

Island Business

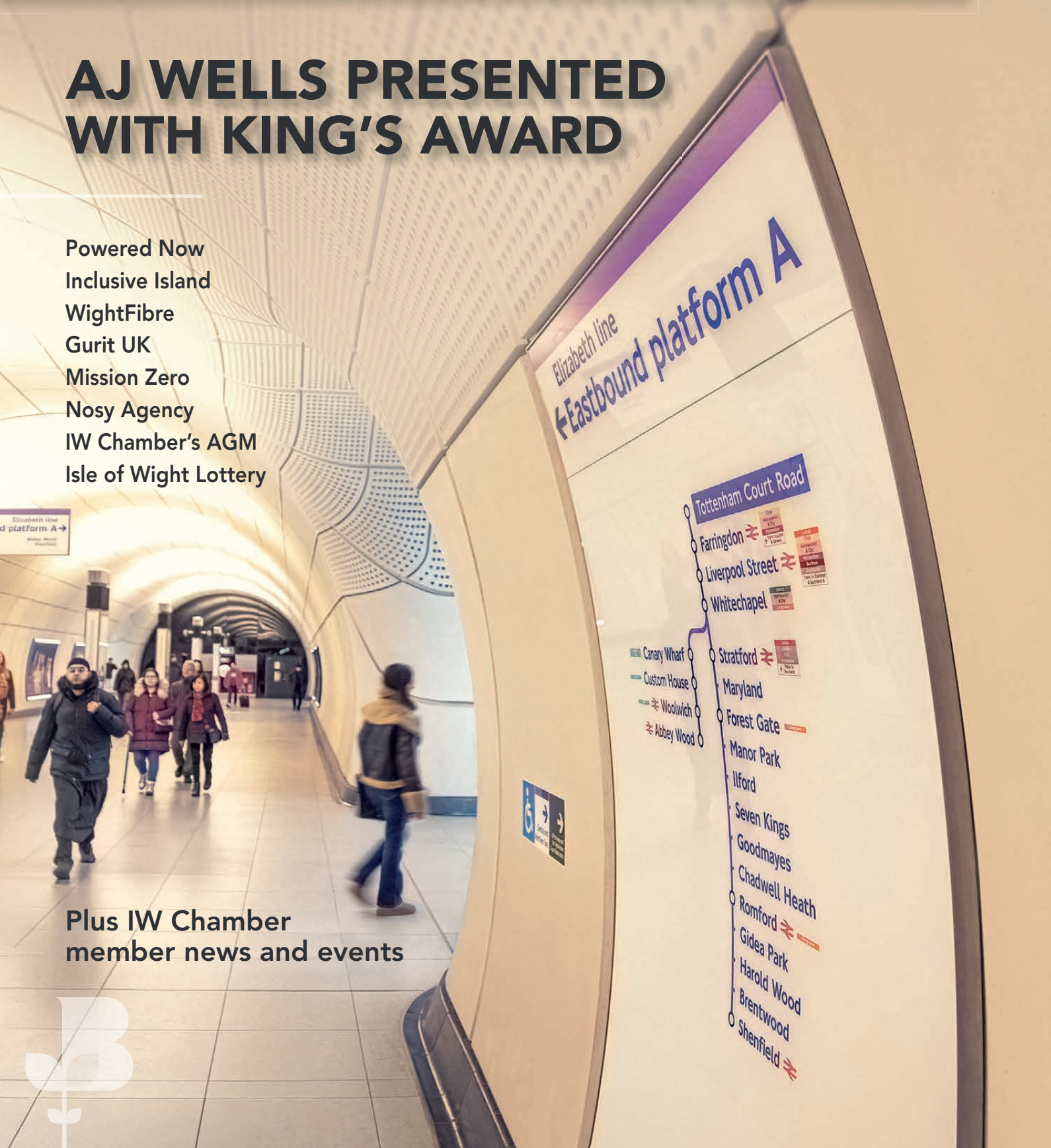
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Chamber of Commerce

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Editor's FOREWORD

WELCOME TO OUR LAST ISSUE OF 2024. AS EVER WE CELEBRATE THE BEST IN BUSINESS ON THE ISLAND AND WE ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING MORE SUCCESS STORIES IN 2025.

Our cover story reflects AJ Wells being presented with the King's Award for Enterprise this year, in recognition of their significant contribution to International Trade, exporting their Charnwood Stoves brand across the globe. As our cover shows, the Newport business also continues to supply Transport for London with enamel signage. IW Chamber members enjoyed a tour of the AJ Wells factory earlier this year; we caught up with Ced Wells for an insight into their continued growth.

Elsewhere in this issue we look ahead to the 2025 IW Chamber Business Awards with WRS Systems, for which entries open at the end of this month.

You'll also see some significant Chamber news, with the appointment of the organisation's first ever female Vice President. Alison Colley of Real Employment Law & HR was appointed at the Chamber's recent AGM, where Chief Executive Steven Holbrook also announced his intention to leave the Chamber at the end of next summer.

This and more, in another busy edition, with all the best for the final months of the year. ■

TOM STROUD
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CONTENTS



14 AJ WELLS



20 IW CHAMBER BUSINESS AWARDS

- 02 NEWS
- 10 IW CHAMBER AGM
- 13 IW LOTTERY
- 14 DIAMETRIC
- 16 AJ WELLS
- 20 IW CHAMBER AWARDS
- 22 POWERED NOW

- 24 INCLUSIVE ISLAND
- 26 WIGHTFIBRE
- 28 MISSION ZERO
- 30 NOSY
- 32 IW CHAMBER EVENTS
- 36 NEW MEMBERS
- 40 IW CHAMBER PRESIDENT

IW CHAMBER'S VISION

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

NEWS

Wightlink named as Best Ferry Operator 2024 at the National Transport Awards



Wightlink has been awarded Best Ferry Operator 2024 at the National Transport Awards in London. The other finalists were Hovertravel and Uber Boat by Thames Clippers. Wightlink CEO Katy Taylor says: "It's all thanks to the hard work of our crews and colleagues at Wightlink's six ports and eight ferries who always put our customers first."

Wightlink carries more than 3.8 million people a year between the Isle of Wight and ports in Portsmouth and Lymington with more than 140 sailings a day. An industry leader in decarbonisation and innovation, Wightlink's hybrid-electric flagship Victoria of Wight sails 24 hours a day between Portsmouth and Fishbourne with 20 per cent fewer emissions than similar conventionally powered ships. The company's ambition is to commission all-electric ferries when suitable shore power is available.

Transport Minister Simon Littlewood MP told the audience: "Transport workers are the backbone of our economy - connecting communities and driving growth." ■

Wightlink CEO Katy Taylor with Wightlink colleagues Commercial Director Phil Delaney, Head of Marketing David Williams and Captain Sam Mitchell at the National Transport Awards ceremony

Wight Computers welcomes Loren to the team

Wight Computers is thrilled to announce its continued growth with the recent addition of Loren Allen as Customer Experience Manager. Loren's role will focus on ensuring that their clients receive top-notch service and support, while also championing cyber security training services.

The team now consists of four dedicated members, continuing to support local businesses with trusted, professional, and friendly IT support.

"We are delighted to have Loren on board. Her expertise and passion for customer satisfaction are invaluable to the team," says Andrew Nordbruch, Managing Director. "Cyber security is a key focus for us, and with Loren leading the way, we offer training to help businesses protect themselves from ever-evolving digital threats. Ensuring our clients are equipped with the knowledge to safeguard their operations is a priority for us."



As part of their commitment to sustainability and efficiency, Wight Computers has also invested in a new electric van for their engineers, enabling them to provide even better on-site support while reducing their carbon footprint. ■

Branstone office for holiday letting agency



One of the UK's leading holiday letting agencies, holidaycottages.co.uk has opened a brand-new office on the Island. The agency currently acts for over 200 holiday lets on the Isle of Wight.

