

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2025

# Island Business

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

**Editor**  
Tom Stroud  
tom.stroud@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

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Cover image:  
*Higher Apprenticeship graduates celebrate at HTP Apprenticeship College's recent ceremony*

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# Editor's FOREWORD

## WELCOME TO A BRAND NEW YEAR AND THE FIRST ISSUE OF ISLAND BUSINESS IN 2025!

I hope the new year finds you refreshed and that 2025 brings you many new beginnings. A new year is also a great moment for reflection and a moment to mark achievement. In this edition we look at independent training provider HTP Apprenticeship College, founded by Rachael Randall in 2000, and very neatly celebrating the organisation's 25th, in 2025.

Staying with the theme of reflection and success, don't forget that entries are currently open for the 2025 IW Chamber Business Awards with WRS Systems. You can see the full list of categories in this issue, and if you've had a year to celebrate, why not enter a category (or two)?

If you're one of those people who loves to fill an empty diary, one date you should definitely mark out is the Chamber's Expo, back again in July at Ryde School with WightFibre. Exhibitor stands go on-sale this month.

Amidst all these new beginnings, there's also an ending. This issue of Island Business will be my last and I'm happy to be handing over the reins as editor to Amber Beard.

For the last time from me, enjoy your magazine! ■

**TOM STROUD**  
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.

## NFU Mutual donates over £6,500 to Mountbatten



NFU Mutual Agents and their staff at the Isle of Wight office recently nominated Mountbatten to receive a donation of more than £6,500 from its national £1.92m 'Agency Giving Fund'.

The Agency Giving Fund forms part of NFU Mutual's £3.25m funding pledge for both local and national charities in 2024, to assist with the ongoing recovery from the pandemic and to help tackle the impact of the rising cost of living.

This donation will enable Mountbatten to continue providing end-of-life care to approximately 2,000 patients on the Island, in their own homes, and in the hospice by funding new equipment.

"One third of the money we need comes from the NHS and while this has not risen in line with inflation, our costs have gone up. That vital NHS funding is also under threat, as we move forward, and we increasingly rely on charitable donations to maintain our 24/7 services in Islanders' homes and our hospice in Newport," said Hospice CEO Nigel Hartley.

John Heather, Senior Agent at NFU Mutual added, "Mountbatten is known for providing personalised care to end of life patients and their families each day. We are delighted to help purchase vital equipment that will be used to detect, monitor, and treat lymphoedema, relief skin surface temperatures, and detect when patients fall." ■

*Left: Julie Rasmussen – Clinical Nurse Specialist from Mountbatten, John Heather (Senior Agent) from NFU Mutual, Nigel Hartley CEO, and Claire Lawrence – Healthcare Assistant from Mountbatten.*

## Red Funnel celebrates Island tourism at 5th annual awards

Red Funnel hosted its 5th annual Isle of Wight Awards on November 7th at Northwood House in Cowes, celebrating local businesses that make the Island a unique and memorable destination recognising exceptional contributions across 19 award categories.

The winners were chosen through a community-driven voting process, allowing locals and visitors to spotlight their favourite Island tourism businesses with a total of 57 businesses receiving Gold, Silver, or Bronze awards.

Red Funnel CEO Fran Collins presented the awards and applauded the nominees and winners: "It's always an honour to be among such talented and dedicated leaders in the Isle of Wight's tourism industry. At Red Funnel, we're proud to support this community by celebrating the people and excellence behind so many fantastic businesses. My congratulations go to every business nominated – they are what makes this Island so special."

This year saw 22 newcomers among the winners, including Eddie's Surf Academy, which won Gold for Best Activity Provider with Saide Cole saying, "Thank you to everyone who has believed in us and helped us along the journey."

Adding to its accolades, The Blacksmiths won Gold for Best Roast. Rachel Burrow shared their joy: "We are thrilled to win gold and feel honoured to be amongst other high-flying businesses." ■



## Local business gives back by supporting surf charity

Appreciating the sea and its impact on positive mental health has inspired a local business to support a surfing charity. Vectis Refrigeration has joined the Wave Project's Surf Therapy Business Alliance, to help offer more surf courses to young people with mental health issues. The initiative uses surfing to help them feel less anxious and gain confidence. "I've sailed all my life, I've windsurfed, and I find the sea to be very

humbling and therapeutic," said Will Overton, Director at Vectis Refrigeration. "This charity provides opportunities for young people I feel I can help."

The Wave Project said it's 'on a mission' to reduce the number of young people with mental health issues. Since starting a pilot scheme on the Island in 2015, the charity has supported over 500 local children.

"Will recognises the benefit of the sea and blue spaces on mental health and well-being and with his help," said Abbie James, IOW Wave Project Coordinator. "And we are keen to raise awareness of the Business Alliance scheme and of the work we do on the Island." ■

*Will Overton, Director at Vectis Refrigeration, with Abbie James, left, and Sarah Dunsterville, right, from The Wave Project.*



## Independent Arts' grant for men's mental health project



Independent Arts, the Isle of Wight's creative wellbeing charity, is thrilled to announce two years of grant funding from The Baring Foundation to support a new project focused on men's mental health.

Starting January 2025, they'll partner with Pan Together to host weekly creative workshops at the Downside Community Centre. This project offers men a safe, supportive space to explore various artistic skills, talk openly, and build new connections.

Since 1987, Independent Arts has used the arts to boost health and wellbeing through singing, movement, and visual arts. Their work is widely recognised for its role in helping people connect, communicate, and thrive by health professionals and artists alike.

Community Development Manager Matt Hitt highlighted the project's impact, saying, "This is an amazing opportunity to create a new project. Men's mental health matters and the arts offer a powerful creative outlet that can help foster emotional resilience and strength, helping men connect with themselves and others while engaging in a meaningful artistic project". ■



## B Corporation Certification for Isle of Wight Tomatoes

Isle of Wight Tomatoes is delighted to announce its certification as a B Corporation (or B Corp), joining a growing group of companies reinventing business by pursuing purpose as well as profit.

The company is working to become a zero-waste business and focus on several areas such as recycling rainwater to irrigate crops and using 100% of the crops they grow. Through culinary craft and innovation, an award-winning range has been created that takes care of every tomato.

Paul Thomas, Managing Director of Isle of Wight Tomatoes, said: "While this is a significant achievement for our team, we understand that it is just the beginning of our journey. Since day one we have always been about growing and creating the best possible products and doing this in the right way. Always being mindful of our impact on the environment and reducing waste of any kind. Going through the B Corp accreditation process has revealed to me that whilst our current approach to several of these areas is all extremely positive, to really drive change for the better we need an ongoing plan and a vision. B Corp allows us to create a road map for the future." ■

## Vectis Radio shines at Community Radio Awards



Local community radio station Vectis Radio is celebrating after securing four prestigious national awards during the recent Community Radio Awards held in Cardiff. Once again Vectis Radio was awarded the bronze in The Station of the Year category, confirming its position as a leading community radio station.

