

Island Roads – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Your guide to how we manage and maintain the Island's highways

1. About Island Roads

What does Island Roads do?

Island Roads manages and maintains the majority of the Isle of Wight's highway network on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. Our role is to keep the Project Network safe, serviceable and accessible for residents, businesses and visitors. This includes maintaining a defined list of assets (Schedule 30) including roads, pavements, bridges, drainage systems, street lighting, traffic signs and road markings, as well as providing winter maintenance, grass cutting and street cleansing services.

In addition to day-to-day maintenance, we inspect and monitor thousands of highway assets across the Island, respond to emergencies, deliver capital improvement schemes, coordinate roadworks, manage permits for work on the highway and provide technical advice to the Council on highway matters. We also work closely with utility companies, emergency services, local councils and community groups to help ensure the highway network operates safely and efficiently.

Through the Island's long-term PFI contract, Island Roads is responsible not only for repairing defects but also for managing the network strategically, using condition data, inspections and asset management principles to prioritise investment and maintain consistent standards across the Island.

Who are Island Roads?

Island Roads is the organisations responsible for managing and maintaining the Isle of Wight's highway network on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. This includes an island based local team of over 200 employees delivers a wide range of essential highway services.

While Island Roads is proud to be based on the Isle of Wight and focused on serving local communities, we are part of Ringway in the UK as well as the wider Vinci Group of companies. This enables us to combine local knowledge with access to national expertise, innovation and resources from one of the world's leading infrastructure organisations.

What is the PFI contract?

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract is a long-term agreement between the Isle of Wight Council and Island Roads to improve, manage and maintain the Island's highway network. The contract was established following significant Government investment in the Island's roads and highway infrastructure. The Isle of Wight was one of only five areas in England, and the only rural authority, to secure this level of investment.

The term Private Finance Initiative refers to the way the initial investment was funded. Rather than the Government providing all the money upfront, private sector finance was used to fund major improvements to the highway network, with the cost being repaid over the life of the contract. This enabled a significant programme of improvements to be delivered in the early years of the contract, bringing roads, pavements, bridges, drainage systems and other highway assets up to a much higher standard than would otherwise have been possible.

2. Our Service

How is Island Roads' performance measured?

The PFI contract is performance-based, meaning Island Roads is required to maintain the highway network in accordance with a detailed Output Specification agreed with the Isle of Wight Council.

Performance is measured against 421 individual performance standards covering a wide range of services and assets, including roads, pavements, drainage, bridges, street lighting, street cleansing, winter maintenance and other highway infrastructure. Compliance is regularly monitored and audited.

The contract focuses on the condition and performance of the network rather than simply measuring the number of repairs completed. This means Island Roads must ensure assets continue to meet the required standards throughout the life of the contract.

Whilst there has been a number of service changes and savings introduced to meet Council requirements, Island Roads continues to achieve in excess of 99% compliance with the Output Specification. This demonstrates that the highway network continues to perform at a consistently high standard against the contractual requirements agreed with the Council.

How has the contract evolved?

When the PFI contract commenced in 2013, it included a range of highway and related services delivered on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. Since then, local government has faced significant financial pressures nationally and on the Isle of Wight. As a result, the Council and Island Roads have worked together to identify savings while continuing to maintain the highway network and meet statutory obligations.

Over the life of the contract, a number of changes have been made to the scope and frequency of some services. These include:

- Reduced frequencies for certain cleansing activities, including routine gully cleansing and litter bin emptying.
- Changes to grass cutting and verge maintenance programmes.
- The removal of the contractual handback condition requirements.
- Changes to CCTV monitoring and associated service provision.

These changes have enabled savings to be achieved while protecting priority safety-related activities such as highway inspections, emergency response, winter maintenance and the maintenance of critical highway infrastructure.

3. Road Condition

Why aren't all roads resurfaced?

The PFI contract focuses on improving the condition of the network overall. This means maintaining a consistent standard rather than resurfacing every road. However, the contract also sets a minimum condition above which all roads must be kept.

Are road conditions improving?

Yes, significant investment has improved the Island's roads, with national data showing major improvements in network condition over time. Recent Government data on roads where maintenance should be considered, known as 'Red Roads', illustrates this significant improvement. For strategic (main) roads, the Island has improved from joint 144th worst area in 2013 to joint 1st in 2025. For more rural (B and C) roads, using the same measure, the Island has improved from joint 133rd in 2013 to joint 1st in 2025.