Adrian Culley, Regional Director from holidaycottages.co.uk commented: "We pride ourselves on offering exceptional levels of service to guests and homeowners across the Island, and our new office is a clear commitment to ensuring this continues. With total bookings for the Isle of Wight taken in 2024 up 10.2% vs 2023, and forward bookings for 2025 up 8.1% compared to the same point 12 months ago, demand to stay on the Isle of Wight remains strong and our local team is fully prepared to support homeowners and ensure guests have an amazing stay on the Island".

The newly constructed office in Branstone will provide a flexible working space for the team to welcome guests or homeowners should they need support, while also being a hub for the local team to work from. It will also provide much-needed space for the company's Managed Services operation which provides year-round holiday let management and maintenance across the Isle of Wight. ■



Wight Coaches collect IW Chamber Award

Congratulations to Wight Coaches, winners of the 2024 IW Chamber Business Award for Start Up Business Of The Year. Josh Harris was presented with the award by Nicola Johnston, of category sponsor PC Consultants. The Wight Coaches team were named as winners in May but were unable to attend the evening ceremony due to ill-health. The judges praised Wight Coaches for "growth year on year - in revenue and profits, with lots of happy customers."

Next year's awards will be presented on Friday 9th May at Cowes Yacht Haven, at a ceremony supported by new headline sponsors WRS Systems. Entries will open for the awards at the end of November and will close on January 31st next year.

For full details and category listings, see our special feature on page 20. ■

JPGL's Island network expands to Newport

Island freight specialist JPGL is opening its first depot on the Isle of Wight. The site on Newport's Riverway will be headed up by Islander David Groves, head of area logistics, who brings almost 40 years of experience in the freight industry – 23 of which he's worked on the Isle of Wight.

New IW Chamber members JPGL specialise in island logistics in the Channel Islands; import, export and cross-border logistics via air, ocean and road, around the UK, and Europe; as well as customs clearance; and warehouse and fulfilment services. Operating 7 days a week out of three south of England depots, JPGL is also part of one of the most trusted pallet networks, Pallet-Track, responsible for delivering to Jersey and Guernsey.

David says: "I'm delighted to join JPGL, and head up their new depot on the Island, offering a much needed alternative freight route onto and off the Isle of Wight. Our team at JPGL have transported freight to the Channel Islands for many years. JPGL offers a reliable and fast pallet delivery service, which is what our island needs to keep our businesses connected with the mainland and beyond." ■

IW Chamber welcomes new Vice President



IW Chamber President Jonathan Thornton (left) with Chief Executive Steven Holbrook and Vice President Alison Colley

Alison Colley of Real Employment Law & HR has been elected as the new Vice President of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce. Alison will support current President Jonathan Thornton and her appointment marks the first time a female board member has taken on this position in the Chamber's leadership team.

Alison assumed the role at the Chamber's recent AGM, where Chief Executive Steven Holbrook announced his decision to leave the Chamber next year. He will remain in post until August, overseeing the Chamber's flagship events and helping the Chamber's board to appoint his successor.

"After more than six fantastic years at the Chamber, I have come to the very difficult decision that it is time for me to move on. I am still in post for a long while yet and I look forward to my final 10 months being the best yet," Steven Holbrook says. Read more about the Chamber's AGM and new board appointments on page 10. ■



JPGL Isle of Wight - David Groves (right) and Leigh Mackenzie (left)

Island Echo grows team and invests in website



From left: Carl Atkinson-Goffe (Commercial Manager), James Rann (Digital News Reporter), Sophie Toogood (Accounts Manager), Darren Toogood (Editor/Publisher) and Warren Whitmore (Digital News Reporter)

Award-winning news website Island Echo – which sees up to 3 million page views a month - has undergone a complete makeover for the first time in over 6 years. Island Echo has also recently moved to a new home, maintaining a presence in the company's hometown of Ryde by joining the thriving business community at Fortis House. Island Echo has also appointed its first-ever commercial manager, Carl Atkinson-Goffe.

Darren Toogood, Editor/Publisher of Island Echo, says:

"Working with fellow Chamber members Four Point Digital, our new site offers a refreshed, cleaner design that is more in tune with modern trends and expectations. Responsiveness and accessibility have been key considerations in the site's development over the past 12 months and care has been taken to ensure that advertisements don't hinder the user experience.

"Our recent investments will help take Island Echo to the next level, ensuring we continue to deliver all the latest Island news as it happens – first, fast and free – for many years to come." ■



From left: Red Funnel's Lee Hudson and Nell Clare, Chris Hall from Acclaim Logistics and Kay Lewis, Manager at the Isle of Wight Foodbank.

Acclaim and Red Funnel donate to Foodbank

Red Funnel has worked hand-in-hand with one of its long-term freight customers, Acclaim Logistics, to collect hundreds of tin cans as part of a food donation drive for its Charity of The Year partner, the Isle of Wight Foodbank. Acclaim generously donated 250 tins to support local Island families and individuals facing food poverty. Hundreds more have been kindly donated by Red Funnel customers and local businesses, taking the total donated to 600 cans. This effort comes at a critical time when many in the local community are struggling with food insecurity.

Since the start of the year, Red Funnel has raised over £16,000 in cash donations thanks to the generosity of customers, also pledging a donation of 50p from the sale of Captain Ted Funnel and Captain Ruby Funnel teddy bear toys, and collecting over 300kg in food donations to help local Island people in crisis.

Red Funnel's Charity of the Year initiative is part of its Changing Tides strategy, which pledges the ferry operator's commitment to supporting the Isle of Wight community for years to come. ■

Southern Vectis driving support for Mountbatten



Southern Vectis is turbo-charging its support for Mountbatten Isle of Wight by gifting the charity £23,000. Earlier this year, the local bus operator named Mountbatten as its official good cause for 2024 and 2025, and is spending two years fundraising to help the charity provide 24/7 care and support for thousands of local people across the Island in their homes, the hospice building in Newport, and St Mary's Hospital.

"This is a crucial local resource, supporting people with death and dying, and also offering relatives and friends free bereavement support," said Southern Vectis general manager, Richard Tyldsley. "Our corporate charity is voted for by the Southern Vectis team. Many of my colleagues have benefited directly from the support Mountbatten provides, so we have decided to boost our support with this lump sum - which is in addition to our fundraising efforts this year and next. We hope this latest donation will help Mountbatten in its vital work to support people across the Isle of Wight, from all walks of life."

As Southern Vectis' corporate charity for 2024 and 2025, Mountbatten is also featured on a bus back and on-board messaging, to help raise awareness of its work. ■

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IOW Group sets standard with Mobi engine maintenance

Ryde based IOW Group's newly launched product Mobi continues to set new standards within the industry, demonstrating a commitment to innovation, customer satisfaction, and sustainable initiatives.

Mobi is a mobile rig equipped with their award-winning centrifugal oil filter and pump, designed to transform the way engine and oil maintenance is performed. Mobi can be installed with ease, minimising downtime and ensuring that the engine runs at peak performance. The flexibility of this rig makes it an ideal solution for industries with a large fleet of engines spanning marine, power generation, and heavy equipment operations.

"Our goal with Mobi was to create a product that not only meets the demands of engine maintenance but also offers our clients a new level of versatility," says Brett Nicholls, Managing Director at IOW Group. "With Mobi, organisations can now maintain their engines more efficiently, without needing to invest in multiple fixed centrifugal filters." ■



Ryan Picou, COO IOW Group US Office (Left) and Brett Nicholls, Managing Director (Right)

Isle of Wight Radio's Child of Wight Awards presented



The Island's young heroes have been crowned at Isle of Wight Radio's Child of Wight Awards 2024. The ceremony, with headline sponsor WightFibre, took place at Tapnell Farm Park for the third consecutive year. The evening also featured a performance from The Starlight Academy and was fronted by Breakfast Show hosts Paul Topping and Emily Wells.