The 4PS Radio Training School also received a Silver Award in the Community Impact category for its 10 years of helping young people by using radio. Ron Leleux, a dedicated volunteer, stood out as he was honoured with the Silver award in the Sage of the Year category. Finally, the station received a Bronze award in the General Election Coverage category for the historic election here on the Island, the first to have two constituencies and the first to return a Labour MP.

Reflecting on these remarkable achievements, Ian Mac, Station Manager remarked, "Since we first launched on FM in late 2017, we've achieved an incredible 37 CRA nominations, with 23 top three placements. This is an extraordinary achievement, especially considering the size of our team, the scale of our setup, and our tight budget. As one of just four community radio stations in the UK capped at £15,000 annually for advertising and sponsorship revenue, we are truly punching above our weight." ■

## Urgent restoration appeal for Quay Arts Centre



Quay Arts is reaching out for community support in an urgent restoration appeal to preserve its historic home.

Known for its welcoming atmosphere, creative programming, and role as a community meeting point, Quay Arts has become a hub of arts and culture on the Isle of Wight.

The Grade II listed building, a former 19th-century brewery, is steeped in Newport's history and represents the Island's commitment to heritage and community. However, essential repairs are urgently needed to ensure Quay Arts' future, with restoration costs projected to exceed £90,000. This funding will safeguard the building's historical integrity and maintain a safe, inclusive, and accessible space for all.

Quay Arts is inviting the community and supporters to get involved. Whether by raising awareness, making a financial contribution, or sharing this appeal, public support will ensure the restoration efforts succeed.

The first £15,000 phase of the restoration is focused on repointing the river-facing wall, which has been affected by the elements and the tidal estuary over the years. Specialist tradespeople will carefully repair this wall to align with the building's historical character, preserving its structure for generations to come. ■

## HTP Apprenticeship College celebrates success at graduation event

HTP Apprenticeship College proudly celebrated the achievements of over 50 Higher Apprentices at its annual Graduation ceremony, held on November 28th at the beautifully refurbished Newport Minster. The event brought together apprentices, families, friends, and employers to honour their hard work and success in an inspiring setting.

The ceremony featured a keynote address by Mrs. Susie Sheldon JP, HM Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, who commended the graduates for their achievements and urged them to embrace future opportunities. She highlighted the

collaborative nature of apprenticeships, involving learners, HTP, and their employers.

Apprentices from a wide range of sectors and businesses, including Age UK Isle of Wight, Portsmouth City Council, Vestas Blades UK, and Isle of Wight NHS Trust, were recognised. The ceremony underscored the vital role of workplace learning and the importance of partnerships between education providers and employers.

HTP's chief executive Rachael Randall reflected on the college's commitment to empowering learners. "Since opening in 2000, we've believed in the power of



## IFPL produces its four millionth unit!

Calbourne-based IFPL Group, global leaders in the design and manufacture of products that enhance an aircraft cabin interior, are thrilled to announce the production of their four-millionth unit. This incredible achievement highlights the company's continued growth and innovation post-Covid as it celebrates 28 years of successful trading.

The four-millionth unit—a triple pin 186546 Noise Cancelling Audio Jack—was presented by Geoff Underwood CEO of IFPL Group, to Stella Nwaogbo, Bernard Demol, Lee Noakes, Tristan Carpenter, Steven Passmore of Thales, a longstanding key OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) business partner. This milestone demonstrates IFPL's continued dedication to delivering high-quality, reliable, and innovative solutions to the aviation industry.

"This achievement is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and innovation of the entire IFPL team," said Neil McGregor, Chief Operating Officer of IFPL. "Reaching four million units is not just a milestone; it's a reflection of our commitment to excellence and sustainable growth. Our focus on product development and manufacturing excellence continues to drive us forward, ensuring that we meet the evolving needs of our partners and the aviation industry." ■



education and strong support networks. Today, we celebrate not just the achievements of our learners but also the contributions of families and employers."

The ceremony concluded with the traditional hat-throwing photo in St Thomas' Square, marking a joyful end to a memorable day. Read more about 25 years of HTP in our feature on page 16 ■



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## Maritime UK Solent appoints Keith Greenfield as Director



Maritime UK Solent has announced the appointment of Keith Greenfield to its board as a non-executive director. The move brings extensive industry expertise to the organisation, which acts as the voice of the maritime sector in the Solent region.

Anne-Marie Mountifield, Chair of Maritime UK Solent, said: "Keith's proven track record and commitment to our regional maritime sector will be invaluable to Maritime UK Solent, particularly at this exciting time as we continue to showcase the world-class innovation and pioneering spirit, working collaboratively to support the region's exceptional maritime sector".

Keith recently retired as CEO of Wightlink, where he led transformative initiatives over nine years. Under his leadership, the ferry operator introduced the UK's first large hybrid electric ferry, Victoria of Wight, and spearheaded environmental partnerships, culminating in Wightlink being named the UK's Best Ferry Operation in the 2023 British Travel Awards.

"I am committed to seeing the region continue to thrive as a leading maritime sector, and I'm delighted to join the Maritime UK Solent Board and play a part in helping the region meet the significant challenges of the future. My vision is for the entire Solent to be zero carbon for all local shipping by 2050 which could be a driver for technology development, jobs, and business success in this vibrant and forward-thinking regional sector." ■

## Guardian moves healthcare onto the digital mobile network

Guardian Mobile, the Isle of Wight-based mobile network operator, is planning the launch of its innovative fusion of digital mobile connectivity and healthtech services in the New Year. The company aims to empower users with affordable, accessible telecare solutions tailored to the needs of people of all ages who are concerned about their personal health and safety.

Focusing on seniors and individuals managing health concerns, Guardian offers a range of specialised products and services, including mobile phones

with emergency assist features and wearables with vital signs monitoring, GPS tracking and fall detection.

Robert Condon, CEO of Guardian Mobile said, "We're not just another mobile provider; our mission is to provide 24/7 tech-enabled care and safety solutions that make a meaningful difference to people's lives. Guardian Mobile is proud to launch from the Isle of Wight, leveraging the Island's digital infrastructure, growing tech ecosystem and high-quality workforce to deliver its solutions nationwide." ■



## The Royal Hotel in Ventnor welcomes new ownership

The Royal Hotel, a landmark in Ventnor, has changed hands after nearly three decades of independent ownership by William Bailey. The hotel boasts panoramic views of the English Channel holding awards, including a four-silver-star 2023 AA hotel accreditation and a 2023 AA two Rosette award for culinary excellence.

