

Island Business

JULY | AUGUST 2026

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including Isle of Wight Chamber
member news and events

RAISING THE ISLAND'S PROFILE

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Visit Isle of Wight

Pulse

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IW Chamber Awards 2026

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

As summer arrives and the Island prepares to welcome thousands of visitors, it feels fitting that this issue shines a spotlight on one of our biggest success stories: tourism.

We sat down with Visit Isle of Wight's new Chief Executive, Dominic Wray, heard his ambitions for the destination, and how the organisation plans to build on everything that makes the Isle of Wight such a special place to live, work, and visit. Tourism remains one of our most important industries, supporting businesses and communities right across the Island, and it's encouraging to hear such a positive and ambitious vision for the future.

There is plenty more to celebrate, too. As this magazine lands, excitement is building around the Isle of Wight Chamber Business Awards. The shortlist has been revealed, and once again, the quality and diversity of nominations are remarkable. From long-established

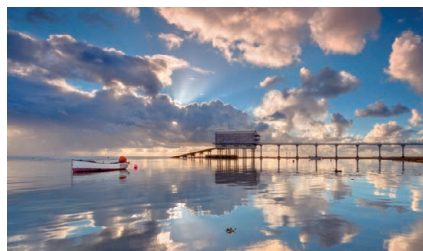
businesses to exciting new enterprises, charities and community organisations, the awards showcase the very best of the Island's business community. Congratulations to everyone who has made the shortlist, and I look forward to celebrating with many of you at our new venue, Bembridge Fort, on the 11th of September.

One thing that always strikes me when putting together each edition is the sheer variety of stories waiting to be told. Whether it's tourism, technology, manufacturing, hospitality, culture, or community, there is always something happening on the Isle of Wight that deserves recognition.

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

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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.



New Hendrix exhibition opens at Dimbola

The legacy of Jimi Hendrix is set to be celebrated once again on the Isle of Wight with the launch of Experience Hendrix, Isle of Wight Festival 1970 at Dimbola Museum and Galleries.

Sponsored by Solo Music Agency, the new exhibition explores Hendrix's historic appearance at the Isle of Wight Festival in August 1970, his final UK performance, and the largest show he ever played in Britain. More than 500,000 music fans attended the legendary festival, which took place just across the fields from Dimbola at Afton Down.

The exhibition features iconic photographs, festival memorabilia, live footage, and personal recollections from those who witnessed the unforgettable performance first-hand. The opening also marks the 20th anniversary of the bronze Jimi Hendrix statue in Dimbola's gardens, commissioned by Isle of Wight Festival promoter John Giddings and created by sculptor John Swindells.

John Giddings said, "Seeing Jimi Hendrix and The Doors in 1970 was a real epiphany for me. The experience has stayed with me forever and inspired me to restart the Isle of Wight Festival." The permanent exhibition continues Dimbola's long-standing commitment to preserving and sharing the Isle of Wight Festival's unique musical heritage. ■

Insights Discovery session for the Chamber



Dragon's Den-style pitch secures investment

A group of Isle of Wight sixth form students has secured investment from local business leaders after successfully pitching their business venture, Boundless Wight, in a Dragon's Den-style event.

The students presented a range of products and business ideas to a panel of Island entrepreneurs, seeking funding to help bring their concepts to market and fulfil existing pre-orders. At the heart of the project is Walk The Wight, a board game inspired by the Island and Mountbatten Isle of Wight. Designed to encourage adventure, tourism, and outdoor activities, the game aims to help people reconnect with the Island as they explore its unique landscape and attractions.

The investment panel, made up of Charlie Panayi, Alison Lee, Mark Lee, Andrew Tapsell, and Jonathan Thornton, questioned the students on their business plans, financial forecasts, and growth ambitions before deciding to invest in the venture. Charlie said, "These students have created a genuine business with purpose, ambition, and real commercial potential. Seeing them pitch so confidently in front of experienced business owners was incredibly impressive. This is exactly the kind of experience young people need. The future generation of Isle of Wight business leaders is looking very bright."

Special recognition was given to Tracy Osborn for her support and mentoring throughout the project. ■



Recently, Alison Thorogood facilitated an interactive Insights Discovery session for the Isle of Wight Chamber team, using one of the world's most widely recognised psychometric tools to help colleagues better understand themselves and each other.

Fun, engaging, and thought-provoking, the session explored individual preferences, communication styles, and their unique strengths, giving the team practical insight they can use every day. By creating a shared language around strengths, differences, and working styles, Insights Discovery helps teams unlock stronger collaboration, better conversations, and improved performance. For business leaders looking to build more effective, connected, and high-performing teams, it offers a powerful reminder that understanding people is often the key to better results.

Carl Joyce, commenting on behalf of the Chamber, said, "Alison's session was insightful, engaging, and surprisingly eye-opening. It helped us understand not only our own working styles, but also why colleagues may approach situations differently. The shared language and practical takeaways have already started to influence how we communicate and work together as a team. It was a fantastic investment in both individual development and team performance." ■



Fundraiser to repeat coastal challenge for Mountbatten

An Isle of Wight man who raised more than £13,000 for Mountbatten Isle of Wight last year is preparing to take on the Island's coastal path once again in memory of a close friend.

Fred White will lead the 2026 Island Coastal Charity Walk this September, retracing the challenging route around the Island's coastline to raise funds for Mountbatten. The event was first organised in 2025 in memory of Islander Roy Denham, with dozens of walkers joining Fred across different stages of the route. Together they raised more than £13,000 to support Mountbatten's work across the Island.

This year, several of the original team members will once again join Fred for the full challenge, while others are expected to take part in individual sections along the way. Roy's wife, Jenny, and their children, Amy and Tom, are also supporting the fundraising effort. "The feel-good factor in Roy's honour was off the scale. We loved it so much that we had to do it again," said Fred. "We can't wait to take on the challenge once more and raise vital funds for Mountbatten, which provided such incredible support to Roy and his family." Supporters are being encouraged to sponsor the walkers and help raise funds for Mountbatten's vital services across the Isle of Wight. ■

Yokogawa Marex team helps clean Cowes' coastline

Employees from Cowes-based software company Yokogawa Marex swapped their desks for litter pickers recently as they took part in a community beach clean between Cowes Green and Gurnard.

Nineteen members of the team spent a sunny afternoon clearing rubbish from the shoreline, collecting a surprising array of discarded items along the way. Among the finds were clothing, car parts, fishing nets, plastics, a circuit board, and even a computer hard drive. The standout discovery, however, was a fossil later identified as part of a sea turtle shell believed to be around 35 million years old.

Wayne Matthews, Divisional Director, said, "Although we are part of a global business, it has always been important for us to play an active role in supporting our local community. We removed a significant amount of waste that could otherwise have ended up back in the sea, while giving colleagues the opportunity to spend time outdoors and work together in a different setting."

The litter pickers used during the clean-up were supplied by Ryde Library, which offers equipment loans to local residents and organisations keen to help keep the Island's beaches and public spaces tidy. ■



Sporting organisations unite for summer networking

Some leading sporting organisations are coming together this summer to showcase the work being done to strengthen grassroots sport across the Island.