Following the ceremony, all the winners gathered for a group photo with proud parents looking on. John Irvine, CEO of lead Child of Wight sponsors Wight Fibre, said:

"We love the Child of Wight Awards and have been sponsoring this event for almost a decade now. There are some fantastic young people on the Island and it's great to give them the recognition they deserve. You can see here tonight that for many young people the Island is a wonderful place, it's good to recognise their achievements." ■

British Chambers of Commerce: Fewer Firms Recruiting

The British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) Insight Unit's latest Quarterly Recruitment Outlook (QRO) reveals hiring intentions have dropped to their lowest levels since the depths of the pandemic. The survey of more than 5,100 UK firms of all sectors and sizes, shows that 56% of respondents said they had attempted to recruit in the last three months, down from the previous quarter (59%). The last time the attempted level of recruitment was lower was in Q2 of 2021 when it was at 52%.

There are wide sectoral differences, with transport (73%), hospitality (70%), and construction (67%) firms looking for new staff. By contrast, more than half of retail (52%), professional services (54%), marketing and communication firms (54%) are not hiring.

Of the firms who tried to hire in Q3, 76% reported difficulties, compared with 66% in the first three months of the year. Construction and engineering firms are still bearing the brunt of staffing issues, with 85% reporting recruitment problems in Q3, up from 69% in Q1. Manufacturing is not far behind with 80% having difficulty, while 76% of hospitality firms said they could not find the people they needed. At the other end of the scale, 65% of marketing and communications firms faced problems.

The third quarter of the year also saw a slight drop in funding in workplace training, as 25% of firms reported an increase in investment in staff, down from 28% in Q2. Most businesses (62%) reported no change in their investment plans for training over the past three months, with 13% saying they had decreased it. ■



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From funding for new equipment to taking payments from customers, there are various ways we can help your business grow naturally without overtrading.

The past five years have been challenging for most businesses due to the pandemic, cost-of-living crisis and rising interest rates, but there are still many growth opportunities - some of which you may be unaware of.

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Going for growth

We support a wide range of businesses on the Island, from hotels and tourism to manufacturing, energy and education.

If you're ready to scale up but aren't sure what help is available or where to start, we can open doors

to solutions around working capital, which can support a holistic approach to growth and help you unearth products and opportunities you didn't know existed.

“Many customers want to grow, but they don't know how. We're here to bridge that gap and set them on the right course,”

SME Relationship Manager, Samantha Holmes.

Listening to local businesses

We're here to listen to and understand what local businesses need and want from us and we value being part of the local community.

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Get in touch to see how we can gear your business up for growth.



**Samantha Holmes,
SME Relationship Manager**

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IW CHAMBER'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

New beginnings and the end of an era at the Chamber's AGM, as Chief Executive Steven Holbrook announces his decision to stand down next year.



The Isle of Wight Chamber will have a new chief executive in 2025. Speaking at the Chamber's AGM on October 4th, Steven Holbrook announced his intention to resign as Chief Executive and to leave the business in August next year. He will remain in post until then, overseeing the Chamber's flagship Awards and Expo events, and will work closely with the Chamber board to appoint his successor.

"After more than six fantastic years at the Chamber, I have come to the very difficult decision that it is time for me to move on," Steven said. "In order to give the Board all the time they need, and also to make sure that I am at the helm to see my team through a full year of events, I will leave in August next year.

"My team mean an awful lot to me. They have supported me my entire journey and that is why I want to make my departure as comfortable as possible and to be as supportive of them as I can. I want to say a huge thanks to them for everything they have done to support me. They have been amazing.

"When I took the role at the Chamber in 2018 it brought me back into the orbit of Island life. I've always been a proud Islander. I was born and raised here. I made my career elsewhere but I chose to move my life here, and raise my family here. Although leaving the Chamber has been a hard decision for me, I look forward to new business opportunities on the Island and having the time to explore new positions that align with my values and interests. I won't be retiring from public life and I look forward to building on the relationships and the friendships that I have made in the last six years.

"I am still in post for a long while yet and I look forward to my final 10 months being the best yet."

The Chamber's President Jonathan Thornton thanked Steven for his commitment to the Chamber and for his continued support as the organisation evolves in 2025.

ALISON COLLEY IS CHAMBER'S NEW VP

The Chamber also welcomes Alison Colley of Real Employment Law & HR as the newly elected Vice President. Her appointment marks the first time a female Board member has taken on this role and Alison will support Jonathan Thornton as President while he completes the third year of his term.



SILVER AND BRONZE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS PRESENTED



Silver: Dale Howarth



Silver: A1 Garage Door Specialists Ltd,
Sean Thrippleton



Silver: HTP Apprenticeship College,
Rachael Randall



Silver: Cridmore Farm Company Ltd,
Edward Clarke



Silver: The Swiss Cottage, Shanklin,
Keith Beckett



Silver: Shanklin Chine Ltd,
Anne Springman

SILVER AND BRONZE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Longstanding Chamber members were also presented with Bronze and Silver awards by the Chamber President, marking 10 and 20 years of membership.

NEW LOOK CHAMBER BOARD

A new Chamber Board was also appointed at the meeting, held at the New Holmwood Hotel in Cowes. Mark Lee of Lifeline Alarms, Darren Toogood of Island Echo, Katy Taylor of Wightlink and Matt Greg of NOSY were all elected unopposed to the Chamber's Board, which now consists of:

Steven Holbrook, Chief Executive
Jonathan Thornton, President
Alison Colley, Vice President
Mark Lee, Chairman & Board Member
John Allen, Past President
Sarah Chatwin, Board Member
Fran Collins, Board Member
Matt Greg, Board Member
Sandra Knowles, Board Member
Karen Lucas, Board Member
Tracy Osborn, Board Member
Katy Taylor, Board Member
Darren Toogood, Board Member ■



Bronze: Culvertronic Ltd,
Diane Merkel



Bronze: Top Mops Ltd,
Sarah Ford



Bronze: Real Employment Law Advice,
Alison Colley and Tony Wicks



Bronze: Transport Seeds Ltd,
Valerie Ballorin



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PATRONS SUPPORT ISLE OF WIGHT LOTTERY

At the core of the Isle of Wight Lottery is a simple idea: to reinvest the proceeds from ticket sales directly into the local business ecosystem. This innovative approach ensures that the funds raised are channelled into supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of the Island's economy. Through interest-free loans, the lottery provides much-needed capital to these businesses, helping them to flourish, expand, and create new jobs.



The Patron Scheme underpins this concept by offering businesses a chance to contribute directly to the Island's economic development. As patrons, you not only support the local economy but also give your employees a chance to win big, with more than 500 prizes awarded each year, including a £10,000 draw. The scheme operates on a Gold, Silver, and Bronze tier system, with additional perks like editorial features in the Island Business Magazine.

Hera Creative Design recently announced the celebration of its third anniversary, marking a significant milestone in its journey as a growing Isle of Wight business. As part of this exciting time, they are proud to have joined the Isle of Wight Lottery as a patron, further solidifying a commitment to supporting the local business community.

"We chose to become a patron of the lottery after hearing about all the wonderful benefits it offers to businesses on the Island," says Martyn Thorp, Hera Creative's founder. "And being a patron means heaps to us as a company. Being a small business isn't easy, and it would be even harder without the incredible support of the business community here. For me, it feels great to contribute and give back in any way we can."

"We've had two wins so far, and to be honest, we didn't expect any, so that was a nice surprise! I would encourage anyone thinking about getting involved in the Isle of Wight Lottery to do so. They help so many businesses get on their feet and expand, and we need to encourage that by supporting them, and our economy will thrive as long as we continue to contribute to it."

"As we celebrate our third year, we look forward to continuing to grow and to support the community that has helped us reach this milestone. Becoming a patron of the Isle of Wight Lottery is just one of the ways we aim to give back and contribute to the thriving ecosystem of local businesses on the Island."