Reflecting on the sale, William said, "Whilst it is of course sad to have sold a business with which we have been involved for almost 30 years, now is the right time to step back. We wish the new owners every success during their ownership of this great and profitable hotel in a picturesque location on the Isle of Wight. Most importantly we would like to thank the staff, with whom we have shared this memorable journey, for their hard work and dedication over the years."

The new owner, Mohamed Bathich, Director of London Choice Apartments added "The Royal Hotel presented a rare opportunity to acquire a hotel that is such an icon on the Island, and we will maintain and enhance the quality that William Bailey has built over the years."

Assisted by experienced hospitality professional Matthew Brooks, Mohamed plans to expand the hotel's appeal while preserving its reputation as a premier destination for visitors and locals alike. ■



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**Don't delay...join today!**

# Summer 2024 stats reveal 'a mixed bag' for the Island in a difficult national domestic tourism market



Cost of living increases and poor weather are being blamed for negative impacts on visitor numbers in 2024's peak tourism season. Figures released by Visit Isle of Wight, the Island's destination marketing organisation, show the average overnight visitor spend for Quarter 3, when compared to the same period in 2023, was down by 11%. The drop reflects a national trend highlighted by VisitEngland, that one of the main barriers to people taking a domestic holiday is the rising cost of living, with most UK adults suggesting they are either 'cautious and being very careful'.

However, the Isle of Wight did see a 1% increase in the overall number of visitors across the summer period. Comparing the 2024 year to date (1st Jan – 30th September) to the same period in 2023, it shows that tourism on the Isle of Wight is down by just 2.1% overall. The latest figures also show an increase in the number of people visiting from outside London and the South East of England.

The data, regarded in the industry as one of the most robust visitor surveys in the UK, is sourced for Visit Isle of Wight by an independent company.

Visit Isle of Wight Managing Director, Will Myles is keen to point out that the latest figures might not reflect the same summer experience of every business, with some businesses having had record years, whilst some are struggling, especially as the 'leisure staying visitor' shows the biggest drop year on year.

"The day visits market has seen the sharpest rise even though the Great British weather has thrown everything it can to encourage people to stay at home with rainfall during the period increasing year on year by almost 25%. There is no easy answer to fixing it and the current 'cost of living crisis' does not seem to be abating, which means that decisions around taking holidays and day visits are a difficult one. The VisitBritain monthly sentiment tracker research states that the top 3 barriers to people taking a UK domestic overnight stay are 'Cost of Living crisis, the UK weather and personal finances' with 48% of people thinking that the worst is still to come.

"It is only because of the Wight BID that the Isle of Wight can have such a strong voice in such a competitive market, with every tourism destination in England fighting hard for a slice of what is currently a difficult national domestic tourism market. We continue to fight that current trend by demonstrating time and again, day in and day out, that the Isle of Wight is an incredible place to visit, be it for the day or for longer in our off-island messaging. Visit Isle of Wight, working with VisitEngland, Tourism South-East and our partners here on the Island, continues to demonstrate that even in these difficult times, we can reach out by highlighting the Island successes, such as awards like the Seaside Heritage awards, the Wanderlust nomination, Conde Nast Awards, Wight In Bloom, South East in Bloom, industry awards such as Best Group destination at the Group Leisure and Travel Awards to name but a few.

"Be assured that Visit Isle of Wight will promote this island off the Island, to ensure that it stands out from other destinations in that sea of sameness, and that it will work with its Island partners to position it as the destination of choice into 2025 and beyond."

Find the full report here:

<https://visitwightpro.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Isle-of-Wight-Quarter-3-2024-Report-Results.pdf> ■



# A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND RENEWAL

**Caroline Hurley, founder of Healthwell Solutions,  
talks to Amber Beard**



**Building a successful business has always been a labour of love for me. It's a path filled with passion, creativity, and connection, but also demands resilience, especially as a woman. The challenges can feel magnified when balancing leadership expectations with family, personal health, and the ever-changing landscape of life.**

When lockdown hit in 2020, it wasn't just a test of my business; it was a test of my spirit. I had poured my heart into growing my company, creating a thriving team, and building a supportive environment for clients and employees alike. Suddenly, it all came to a halt. Bills arrived, but income didn't. I spent sleepless nights trying to find solutions, strategising over Zoom calls, and putting on a brave face for my team while feeling completely lost inside. I remember sitting at my desk, wondering how I could keep it all afloat.

Thanks to government support and sheer determination, we managed to survive. But survival came at a cost. The strain of keeping everything together: supporting young team members fresh out of college, many of whom had barely begun their careers, and dealing with a crumbling industry took a toll on my health. At one point, I had to step back and ask, "What is my future? What does success look like for me now?"

In 2023, I made the bittersweet decision to sell my beloved business. It felt like letting go of a part of myself, a piece of my identity. But as I handed over the reins earlier this year, I felt a sense of pride, knowing it was ready to grow in a new direction under new leadership. Letting go gave me space to heal and regroup.

Now, I've embraced a new chapter. As part of our family business, Healthwell Solutions, I decided to launch Healthwell Academy where training is focused on health and well-being for businesses and individuals, giving me a fresh sense of purpose. I feel inspired to shape something that aligns not just with my professional goals but also with my values. I've started offering courses and workshops, sharing years of knowledge and experience to help others improve their skills and thrive. Winning the Chamber Award for Training and Development this year underpinned everything we stand for and we were proud to have won it.

My message for any woman in business is this: Be kind to yourself. We're often the carers, the nurturers, the ones spinning a hundred plates. But you can't pour from an empty cup. Take time for yourself, whether it's a walk in nature, an hour of quiet, or seeking help when you need it.

The road hasn't been easy, but I've learned that every challenge holds the seeds of new beginnings. For me, the lockdowns were the push I needed to reimagine my future, and that has led me to a place of renewed hope and opportunity. ■

*Above: Caroline with daughter Laura, Sports Massage Therapist*

*Right: One of the clinic's new therapy rooms*

*Far right: Caroline receives the 2024 Training & Development statue at the 2024 IW Chamber Business Awards*



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BUSINESS AWARDS 2025  
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## ENTER NOW! FOR THE ISLAND'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS CEREMONY

Entries close on January 31st 2025

Has your business had a brilliant year? Do you have a story to celebrate? It's time to think about entering for the IW Chamber Business Awards, which will be presented on Friday May 9th at Cowes Yacht Haven.