Hosted by Sporting Island, Team IOW, the Isle of Wight Sports Foundation, Primary School Education, and the Peach Games, the Summer Sporting Island Drinks & Canapé Evening will take place at the County Ground on Monday, 13 July, from 5.30 pm to 7 pm.

The event will feature a series of short presentations from key figures involved in developing sport and physical activity across the Island. Beth Dyer, Isle of Wight Council Service Director for Education, Access and Inclusion, will discuss the importance of primary school PE and its links to health, education, and opportunity.

Representatives from the Peach Games will outline the programme's impact within Island schools. Sporting Island Chair Graham Biss will provide an update on efforts to improve facilities, attract investment, and strengthen sporting partnerships.

Claire Beasley will explain how the Isle of Wight Sports Foundation is helping clubs become more sustainable, and Kevin Winchcombe will share Team IOW's preparations for the 2027 Island Games in the Faroe Islands. To attend, email Kevin Winchcombe at kevin@iwiga.uk. ■



Cowes singer announces new sushi venture

Singer and Wight Proms Festival organiser Mike Christie has unveiled plans to breathe new life into a long-derelict building in the heart of the town.

The former public bath house at the junction of Park Road and Terminus Road is set to be transformed into The Bath House, a new café with sushi at the heart of its menu, alongside a range of locally sourced food and drink.

Working with local builders and Cowes-based heritage architect Leah Mew, Mike hopes to create a vibrant community venue while respecting the site's historic significance. The building, which originally served as a public bathhouse in the 1940s before later becoming public conveniences, has stood unused for around 15 years. "As a resident of Cowes, I'm passionate about seeing the town thrive. Hopefully, these plans will add something unique while complementing the fantastic places to eat and drink already here."

A keen musician himself, he hopes to include a piano for intimate acoustic performances and community sing-alongs. "I want to bring a building that has fallen into disrepair back into use and create somewhere people will genuinely enjoy visiting." Subject to final approvals, Mike hopes to open The Bath House later this summer. ■



Free crime-fighting membership extended for businesses

Businesses across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are being encouraged to take advantage of a free 12-month membership with UK Partners Against Crime (UKPAC), following the extension of a successful scheme funded by Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones.

Originally launched in June 2025 and due to end in March 2026, the offer has now been extended until November 2026, giving more businesses access to tools designed to help tackle crime and improve community safety.

Members gain access to UKPAC's crime reporting platform and secure Crime Hub, enabling businesses to report incidents, share intelligence, and receive real-time alerts on crime trends, offenders, and local safety issues.

"Theft of goods and violence towards shop workers are not tolerable," said Donna Jones. "Through funding the UKPAC app, we have made it quicker and easier for businesses to report crime and help police take action."

The scheme is already delivering results, with intelligence submitted through the platform helping to secure convictions against prolific offenders and saving thousands of hours of police administration time. UKPAC Chair Gareth Lewis added: "By sharing information and reporting incidents, businesses are helping build a clearer picture of crime and contributing to safer trading environments for everyone." ■

Island scouts prepare for expedition to Germany



More than 50 young Scouts from across the Isle of Wight are preparing for a once-in-a-generation adventure to the Island's twin town of Coburg, Germany, during the October half term.

The expedition will see 56 Scouts aged between 10 and 14 travel to Germany alongside 12 volunteer leaders, marking the first county-wide Scout trip to Coburg since the twinning relationship was established.

Based at the Callenberg Scout Centre, the group will spend a week exploring the region, meeting local Scouts and experiencing German culture through a packed programme of activities. Highlights include visits to the historic Veste Coburg castle, Ehrenburg Palace, Rosenau Palace, the birthplace of Prince Albert, as well as outdoor activities, swimming, and a German cooking workshop.

Expedition leader Samantha Sharp said: "We are delighted with the response from Island Scouts. This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to develop new skills, experience a different culture, and build international friendships."

The Scouts are continuing to fundraise to help support the cost of the trip and welcome support from the wider Island community. ■



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New Solent map helps protect vital seagrass habitats

A new interactive map has been launched to help boaters across the Solent avoid damaging one of the UK's rarest and most important marine habitats, seagrass meadows.

Developed as part of the Solent Seascape Project, the map shows the locations of known seagrass beds, allowing skippers to plan their journeys and choose suitable anchoring spots away from these sensitive underwater ecosystems.

Seagrass plays a vital role in supporting marine life, providing nursery grounds for species including bass, pipefish, and cuttlefish, while also helping to store carbon, improve water quality, and protect coastlines from erosion. However, it can be easily damaged by anchors and chains, with recovery often taking many years.

Emily Stroud, Marine Nature Recovery Manager at Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, said, "Good information is essential for safe and responsible boating. This map gives skippers an extra layer of local knowledge to support their decisions on the water."

Boaters can also contribute to future updates by reporting sightings through a dedicated seagrass spotting app, helping to build an even clearer picture of the Solent's valuable marine habitats. ■

Literary Festival celebrates 15 years with star-studded line-up

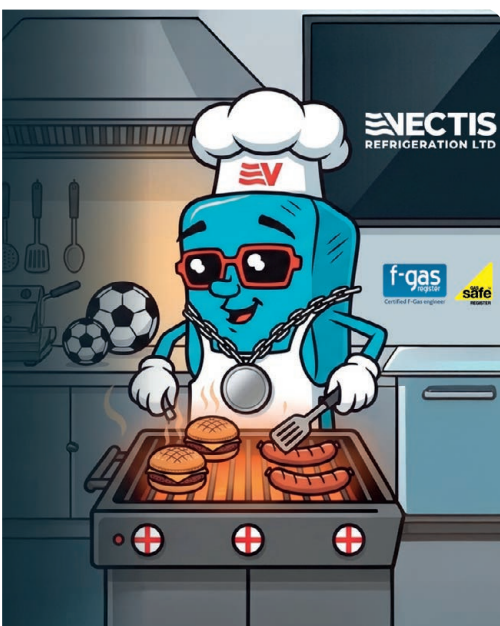
The Isle of Wight Literary Festival is set to mark its 15th anniversary this October with one of its most impressive programmes to date, bringing a host of household names and best-selling authors to Cowes. Taking place from October 8th to 11th, the festival will once again be based at Northwood House, with events also hosted at venues across the town.

Among the headline names is celebrity chef and campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, who will discuss his latest book *High Fibre Heroes* and share how simple changes to our diets can improve health and wellbeing.

Joining him will be broadcaster Sophie Raworth, crime-writing icon Ann Cleeves, actress Amanda Barrie, Clare Balding, political commentator Iain Dale, royal historians Robert Hardman and Penny Junor, football commentator Clive Tyldesley, and acclaimed historian Dr Alison Weir.

Festival favourites, including Helen McGinn's wine tasting, the Fizz Quiz and the Write on Wight programme celebrating Island authors, will also return, while the Schools' Programme aims to reach every school on the Island.