Hera Creative Design joins Rouse Limited as the initial patrons of the Isle of Wight Lottery. To find out more about being a Patron, or to play the Isle of Wight Lottery, head to isleofwightlottery.com ■

WHY WE JOINED THE CHAMBER

OUR IW CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP DIAMETRIC

By Stacey Steele, Diametric

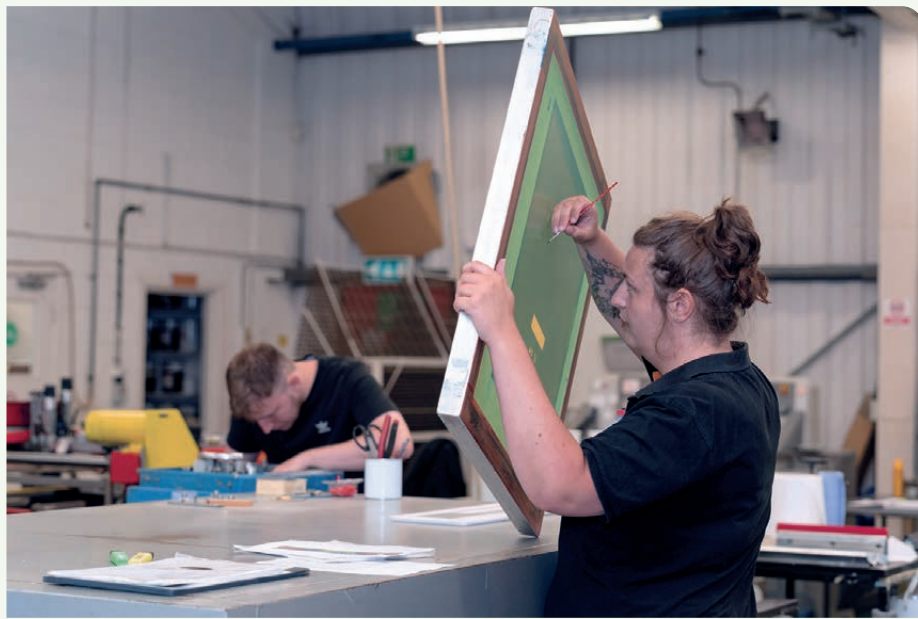
At Diametric, we design and manufacture precision product branding, labels and nameplates, using a range of processes. We work in partnership with a diverse range of industries, including automotive, medical, marine, and audio.

We initially joined the Isle of Wight Chamber to increase our brand recognition across the Island. We've been in business for over 40 years but have not always been (and still may not be) that well known locally!

Since becoming members five years ago, we have taken up opportunities to attend networking breakfasts and exhibit at the IW Chamber Business Expo. Particularly enjoyable events have been tours of Teemill and the Wildheart Animal Sanctuary, as well as the Cowes Week BBQ. The Bank of England Lunch also stands out as being extremely informative and well-presented, and enabled us to make strategic decisions with our short-term strategies. We have also featured in the Island Business Magazine showcasing our wonderful team.

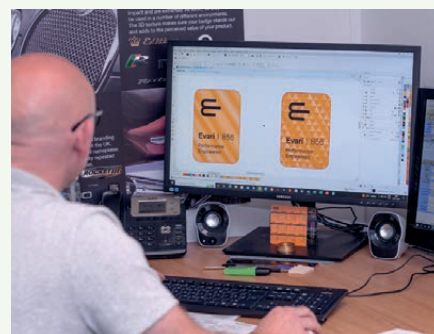
A highlight on the social calendar for Diametric is always the annual IW Chamber Business Awards. It was a particularly proud moment for us a couple of years ago, when we won 'Small Business of the Year'. Since then, we have also sponsored an award, and it's been wonderful to attend and celebrate successes with so many other Island businesses.

The member-to-member discounts are great, and we regularly take advantage of the ferry discounts. As we frequently travel between the Island and our offices in Swanmore, this has been a



great help (thank you Wightlink and Red Funnel!) Another helpful resource has been the Chamber HR and H&S services, with the added support of the advice line if needed.

Ultimately, being part of the Isle of Wight Chamber has enabled us to get to know the wonderful network of Island businesses and build positive and lasting relationships within the community. It's definitely been an incredibly positive experience. ■



JOIN THE ISLE OF WIGHT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TODAY

Call our membership team on 01983 520777 or go to www.iwchamber.co.uk

National Awards Finalists



“WRS Systems is honoured to be the headline sponsor at the Isle of Wight Chamber Business Awards in 2025. As a business based on the Island, we understand the vital role that the Chamber plays in the local business community. 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 CEO

WRS Systems is proudly in the running for two awards at the prestigious **Lloyds Bank British Business Excellence Awards 2024.**

Team members from WRS Systems will be at London’s Grosvenor House on November 12 to see if they have been successful in the Customer Loyalty and Family business of the Year categories.

“It is fantastic to see a family-run Island business recognised on the national stage for delivering best in class customer service. A true success story. We wish WRS all the best on the night.”

Steven Holbrook
IW Chamber Chief Executive



LLOYDS BANK

**2024
Finalists**

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INSIDE STORY: AJ WELLS

Tom Stroud talks to Ced Wells, creative director of AJ Wells

Charnwood Stoves, London Underground, vitreous enamel and the Kings Award for Enterprise make 2024 another remarkable year for this Isle of Wight manufacturer

Below right: AJ Wells receives The King's Award for Enterprise from HM Lord-Lieutenant Susie Sheldon at their Newport studio in September

How's business for AJ Wells at the moment? How has your year been?

We're very positive for the future. Innovation is the key for us and to keep adapting and pivoting is very important. We enjoyed a real boom for woodburning stoves in recent years, which has settled down a bit. Our stoves became very popular during Covid, when people were stuck at home, building rooms in their gardens essentially and investing in a new type of product. It's always been really important for us to innovate and seize opportunities as they come up.

AJ Wells is very much a "people" story isn't it? It's the product... but it's also more than that.

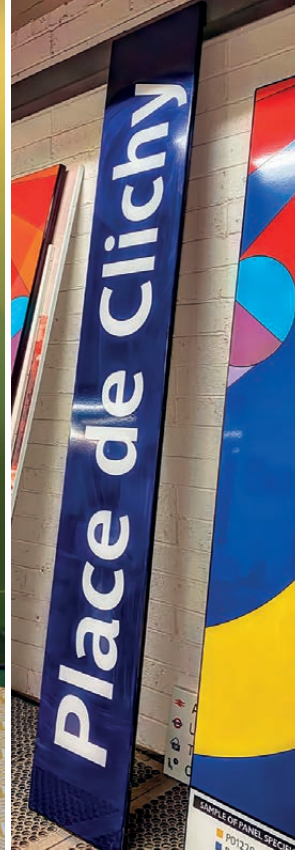
Yes it is. On an island you've got boundaries and a limited pool of people but the advantage is that people show loyalty and they stick with you. Some of our people have been with us for over 40 years. The skills and the gifts that those people have, they've grown with the business, they've helped develop the business. We're a very flat structure, we all get involved and we all put forward ideas. We don't always get it right, but hopefully that spirit is reflected in the culture of how we do things and our company.

Ced Wells



You won the Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade in 2009, and now the King's Award for International Trade in 2024. That's an incredible achievement, but I would imagine that also leverages business.

It does. Winning the Queen's Award suddenly opened up a lot of markets overseas. I think people saw it as a symbol of trust, and that we'd been recognised by the highest, and in the highest way possible. The King's Award reflects a couple of unusual years for us because of COVID and the war in Ukraine. The awards definitely elevated our overseas business, which accounts for 30% of the stoves we sell. We export to America and California in particular, Australia, Japan, South Africa, Europe including France, Belgium and Spain.



What do you put that international success down to?

