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## Dear all,

Despite the lockdown it's been our second busiest winter since our contract began with prolonged periods of freezing weather requiring over 50 gritting

runs across the Island, as well as the usual responses to fallen trees, floodwater and our programme of road maintenance, gully and street cleansing and drainage works. Our teams have continued to work throughout the lockdown to keep the Island's roads safe for residents, including key workers needing to get to and from work.

We've also begun two major schemes; a reconstruction scheme at York Avenue in East Cowes and a junction improvement scheme at St George's Way in Newport, both timed to coincide with the quieter periods of restrictions and to ensure the work is completed ahead of the main tourism season.

The St George's Way scheme, part of a number of projects including the work at St Mary's which finished last year, is designed to help ease congestion in and around Newport by extending the lanes leading up to both Coppins Bridge and the roundabout near Matalan to help prevent the queues that form in these locations. Although this will inevitably create some disruption in the six months while this scheme is underway, it is hoped the longer-term improvement will make journey times better for residents and visitors alike.

Meanwhile in York Avenue, a major gateway route to the town, work is also moving forward on the rebuild of sections of this busy road and we have been very grateful to the residents of East Cowes for their tolerance of the extended diversion route while this important work is completed.

We are well underway with our road



and footway improvement programme with many residential streets having been completed already and having begun some of the more seasonal activity like grass and verge cutting and weeding. You can read in this newsletter how we have adopted a new approach to weeding this year having listened to issues raised by residents.

We are also continuing with work to improve accessibility for pedestrians in a number of locations around the Island and installing anti-skid (high-friction) surfacing to improve road safety for motorists in a number of key locations.

Although we are now all thinking ahead to the summer, we hope our Spring update provides you with a useful update. Don't forget you can keep up to date with our news on our website [www.islandroads.com/news](http://www.islandroads.com/news)

**Stephen Ashman,**  
*Service Director, Island Roads*

# Another busy winter



We've had our second busiest winter since the Highway PFI began in 2013.

Between October and the end of March, we carried out 51 gritting runs depositing a total of nearly 1,000 tonnes of salt on the network. That level of activity was eclipsed only in the 2017/18 'Beast from the East' winter when 1,456 tonnes of salt was used on 53 runs.

Though the 'Beast from the East' winter saw dramatic snowfall, this year's high level of activity was the result of prolonged periods of freezing weather.

This year there was more than twice the volume of the salt used and double the number of runs than in the preceding winter, 2019/20, (23 runs and 423 tonnes).

Though at the end of the traditional winter maintenance period, Island Roads will be ready to return with its gritting fleet should any unseasonably cold weather develop in the coming weeks.

## Safety schemes underway

A major safety programme to lay anti-skid surfacing at locations across the Island is underway.

The work is being undertaken now as temperatures need to be above freezing – and conditions dry – in order for the anti-skid surfacing to be laid effectively. Another programme will be undertaken after the main summer season – probably around September time.

The most significant work is being undertaken on various sections of the new St Mary's junction in Newport. The work is being carried out at night in order to minimise disruption.

As well as installing new anti-skid measures – or high friction surfacing (HFS) – on the approaches to junctions and traffic lights, the work will also include pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes and the introduction of bands of coloured HFS at several locations as a visual reminder of a change in speed limit between sections of the same road.



## New way of weeding welcomed

A new approach to removing weeds from the highway network has been announced.

This year we will be employing extra seasonal staff to remove weeds, wherever possible, by hand and traditional tools. Previously the approach to weed-removal was more reliant on the use of herbicides, often sprayed by contractors on quad bikes.

We will also be using an organic-based herbicide where manual removal is not possible.

The new method has been agreed following local feedback including dialogue with local stakeholders and in line with moves from within the highway maintenance industry to reduce herbicide use.

This new method will ensure we continue to maintain the level of service required and reflects our commitment to working in a way that looks after the environment.



## Complex structures work completed

Major work to strengthen the 20ft (7m) high wall that supports the highway at Hope Road, Shanklin, has been successfully completed.

The project addressed significant erosion at the base of the wall that had been caused by groundwater.

The scheme involved construction of new concrete foundations supported on a series of piles drilled into the ground at the base of the wall. The work also included improvements to the parapet at the top of the wall and also the use of soil nails to further strengthen the new foundations.

Slope netting installed to help support the topsoil on the bank will allow vegetation to take hold and add support to help reduce future erosion at the base of the wall.

The complex project involved erecting a scaffolding structure in order to accommodate the drilling rig needed for the piling and was completed within the target ten weeks also managing to avoid any long road closure, much to the relief of the local community.



## Work to reduce congestion in Newport

The latest phase of ongoing investment to reduce congestion in and around Newport is underway and progressing well.

The Isle of Wight Council scheme, delivered by Island Roads, will see St George's Way widened to improve traffic flows in this area of the town. It will also address safety issues and includes improved connections for buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

The scheme, which is funded by a government grant and developer contributions and not local authority resources, will also provide an upgrade to the existing crossing at the junction of Furrongs, improving safety for highway users.

During construction, a short local diversion using adjoining principal roads is in place to bypass St George's Way which will be restricted to one lane.

The project, which started in March, is expected to last for at least six months with the one-way restriction being removed in time for the school summer holidays and the subsequent surfacing work being undertaken overnight.