Tickets are expected to go on sale in August. ■



Helping Island hospitality stay match fit this summer

With the World Cup on the horizon, many Isle of Wight pubs, bars, restaurants, and hospitality venues will be preparing for a busier trading period. Big match days can mean more food orders, more drink sales, more ice, more cellar cooling demand, and far more pressure on kitchen equipment.

Vectis Refrigeration has recently expanded its service offering to support refrigeration, air conditioning, commercial catering, commercial gas, ice machines, and laundry equipment from one local Island-based team.

The company is encouraging hospitality businesses to carry out pre-event checks before peak trading begins. A failed

fridge, freezer, cellar cooling system, oven, grill, or warewasher during a busy match day can quickly impact sales, food safety, customer experience, and staff stress levels.

The latest "Licensed to chill, Licensed to grill" campaign has been created to raise awareness of this issue in a light-hearted way, while highlighting the importance of planned checks and preventative maintenance. A short site check before a major trading period can often identify minor issues before they become expensive emergency callouts.

After all, warm beer at halftime is one thing. A kitchen breakdown before kick-off is a straight red. ■



VISIT ISLE OF WIGHT LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF TOURISM

As the new CEO of Visit Isle of Wight, Dominic Wray steps into the role at a pivotal moment for the Island's visitor economy. With a background spanning tourism, attractions, and business development, including his time at Blackgang Chine, he is now helping shape how the Isle of Wight is marketed, perceived, and supported in the years ahead.



You've worked within the Island's tourism sector for some time, but how has your perspective changed now you're responsible for the wider visitor economy rather than one attraction?

My perspective has definitely deepened. I always had a good appreciation of the wider visitor economy through previous work, but stepping into this role has really highlighted the incredible breadth of businesses we have on the Isle of Wight.

There are so many fantastic businesses here, from major attractions and hotels to independent cafés, heritage sites, and outdoor experiences. What's struck me most is just how diverse the tourism economy really is and how many unique experiences we already have here. I also think there's far more talk about than we currently do. Sometimes we underestimate just how special the Island is.

Tourism strategies can sometimes try to appeal to everyone at once. If you had to prioritise one type of visitor over the next five years, who would it be?

One of the Island's biggest strengths is that it genuinely offers something for everyone. Families can have a brilliant holiday here, couples can enjoy fantastic food and hotels, and for people who love the outdoors, I don't think you can beat the landscape we have.

Rather than focusing on one specific audience, I think the opportunity is to elevate the perception of the Island. Traditionally, the Isle of Wight has been positioned as a classic seaside holiday destination, but we also have fantastic restaurants, stylish accommodation, and experiences that perhaps we haven't shouted loudly enough about.

We need people to think about the Isle of Wight in the same way they think about places like the Cotswolds, Devon, or Cornwall, somewhere thriving, exciting, and worth choosing for a short break or holiday.

You've previously spoken about changing visitor behaviours. Is there a trend you feel the Isle of Wight hasn't fully embraced yet?

I think we need to lean much more into being perceived as cool, creative, and contemporary. Sometimes there's an outdated perception that the Island is slightly behind the times, but the reality is very different.

There are lots of exciting businesses operating here already, and that's where the opportunity lies for the Island, embracing that more aspirational feel while still keeping the authenticity and character that make the Isle of Wight unique.

A major part of your role centres around the future of the BID levy. You've said it needs to 'earn confidence, not assume it'. What would success look like in 12 months?

For me, success is about transparency, trust, and engagement. Businesses need to clearly understand what they're getting for their money and feel involved in shaping the future of the BID. Historically, communication hasn't always been strong enough. A lot of good work has been done, but people haven't necessarily understood what's happening behind the scenes or what impact that work is having.

A big focus now is opening those communication channels up. We've launched a new website, introduced WhatsApp updates, and held BID Live Open Floor sessions where businesses could come in, speak openly, and help shape what the next BID looks like.

There's also a practical side to this. I understand what it's like running a business and having bills arrive at difficult times of year, so we're exploring more business-friendly payment structures and ways of making the levy system fairer and more reflective of the impact tourism has on different businesses.

At the end of the day, the role of Visit Isle of Wight is to market and sell the Island. If the BID wasn't renewed, there's no obvious alternative structure in place to promote the Isle of Wight at that scale, so people must understand both the value and the bigger picture.



What's been the most challenging feedback you've received so far?

One of the biggest things that's come through is how strongly businesses want to collaborate more effectively. The cost of digital advertising is increasing all the time because everyone is competing for the same audiences and search terms.

A lot of businesses have naturally hit a ceiling with what they can achieve individually, and there's now a growing understanding that we need to market the Isle of Wight collectively. There's a real appetite for businesses to pull together more, share ideas, and work collaboratively. The whole really is stronger than the sum of its parts.

Finally, what's one hidden gem that captures what the Isle of Wight could become as a destination?

Artisan in East Cowes is probably not hidden anymore, but it's a brilliant example of what the Isle of Wight can become. It started small and has grown organically into something that feels modern, stylish, and genuinely high quality, while still retaining its independent personality. The first time I walked in, it felt like somewhere you'd discover in London rather than on the Island, and I mean that in the best possible way.

Businesses like that are helping change perceptions. They prove that the Isle of Wight can be aspirational, contemporary, and creative while still staying true to its identity. ■



ISLE OF WIGHT ARCHITECTS TURN INDUSTRY FRUSTRATION INTO AWARD-WINNING INNOVATION

An Isle of Wight startup founded by two practising architects has won national recognition after taking top honours at one of the construction industry's most prestigious live pitch competitions.

Design and Build UK's Construction Start-Up Launchpad's Pitch Your Plan, a national search for visionaries reshaping our built environment. The platform to find the UK's next industry giant, showcasing the most promising early-stage companies, those tackling everything from AI and Robotics to Mental Health and Sustainability. Pulse, an AI-powered business intelligence platform designed specifically for architecture practices, was named overall winner of the Design and Build UK Pitch Your Plan Live 2026 competition at UK Construction Week in London.

Co-founders Lindsay Mattinson and Lewis Wood travelled to Excel London to present their vision to a panel of leading construction professionals, investors, and industry experts. Competing against emerging businesses from across the UK, the Isle of Wight team impressed judges with their combination of industry expertise, commercial potential, and innovative approach to solving long-standing challenges within architectural practice.

What makes the success particularly significant is that Pulse has not been developed by software engineers looking into the profession from the outside. Instead, it has been created by architects who experience the daily realities of practice first-hand. Both Lindsay and Lewis work together at Mattinson Associates Ltd and have spent years navigating the operational challenges faced by architecture firms. It was through those experiences that the idea for Pulse was born.

"Like many architects, we were constantly dealing with information spread across multiple systems, endless email chains, and the challenge of keeping track of decisions, approvals, and project updates," explains Lindsay. "We could see there had to be a better way."

Lewis identified the opportunity to tackle those frustrations digitally, while Lindsay brought more than 30 years of industry experience, knowledge, and professional networks to help shape the concept into a commercially viable platform. The result is Pulse, a software-as-a-

service platform designed to become a single operational hub for architecture practices.