It's grown quite organically, but I think it partly comes down to the Britishness of our product. Particularly in Japan and across Europe, they just love the fact that it's made in the UK and designed in-house as well. It has that quintessential sort of British charm to it, whatever that is. We don't really know, but it's designed by us, and they obviously see something special in it! It's very different to Italian style, but the Italians really like the look of it. They see it as slightly traditional, and very British. I think a lot of it has got to do with the fact that we've remained true to our "made in Britain" roots.

AJ Wells is now very closely associated with Transport for London, London Underground, Crossrail and now the rebranding of six new Overground lines. You're delivering enamel signage for 113 stations within that network. That must be a brilliant project to be part of.

Of course. It's such an iconic brand design and it's been a total privilege to work on it. When people think of London, they think of the roundel, so we're very proud to be associated with that. We got into that slightly by accident because we happened to have an enameling plant at the time. Our stoves are a great product but they're produced on a production line whereas with the signage, it's ever changing. One minute we might be producing a standard roundel, or an illuminated roundel, or for Sony PlayStation, or the rebrand for London Transport Museum. It's an incredible privilege to be able to do that because we're one of very few companies that have that association.

How do you grow AJ Wells, and do you even want to? You employ 170 people. Are you actually where you want to be?

It's a very good question, because we've stayed around the same size probably for the last 10 years. We've definitely got to become more efficient and more competitive in what we do in, in production terms. The issue is that if you go above 200 people, you start to lose touch with those people, and we are like a family. We know each other well.

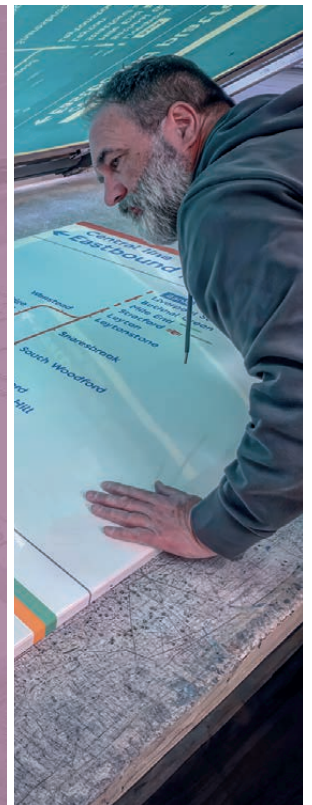
We've always been very open and we do grow quite organically. We tend to try not to rush into things too much. We're following market and industry conditions. I think our Christian faith has got a lot to do with it too. I guess we're just vessels for this business really and we have to be led by what we believe in, and what we think we should be doing.

Undoubtedly we will grow, and we do see growth overseas because the UK is a limited market. But for our core business, I think we're a good manageable size. We are all about people - our relationship with the people that work for us and our customers and beyond. ■



"We do live and breathe our products. We want to make things that are built to last. We're a 'people' company, born out of family, and the people that work within the company are like extended family. We've stayed independent and true to who we are, and I think that comes across in our culture."

Ced Wells, AJ Wells & Sons



IW Chamber members receive a tour of the Newport factory, seeing the manufacture of Charnwood Stoves and signage for Transport for London

TALK TO THE ISLAND'S EXPERTS IN

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IW CHAMBER
BUSINESS AWARDS 2025
WITH WRS SYSTEMS

The Island's most prestigious awards ceremony will return in May 2025

Entries open on November 29th 2024
and will close on January 31st 2025



IW CHAMBER
Business Awards 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **WRS** SYSTEMS

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



THE CATEGORIES IN FULL:

Start Up Business of the Year

Sponsored by PC Consultants

Entrepreneurship Award

Sponsored by Red Funnel

Customer Service Award

Sponsored by RPL Construction

Community Award

Sponsored by Moore (South) LLP

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

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

Sponsored by Wightlink



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 will open on Friday 29th November and full details of the categories, entry forms and terms and conditions will be published on-line.

iwchamber.co.uk/awards2025 ■



PATRON SPOTLIGHT: POWERED NOW

Peter Hargreaves is admired in many circles and has been in the news recently as the company he founded has received a £5.4 billion takeover offer. Benjamin Dyer, CEO of trade app supplier Powered Now, asks him about his investment in Powered Now.

BILLIONAIRE PETER HARGREAVES SUPPORTS DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN THE TRADE INDUSTRY



Peter Hargreaves, investor in Powered Now.

Although you are well known in the world of finance, some people might not have heard of you. Could you introduce yourself please?

In 1981 Stephen Lansdown and myself started a Bristol company called Hargreaves Lansdown. This grew to be the largest retail investment platform as well as the biggest execution only stockbroker in the UK. It floated on the London Stock Exchange in 2007 and subsequently became one of the largest businesses on the market. It has recently received a £5.4 billion bid from private equity. As I'm still the largest shareholder I've been in the news quite a lot recently.

Powered Now provides an app that helps Tradel companies run their businesses. As a major investor in companies like Hargreaves Lansdown, Goonhilly Earth Station with NASA as a client and investment company Blue Whale Growth Fund, what made you think of investing in Powered Now?

I previously knew Chris Barling, one of the founders of Powered Now, as he was on the Hargreaves Lansdown board. I was slightly intrigued by his description of the trade industry as the last frontier of computerisation. He mentioned that the government initiative "Making Tax Digital" would spur digitisation and given the size of the industry, I thought that this could have legs. Actually it's been quite a slog and neither of us allowed for the government hurdles we've had to overcome.



WHAT IS POWERED NOW?

Powered Now is a field service management software designed for trade businesses in the UK, headquartered here on the Isle of Wight. It's an app-based solution that helps you manage all aspects of your business, from quotes and invoices to scheduling and job tracking.

Here's a breakdown of what it offers:

- **Paperwork:** Create professional quotes, invoices, and other documents on the go.
- **Job Management:** Schedule jobs, track progress, and communicate with your team.
- **Financial Management:** Track expenses, manage payments, and get a clear view of your finances.
- **Customer Management:** Store customer details, communication history, and job records.

Powered Now is accessible on any device, even offline, making it ideal for busy tradespeople who are always on the move. It's designed to streamline your business operations, reduce paperwork, and improve efficiency, ultimately helping you get paid faster and save valuable time.

You can learn more about Powered Now by visiting www.powerednow.com or calling 0800 368 8153



What are the benefits that Powered Now can bring to the Trade industry?

I think that people would be astounded at just how many benefits an app brings to tradesmen and women. The list is almost endless. To mention these quickly they include saving time, saving money, invoicing more, quoting easily when on the road with a professional appearance and automatic reminders, all of which help to get more business. You can also find things easily, reduce risks, communicate better with customers and possibly most important of all - be in the best possible control of your business.

I know that's a long list but each can be unpacked and explained in detail. I'm just not sure that we have time for that here. The thing that I would encourage anyone running a trade business – up to fifteen staff – is that they investigate Powered Now.

You have made a series of investments in Powered Now, the latest less than a year ago. Why have you continued to support them?

What's become clear over time, is that digitising the trade industry isn't simple. Tradesmen and women generally suffers from a lot of red tape, possibly due to its reputation for black market activity and some poor practices. I guess we can blame this for both the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS), Domestic

Reverse Charge (DRC) and The Construction Act. Then there are multiple rates of VAT to encourage green developments. Plus, there are all the other specific electrical regulations.

But it gets worse. Trades are by definition on the road. Sometimes there's no signal present. Powered Now had to solve the problem of always working, even in the sticks. That wasn't easy. Nobody wants a solution that requires paper and pen as well as having an app. Finally, there isn't one platform that everyone uses. People have iPhones, iPads, Android phones, tablets, PCs and Macs. Everything needs to work seamlessly on every device. It takes a lot of investment and Powered Now covers all of these points. But it's not been cheap.

Is there anything that makes you proud of Powered Now?

Hargreaves Lansdown built its reputation on the back of great service. We tried to keep things simple and we got real people to answer customer queries. I'm proud that Powered Now has adopted a similar approach. They just focus on the UK trade industry so are always up-to-date with the latest UK regulations. There isn't a debate about whether to meet the needs of UK trades or someone in Australia or wherever.