# Gateway road improvements

A major road improvement scheme is underway in East Cowes.

Reconstruction and resurfacing work on one of the Island's main gateway routes - York Avenue in East Cowes - is moving forward. The work is taking place early in the year when Covid restrictions are in place and so work can be completed before the start of the main tourism season.

The work is being split into separate phases to ensure as much of York Avenue as possible can remain open to traffic for as long as possible.

The scale of the work is significant with approximately 3,000 square metres of road being excavated up to a depth of over two feet (650mm) with some of the removal being done by hand given the presence of underground services in the area. The deep excavations mean a 24-hour-a-day road closure with local diversions in place.

The project which started in March is expected to last around two months, with night-time resurfacing currently scheduled in June.

Details of the scheme's progress will be given regularly by Twitter @Islandroads and via a dedicated page accessible from the homepage of our website.



## Belgrave Road progress

Comprehensive ground investigation works to determine the cause of the collapse of the retaining wall at Belgrave Road have been completed and the results analysed and a report has been prepared to identify possible options for the reinstatement of the road.

In the meantime, visual site inspections continue to take place at both Belgrave Road and Esplanade Road twice weekly to monitor any wall

movement and cracking at the top of the terrace and the middle and lower sections. Additional inspections are also undertaken after periods of bad weather. These inspections have shown no further significant movement, cracking or deterioration in recent weeks.

It is envisaged that the repair work could begin by mid-summer with work being completed by the end of November 2021.

# Yarmouth Bridge maintenance completed ahead of schedule



Maintenance work which formed part of Yarmouth Bridge's annual service was completed ahead of schedule in March.

Besides routine maintenance, the work involved the replacement of the landing pads which form part of the bridge's moving section.

## Thanks for your feedback

Thank you to everyone who took the time to take part in our annual customer survey.

Your feedback has been really helpful to us in identifying areas in which we can do better, it also highlights areas of our work in which we are performing particularly well.

The findings have been shared with our teams to inform their ongoing work and any changes they need to make to working practices.

## Work to improve pedestrian access

A comprehensive programme of work to improve pedestrian accessibility is underway and will continue throughout 2021 and beyond.

We are working with the IW Council on a series of improvements across the Island that make the network safer and easier for pedestrians to use.

We have installed dropped kerbs and tactile paving in an initial phase of work at six locations and have now begun similar improvement work at 22 further sites. The IW Council is also looking to make accessibility improvements at around ten other sites. In most cases these will be pedestrian crossing points with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

This work is in addition to the improvements we have made at 50 locations in recent years, often as part



of wider footway resurfacing schemes as well as the enhanced pedestrian crossings at other locations across the Island.

# Isle of Wight Foundation supports Island groups

Ten Isle of Wight groups shared more than £73,000 from our charitable foundation to help them in their work to tackle social isolation and help people access employment on the Island.

## Grant recipients

**Ability Dogs 4 Young People** – £14,000 towards a new van for a new ability dog trainer.

**Bembridge Friendship Circle** – £10,000 towards the cost of a new community bus.

**Care in the Garden** – £7,500 for a new ride-on mower, trailer and mulcher.

**Chillerton and Gatcombe Community Association** – £3,505 to upgrade Chillerton village hall as a community facility and hub.

**The Way Forward Programme** – £4,125.25 for a new fully accessible kitchen at their Newport headquarters.

**Whippingham Community Association** – £5,000 towards the cost of refurbishing the hall to make it accessible to all.

**Mountbatten Hospice** – £6,700 to purchase 30 laptops for its Neighbours Remote Support initiative.

**Isle of Wight Search and Rescue (Wight SAR)** – £8,000 for new search and rescue equipment and training.

**Aspire Ryde (pictured)** – £6,730 to provide computer equipment and furniture for a new skills hub.

**4Ps Training School run by Vectis Radio** – £8,000 to provide computer equipment and furniture for a new skills hub.



We look forward to seeing the progress of these projects over the course of this year and to seeing the impact that the funding has made.

Applications for the latest round of IW Foundation grants have just closed and we will be reviewing applications shortly. Up to £80,000 is once again being made available for groups on the Isle of Wight that help deliver projects that tackle social isolation or support access to employment.

You can find out more about the foundation, its work and the grants we have awarded to date by visiting [www.islandroads.com/iw-foundation](http://www.islandroads.com/iw-foundation)

## Staff make Daisy Chains their charity of the year

Island Roads staff have picked Daisy Chains as their chosen charity for the second year running.

Usually a different good cause is selected each year, but Island Roads staff have again chosen to fundraise for Daisy Chains because planned charity events during 2020 have been so badly affected by COVID-19.

The news has been welcomed by Daisy Chains, the IW-based children's charity which supports families affected by long-term sickness or disability. The charity's main focus has become assisting with the travel needs for those requiring urgent and sometimes life-changing treatment at mainland hospitals. And there has been no let-up in demand for their services.

Fundraising manager Mandy Fuller said: "It has been a



really hard year for us in terms of fundraising as we have been unable to hold any of the events. Luckily for us we received some grants in the first wave of the pandemic which allowed us to deliver much-needed food parcels and baby essentials parcels to those families most in need.

"We would like to thank Island Roads for again choosing to support our charity. It has been this kind of support that has kept us going through the challenges of 2020 and we are very proud to still be here to support Island families."