This year's awards will be presented in association with WRS Systems for the first time as headline sponsor and the Chamber's Gold Patron.

As ever, the awards will be judged by a panel of business experts, based mostly off-Island and some internationally. The judges are wholly impartial and independent and will score businesses entirely on their submissions. Unless otherwise stated, your entry should solely reflect activity in 2024.

"Being a part of this event is an exciting opportunity for us, as we have always valued our collaboration with the Chamber. Having been previous winners, we can attest to the greatness of these evenings and the fantastic opportunity they provide to celebrate the hard work of our teams. The Awards evening is the highlight of the Island business scene, and we are eagerly looking forward to seeing you all in May 2025."

**David Jackson, WRS Systems**



IW CHAMBER  
**Business Awards** 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **WRS** SYSTEMS



## THE CATEGORIES IN FULL:

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### Customer Service Award

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### Community Award

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### Training and Development Award

Sponsored by JR Zone

### Environment and Sustainability Award

Sponsored by IFPL

### Technology and Innovation Award

Sponsored by Lifeline Alarms

### Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Glanvilles Damant Legal Services

### Tourism and Leisure Business of the Year

Sponsored by Visit Isle of Wight

### Hospitality Business of the Year

Sponsored by Cherry Godfrey

### Manufacturing and Export Business of the Year

Sponsored by GKN Aerospace

### Creative Impact Award

Sponsored by Medina Publishing

### Business Social Impact Award

Sponsored by WightFibre

### Growth Business of the Year

Sponsored by WRS Systems

### Micro Business of the Year

Sponsored by Gurit

### Small Business of the Year

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All entries must be received on-line and before the deadline of January 31st. The shortlist will be published in March when tickets will go on-sale.

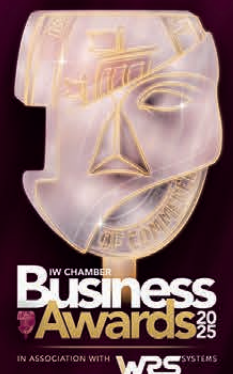
"We're really looking forward to next year's awards, and already my team are working hard to make this our biggest event ever," says the Chamber's Chief Executive Steven Holbrook. "Every year we present the Island business community's biggest party. A spectacular event, full of entertainment and surprises, which celebrates the success stories of the brilliant businesses based on the Island.

"If you've never entered before, make this the year. The process of writing an entry is a brilliant opportunity for reflection and to recognise the success of your business. Being shortlisted is a huge achievement and to win one of these highly coveted awards is a game-changer.

"We're thrilled to welcome WRS Systems as our headline sponsor this year, and I'd like to thank all of our supporting sponsors for their help in making this event happen. See you there on the night I hope!"

Entries are open now and full details of the categories, entry forms and terms and conditions can be found on-line.

[iwchamber.co.uk/awards2025](http://iwchamber.co.uk/awards2025) ■





## TURNING AN IW LOTTERY LOAN INTO A SUSTAINABLE LEGACY

Rob and Mart Drake-Knight founded Rapanui with the vision of creating products that contribute to a waste-free world. The brand was born from a deep connection to the Island, and sustainability began early, shaped by the love for the Island and its beaches, and the reality of pollution washing ashore. This drive to protect what they loved evolved into a mission: to design products made from natural materials that could be reused and remade when worn out.



*Rob and Mart Drake-Knight  
founders of Rapanui*

Starting in 2008 with a modest £200 budget and a shed, Rapanui quickly embraced the challenge of eliminating waste focussing on creating durable, high-quality clothing that would last, using organic materials. Ten years ago, the brothers applied for a lottery loan to help them expand their business and since then haven't looked back. Rob told us, "The Isle of Wight lottery helped us open our first shop in Sandown where some of our current team leads started too. It's a great community business funding scheme, and one we're proud to have been part of. That support in the early days enabled us to grow, and start our factories, and now we employ over 150 people across our East Cowes and Freshwater sites."

To address the issue of overproduction in the clothing industry, they developed unique technology that allows their factories to produce items only after an order is received, reducing waste and energy use. Rapanui's commitment to sustainability extends beyond product design. They power their factories with renewable energy, and their supply chain is GOTS-certified, ensuring fair pay and safe working conditions for all involved. To inspire a better way of life, Rapanui encourages others in the fashion industry to adopt similar practices and has made their technology available for anyone to use. ■



**SIGN UP TODAY!**

[ISLEOFWIGHTLOTTERY.COM/JOIN-NOW](https://www.isleofwightlottery.com/join-now)

There's never been a better time to play and at just £1 a week, you'll also be helping the IW Lottery to create and sustain Island jobs.

The lottery's unique interest-free loans have nurtured hundreds of jobs with more than 100 loans to Island businesses pumping more than £1million into the Island's economy since 2001.



DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE

# THINK HTP APPRENTICESHIPS IN 2025



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BETH+MILANIE  
ALL ACHIEVED  
WITH HTP

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See tangible improvements in staff skills and performance.

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Main Campus: 118-119 St James Street • Newport • PO30 5HE

[HTP.AC.UK](http://HTP.AC.UK)

# CHAT HTP: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF HTP APPRENTICESHIP COLLEGE

Founder and chief executive Rachael Randall talks to Tom Stroud

"It's gone by so quickly, it feels like only yesterday. Our 25th anniversary showcases our longevity, enabling people to see the opportunities that are there. Aspirations are still low on the Island and we need to keep showing young people that there are opportunities on the Island for them to build a career."

### When you set up HTP back in 2000 what did you want to achieve?

Like a lot of people who set up a business, I wanted to get a monthly wage coming in. I also wanted to set up a training company that could deliver apprenticeships so that young people on the Isle of Wight could achieve. I've seen a lot of people deliver apprenticeships badly and it was important for me that as an organisation we would do the job well.

We grew very quickly and I built up a crew of staff who became our foundation stones. Some of my team have been with me for more than 20 years. Today we employ around 70 people on the Island and in Portsmouth.

### What have you learnt in that time, about business and yourself?

It's a very different world once you get inside the walls of a training provider or a general FE college. You have to be a particular type of person who wants to motivate others and it's not just about teaching. It's about the whole holistic approach to your apprentice and all your full-time student.

People used to tell me "don't micromanage" but I would say that the only way to manage a government funded organisation is to micromanage quite often, because there are so many important aspects. I work strategically and I do like to engage and to give back. I enjoy having been on the board of organisations like the Solent LEP, Solent Partners, Visit Isle of Wight and Ryde Town Board. I think it helps feed back into HTP because I know what's going on in the wider world.

