

Community Insight

In the second of our summer issues, we are pleased to bring you news of the launch of the Isle of Wight Foundation – a charitable trust which will support community projects across the Island each year.



Paul Herbert, Island Roads Service Director

By providing both financial grants of between £3,000 and £16,000 and enabling our employees to take part in volunteering, we hope to support new projects that bring communities together and help people to access employment.

We already have an active role in supporting the community and in this issue you'll also read more about how we've already made a difference through our employee volunteering scheme with the work our staff were involved in to help Wroxall Scout Group and to help install gates at a recreation ground in Yarmouth.

We also tell you more in this issue about how we are making changes behind the scenes to integrate our

hub, CCTV and help desk staff where we receive many hundreds of calls each week from members of the public.

Plus news of a new scheme we have completed at Quarr Road, supporting Isle of Wight Council to improve sustainable routes that are shared by walkers and cyclists.

We also saw the launch of the new asphalt plant by Wight Building Materials in August – an important development and one which will play a crucial part in helping us to deliver our PFI contract more efficiently and effectively.

Isle of Wight Foundation

The Isle of Wight Foundation was launched last month - a charitable trust in which Island Roads is a key founding partner. The Foundation will provide grants of between £3,000-£16,000, as well as employee volunteering support, to local community projects and schemes to help tackle social exclusion on the Island by bringing communities closer together and helping people to access employment.

Applications for this year's grants programme will close at 12 noon on 12 October 2014.

To read more about the Foundation, please visit www.islandroads.com/137-iw-foundation



Wight Building Materials opens new £3.5 million asphalt plant

The new asphalt plant at Blackwater Quarry was officially opened by Andrew Turner MP on Friday 1st August. Clients, local councillors and the press, together with employees from Wight Building Materials, were invited to attend the opening and given an opportunity to tour the plant.

The new plant is quieter, cleaner and more efficient to the benefit of residents, the environment and the Island's road network. Local Island minerals will be used within the asphalt production, as well as incorporating recycled asphalt, to ensure high quality and environmentally friendly road material.

The opening of the plant is a welcome development for Island Roads as it will provide much of the materials required to upgrade the Island highways as well as other future general infrastructure projects.

With the plant now up and running, surfacing schemes across the Island are already benefiting.

Another visit to the plant was also arranged after the launch at the request of Cllr. John Hobart. He and other councillors and the Chair for the IOW Bridleway group Tricia Merrifield attended and found the visit extremely useful and informative.



Compliments

- "Many thanks for bringing the repair of Staplers Road forward and for doing such a wonderful job of rectifying the problem."
- "Would like to thank Kevin Legg and his team for a wonderful job regarding verges and hedges prior to the Chale Show taking place. It has made a huge difference and safety regarding visibility has been vastly improved. Thanks to all the team."
- "Very happy with the new road at Whitcombe Road - well done, it is a pleasure to drive on now."

Vectis Belles bring a splash of colour to Island Roads Control

A group of ladies known as the Vectis Belles brought a splash of colour to the control hub of Island Roads during a visit to hear more about Island Roads operations.

The group of nine ladies, dressed in the customary red hat and purple dresses of the Red Hat Society – a friendship group for ladies over 50 – had asked to visit Island Roads visitor centre to learn more about the company's work on the Island.

During their visit the ladies were able to see the hub in operation, where enquiries are taken, defects recorded and jobs scheduled for action, and had a chance to hear more about aspects of the highways work on the Island.

The group were given an explanation of the seven year core investment programme to bring the Island's roads up to the required standards.



They also heard about how the company looks after other highways 'assets' e.g. streetlights and benches, how operational activities are carried out such as street cleansing and grass cutting. Vectis Belles 'Queen' Margaret Hedges said, "It was a really useful visit and we learnt a lot of things we didn't know about the work that Island Roads were involved in and now have a much better

understanding of the work they have been tasked with."

