

FactSheet

www.islandroads.com

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Helping to reduce flooding on the highway network *A guide to our work on the Island to help reduce highway flooding*

Highway flooding can be caused by several different factors including overflow from rivers and streams, badly drained land, blocked ditches, high tides, and stormy conditions or simply by prolonged or unprecedented heavy rainfall overwhelming the drainage capacity.

Here we explain what Island Roads is responsible for and the work we do to try and reduce the likelihood of flooding.

What is Island Roads responsible for?



Island Roads is responsible for maintaining a safe highway network and that includes work to reduce the likelihood of highway flooding. Much of this work involves the maintenance of the Island's existing highway drainage systems including gully and drain cleansing and the maintenance of highway ditches.

The activities to be carried out – and their frequency – are agreed with the Isle of Wight Council and monitored by the authority's Highway PFI contract management team.

We also provide, within our available resources, an emergency response when highway flooding occurs. This will typically involve unblocking drainage systems that have been overwhelmed by storm debris.

We are not responsible however, for water that enters the network from adjoining land or properties.

Drain and Gully Cleansing

A highway gully is a drainage pit covered by an open metal grating located on the edge of the road. The purpose of the gully is to drain water from the highway into the drainage system.

A highway drain is a pipe connecting the highway gully to the surface water sewer. The Island has a network of around 20,000 gullies, drains and manholes helping take rainwater off the highway.

Keeping the highway drains and gullies cleansed is a key function in preventing highway flooding. A gully system will perform at its optimum level if it is clean and clear of debris.

At the start of its contract in 2013, Island Roads carried out a deep cleanse of the entire highway drainage system. The network is also subject to a cleansing schedule agreed with the IW Council and monitored by the local authority's contract management team.



The routine gully cleansing programme is carried out by two 18-tonne tanker lorries which are based at our Stag Lane depot.

Cleansing treatments range from a quick cleanse to power jetting. If a problem is found, cameras are used to survey the gully and identify the problem, this survey is used to help plan suitable repair works. Locations that require more frequent cleansing are prioritised especially during the winter months. As required by the Environment Agency, only clean water is used in the cleansing process.

Waste collected from gully cleansing activities is transported back to Stag Lane where an initial treatment process is undertaken to separate the water and the debris. The treated water and debris are transported to a recycling facility where 95 percent of gully cleansing waste is then re-used or recycled into building material such as sand or aggregate.

The highway drainage systems are not designed to take water from adjoining third-party property or land which can also bring with it materials that cause blockages and flooding (this 'third party' water is often recognisable by its brown muddy rather than clear appearance). It is the responsibility of land and property owners to prevent water from discharging onto the highway.

You can watch a video on our [gully cleansing operations](#) on our website.

Street Cleansing



Debris on the highway can also reduce the capacity of a drainage system as it is swept into it by rainfall. The amount of debris on the network is reduced by regular street sweeping. The street sweeping frequencies are agreed with the IW Council and monitored through the Highways PFI contract management.

In line with the contractual requirement, all adopted highway on the Island has been zoned based on factors such as housing density, traffic use, public usage, and the presence of retail premises. A cleansing frequency is then applied to each zone.

For example, a residential street will be cleansed less frequently than a main shopping street or a tourism area which has a higher footfall.

These prime locations are swept manually on a daily basis and esplanade areas are swept weekly during the winter months and daily during the summer months. Additional localised cleaning is undertaken at particularly busy times such as in Cowes during the Cowes Week regatta.

Residential and rural roads are mechanically (using a road sweeper) and manually swept on a varying frequency according to the intensity of pedestrian use.

You can read more on our separate factsheet [keeping the network clean and tidy](#) on our website.

Clearing leaf fall

Leaf fall can also cause an issue, particularly in Autumn as trees shed their leaves. At this time, additional steps are taken to prevent this vegetation causing a safety hazard on the highway and/or entering (and compromising) the gully system. In the autumn months, we therefore deploy additional mechanical and manual sweeping resources to help tackle leaf fall and keep drains, gullies, and pavements as clear as possible.

Specific locations that experience increased leaf fall are scheduled for regular visits to remove leaf litter and branches.

We also respond reactively to reports of road drain grills blocked by leaves or storm debris and slippery conditions in areas of high footfall.

Roadside ditch clearance

Highway flooding is a nuisance for everyone, and overgrown or blocked drainage ditches can be just one of the many causes.

Island Roads is responsible for a proportion of ditches that run alongside the highway and work is regularly undertaken to keep these cut back and cleared of debris to allow water on the highway to drain effectively.

However, many more of the roadside ditches belong to local land and property owners. It is their responsibility, by law, to ensure ditches are kept clear and land adequately drained to prevent water, earth, and vegetation from entering onto the highway area.



Clearing away debris after hedge-cutting is also important as this can often clog up the ditches and prevent them from functioning properly.

If this work cannot be done quickly and satisfactorily, Island Roads may remove the debris to keep the highway safe and any costs for that work will then be passed to the landowner.

For more information on these responsibilities please view our leaflet '[Working together to ditch highway flooding](#)'.

To report a ditch that needs maintaining, please contact the Island Roads' helpdesk via email at info@islandroads.com or report it via our [online form](#).

Sewerage, sewers, drains and other drainage

Domestic sewer and drainage problems are dealt with by the Isle of Wight Council's housing department. They can offer advice to customers and also enforce the laws covering drainage and

sewers. Please contact the Isle of Wight Council's call centre on 01983 821000 or visit www.iwight.com for more information.

Sewerage pipes and manhole covers in the highway are usually controlled by Southern Water. Southern Water can be contacted on 01983 526611 or 0330 303 0368.

Reporting flooding on the highway or blockages to the drainage system

To report an incident of flooding from drains or gullies report it via our [online form](#). In an emergency call the Island Roads help desk on 01983 822440.

For help with other forms of flooding

For general issues around flooding, contact the Isle of Wight Council on (01983) 823600.

If you believe the flooding is from a main river or the sea, contact the Environment Agency on 0345 988 1188. www.environment-agency.gov.uk

The Environment Agency also provides help on flooding issues via its Floodline: 0345 988 1188.

Notify Southern Water if flooding affects your mains sewage/public drains by calling 0330 303 0368. www.southernwater.co.uk

Sandbag provision

While it is not the council's or Island Roads responsibility to protect individual homes or businesses and people are responsible for their own properties, in some emergency situations, the council will instruct Island Roads to position stocks of sandbags at the following strategic locations:

- Well Road, East Cowes.
- Simeon Street Recreation Ground, Ryde.
- St Mary's car park, Cowes.

Additional sandbag locations may be identified around the Island based on the forecast impacts of flooding and in areas where the Environment Agency has advised there is a potential risk of flooding.

The use of sandbags should be restricted to the protection of access points into residential properties, and we would ask that the numbers used are kept to a minimum (a maximum of 6 each property) to ensure that stocks are available for other residents.

Other useful contacts

Other useful contacts and information and advice about flooding can be found on the council's website <https://www.iow.gov.uk/news/Who-to-call-if-a-flood-happens>

You can visit our website for more details about any of our services www.islandroads.com