I do think you have to have a particular mindset to be a business owner or an entrepreneur. If you worry about whether you're going to get the money in each month, you're never going to employ staff and you're never going to be able to grow. When the pandemic hit, the Department for Education owed HTP over a quarter of a million pounds and as an independent contractor they didn't guarantee that we would get paid. We owed suppliers, we had wages to pay and we'd

overachieved our contracts, so I was a bit worried that day and I ended up cleaning the house from top to bottom! Fortunately the money landed in the bank but it was a very stressful time.

I'm quite a fiery person but I've learnt to not take things personally. I used to get upset when staff would leave or if things were said outside of the organisation. You've got to have a thick skin in business though and the Isle of Wight can be a small place, with some gossip and negativity, but I don't let that bother me now.



HTP founder Rachael Randall addresses Higher Apprenticeship graduates at Newport Minster

## How has HTP changed as an organisation in that time?

Expanding off-Island has been really important because we deliberately wanted to grow the business and you have to go over that piece of water to do so. I've always been keen to show that the water isn't a barrier. We're very unique in that a lot of our staff commute to the mainland and we have a Portsmouth office. A lot of people don't realise how far afield we go. We've worked with national companies, and in London and on that M27 / M3 corridor, where we work with lots of employers. We've supported Michelin star restaurants, national air traffic control, The Pig hotel group, Limewood Hotels and recently started working with The Dorchester. These companies really relish and value the training we give, as well as small companies in Commercial Road in Portsmouth.

I was very proud to receive the President's Award for Outstanding Contribution in May from the IW Chamber of Commerce. When I accepted it I said to the room "Isn't it great to see people here that we work with as employers, who were our apprentices and are now employing apprentices?" It was a very proud moment and so many people who stood up and cheered. I was so gratified. It's all about giving people a start in life.

## What does HTP mean to you personally?

HTP is my baby and it is something I've grown from day one. It is it's a symbol that I've achieved something. It's enabled me to bring up my own children and work in lots of different areas. I love nice things, but I'm not motivated by money. I'm motivated by being good at what I do. When the company achieved OFSTED outstanding in all areas of provision and kept that for 11 years, that was the proudest moment in my career.

I've always believed that if we do our jobs well and people achieve, then the company will be successful and then the money will come. Others set up businesses to generate income and then sell the business for loads of money, but HTP has always been about being successful by putting the learner first and achieving high standards of success. ■



Above: HTP Higher Apprenticeship learners celebrate their graduation in Newport in November

Below: Rachael Randall receives the President's Award for Outstanding Contribution at the 2024 IW Chamber Business Awards



## WIGHTFIBRE

WightFibre achieves outstanding Customer Satisfaction Scores.

The best customer service and fast becoming the number one broadband provider on the Isle of Wight.

ServiceMark with Distinction affirms WightFibre company ethos 'Because we care'.

# WIGHTFIBRE RECEIVES INSTITUTE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE SERVICEMARK WITH DISTINCTION – AGAIN!

**ServiceMark**  
with distinction  
The Institute of  
Customer Service



WightFibre, which is fast becoming the number one broadband provider on the Isle of Wight, is proud to announce exceptional results in the latest Business Benchmarking survey conducted by The Institute of Customer Service and the UKCSI. The survey highlights WightFibre's commitment to delivering superior customer service and satisfaction. WightFibre has been awarded The Institute of Customer Service's ServiceMark with Distinction Accreditation – Again! WightFibre was the first broadband company in the UK to secure the accreditation with distinction in 2021, and being accredited for the 2nd time is a real achievement.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI):** WightFibre achieved a CSI score of 90.4, significantly higher than the Telecommunications & Media sector average of 73.3 and the UK all-sector average of 75.8 in the latest UKCSI.
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS):** WightFibre's NPS stands at an impressive 71.3, reflecting strong customer loyalty and advocacy.
- **Customer Effort:** Customers reported a low effort score of 2.4, indicating that WightFibre makes it easy for customers to do business with them.
- **Top Customer Descriptions:** Customers frequently described WightFibre as "satisfied," "helpful," "happy," "service," and "good".

## Our Business Benchmarking GSI

90.4

73.3

75.8

WightFibre  
(Business  
Benchmark)

Telecommunications  
& Media  
(UKCSI)

UK all sector  
average  
(UKCSI)

WightFibre customers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the company's services, highlighting the professionalism, efficiency, and friendliness of the staff. Customers also appreciated the ease of use and reliability of WightFibre's services.

John Irvine, CEO of WightFibre, shares his excitement: "Our growing customer base and unwavering loyalty speak volumes. We're not just a provider; we're rapidly becoming the number one broadband provider on the Isle of Wight. WightFibre's secret sauce? Localness. It's what sets us apart, allowing us to deliver exceptional service at competitive prices".

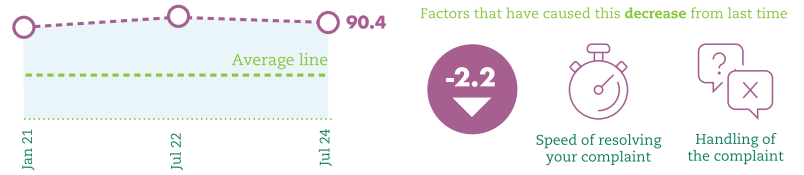
David Beckett, Head of Customer Service at WightFibre said "WightFibre's customer service is exceptional. The team is always ready to help and resolve any issues promptly. Our dedication to customer satisfaction is evident in every interaction with our over 22 000 customers"

The independent assessor, Julija Suzejeva, reviewing WightFibre's accreditation commented, "WightFibre have gone from strength to strength in their customer value proposition, consistently refining their offerings to meet and exceed evolving customer expectations. Their unwavering commitment to quality, reliability, and excellent service has helped foster lasting trust and loyalty among their customers. Having achieved the ServiceMark with Distinction previously, the team far from rested on their laurels; instead, they used it as a springboard for further improvement. Determined to set even higher standards, they continuously sought feedback, refined their processes, and invested in training to ensure that exceptional service became an unwavering part of their culture". ■

"Congratulations to WightFibre for achieving ServiceMark with Distinction once again. Achieving this independent benchmark for a second time demonstrates a renewed commitment to a strong and differentiating service strategy, alongside providing the teams at WightFibre with detailed customer feedback in order to continue improving and enhancing their customer's experience – and we look forward to working with them in this capacity."