My final thought is a bit of a plug. I have invested millions in getting Powered Now to meet the needs of UK trade companies. I think that it's really worth giving it a try. ■

INCLUSIVE ISLAND

Inclusive Island is a programme designed to support and empower Island-based organisations to become more inclusive in their approach to employing staff. Wide consultation has resulted in the development of a new Toolkit for employers, which was launched at an event at Building 41 in September by the programme lead, Marnie Janaway.

INCLUSIVE ISLAND LAUNCHES NEW TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS

The event's opening speaker was Paul White, CEO of Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, a passionate advocate for people with hidden disabilities. Paul spoke with great knowledge and insight, and is a brilliant supporter of the programme.

Sarah Chatwin of ERM was another of the brilliant speakers at the launch event:

"It was great to be asked to talk at the event and the commitment behind making island organisations more progressive and inclusive is fantastic. The Inclusive Island events and the newly launched toolkit offers support to anyone who wants to understand more, act positively and engage in the inclusive conversation."

The new Inclusive Island Toolkit has been developed to help employers improve their knowledge and understanding of the issues around Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging.

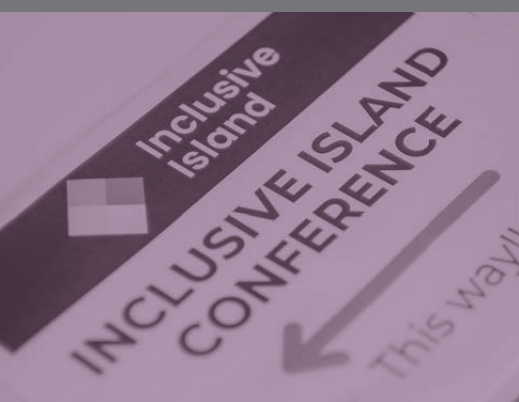
More than 80% of people with disabilities acquire their impairment during their working life, including mental health, hearing, sight and neurodiversity issues. Abilities change over time, and so people within your workforce may have disabilities that you are not aware of.

Attendees at the event heard a brilliant success story from Natasha Edwards of the Garlic Farm who worked with Care In The Garden to develop a fantastic 'buddy' support system. Natasha spoke about how positive this has been for everyone involved.

Alison Colley from Real Employment Law Advice offered an excellent, practical perspective on the legal and HR aspects. Alison's incredible knowledge and support has been a huge asset to the development of the Inclusive Island work.

Victoria Egerton Davies and Janet Stevens from the IW College are looking to develop courses that will further support organisations with a greater depth of learning, and highlighted the 'Workforce Development Fund'.

The event was only possible through the support of Chris Brammall, Ella Clapham, Oillie Richardson and Alex Minns from the Isle of Wight Council, and Councillor Debbie Andre who spoke of her great support for this work, closing the event.



"We are proud to connect with Marnie and the No Barriers team to support men's mental health issues. By working together we feel that a culture where men can talk openly is brilliant, rather than suffering in silence."

Martyn Thorp
Mindset Bros

Inclusive Island welcomed Sarah from Adaptive Surfing and Sue from Swim the Wight. Sports is such a great way for all to develop skills and confidence, helping mental health, support during menopause and much more.

The event created connections with Paula from Vectis Ventures, Stef and Dan from Caffé Isola, Richard White from the Island Careers Partnership and Kristina from WightFibre.

The event included a break out session where groups discussed the opportunities and challenges within their own organisations, and the feedback provided more brilliant ideas that will be used to improve and develop the Toolkit into the future.

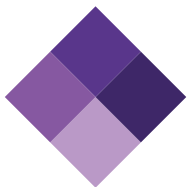
Inclusive Island's mission is to:

- See the person and their abilities
- Make the Island a great place to live, work and enjoy, for everyone
- Enable ALL of us to have fulfilling futures

This would not happen without our incredible Island and your inputs.

Inclusive Island started in September 2022, with the support of Liz Earle. The first event took place in February 2023, with over 60 people attending, hosted at Liz Earle's wonderful building at the Green House in Ryde. An amazing start!

In 2024 Inclusive Islands has been supported by the Isle of Wight Council with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (along with Go for Growth), enabling the development of the Toolkit, designed to help organisations to engage with those with potential barriers and help them have fulfilling futures. ■



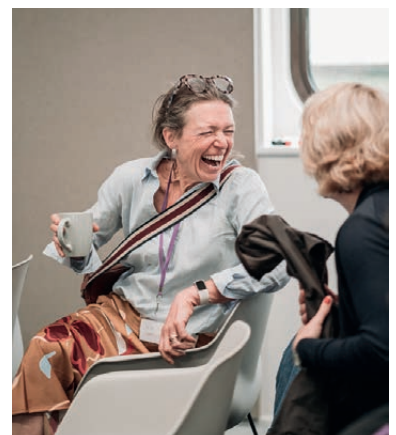
Inclusive Island

www.innovationwight.co.uk/inclusive-island



"An engaging well thought-out pack clearly designed to help not hinder."

Lisa Hollyhead
CEO of Sight for Wight





WIGHTFIBRE

PRESERVING A NATURAL TREASURE: WightFibre's Commitment to Red Squirrel Conservation on the Isle of Wight

WightFibre is proud to be in its third year of sponsoring a PhD studentship focused on the conservation of the Isle of Wight's red squirrel population. This project, run in collaboration with Bournemouth University, the Isle of Wight National Landscape, and the Wight Squirrel Project, aims to secure the long-term survival of this UK endangered species. Through a combination of cutting-edge research and fieldwork, the project will assess the health and viability of the Isle of Wight's red squirrel population, exploring challenges such as human interference, inbreeding, and climate change.



Why WightFibre is Involved

As a local Island business, WightFibre understands the importance of preserving the Isle of Wight's unique natural heritage and is deeply committed to supporting the Isle of Wight's environment and community. The Island's red squirrels are one of its most recognisable natural treasures. This investment in research will help ensure that the red squirrel population continues to thrive for future generations.

John Irvine, CEO of WightFibre, expressed his support for the project:

"We are thrilled to support this vital research. The red squirrels are an iconic part of the Isle of Wight's natural heritage, and we are happy to help to ensure their survival. By investing in this project, we hope to make a significant impact on the conservation efforts and help these beautiful creatures thrive for generations to come."

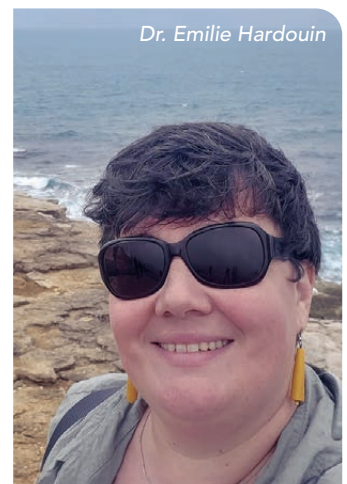
Importance of Red Squirrels on the Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight's red squirrels are not only a beloved symbol of the Island's natural beauty, but they also hold significant conservation value. The Island's population of around 3,500 squirrels is one of the last strongholds of the species in Southern England. The Isle of Wight's isolation provides valuable protection from the invasive grey squirrel, which has been a major factor in the decline of red squirrel populations across mainland UK.

Unlike their mainland counterparts, Isle of Wight red squirrels have retained their genetic uniqueness, forming what scientists call an Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU). This means that their genetic make-up is distinct, and preserving this diversity is crucial for the species' survival. However, research has also shown that the Island's red squirrel population has low genetic diversity and some population fragmentation, which the project aims to address.

Dr. Emilie Hardouin of Bournemouth University highlighted the importance of genetic diversity:

"Giving all the populations on the Island the opportunity to mix would allow them to bring all their gene pools together, creating better genetic health for future generations of squirrel and ensuring they can adapt as needed."



