there is a renewed focus on member engagement, including looking at how we introduce more regular and personal check-ins, improve communication, and ensure that the Chamber is inclusive and relevant to businesses of all sizes and stages.

The Chamber has a fantastic team at the heart and what they are already doing for members as a small team with their limited resource is incredible.

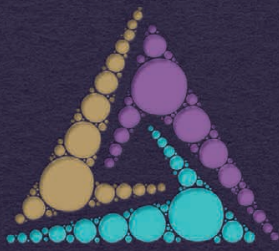
It is therefore not about making major changes or change for the sake of it but rather about evolution of the Chamber offering driven by the voice of members.

As always, I would encourage you to engage in the events and initiatives that the Chamber team provide, ensure you update your business details on the website and send Amber any news about your business to include in this magazine.

Remember the more that you put in the more you will get out of your membership.

The Isle of Wight is a unique place to do business and by working together, listening, adapting, and supporting one another we can ensure our local economy continues to grow in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

I look forward to continuing these conversations and sharing more about the new strategy in the coming months. ■

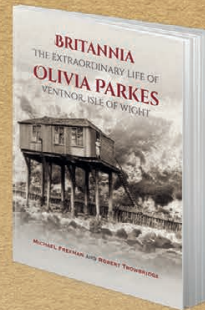


# meridian 3

## DESIGN & PRINT



Your friendly  
local  
design & print  
company!



attentive  
and reliable  
service



full  
design  
service  
available



The next time you require any design & print services  
feel free to give us a call or email us  
[meridian3mail@icloud.com](mailto:meridian3mail@icloud.com)  
07777 155663  
[meridian3.co.uk](http://meridian3.co.uk)



WightFibre   
*because we care*

# 25

## Years of Connection

Celebrating 25 Years  
 of keeping the  
 Island Connected

---

Find out more at  
[business.wightfibre.com](http://business.wightfibre.com)  
 or call 01983 300 000