**Jo Causon – CEO**  
Institute of Customer Service

### Satisfaction trends



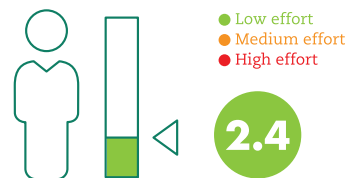
### Satisfaction by channel



### Our customers are most satisfied with



### Customer Effort



In general, customers find it easy to do business with us

### Net Promoter Score ®



### Top 5 words our customers use to describe us



**743** customers interviewed

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

**WightFibre**  
because we care

IW CHAMBER  
EXPO 2025  
WITH WIGHTFIBRE

# MAKE SURE EXPO IS IN YOUR CALENDAR FOR 2025!

The Island's biggest day for business  
networking is **Wednesday 9th July 2025**

IW Chamber's Business Expo is back for 2025, returning once again to Ryde School and still proudly supported by WightFibre. Expo is by far the biggest business networking day of the year, with hundreds of attendees and a wide range of exhibiting businesses. If you're in business on the Island, you'll want to be at Expo.

Exhibitor stands go on sale from January 15th and offer a superb way to promote your business and the products and services you offer.

Entry is free to visitors, you don't have to be a Chamber member to attend and it really is open to everyone. It's a brilliant way to engage with the Island's business community and to chat to people from businesses of all sizes and sectors.

"We're really looking forward to making Expo our best yet," says IW Chamber Chief Executive Steven Holbrook. "In our third year now at Ryde School, we'll really be making the most of the opportunities on offer in this brilliant location. Expo really works as a summer event, and we're expanding our Expo marquee, to integrate more stands and encourage footfall around the exhibitor space. We'll be giving our exhibitors more space outside too, to encourage informal networking and increase time spent at the event.

"If you've exhibited at Expo before you'll know how valuable this day is and how well the business community supports this event. If you've never exhibited before, I would recommend it as a great way to promote your business, plugging into an already established network of other Island businesses. As an Island it's so important that we trade with each other as much as we can. Expo really helps nurture those connections and relationships. Join us on **Wednesday 9th July!**"

## Book your stand at Expo 2025

Exhibitor stands will go on sale on January 15th and can be booked at [iwchamber.co.uk](http://iwchamber.co.uk). IW Chamber members receive discounted rates, but you don't have to be a member to book or take part in Expo. ■





"WightFibre is once again happy to help bring together the Island's business community. Communication and collaboration is the lifeblood of business and Expo really delivers. We look forward to connecting with as many businesses as possible at Expo and we hope to see you there!"

John Irvine,  
WightFibre

# IWChamber BUSINESS EXPO 2025

9 JULY  
RYDE SCHOOL

Sponsored by

WightFibre  
*Because We care*



# FORGING A POSITIVE PARTNERSHIP THROUGH 1% FOR THE PLANET

*From left, the Trust's Senior Communications Officer, Kate Garnham, with CEO Deborah Tann and Steph Watson, Philanthropy Manager.*



NOSY



**Hampshire &  
Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust**

For the past two years, NOSY has been supporting Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, as part of the 1% for the Planet initiative.

The NOSY team collectively chose to support the Trust, feeling its commitment to protecting the environment aligned with their own ambitions.

NOSY's donation to Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has included the creation of a compelling video highlighting the Trust's rewilding projects on the Island, with another exciting new film planned for early next year.

"Working with NOSY over the past two years has helped us to connect with our local communities around conservation, protecting wildlife and natural habitats, in a way that would not have been possible otherwise," said Kate Garnham, Senior Communications Officer at Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

"Raising awareness of our core objectives is becoming increasingly important but we're in a very challenging time across the charity sector. To be able to work with NOSY to create compelling video and photography, helping us elevate the quality of our messaging and storytelling, gives us an opportunity to have more impact.

"We can feel how much the NOSY team values our work, and we're just really pleased to partner with them through this scheme."

The 1% for the Planet initiative gives businesses all over the world an

opportunity to support an environmental cause that puts people and the planet first.

Members select an organisation they want to support and pledge to donate at least 1% of their annual sales. Donations have to be verified by 1% for the Planet to gain accreditation.

As well as financial and service contributions, the NOSY team has also volunteered to remove Himalayan balsam from the Eastern Yar. This is an invasive non-native species which needs to be controlled due to its impact on native habitats.

"We really enjoyed welcoming the team on to our sites and it was great for them to get involved and help us with this work," said Jamie Marsh, the Trust's Director of Nature Recovery – Wilder Wight, Solent and Seas.

"While it's a very attractive plant, Himalayan balsam outcompetes native flora so it's really important we manage it and eradicate it from as many areas as possible. Having everyone from NOSY along to lend a hand was fantastic to help remove this plant from our local watercourses and protect our native species.

"And by having a local business involved with us, it gives another chance to promote conversations about our work, creating more opportunities to raise awareness and help people get involved."



**FOR THE  
PLANET**





NOSY's Laurence Montalbo filming with the team at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Last year, NOSY contributed a total of £6,250 to the Trust. A similar pledge will be made this year too.

"The work done by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is so important for our local environment," said NOSY Operations Director April Turner.

"Climate change, habitat loss, pollution and declining wildlife populations pose significant challenges to the health of our planet.

"We are really passionate about supporting the trust and look forward to continuing our partnership with them into next year."

If you are interested in joining 1% for the Planet, contact April Turner, NOSY's Operations Director, via [april@nosy.agency](mailto:april@nosy.agency)



NOSY's team removing invasive Himalayan balsam.



**NOSY**



Watch the video





MISSION ZERO  
BUSINESS HUB  
Isle of Wight

## MAKING SUSTAINABLE SHOPPING SIMPLER

We're shining a light on Ryde business Her Whey in our latest feature from the Mission Zero Business Hub Isle of Wight.

Owners Annie and Yve talk to us about why shopping in a sustainable way is so important to them, and how simple it is to switch.

"You don't have to be perfect to help make a big difference."

Sisters-in-law Annie Smith and Yve Woodfield are on a mission to make it simpler to shop sustainably.

For the last two-and-a-half years, the pair have been running Her Whey, a business committed to helping people protect the planet.

Their award-winning shop in Ryde - soon to be online too - sells everything from pantry items and body products to household goods and everyday essentials. There are vegan, organic and gluten free options too.

All products are made from sustainable alternatives to plastic and they are only sourced from ethical, UK based suppliers, including many from the Island, helping to keep their carbon footprint low.

"We want to make you feel good about choosing sustainable, eco-conscious and high quality products," said Annie.

"All of our suppliers have a strong ethical footprint and protecting our forests and oceans is at the heart of what they do."

The 'reduce, reuse and recycle' mantra is really important to Her Whey, with shoppers encouraged to use their own containers to reduce single use plastic.

"Shopping at a zero waste store is different," said Yve.