Dr. Emilie Hardouin

Alyson Buchanan



Alyson Buchanan, the PhD student working on the project, shared her experience:

“Working on this project has been incredibly rewarding. The red squirrels on the Isle of Wight are a unique and vital part of the UK natural heritage. Through our research, we hope to address the challenges they face and ensure their survival for future generations.”



The Role of Research and Fieldwork

Fieldwork data for the project has been collected by Helen Butler from the Wight squirrels project (wightsquirrels.co.uk). The research and fieldwork conducted as part of this project are crucial for understanding the current state of the red squirrel population on the Isle of Wight. By collecting data on the squirrels' health, genetic diversity, and population dynamics, the team can identify key threats and develop strategies to mitigate them. This includes addressing issues such as habitat fragmentation, disease, and the impact of climate change.

The project is using cutting edge sequencing technology to investigate the risk of inbreeding for our squirrels. They are also assessing the long-term viability of the Isle of Wight red squirrel population by analysing habitat availability, food resources, and genetic data, combined into a comprehensive model to evaluate any potential extinction risks.

Community Involvement in Feeding Red Squirrels

A red squirrel supplementary feeding survey is being utilised to investigate the extent and geographic distribution of supplementary feeding on the Isle of Wight. By understanding how much additional food is being provided to red squirrels by island residents, the University aims to better estimate the number of red squirrels the island can support. This data is crucial for assessing the population's ability to grow and thrive.

Additionally, the red squirrel supplementary feeding survey will provide valuable insights into the types of food being offered to the squirrels and how well the local community adheres to feeding guidelines. By collecting data on the specific foods being supplemented and comparing them with recommended feeding practices, the survey will help determine if residents are following proper guidelines designed to support the health of red squirrels. Additionally, the survey will reveal the geographic spread of supplementary feeding across the Isle of Wight, identifying areas where feeding is more common and potentially highlighting regions that may benefit from further educational outreach. This information will also allow researchers to assess how effectively the community responds to educational programs about proper feeding practices, offering feedback on the success of these initiatives and areas where improvements may be needed. Ultimately, this data will help guide future conservation efforts by ensuring feeding practices are aligned with red squirrel health and sustainability goals.

Read more about how to feed red squirrels on the Wight Squirrels home page.

www.wightsquirrels.co.uk/Red-Squirrel-Feeding.html

The Future of Red Squirrel Conservation

Looking ahead, the future of red squirrel conservation on the Isle of Wight depends on continued research, collaboration, and island community support. The findings from this project will inform conservation strategies and policy decisions, ensuring that the red squirrel population remains viable and resilient in the face of ongoing challenges.

WightFibre's commitment to this cause exemplifies the positive impact that local businesses can have on environmental conservation. By investing in research and supporting community initiatives, WightFibre is helping to safeguard one of the Isle of Wight's most cherished natural treasures.

The conservation of the Isle of Wight's red squirrels is a multifaceted effort that requires the collaboration of researchers, local businesses, and the community. Through dedicated research, fieldwork, and public engagement, the project aims to secure the long-term survival of this iconic species. WightFibre's sponsorship of the PhD studentship is a testament to their commitment to preserving the Island's unique natural heritage and ensuring a bright future for the red squirrels. ■



GURIT'S NET ZERO JOURNEY

From the early 'small steps' to making sustainability front and centre - Gurit's approach to helping the planet has taken significant strides.

In the latest of our Mission Zero case studies, we head to Gurit's Newport site to see how the manufacturer is driving sustainability.

Gurit's journey towards Net Zero began around three years ago with a series of energy-saving measures, such as replacing the lighting at its Newport site with LED alternatives and using more efficient boilers.

Those projects brought benefits for both the environment and the business, and have led Gurit to making sustainability a natural part of its daily operations.

"Embedding sustainability in our working practices through awareness raising, such as the Carbon Literacy Project, enables us to recognise initiatives at all levels of the business that can deliver this value," said Amy.

"We understand sustainability is not a 'nice to have' for business, it can provide real value for employees and customers, as well as significantly reduce operational costs."

More than 110 people are based at Gurit's St Cross Business Park site, which houses a factory manufacturing specialist resins and adhesives. Test labs, a huge warehouse and office space are also accommodated.

James Daws,
Gurit Site Manager
and Mission Zero Hub
committee member

Amy Moram,
Gurit Sustainable
Products Lead



INVOLVING THE TEAM

Efforts to engage the workforce have seen a shift in how the team approaches sustainability, with a collective focus placed on exploring new ways of working. Gurit's new gravity conveyors, and its collaboration with suppliers to recycle more packaging, are just two examples.

"Initially, we focused on specific projects, but learned that involving everyone is key to making real progress," said James.

"By considering sustainability in our daily tasks, projects and conversations with suppliers, it becomes a natural part of how we work day-to-day."

In addition to larger projects, emphasis has also been placed on the small changes that make a difference.

Gurit's 'Green Team' helps to empower the workforce with an interest in biodiversity to implement improvements. Composting, a new red squirrel run and log piles to encourage flora and fauna are all initiatives developed in the green space outside the Newport site.

Staff have been upskilled in carbon literacy training, giving them the tools and knowledge to build into everyone's day-to-day, while engaging in the community has been another positive step, with Gurit employees taking part in activities like litter picks and Himalayan Balsam picking.

"Engaging with the local community is essential to our sustainability efforts. Collaborating on collective initiatives like litter picks and habitat restoration strengthens our connection to the area and reinforces our commitment to shared responsibility for the environment," said James.



From left, members of Gurit's 'Green Team', Kate Gosden, Giulia Sartori and Sharon Pragnell

"We are delighted to be sharing some of the steps Gurit has taken towards taking greater responsibility for our environment. Working more sustainably has taken time and commitment but it has brought considerable benefits to our business, our staff, and of course, helps to protect our planet. As we continue our journey to embed sustainability into our day-to-day work, we hope our story helps to inspire other Island businesses to join us."

James Daws and Amy Moram



Gurit's Darren Eagles enhancing the process flow for material transfer within a production cell using gravity fed roller systems

Gurit is one of over 40 Island businesses to have signed up to the Mission Zero Business Hub Isle of Wight. To join them or to find out more, visit Mission Zero Business Hub | Isle of Wight.

missionzerohub.co.uk



“I believe every business can help the next generation to have a better future.”

NOSY founder Matt Greg is urging Island businesses to join the 'Curiosity Collective' to inspire more children to understand and respond to the pressing issues around our planet.

The planet conscious creative agency has joined the Wonderseekers charity's brand new corporate partnership scheme, which brings businesses together to support its work.



INSPIRING CHILDREN TO PROTECT OUR PLANET

Wonderseekers collaborates with schools, businesses and communities to nurture children's skills and knowledge, to help them understand more about climate change and biodiversity loss.

As well as running Winchester Science Centre, it provides a range of activities to bring science to life in the classroom and at home.

In the last year, over 115,000 people - children, their families, friends and peer groups - visited the centre, with 40,000+ specifically as part of school-based educational activities. A further 14,000 people engaged with the charity in the community, to learn and discover more about science.

For a £1,000 donation to join the Curiosity Collective, businesses can support the charity to provide new educational science and nature experiences for young people.

“For us, it's an exciting opportunity to demonstrate our values by taking action and contributing to a better future for children and for nature,” said Matt.

“It's very easy to feel overwhelmed by the state of our planet. We sit back and tell ourselves our efforts don't matter and we do nothing, though we owe it to our children to try.

“Wonderseekers is a charity that is switching mindsets from passive negativity to action, engaging young

minds with the natural world in a fun and imaginative way.

“We're really pleased to have joined the Curiosity Collective, joining other like-minded businesses committed to supporting Wonderseekers' mission.

“I encourage you to join us too.”

Investing in exciting young people

Johnson Electric Company, Parlex, has joined the scheme and believes empowering children with science skills is key to a better future.

“If you're wanting a return on your investment, there is none better than investing in exciting young people in science and technology,” said Dominic Ward, Head of Flexible Circuit Products Organisation at Parlex.