Rather than relying on a patchwork of spreadsheets, email inboxes, cloud storage systems, and disconnected project management tools, Pulse brings projects, people, communications, and documentation together in one integrated environment. The platform creates what its founders describe as a 'single source of truth' for a practice, enabling teams to access information quickly, track project progress, and maintain clear oversight of responsibilities, decisions, and deadlines.

For directors and senior leaders, Pulse provides visibility across entire project portfolios, reducing the need for time-consuming status updates and manual reporting. For project teams, it offers greater clarity and structure, while clients benefit from improved transparency and communication throughout the life of a project.

Following their success at UK Construction Week, Lindsay and Lewis are now focused on taking Pulse to the next stage of growth. For Lindsay, the award is not only recognition of the platform itself but also validation of an idea that grew directly from the experiences of architects working within the profession. "Winning on a national stage is an incredible moment for us," she says. "To receive recognition from respected industry leaders is something we're hugely proud of."

Lewis agrees. "This feels like the beginning of something really special. Architecture practices have been working around disconnected systems for years, and we genuinely believe Pulse can change the way the industry works."

With interest in the platform continuing to grow, the founders are now actively seeking investment to accelerate development and bring Pulse to a wider market. They believe there is a significant opportunity to scale the business and are keen to speak with individuals and organisations who share their vision for the future of architectural practice. ■



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THE KING'S AWARD

CELEBRATING ENTERPRISE: A NEW AWARD FOR YOUNG FOUNDERS

The King's Awards for Enterprise have long been recognised as the gold standard of business achievement in the UK, and now, a brand-new category is set to shine a spotlight on the next generation of entrepreneurial talent.

Announced as part of the Department for Business and Trade's Small Business Plan, the new Young Founder category officially opened for applications on May 6, 2026, alongside the existing awards for International Trade, Innovation, Sustainability, and Social Mobility.

Designed to recognise entrepreneurs aged 18 to 30, the category aims to celebrate fresh thinking, ambitious leadership, and the growing impact young founders are having on the UK economy. The award will focus not only on commercial success but also on resilience, creativity, customer value, and the ability to inspire others. Applicants will need to demonstrate strong business performance or growth potential, alongside robust environmental, social, and governance practices.

Spinlock (left) and PC Consultants (right) receiving their awards

For businesses on the Isle of Wight, the introduction of the Young Founder category presents an exciting opportunity. The Island has already built an impressive track record when it comes to national recognition through the King's Awards and the former Queen's Awards for Enterprise, with several local businesses having earned royal acclaim over the years.

Companies including Datum Electronics, The Garlic Farm, PC Consultants, HTP Training, Spinlock, Stainless Games, A J Wells, IFPL, Wight Shipyard, and Teemill have all demonstrated the kind of innovation, resilience, and ambition these awards are designed to celebrate. Their achievements span a wide range of sectors: from advanced engineering and maritime manufacturing to sustainable fashion, software development, education, and technology, showcasing the breadth of talent operating on the Island.

For many winners, the impact of receiving a King's Award extends far beyond the prestige of the title itself. The awards can help businesses raise their profile nationally and internationally, strengthen credibility with customers and investors, support recruitment, and open doors to new markets. That is particularly significant for younger entrepreneurs looking to scale their businesses and build long-term confidence in their brands.

Alongside the new Young Founder category, businesses can also apply for King's Awards in International Trade, Innovation, Sustainability, and Social

Mobility. The International Trade award recognises outstanding overseas growth and export success, while the Innovation category celebrates businesses bringing genuinely new products or services to market. Sustainability focuses on organisations embedding environmental responsibility and long-term sustainable practices across their operations, while the Social Mobility category highlights businesses that create opportunities for people who may otherwise face barriers to employment or career progression. The Young Founder category is also expected to help position entrepreneurship as an increasingly attractive career path for younger people, recognising not only established success but also the determination and vision required to build a business from the ground up.

Applicants will be assessed across five core themes, including fresh ideas and creative thinking, driving growth and industry influence, leadership, strategic resilience, and customer value. The first recipients of the new award will be announced on May 6, 2027.

As Isle of Wight businesses continue to innovate across industries and generations, the addition of the Young Founder category feels like a timely recognition of the entrepreneurial energy emerging across the UK, and perhaps a glimpse of the Island's next King's Award winners in the making.

If you think you are eligible, having read the above, but need further information, please go to www.gov.uk/kings-awards-for-enterprise ■



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For Claire Beasley, leadership has always been about people. After more than two decades working across executive search, coaching, and board facilitation through her business, Court & Spark Consulting, she has built a career helping organisations find the right leaders and helping those leaders thrive once they are in place.

HELPING BUSINESSES THRIVE THROUGH LEADERSHIP

A member of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce for the past 10 years, Claire has become a familiar face within the Island's business community. While much of her work reaches beyond the Isle of Wight, supporting businesses across retail, consumer, and service sectors nationally, including Carnival UK in Southampton for Executive Coaching and Williams Trade Plumbing in Fareham for board facilitation, she says the Chamber has always provided a valuable network of connection and collaboration closer to home.

Executive search forms a significant part of Claire's work, but she is quick to point out that it goes far beyond recruitment. "The right leadership appointment can strengthen culture, improve performance, and create momentum for growth," she explains. "Successful businesses are built through strong leadership, clear communication, and having the right people around the table. That sounds simple, but getting those things right can completely shape the direction of a business."

Taking time to understand both the organisation and the individual is central to her approach. Experience and capability matter, of course, but so do cultural fit and shared values. "It's about understanding what success looks like for both sides. The best appointments are the ones that last because there is alignment in ambition, leadership style, and culture. Equally, the wrong fit can have a real impact on teams and business direction. I've always believed executive search should be relationship-led rather than transactional."

Alongside executive search, Claire also works as an executive coach, supporting senior leaders as they navigate change, build confidence, and develop their leadership skills. In increasingly fast-moving and pressured business environments, she believes many leaders benefit from having an independent sounding board. "Leadership can feel quite isolating at times. Having someone external who can challenge constructively, encourage reflection, and help you think differently can be incredibly valuable."

Her work also extends into board facilitation, helping senior teams improve communication, strengthen relationships, and have more productive strategic conversations. "I'm passionate about helping boards and leadership teams work collaboratively. Often, businesses already have talented people in place, but creating the space for open, honest discussion is what allows better decisions to happen."

That emphasis on collaboration is something Claire also values within the Isle of Wight business community itself. "The Island has such a resilient and supportive business network," she says. "Over the past 10 years as a Chamber member, I've seen first-hand how willing businesses are to connect, collaborate, and support one another, and that's something I've always appreciated. "I'm always happy to have conversations with fellow Chamber members. Whether that's around leadership, talent, team development, or simply sharing ideas and experiences, those conversations are often where the most valuable opportunities begin. ■



Nominees Announced for the 2026 Isle of Wight Chamber Business Awards

The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce has unveiled the shortlist for the 2026 Chamber Business Awards, with businesses and organisations from across the Island now preparing for the flagship celebration of enterprise on **Friday 11 September**.