Tracy Ringer, Performance Manager who hosted the visit said, "It was a pleasure to meet the ladies and to be able to talk to them about our work and help answer their questions."

Anyone wishing to book a group visit to the hub should contact 01983 822440.

Investors in people

We are pleased to confirm that we have retained our Investors in People accreditation for the second year running. The award is made in recognition of our commitment to developing, valuing, recognising the achievements of and investing in the people that work for Island Roads.

The accreditation framework covers everything from business leadership and planning to management effectiveness and performance measurement and we gives an independent, expert assessment of how we are performing in relation to these standards.

Integrated hub

We're pleased to announce that Cheryl Rodger has been appointed to the role of Customer Service Manager, responsible for the Hub including staff management, rotas for the call centre and CCTV, customer compliments and complaints, scheduling of works and the mobile visitor centre.

The call centre takes hundreds of calls each week from members of the public as well as keeping a close eye on the traffic situation on the network and helping to keep people informed about roadworks, delays and developments. Cheryl will be looking at ways in which we can further improve this important area of our work.

As a first step, part of the wall between the helpdesk and control room area has been removed which has resulted in both teams merging to become an 'integrated hub'. This improvement will help the teams work more closely together to ensure we deliver the level of service expected.

The call centre can be reached on 01983 822440 and our website www.islandroads.com also contains lots of useful information about roadworks, current surfacing schemes as well as frequently asked questions.

Wroxall Scout Hut

An overgrown amenity area outside Wroxall Scout Hut has been brought back into use thanks to Island Roads staff.

Following a plea for help from scout leader Azwar Zahoor, a work gang of Island Road employees spent a day clearing the overgrown area under the company's employee volunteering scheme.

Nine Island Roads staff lead by Shane Hall joined Azwar in the clear up operation to make the area safe and suitable for scouts, cubs and beavers to undertake a range of activities including camping, sports and other adventure activity.

As well as the manpower, Island Roads also provided the tools to allow the team to do the work.

Shane explained: "The Scout hut has been maintained and run by Azwar for many years but after a serious accident he found it difficult to keep the area under control.

"Azwar requested assistance from Island Roads as the situation had become so bad that the area was unusable as it was too dangerous due to fly-tipped objects and brambles.



"We were delighted to help out and two of our district responders joined members of the finance team to undertake various tasks including cutting grass, brambles, hedges, and trees and we also shovelled mud and brick, cleared footways, removed illegally tipped tiles and other general waste.

"The team did a fantastic job and achieved more than I had hoped for, and they all did it with a smile on their face."

Azwar said: "It was great to work alongside Island Roads staff. Because

of their efforts we have brought back into use an amenity area for young people in the village. I would like to thank all the staff who gave up their time and also to Island Roads for allowing them to spend the time helping us out through their volunteering programme."

Under Island Roads' volunteering scheme, the company encourages staff to take two paid days volunteering in support of local good causes.

Compliments

- I would like to say how marvellous the new lights are, they are super and so good compared to the old orange lighting, I love them. Well done on the roads that you have resurfaced also, it is really good these things are being done, well done!
- "I would like you just to pass on our compliments to the man that street cleans Lugley Street in Newport! He does an amazing job of keeping our street clean and tidy and goes above and beyond. A total star."
- Thank you for dealing with the tractor oil spillage at Forest Road. I think you probably saved someone's life. Well done and thank you all.

Undercliff Drive

Much has been written in the local media of late about the on-going situation at Undercliff Drive following the landslide earlier this year although of course it is an issue that has been in the news for centuries – it was even featured in a Pathé News Reel from 1926.

The Isle of Wight has an international reputation as an area with unique and volatile geological features. With 15 sites of Special Scientific Interest on the Island, it has been a Mecca for geological studies since the early 1800s. In more recent years, the Island played host to an international conference (2007) on climate change with experts from across the globe visiting many sites, including the Undercliff, to view first-hand the impact of climate change both on the

coastal area and inland.