“You're investing in all of our futures because young people are our future.”

According to the Save the Children charity, 70 percent of those who completed a survey said they were worried about the planet. Wonderseekers is determined to equip more young people with the critical thinking skills needed to respond to global issues, with the input of businesses a key part.

“With the support of local businesses, we will help every child to discover the wonder of science,” said Ben Ward, Wonderseekers Chief Executive.



"Our aim is to empower children together, to develop their self-confidence and resilience and to help them connect and participate in positive local action.

"We're excited to hear from businesses who want to join us on our mission.

"It's time to join the Curiosity Collective and make a difference."

To find out more, bit.ly/curiosity-collective or scan the QR code. ■

Wonderseekers



IW CHAMBER | NETWORKING EVENTS & TRAINING COURSES

BUSINESS LUNCH WITH THE BANK OF ENGLAND

Isle of Wight College, Newport

Thursday 14 November, 11.30am-2pm

IW Chamber members - £20 per person

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

COFFEE & MINCE PIE

Caffe Isola, Newport

Wednesday 20 November, 3.30pm-5pm

IW Chamber members – FREE

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

CUTLASERCUT STUDIO TOUR

The 'Green Hangar' Scotchells Brook Lane, Sandown

Friday 22 November, 10am -11.30am

IW Chamber members only

Learn about the wonders of laser cutting and CNC engineering on this exclusive IW Chamber member tour. From small one-off B2C projects to large B2B designs and production runs, locally and internationally, CutLaserCut can make your ideas! Email them your artwork by Thursday 21 November and they can laser your design while you watch.



Quay Arts

IW CHAMBER NETWORKING BRUNCH

The Garlic Farm, Newchurch

Wednesday 27 November, 9am-11am

IW Chamber members - £20 per person

An ideal opportunity for informal networking in the great setting of The Garlic Farm. It's a smaller alternative to our breakfast event – join us for brunch, with a capacity for 30 people. If you're new to networking or prefer smaller events, our Brunch is the perfect way to get connected with like-minded business people.

FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING

Delivered by Good Skills Training at YMCA, Shanklin

Monday 2 December, 9am–12.30pm

IW Chamber members - £65+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 are as a fire marshal.

IW CHAMBER NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Quay Arts, Newport

Friday 6 December, 7.30am-9am

IW Chamber members - £18 per person

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

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW!



The Garlic Farm

EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK TRAINING

Delivered by Good Skills Training at YMCA, Shanklin

Monday 9 December, 9am-4pm

IW Chamber members - £74+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. The certificate will be emailed after completion.

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.

BOARD DIRECTOR 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)

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.

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

Looking to start your own business?
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Our expert business mentors will give you an overview of running your own business, operating as sole trader or company, bookkeeping, insurance, professional services, marketing and more.

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The Red Funnel Business Start Up Course is only £5 to attend, thanks to the support of **Red Funnel**. The courses are promoted 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

RED FUNNEL BUSINESS START UP COURSE

The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce is providing monthly, one-day business start up courses, Sponsored by **Red Funnel**. Our friendly courses will help you to get started on the road to being your own boss.



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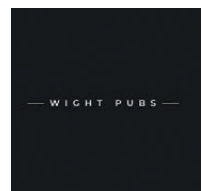
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www.iwchamber.co.uk

Call 01983 520777

Join the CHAMBER!

Being a member of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce is a great business decision! Membership starts at little more than £3 a week and entitles you to a huge range of business support, exclusive events and member discounts.

IW Chamber members have access to these four essential services:

- ChamberHealth & Safety
- ChamberHR
- ChamberTax
- ChamberLegal

These services give you unlimited access to no less than five business advice lines and a website which features over 750 free downloadable template documents. Not only that but you are protected by £1,000,000 of legal expenses insurance which includes employment cover and tax enquiry cover.

All these services are included in your membership fee.

Don't delay...join today!



NOVEMBER TRAINING SESSIONS

To secure your spot at either of these workshops, scan the QR code below.



6th November: Finance Training Session with Sally Casterton. 10am to 4pm. Includes lunch.

Sally is a people-focused advisor with a strong background in financial planning. In 2015, she founded Garner Financial Solutions to offer small business owners the benefits of an outsourced Finance Director, providing support and guidance through consultancy, coaching, and mentoring.

Understanding that many businesses struggle with numbers, Sally excels at demystifying spreadsheets and helping even the most numerically challenged individuals understand their business finances. Sally is a firm believer in business planning, including budgeting, forecasting, financial reporting, cost control, and cash flow management, and is brilliant at demystifying what was previously a blur of incomprehensible numbers!

This session will be beneficial for businesses in need of more structure or clarity around how the business is performing.

26th November: Social Media Marketing with Zoe Stroud. 10am to 1pm.

The owner of Zesty Marketing, Zoe brings 25 years of marketing and business engagement experience in a variety of business sectors including the Public Sector, Tourism, Transport, Utilities and Media. Zoe has a strong track record of success in growing brands and increasing revenue.

If you are lost in the maze of figuring out how to present your business on social media, this workshop is for you. In this workshop, you will learn about platform insights where you will discover the best features and best practices for top social media platforms including Instagram, LinkedIn & Twitter. You will also learn how to craft compelling content that resonates with your audience and drives engagement through content creation. Develop social media strategies that align with your goals and target audience through strategic planning analytics and metrics. You can also learn effective techniques on how you can connect with your audience and build a loyal community.

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Reflecting on the past and looking forward

IW CHAMBER PRESIDENT

By Jonathan Thornton, IW Chamber President

The IW Chamber's recent AGM, held at the New Holmwood Hotel in Cowes, was a great opportunity to bring together our members and to celebrate our longstanding memberships, with the presentation of Bronze, Silver, and Gold Membership Awards. It was great for me to hand out these certificates, in recognition of their support over many years.

It is also a time to reflect on the core activities of the Chamber and how we support our membership by looking back at our full social calendar of events, from the Expo and the Chamber Awards to countless breakfast networking opportunities, and new events that have been introduced to reflect member feedback.

At this AGM we also announced changes to the board membership. This year we thanked outgoing board members John Irvine, Rob Holgate, Helen Farrant and Alistair Dickinson for their service and support, and welcomed new board members, Darren Toogood of Island Echo, Katy Taylor of Wightlink, and Matt Greg of Nosy Creative Agency. It was exciting to announce the new Vice President of the Chamber, Alison Colley from Real Employment Law who becomes the first woman to hold this position in the history of the Chamber on the Island. She has supported the Chamber both as a member for some years and as a board member, and I am looking forward to working closely with her to continue with the changes to move the business forward and to increase the knowledge and expertise of the board, as well as staying relevant as an organisation.

We also saw the announcement that Steven Holbrook will be stepping down as CEO in August next year. His support of the Chamber has been second to none and we will carry on working with him in the coming months to continue to grow.

Looking back at membership over the past year, we are now at over 700 members from a cross-section of Island businesses large and small, which is the highest number we have ever had. The importance of chamber membership comes back to me when I'm travelling and see the importance placed on Chambers of Commerce around the country, and the pride that companies take in that membership making us, stronger together. We also welcomed new members who have come to us via the Go For Growth programme in the last 12 months, and we know that they will see the value of this initiative and all that the membership has to offer them in their initial stages as growing businesses.

I must also thank the Chamber team for all of their hard work over the past year. We are only as good as the sum of our parts and the team has worked tirelessly to benefit the members. Congratulations go to Kathryn Morey, who graduated from the University of Portsmouth with a First Class BA (Hons) Degree in Business Leadership and Management. She originally joined the team as an apprentice in 2013 and has become one of the most senior and experienced members.

The AGM has given me not just a chance to reflect on the year gone past, but to look forward to the year to come, and I am confident with our new board we will continue to expand and evolve our offering and strengthen our membership. ■

IW CHAMBER'S MISSION

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



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