This year's awards will take place at spectacular **Bembridge Fort**, providing a unique backdrop for an evening dedicated to recognising the people, businesses, and organisations helping to drive the Island economy forward.

The shortlist reflects the breadth and diversity of the Isle of Wight business community, with nominees representing a wide range of sectors and businesses of all sizes. Alongside many familiar and well-established names are a host of first-time finalists and newer enterprises, highlighting the strength and resilience of the Island's entrepreneurial spirit.

"Every year, the Chamber Business Awards remind us just how much talent, ambition, and innovation we have on the Isle of Wight, and this year is no exception. Our nominees represent a fantastic mix of businesses and organisations of all sizes and from every sector, which is exactly what makes these awards so special," said Rob Johnson, Chief Executive of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce.

"It's great to see some familiar names returning to the shortlist, alongside many businesses that are engaging with the awards for the first time. That blend of established success and fresh energy says a great deal about the strength and vibrancy of our business community. Congratulations to everyone who has been shortlisted. Reaching this stage is an achievement in itself, and we're looking forward to bringing the Island business community together for what promises to be a memorable evening at Bembridge Fort."

Tickets for the 2026 Isle of Wight Chamber Business Awards are now on sale on the Chamber website, with finalists, sponsors, and guests set to come together for one of the highlights of the Island's business calendar for a celebration of business excellence, achievement, and collaboration.



IW CHAMBER
Business Awards 2026



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Isle of Wight Tomatoes
Ringway Island Roads
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Ventnor Botanic Garden CIC

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IW Chamber Business Awards
Friday 11 September 2026
Bembridge Fort



The pilot walks into the small terminal building, wearing jeans and a shirt dusty from the Texas heat. It's late afternoon. An aircon unit rattles on a windowsill, fighting against the desert heat. He needs a restroom and fuel for the next leg of his journey back home.

At the desk, a woman wakes up her computer. Before she can pull up the menu, the pilot interrupts her.

"I don't have the funds for a wire transfer today."

"That's OK, we can do credit card."

He hesitates, then pulls out his wallet and slides a card across the counter.

She swipes it. The machine beeps. Processing. They both watch the small screen.

DECLINED.

He pulls out another card. "Try this one."

The machine thinks about it longer this time.

DECLINED.

The pilot exhales slowly. "Can I open an account and pay you at the end of the month?"

"Just a moment."

She disappears into the back office. The pilot feeds pocket change into the vending machine and cracks open a cold soda. Through the window, his plane sits alone on the dusty strip, with heat shimmering off the tarmac.

A man in his fifties emerges with his shirt tucked in and a calm demeanour.

"Afternoon Sir. I understand you're looking for credit?"

"Just need an account. I can pay at the end of the month."

The manager shakes his head slowly. "Sorry, I can't do that. It's company policy."

The pilot's jaw tightens. "You're telling me I'm stuck out here over a tank of gas?"

"If you can get funds into your account today, we'll get you fuelled up and on your way. But I can't authorise credit."

"This is bullshit."

The manager doesn't react. The pilot

stares at him with an uncomfortable silence, then turns and walks out slamming the door behind him. Dust kicks up as he crosses the open ground toward his plane.

The woman looks at the manager.

"Give him a few minutes," he says. "He'll call someone. Let me know when he comes back in."

She nods. The manager returns to his office. The aircon unit rattles. The woman sits back down and stares at her screen.

Thirty minutes pass.

Then an angry voice crackles over the radio.

The manager jumps up out of his chair and runs past the reception desk to the window.

The plane is gone.

They both move to the radio in the back office. The pilot's voice comes through again - louder now, clearer. He's shouting. Blaming the manager. Blaming the policy. Blaming the heat

and the desert and the whole goddamn system that won't give a man credit when he needs it.

Then his engine stutters.

The manager and the woman look at each other.

The engine coughs once. Twice.

Then nothing.

The pilot's voice cuts through the static one more time - just a couple words. Hard to make out. Then the radio goes quiet.

They stand there in the small back office, listening to static. The aircon unit rattles in the next room. Outside, the desert stretches flat and empty in every direction.

—

PS. Light Aircraft Monthly just published a story about a business owner who ran out of cash before reaching profitability. The headline - 'Fuel Management.' ■





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UKSA

As part of this year's World Boating Day celebrations, UKSA welcomed representatives from local businesses and organisations to its Cowes campus for a day of sailing, teamwork, and friendly competition on the Solent.



FRIENDLY RIVALRY ON THE SOLENT FOR WORLD BOATING DAY



Held on Friday 22 May, the event brought together teams from Burgess Yachts, the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, and The Island Echo for a J80 sailing challenge designed to celebrate the Island's rich maritime heritage while showcasing the opportunities available through sailing and water sports.

The day began with safety briefings and expert instruction from UKSA's experienced water sports team, allowing participants to familiarise themselves with the J80 race yachts before taking to the water. For some, it was a chance to refresh existing sailing skills; for others, it was a first opportunity to experience competitive sailing in one of the world's most famous sailing locations.

After a busy morning learning the ropes, developing race tactics, and working together as crews, participants returned ashore for lunch before heading back out onto the Solent for an afternoon of racing in near-perfect conditions. The event highlighted just how much sailing relies on communication, collaboration, and trust. With every crew member

playing a vital role, success depended not only on technical ability but also on teamwork and quick decision-making.

Following a closely fought afternoon on the water, it was the Chamber team, whose crew included Richard Winter, Carl Joyce, Amber Beard, Lucy Johnson, and Alfie Wild, that ultimately claimed victory, returning to shore to celebrate with a well-earned glass of cava overlooking the marina. In keeping with the spirit of the day, the winning crew also received a rather unique prize: a celebratory pack of Gold Bar chocolate biscuits.

Amber Beard, Island Business Editor, said, "A big thank you from the Chamber team to everyone at UKSA for such a fantastic day on the water. From the moment we arrived, the hospitality was exceptional, and the whole experience was brilliantly organised from start to finish.

"A special mention must go to our instructor, Kai, whose knowledge of the sea, the wind, and the finer points of racing was incredible. His enthusiasm, calm guidance, and super-sharp tactics certainly helped us make the most of our time on the Solent and added a competitive edge to the day.

"Days like this are also a reminder of just how fortunate we are to live and work on the Isle of Wight. We have world-class sailing waters right on our doorstep, alongside organisations like UKSA that are helping to inspire the next generation of maritime professionals. We thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were delighted to come away with the win, although I'm not sure the Gold Bar biscuits will last very long!" ■



WIGHTAID

For ten years, WightAID has been connecting the generosity of Isle of Wight businesses with the charities and community groups that need support most. As the organisation celebrates a decade of impact, it is inviting more businesses to join its growing network of local changemakers.

Since its formation in 2016, WightAID has distributed more than £884,000 to over 290 small charities and community groups across the Island, helping organisations that often struggle to access funding but play a vital role in supporting local people.