The site at the Undercliff is the most well known of these and has for centuries been the subject of significant ground movement and landslides, with over 300 reported incidents having occurred there. This historical situation, compounded by one of the wettest winters on record, caused further ground movement not just here but right across the Island.

There have been allegations in the media that the work being undertaken on the site to tackle the surface issues and not the surrounding geological conditions somehow played a part in contributing to the landslide however there is absolutely no evidence that this was the case and much more

evidence that the combination of groundwater levels and deep underlying instability was the cause of the landslide.

We do however appreciate that this is a very difficult time for the residents affected and sympathise greatly with their on-going circumstances and continue to work with the Isle of Wight Council both to monitor ground conditions and to identify options to re-establish access to these properties.

This is a complex and lengthy process, made more difficult by site access issues and continuing ground movement, but we are endeavouring to do all we can to assist the council to reach a decision around the future of this road as quickly as possible.

Facebook site helps re-unite feline road fatalities with owners

The Facebook site Isle of Wight Lost Pets has teamed up with Island Roads to help ensure cats killed on the highway network can be returned to their owners.

Under the highways PFI, Island Roads is contracted to collect dead animals including pets from the roadside. Since April last year, more than 70 cats have been retrieved but because so few are micro-chipped it had proved extremely difficult to trace the owners.

However Island Roads approached the Isle of Wight Lost Pets Facebook page which carries a regularly updated gallery of missing pets. Unfortunately a number of these are

the victims of road accidents and the two organisations now work closely together to identify animals based on the information – including photographs – provided to the site by owners.

Shirleyann Jones, a volunteer who helps manage the page, said: "Losing a cat is an awful experience for any owner to go through and often the worse thing is simply not knowing what has happened to their pet

"While being re-united with a deceased pet is in itself traumatic it at least gives the owner a sense of closure and enables them to make their own arrangements for saying goodbye to their cat.

"I can only thank Island Roads for teaming with us and making this special extra effort to re-unite cats with their owners. It shows they are very committed to being part of the Island community.

"So far our partnership has enabled ten owners to retrieve their animals while only four have been returned because they have been micro-chipped."

Upgrade for popular shared route

Works to upgrade a well used public route near Ryde have been completed in partnership with Island Roads.

Using money secured under the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF), more than £130,000 has been spent improving the route that runs between Fishbourne Lane and Quarr Road, Binstead. It is part of the overall project to create a safe, traffic free and well surfaced route between Ryde and Newport.

The old stone and gravel route has been replaced with a cement-bound base overlaid with a surface dressing that is in keeping with the rural setting of the area. The new route is now suitable for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, wheelchair users and people with push-buggies. New gates at either end of the route have also been installed.

With Quarr Abbey undergoing its own refurbishment recently, the council also worked very closely with the abbey and with Island Roads, which carried out the improvements on the route, to ensure any disruption during works was kept to a minimum.

Councillor Luisa Hillard, Executive member for sustainability, environment and public realm, said: "I am very pleased to see this latest shared route finished and it is a testament to the hard work done by officers.

"With Quarr Abbey itself also recently undergoing refurbishment works using Heritage Lottery funds, the upgraded route from Ryde provides



improved opportunities for visitors to the abbey without needing to use a car."

Councillor Shirley Smart, Executive member for economy and tourism, said: "This route is well used and is popular with residents and tourists alike. The old route was in need of upgrading and I am delighted these excellent improvements have been carried out which means the route can be enjoyed by so many people including walkers, cyclists and horse riders."

The Isle of Wight Council was recently informed its latest bid for funding under the government's next round of LSTF money has been accepted. The council will find out in the autumn how much it will receive, having put in a bid for just under £1 million pounds of revenue funding.

Improvements of a similar nature have also been made to a shared path between Wroxall and Shanklin and work started at the end of July on the shared surface between Newport and Medina Harbour.