"The whole concept of zero waste is it's package free. We have paper bags for dry goods and we always have recycled bottles and jars our customers can take for free if they haven't got their own.

"You can buy as much or little as you want so you can get the exact amount you need for a recipe and have no waste.

"Most importantly, you can buy to suit your budget, so if all you can afford is one pound's worth of lentils, you can buy them without being dictated to by the supermarket giants.

"Our liquid refill suppliers are also part of the Circular Economy, which means all the containers they provide are sent back to them, cleaned, refilled and redistributed,

so the very fact that people are refilling means they are reducing waste.

"When you put all that together, it becomes a very bespoke and personal shopping experience where everyone is connected by the common goal of helping the planet."

Since relocating to the new premises, Annie and Yve feel the high street presence has enabled them to influence more people to shop sustainably.

"The whole idea behind moving was to connect with more people," said Annie.

"Generally, we've seen how more people really do want to make more conscious choices, especially with regard to single use plastics and food waste.

"We think consumers are fed up with greenwashing and by using a zero waste store like us, they know they are getting genuinely ethical, sustainable products.

"We believe if everyone made a few waste-free changes, together, we can stop so much waste



from littering our precious planet.

"It's something we are extremely passionate about and our ethos is you don't have to be perfect to help make a big difference.

"It's important to remember we can't do everything but we can do something. Just start with one bottle!"

Her Whey is one of over 50 Island businesses to have signed up to the Mission Zero Business Hub Isle of Wight.

The aim of the hub is to grow awareness and educate businesses about net zero, circular economy and biosphere, supporting them to overcome obstacles in their net zero journeys.

To join them or to find out more, visit [Mission Zero Business Hub | Isle of Wight](https://missionzerohub.co.uk) [missionzerohub.co.uk](https://missionzerohub.co.uk) ■



## IW CHAMBER NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Shanklin & Sandown Golf Club, Sandown

Friday 10 January, 7.30am-9am

IW Chamber members - £18 per person

Join us for an excellent networking opportunity at the Clubhouse at Shanklin & Sandown Golf Club, with a hot breakfast and a great start to the business day, networking with other Chamber members.

## LEGAL LUNCH WITH ELDRIDGES SOLICITORS

Isle of Wight College, Newport

Tuesday 21 January, 12pm-2pm

IW Chamber members - £20 per person

Join guest speakers James Thorn and Kyle Cooper as they provide a comprehensive talk about dealing with disputes as and when they arise, and how the outcomes can affect you and your business. James Thorn will also provide a legal update on the new laws being considered by the Government, and the effect which they could have on you and your business.

## EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK COURSE

Delivered by Good Skills Training at YMCA, Shanklin

Tuesday 28th January, 9am-4pm

IW Chamber members - £78+VAT per person

This one-day course is designed to give delegates the knowledge, skills, and confidence to help those that 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.

## IW CHAMBER NETWORKING BRUNCH

The Garlic Farm, Newchurch

Wednesday 29th January, 9am-11am

IW Chamber members - £20 per person

Please join us for Brunch at The Garlic Farm. This event has capacity for 30 people, as one of our smaller events, we would love to hear about your business in a one-minute pitch. Perhaps you are a new member, marking a milestone, have won an award, have appointed a new staff member, are supporting a charity or need some support. You will be amongst people who want to learn about your business and are genuinely interested and there to support, you and your business.

## BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW!

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

## BOARD DIRECTOR'S DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Friday 31 January – All day

IW Chamber members £250 per person +VAT

Whether you are an experienced, long-serving director, newly appointed or an aspiring director, this course will give you a fresh and unique insight into an ever-growing role and responsibilities accompanying the position. Course provider: In Professional Development (INPD)

## FIRE MARSHAL COURSE

Delivered by Good Skills Training at YMCA, Shanklin

Wednesday 5th February, 9am-12.30pm

IW Chamber members - £68+VAT per person

This half day course is 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.

## SPARKLING AFTERNOON TEA

Luccombe Hall, Shanklin

Thursday 6 February, 3.30pm-5.30pm

IW Chamber members - £20 per person

IW Chamber members and their guests are invited to join us for a Sparkling Afternoon Tea in the Grand View Restaurant at Luccombe Hall.

## IW CHAMBER NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Bluebells at Briddlesford

Friday 7 February, 7.30am-9am

IW Chamber members - £18 per person

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



Bluebells – Briddlesford Farm

# 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 £5 to attend, 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!

Wednesday 25 November, 2024, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Thursday 23 January 2025, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Thursday 20 February 2025, 9.30am – 4.00pm

at IW Chamber Office, Branstone Business Park

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 | NEW MEMBERS

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Elle Lolley  
adprecision.co.uk  
info@adprecision.co.uk  
01983 810701



## Cowes Fringe Ltd

Sara Blackwell  
cowesfringe.com  
sara@cowesfringe.com



## Airtek Services IOW Ltd

David Woolfenden  
airtekservices.co.uk  
info@airtekservices.com  
01983 613303



## Digitally Spruced

Katalin Zongor  
digitallyspruced.com/  
contact@digitallyspruced.com



## Best Interest Services Ltd

Kane Barnacle  
bestinterestservices.co.uk  
info@bestinterestservices.co.uk  
01983 685594



## DYNO ROD Plumbing & Drain Services

Natalie McAllister  
dyno.com  
nat@dynoiow.co.uk  
01983 529990



## Bill Kent – Energy Consultant

Bill Kent  
billchristinekent@gmail.com  
07811 236175



## Eringold Recruitment Limited

Trinka and William Beresford  
eringoldrecruit.com  
info@eringoldrecruit.com  
07766 392693



## Classic Cottages

Rachel Street  
classic.co.uk  
rachel.street@classic.co.uk  
01983 617322



## Eureco Technologies Ltd

Martin Thompson  
eureco.com  
information@eureco.com



## Clean Safe Insulation Ltd

Tina Verch  
cleansafeinsulation.co.uk  
info@cleansafeinsulation.co.uk  
07711 117051



## Exclusive Rewards

Joseph Humphries  
exclusiverewards.co.uk  
joe@exclusiverewards.co.uk  
07713 883009



### Islandwide Carpet Warehouse

Martin Keyworth  
islandwidecarpets.co.uk  
info@islandwidecarpets.co.uk  
01983 564958



### Stella Developments Southern Limited

Mike Treadwell  
stelladevelopments.co.uk  
mike@stelladevelopments.co.uk  
07595 749937



### Linear Kitchen Designs

Helen Copeland & Alex Hodder  
linearkitchendesign.co.uk  
designer@linearkitchendesign.co.uk  
01983 522333