What makes WightAID unique is its simple but powerful model. Supported by local businesses and individuals, the charity acts as a trusted funding hub, ensuring donations remain on the Isle of Wight and are directed to where they can make the greatest difference. All applications are carefully assessed, and the distribution process is managed by a team of volunteers, giving donors confidence that their contributions are being used effectively.



WIGHTAID CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF COMMUNITY IMPACT



The impact of that support can be seen across every corner of Island life.

In its most recent round of grant awards alone, WightAID distributed more than £30,000 to 13 local organisations. Recipients included children's mental health charity The Wave Project, Freshwater Independent Lifeboat, Feeding the IOW, Stone Crabs Theatre, Sporting Opportunities, and Shanklin Men's Shed, alongside a number of smaller community initiatives supporting vulnerable residents, tackling loneliness and promoting inclusion.

Geoff Underwood, founder and trustee of WightAID, believes the charity's success is rooted in community collaboration. "We are so grateful to the businesses and individuals that support us and hope that support will continue, as money coming in means there are funds to give out," he said.

For businesses, supporting WightAID offers more than simply the opportunity to give back. It provides a straightforward way to deliver meaningful local impact while demonstrating a genuine commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Many companies already support charitable causes but may find the process time-consuming or difficult to manage. WightAID removes that burden, handling due diligence, grant administration and distribution on behalf of donors. Businesses can be confident their contributions are reaching legitimate local causes and creating measurable benefits within the Island community.

There can also be financial advantages.

Donations made through a limited company can typically be deducted from taxable profits, potentially reducing corporation tax liabilities. Depending on the company's circumstances, a £1,000 donation could effectively cost significantly less once tax relief is taken into account. Sole traders and partnerships may also be able to benefit through Gift Aid and higher-rate tax relief, helping donations go even further.

As businesses increasingly look to demonstrate their social value credentials, WightAID offers a practical way to make a visible difference close to home. Every pound donated remains on the Isle of Wight, supporting the charities, volunteers, and community groups that help make the Island such a special place to live and work.

Now entering its tenth year, WightAID is keen to expand its network of business partners and increase the funds available for future grant rounds. Whether through a one-off donation, annual contribution, or regular monthly support, every donation helps strengthen the Island's voluntary and community sector.

To find out more about becoming a WightAID Business Partner or making a donation, visit WightAID or contact the team on 01983 555915. Or simply scan the QR code to make a one-off donation, set up a regular contribution, or learn more about how your business can support WightAID's work across the Isle of Wight. ■

FUTURE ISLE OF WIGHT SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION FAIR RETURNS

The Future Isle of Wight Sustainability & Innovation Fair will return on **Wednesday 5 August 2026 at the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Havenstreet**, bringing together residents, businesses, landlords, community groups, and sustainability specialists for a major Island event focused on low-carbon living and energy efficiency.

Organised by Future Isle of Wight C.I.C., the Fair will showcase practical solutions to help Islanders reduce energy costs, improve buildings, and support a greener future.

Visitors will be able to explore renewable energy technologies, insulation solutions, heat pumps, electric vehicle charging, battery storage, and smart energy systems, alongside expert talks, live demonstrations, and interactive displays.

A dedicated Community Retrofit Advice Hub will also provide guidance on

funding opportunities and practical energy-saving improvements for homes and businesses.

Vince Wedlock-Ward MBE, Founder of Future Isle of Wight C.I.C., who received an MBE for his work supporting households in fuel poverty through retrofit energy-saving measures, said, "We aim to make sustainability practical and accessible for everyone on the Island while helping create a more energy-efficient future for the Isle of Wight."

Future Isle of Wight CIC, established in 2017, helps Islanders reduce energy, water, waste, and transport costs while supporting home energy improvements through grant funding. Through the innovative Drive 2 X project, delivered with European partners and Innovate



UK, the organisation is demonstrating bi-directional EV charging, enabling tourism businesses to significantly reduce energy bills by using electric vehicles as mobile batteries. ■

RYDE SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH SOUTHAMPTON FC

A new football development programme will launch at Ryde School in September as part of its new partnership with Southampton FC.

The affiliate partnership, initially for three years, will give Ryde School access to Southampton's football coaches and elite training resources. Boys and girls from Year 3 to Upper Sixth will benefit, with football now included in the school's sports scholarship programme.



"We are thrilled to partner with Southampton FC, and it is a fantastic opportunity to build on the growing popularity of football at Ryde," said Will Turner, Headmaster. "This is an exciting step forward in our sports provision, and the partnership will elevate our football to a more professional and competitive level."

Southampton FC academy staff will regularly visit Ryde School to deliver high-level coaching sessions, while pupils will have opportunities to visit the club's world-renowned academy, its training ground, and St Mary's Stadium.

"Ryde School has a fantastic reputation for delivering a well-rounded education, and we're excited to support their continued development in football," said Tom Grevatt, Head of Football Programmes at Southampton FC.

"This partnership allows us to bring the Southampton Way into the school environment, helping to enhance both player development and the wider football culture. We're looking forward to working closely with staff and pupils to create a meaningful and lasting impact."

The football programme will run alongside Ryde School's other main sports, notably rugby, cricket, hockey, netball, and sailing. ■

TAKING THE ISLAND'S BUSINESS VOICE TO WESTMINSTER

IW Chamber CEO Rob Johnson reflects on a successful visit to The House of Commons and Westminster.



In May, I joined colleagues from across the Chamber network for a visit to the House of Commons, alongside Jonathan Thornton and Alison Colley from the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce.

Set against the backdrop of Westminster, the visit brought together Chamber leaders from across the UK to engage directly with policymakers and reinforce the importance of the business voice in national decision-making, while also building national and international connections with Chambers facing many of the same business challenges.

For us, it was a valuable opportunity to ensure the Isle of Wight is part of those conversations, particularly around key issues such as economic growth, skills, and connectivity.

The timing was particularly notable, coming shortly after the appointment of the new President of the British Chambers of Commerce, Andy Haldane CBE, who gave his first address and reflections on the UK economy in his own distinctive style. We also heard from Michael Hayman as the new Chair of the British Chambers of Commerce, signalling the next phase of leadership for the network.

With a renewed focus on strengthening the Chamber network's influence at a national level, there was a clear sense of momentum around how businesses can shape policy more directly and, as a unified voice, influence policymakers in government to listen to UK PLC's concerns and solutions.

The following day, I was delighted to attend the President's Lunch at the Cholmondeley Room and Terrace in the House of Lords. It was a pleasure to join colleagues from across our UK and international Chamber network for such a special occasion and to continue conversations with business leaders from around the world.

The event provided an excellent opportunity to connect, exchange ideas, and celebrate the impact of our collective work. In his President's address, Andy Haldane CBE set out a clear and optimistic vision for the years ahead, focused on building confidence, strengthening global connections, and supporting business-led growth. His remarks were a powerful reminder of the central role the Chamber network plays in shaping the UK's economic future and championing the interests of businesses both at home and internationally.

For me, the two events reinforced the importance of being present at key moments such as these, ensuring that the challenges and opportunities facing Isle of Wight businesses are heard, understood, and reflected in the wider national agenda. ■



Richard Winter looks back on a busy spring and forward to an even busier summer.

The Island Summer is here, and we've been incredibly fortunate to enjoy spectacular weather since May. While businesses have certainly faced their share of hardships recently, the exceptional sunshine has served as a welcome counterweight, drawing crowds to the Island.

During the Spring, the Chamber opened the doors to back-to-back award-winning venues, helping members continue to build on the success of 2026. Our ever-popular events programme has featured busy breakfast networking mornings at The Birdham Hotel and Quay Arts, as well as fantastic brunch events at The Cow and The Garlic Farm.

A handful of businesses that signed up early were treated to an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of Vikoma International. Overlooking the River Medina, their East Cowes factory boasts a team of highly skilled Islanders who build the iconic, orange-branded machinery and connect to more than 100 countries across the globe. Karen Lucas, Managing Director, and Paul Rayner, Head of Sales, hosted Chamber members, sharing the innovation and effort that goes into engineering products that protect the environment from dangerous oil spills, the difficulties of hazardous environments, and what the future of their industry looks like.

The Chamber also continues to build partnerships that bring opportunities

to our members. Together with public sector partners, we hosted a 'Doing Business with the Council' workshop at Building 41. In this session, the Council unpacked the often-complicated procurement process, highlighting the best ways for businesses to pitch for products and services - ensuring that taxpayer money is kept on the Island and spent with local businesses.

Just as the weather brightened, the Chamber was invited to UKSA for a head-to-head sailing race against a team from the Island Echo. Perfection is subjective, and the perfect spring day is not perfect for sailing. The gentle winds on the Solent meant that the teams spent more time sunning themselves than sailing. Inevitably, the real winner on the day was the Island itself, as the experience brought teams together through the fantastic coaching staff at UKSA. Members can experience this for themselves; there are still several spaces left to race keelboats during Cowes Week, followed by the Chamber's Cowes Week 200th-anniversary party. Check the events page on www.iwchamber.co.uk to secure your tickets for both.

Finally, this edition arrives just before Expo '26, one of the most highly anticipated B2B events of the year. I can't wait to see what our attendees choose to exhibit. I welcome every business reading this to get involved: Expo takes place on the 7th of July at Ryde School, and entry and parking are completely free. ■





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ROBIN HILL'S YEAR-ROUND VISION COMES TO LIFE WITH ISLE OF WIGHT LOTTERY LOAN SUPPORT

When Lee Priddle and his team took ownership of Robin Hill Adventure Park, they quickly identified one of the biggest challenges facing the popular Island attraction: seasonality.

Like many tourism businesses, Robin Hill thrives during the warmer months, but maintaining visitor numbers, income, and staffing levels throughout the winter has always been more difficult. Rather than accept the limitations of a seasonal business, the team set about finding a solution.

The result is Robin's Nest, a major new indoor soft play attraction that opened in March 2026, made possible with the support of an interest-free loan from the Isle of Wight Lottery Loan Fund. Located within the park's former 4D cinema building, Robin's Nest represents far more than a new attraction. It forms part of a long-term strategy to create a year-round destination for Island families and visitors while supporting local employment and business sustainability.

Speaking about the project, Robin Hill co-owner and CEO Lee Priddle said the decision was driven by a desire to strengthen the park's all-weather offer. "We quickly realised in our first year of owning the place where our shortcomings were, and having more all-round, all-weather play was important to us," he explained.

The development will allow Robin Hill to remain open throughout the winter

months, creating greater certainty for both customers and staff. For Lee, one of the most important benefits of the project is the ability to retain valued employees throughout the year. "We have so many seasonal staff that we struggled to keep hold of over the winter, and we don't want to say goodbye at the end of the summer. The more that we can keep them employed and keep them busy is a main focus."

The impact of that investment extends well beyond the park itself. By creating a year-round attraction, Robin Hill is helping to support local jobs, strengthen the visitor economy, and provide families with a new indoor leisure option regardless of the weather.

Designed for children from 13 months upwards, Robin's Nest features dedicated play areas for different age groups, including exclusive sessions for pre-school children. Attractions will include an obstacle course, immersive ball pool, interactive LED floor, crawl tubes, a vertical drop slide, and a twirly-whirly slide, alongside comfortable viewing areas for parents and carers. The attraction has also introduced a new Laser Quest experience, offering private party packages that combine soft play with friendly laser battle sessions for children aged five and above.

While the finished attraction promises plenty of excitement for visitors, Lee is equally enthusiastic about the

support received through the Isle of Wight Lottery Loan Fund. "We wouldn't have been able to do it without the Isle of Wight Lottery Loan. The loan process itself was straightforward and professionally managed; there was a bit of due diligence, and rightly so, because it's public money. I found the whole process professional, done in the right way, and very useful."

Importantly for a project operating to commercial deadlines, the funding was also delivered quickly once approved. "The whole process didn't drag on. The loan was granted, and the funds were quickly transferred over."

As Robin Hill welcomes families through the doors of Robin's Nest, the project serves as an excellent example of how targeted business support can unlock investment, create jobs, and help Island businesses grow. ■



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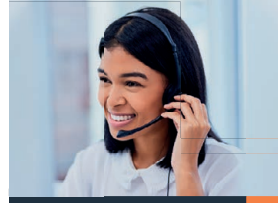
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NETWORKING EVENTS & TRAINING COURSES

UNDERSTANDING EXPORTING - ONLINE COURSE

23 September/4 November 2026

9.15 am - 12.20 pm

IW Chamber Members - £250 plus VAT

The UK accounts for only 2% of global GDP, so 98% of the world's market could be open to your company. This is an introduction to exporting and the practical considerations needed. The course covers the requirements of sales and purchase orders, an introduction to Incoterms, packaging considerations, general compliance issues, and commodity codes. The importance of export documentation is explained, along with sources of help and guidance.

UNDERSTANDING IMPORT PROCEDURES - ONLINE COURSE

8 July/24 September/5 November July 2026

9.15 am - 12.30 pm

IW Chamber Members - £250 plus VAT

This introductory course is aimed at those involved in the importing of goods. The course will cover import documentation and procedures, commercial considerations, the importance of your purchase order, calculating VAT and duty, the three main import duty drivers and how to reduce import customs clearance delays. Incoterms® and their impact on importing will be shown, along with an introduction to duty regimes to help importers.

RULES OF ORIGIN - ONLINE COURSE

21st July/7th October/18th November 2026

9.15 am - 12.30 pm

IW Chamber Members - £250 plus VAT

This introductory course is aimed at those involved in the administration of international trade to ensure an understanding of rules of origin, product classification and item valuation to meet the demands of international trade in both exporting and importing. Understanding origin, tariffs, and valuation is essential for the correct calculation of taxation and duties, and mistakes leading to non-payment or underpayment are considered a serious matter by HMRC. They could also lead to duty reliefs, so getting this right could save you money.