### Tim MacAdam Coaching and Stress Consultancy

Tim MacAdam  
macadamcoaching.com  
tim@macadamcoaching.com  
07908 843213



### M W Electrical Services (IOW) Ltd

Matthew Woolfenden  
mwelectrical.uk  
info@mwelectrical.uk  
01983 305505



### Tipi Wills & Mediation

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tipiwills.co.uk  
info@tipiwills.co.uk

### Noble Contractors IOW

Daniel Parratt  
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07792 936277



### The Halland

thehalland.com  
Christopher Jelf and Harriet Hadfield  
hello@thehalland.com  
07899 908 643



### Robin Hill

James Marsh  
robin-hill.com  
james.marsh@robin-hill.com  
07760 614952



### Thomas P Cochran Ltd

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### RWR Associates Ltd

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### Wight Tyres

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# IW CHAMBER PATRONS

GOLD | SILVER | BRONZE | LOTTERY

GOLD PATRON



## SILVER PATRONS

SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



SILVER PATRON



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SILVER PATRON



## BRONZE PATRONS

BRONZE PATRON



BRONZE PATRON



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LOTTERY PATRON



LOTTERY PATRON





TOM STROUD



I started working for the Chamber in 2013 as editor of Island Business. In that time I've interviewed hundreds of our local businesses, of every size and shape. For a population and geographical area as small as ours, the Isle of Wight really does present an incredibly diverse range of businesses and employers. It's been great to tell those stories for more than 11 years.



## FINAL EDITION: GOODBYE FROM ME TO ISLAND BUSINESS

By editor Tom Stroud

Change is good. I've changed in that time and the Chamber definitely has too. In 2025 it's a much more inclusive organisation, much more welcoming and providing events where members can enjoy themselves as well as promote their products and services. I'd recommend Chamber membership to anyone, and working for the Chamber taught me a huge amount about how businesses really work. Being a journalist and working independently means that you can feel a little aloof at times, but I've built some great relationships over the years and I'm looking forward to working with Island businesses in the future whilst wearing a new and different hat.

I'm very happy to be handing over the editorship of the magazine to Amber Beard, whom many readers will already know via her work for the Chamber and her wide experience in publishing both on and off-Island. I'll look forward to reading each new issue, although I'll miss the deadlines and the last-minute pressures of producing a publication a little less!

A lot has changed since 2013. The media landscape on the Island and in the UK has evolved rapidly, a trend only accelerated by the pandemic. The future and indeed the present is very digital, but I'm very pleased that in 2025 Island Business still exists as a printed publication. I hope you'll agree that it occupies its own space and continues to champion the success of the Island's business community. I'm also proud that

Island Business returned and continued to thrive after lockdown, when many publications ceased. In 2024 we published some of our biggest issues for a long time and I hope the magazine continues to grow in 2025.

Working for the Chamber has been a significant part of my working life. Being a magazine editor is a fairly rare job, and although now feels like the right time to move on, I will also miss it. I'm also very proud of the Chamber Business Awards as an event, which I've produced for many years with Kathryn Morey. It has grown significantly in size and spectacle under Steven Holbrook as Chamber CEO, and I've enjoyed making the show happen each year and telling our winners' stories in these pages.

I'd like to thank everyone who has helped me in my time as editor of this magazine and who has supported Island Business as a publication. The list is long, but if you've worked with me to sell, design or print the magazine, thank you so much. If you've worked with me on a story, or encouraged someone to read the magazine, I appreciate it.

And for reading this far, in a fairly self-indulgent page I thank you too. In my defence, I only get to leave once and it has been 11 years, so I hope you'll forgive me. Seriously though, magazines are nothing without their readers and I'm glad you're there.

Let me wish you all the best for 2025. For now, thank you, and good night! ■

*Tom Stroud interviews Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce and IW Festival promoter John Giddings*





# IW CHAMBER PRESIDENT

## Looking Forward to a New Year and New Opportunities

By Jonathan Thornton, IW Chamber President

As we close the chapter on 2024 and look toward the opportunities of 2025, it's astonishing to reflect on how quickly the past year has flown by. This has been a transformative year for the Chamber of Commerce, with significant changes, including adding new board members and the upcoming appointment of a new CEO in 2025. These transitions remind us of the importance of balancing reflection on our past achievements with setting a clear vision for the future.

### IW CHAMBER'S MISSION

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

Running a business often feels like operating a ship's engine room—keeping everything running smoothly, addressing immediate challenges, and focusing on day-to-day operations. While this work is critical, it's equally essential to step away from the engine room and climb to the bridge to take a broader view of your business's strategic direction. Awards season provides an excellent opportunity for this reflection. Whether or not you choose to enter an award, the process itself encourages you to review your business, celebrate successes, and identify areas for growth and I would encourage all businesses to sit down in January and do this.

This year, awards have highlighted not only the accomplishments of individual businesses but also the resilience and innovation of the Island's broader business community. Recognising achievements, whether within your team, with your customers, or in the community brings to light the importance of stepping back and acknowledging how far you've come, even as we prepare for what lies ahead.

Looking to 2025, it's clear that the landscape continues to evolve, presenting challenges and opportunities. Businesses have faced disruptions, but these waves of change also encourage adaptation and growth. The Chamber's commitment to fostering collaboration and connection has never been more vital. Events like networking breakfasts, the Expo, and the annual awards ceremony exemplify the Chamber's ethos: we are stronger together.

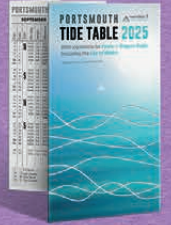
A recent networking event showcased a striking example of this collaboration. Artwork created by students from Queensgate School with each pupil contributing a single feather to a larger piece beautifully illustrated how individual contributions combine to form something far greater than the sum of their parts. This serves as a powerful metaphor for our Island business community. With over 700 members, each representing a unique business, we collectively create a thriving and dynamic economic ecosystem. Together, we are stronger, more resilient, and better positioned to navigate the challenges ahead.

As we enter 2025, the Chamber is fortunate to have Alison Colley who has stepped into the role of Vice President. Alison's expertise and commitment to the business community have already made a significant impact, and her leadership will undoubtedly strengthen the Chamber's work in the years to come. I would also like to thank Tom for his 11 years of editorship of the magazine and I look forward to fresh perspectives brought by the new editor, ensuring our communications continue to inspire and inform.

Finally, as the holiday season offers a pause from the demands of business, I hope you've taken time to reflect, recharge, and connect with your family and community. This balance between personal well-being and professional ambition is crucial to sustaining the energy and focus we need to tackle the year ahead. Let's keep moving forward, together. ■



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