INCOTERMS - ONLINE COURSE

23 July/20 October/1 December 2026

9.15 am - 12.30 pm

IW Chamber Members £250 plus VAT

An introduction to Incoterms® and their importance to international trade. Understand the history and purpose of Incoterms®, how they are used, the practical issues to be considered, and sources of additional help and information. Commercial matters will also be discussed, including the impact of Incoterms® on costs and profitability. The definition of each Incoterm® will be covered as well as practical topics such as why EXW is not suitable for international trade. An understanding of Incoterms® is fundamental to international trade.

DOCUMENTARY LETTERS OF CREDIT - ONLINE COURSE

9 July/6 October/17 November 2026

9.15 am - 12.30 pm

IW Chamber Members £250 plus VAT

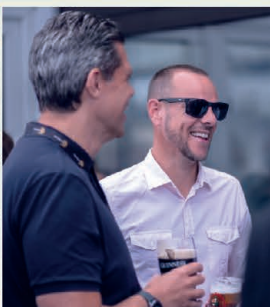
This introductory course covers the ten main types of Letters of Credit used in international trade, from advance payment, including Sight Documentary Collection, and Documentary Letters of Credit. It includes the use of Bills of Exchange with and without documents.

Over 75% of first presentations to banks against Documentary Letters of Credit are rejected, resulting in delayed payments to exporters, additional costs, and breached delivery deadlines. This introductory course is suitable for all staff who need to have a clear understanding of the procedures required to ensure payments for goods sold on documentary credit terms.

Knowledge and understanding are reinforced through the use of exercises, tips on getting the credit you want, and working examples of documentary credits.



Island Sailing Club



IW CHAMBER BUSINESS EXPO 2026 – BREAKFAST

Wednesday 7 July 2026

Ryde School

7.30 am – 9.00 am

£20 per person

Start Expo with a hot breakfast. A great start to the business day, networking with other Chamber members.

FIRE MARSHAL COURSE – DELIVERED BY GOOD SKILLS TRAINING

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Unit S5, Branstone Business Park

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 megan.barrett@iwchamber.co.uk

EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK COURSE – DELIVERED BY GOOD SKILLS TRAINING

Tuesday 14 July 2026

Unit S5, Branstone Business Park

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 megan.barrett@iwchamber.co.uk

IW CHAMBER MEMBERS EXCLUSIVE TOUR OF JOEDAN WINDOWS AND DOORS

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Joedan Windows & Doors, Newport

12.30 pm – 2.30 pm

IW Chamber members – FREE

We're excited to welcome IW Chamber members to the Joedan Design Centre for an exclusive showroom tour.

You will have the opportunity to explore our space, discover the products we manufacture, and gain a deeper understanding of what we do.

It's also a chance to hear more about the future of Joedan on the Isle of Wight, including the exciting plans for our soon-to-be new site.

NETWORKING BRUNCH AT ISLAND SAILING CLUB FOR COWES WEEK 200

Wednesday 5 August 2026

Island Sailing Club, Cowes

10.00 am – 12.00 am

£20 per person

An ideal opportunity for informal networking at The Island Sailing Club. If you're new to networking, our Brunch is the perfect way to get connected with like-minded businesspeople. After Brunch, attendees will have the opportunity to stand up and present their 'minute-pitch' to the other attendees.

From the balcony of the Island Sailing Club, we will be able to watch the start of the day's racing!

IW CHAMBER COWES WEEK 200 LUNCH PARTY

Wednesday 5 August 2026

Island Sailing Club, Cowes

1.00 pm – 4.00 pm

£75 + VAT per person

Join us in celebrating the 200-year anniversary of Cowes Week whilst overlooking the sailing from the balcony of the Island Sailing Club.

Soak up the atmosphere with an open bar including Mermaid Gin, Mermaid Rum, and Fever Tree alongside a buffet lunch with an incredible selection of dishes.

Don't miss out on the Chamber's flagship summer event, book now!

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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!

23rd July - Goddards Brewery

17th September - Caffe Isola

22nd October - Goddards Brewery

17th November - Caffe Isola

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IW CHAMBER PRESIDENT

From the Isle of Wight to Westminster: Why Chamber Membership Opens Doors Beyond the Island

By Alison Colley, IW Chamber President

I recently had the privilege of attending the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Presidents' Lunch at the House of Lords. This was my first BCC event, and it was an occasion that brought together Chamber leaders and business representatives from across the UK and beyond.

IW CHAMBER'S MISSION

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

What struck me most was the sheer breadth of the network represented in the room. Alongside colleagues from Chambers across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, there were representatives from European and International Chambers. Chatting with representatives from Luxembourg and Kazakhstan Chambers of Commerce, it served as a reminder that while the Isle of Wight may be geographically separate, our business community is firmly connected to a much wider national and global network.

For many people, membership of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce is understandably seen as a way to connect locally, building relationships with Island businesses, collaborating on opportunities, and supporting our local economy. Those things remain hugely important; however, BCC events illustrate that Chamber membership also provides something much bigger, a direct link into one of the most influential business networks in the World.

The British Chambers of Commerce is headquartered in Westminster and maintains regular engagement with government ministers, policymakers, and national stakeholders. Through this structure, the voices of local businesses are carried directly into conversations that shape economic policy, infrastructure investment, skills development, transport, taxation, energy, and many other issues that affect businesses here on the Island.

It is easy to feel removed from this, particularly if you are a small business owner dealing with the daily challenges of running a small business, but seeing our part in the 'bigger picture' matters enormously for the Isle of Wight.

Too often, Island businesses face unique challenges that can be overlooked in national discussions, whether that is transport connectivity, recruitment and skills, seasonal pressures, or the additional costs associated with operating on an island. Through the Chamber network, we have an opportunity not only to highlight these issues but to influence policy decisions and advocate for practical solutions.

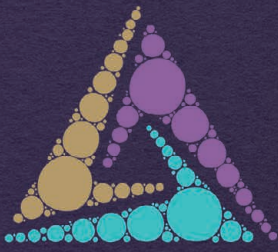
One of the most valuable aspects of the event was hearing how Chambers from other regions and countries are addressing similar economic challenges and identifying opportunities for growth. There is real value in sharing ideas, experiences, and best practices. Those conversations help strengthen our own thinking and create opportunities for collaboration that may otherwise never happen.

It also reinforced an important message for our members: when you engage with the Isle of Wight Chamber, you are not joining an isolated local organisation. You are becoming part of a powerful and connected business community that extends to Westminster and far beyond.

This is why member engagement is so important, and the stronger and more representative our collective voice is, the more influence we can have.

I left the House of Lords feeling proud that our Island is represented within such an influential network and encouraged by the opportunities available.

The Chamber exists not only to support business today, but to help shape the future environment in which our businesses will grow tomorrow. ■

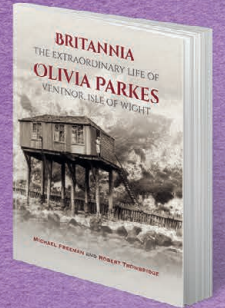


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