When assessing road condition, it is important to recognise that roads are grouped into different districts and hierarchies. Major A roads, local distributor roads and residential streets serve different purposes and are managed to different standards. In addition, the contract divides the island into six districts which have to achieve an average score. National condition surveys measure the overall condition of the network rather than individual roads. This means that while some roads may still appear to require improvement, the overall condition of the Island's highway network has improved significantly.

4. Repairs & Maintenance

How do you decide which repairs to do first?

Repairs are prioritised based on risk, safety, and the condition of the road or asset.

What is the Project Network?

The Project Network is the defined list of roads, footways and associated highway assets that form part of the PFI contract and are managed and maintained by Island Roads on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. The defined list of assets is set out in Schedule 30 of the PFI contract.

The Project Network is not fixed forever. New roads and assets can be added to the Project Network through an agreed process, for example when new developments are adopted by the Isle of Wight Council. Similarly, where appropriate, assets can be removed from the Project Network following agreement between the Council and Island Roads.

Why hasn't my pothole been fixed yet?

Not all defects meet the criteria for immediate repair. Some are monitored and scheduled based on priority and available resources.

Why do some repairs look temporary?

Temporary repairs are sometimes used to make an area safe quickly, with a more permanent fix planned for a later date.

5. Roadworks

Why are there so many roadworks?

Roadworks can be inconvenient, but they are necessary to keep the Island's roads and essential services safe and operational. Work on the highway is carried out by a range of organisations, including Island Roads, utility companies, developers and other statutory undertakers.

More than 60% of roadworks are undertaken by utility companies to maintain or improve services such as water, gas, electricity and telecommunications. These organisations have a legal right to access the highway when work is required.

Island Roads also carries out maintenance and improvement work to roads, pavements, drainage systems, bridges, street lighting and other highway assets, as well as supporting new developments and infrastructure projects.

Safety is always the primary consideration. Many roads on the Isle of Wight are narrow, meaning there is often insufficient space to safely accommodate traffic and the workforce at the same time. Road closures are therefore sometimes necessary to protect road users and workers. While closures can be inconvenient, they often allow work to be completed more quickly and efficiently.

What is Island Roads' role?

Island Roads' role is one of co-ordination and ensuring that traffic management put in place by those working on the network is legal, safe and causes the least disruption practicable.

Planned work can only be carried out with a permit. The permitting process is designed to ensure that works can be co-ordinated and completed within an agreed timeframe. Island Roads administers the permit system on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. The statutory duties in relation to the Traffic Management Act remain with the council, including the approval of road closure orders.

Why do roadworks seem to happen at the same time?

To support the Island's tourism economy, major planned roadworks are generally discouraged during the peak summer months. This means roadworks often intensify during the shoulder periods in spring and autumn, when conditions are better for construction activities and the impact on visitors is reduced.

Because the highway is used by utility companies, developers and Island Roads, multiple activities can also take place at the same time, making roadworks appear more concentrated during these periods.

Where can I find information about roadworks?

You can view planned roadworks and closures via the Island Roads website or online using tools such as [one.network](#).

6. Reporting Issues & Contacting Us

How do I report a highway problem?

You can report issues quickly online using our reporting system (such as Fix My Street) or via the Island Roads website www.islandroads.com.

Your report is logged, assessed, and prioritised based on safety and urgency. You will receive updates where possible.

What should I do in an emergency?

If there is an immediate risk to safety, please contact Island Roads directly using the emergency contact number 01983 822440.

How long will it take to fix my issue?

This depends on the type and urgency of the problem. Safety-critical issues are dealt with first, while less urgent repairs may take longer.

Why can't I always speak to the person dealing with my issue?

Our teams manage a high volume of enquiries, so all requests are handled through our customer service system to ensure they are tracked and resolved efficiently.

7. Communication & Updates

How will I know about roadworks in my area?

We inform residents in advance of planned works wherever possible, including letters and updates to local councils and local elected members. Copies of all press releases are also sent to elected IW Council members. Regular updates – including a daily list of planned Island Roads activity – are provided on our X (Twitter) feed @Islandroads. Please follow us.

A weekly list of planned road closures is published in the County Press. It is also sent to stakeholders including local transport providers, Visit Isle of Wight, emergency services, and all parish and town councils and IW Council members.

Why didn't I know about works near me?

Island Roads aims to provide advance notice of significant planned works undertaken by our own teams where the impact on residents, businesses or road users is expected to be substantial. This may include letters to affected properties, updates to local councils and elected members, press releases, social media updates and information on the Island Roads website.

However, it is not practical to provide direct notifications for every maintenance activity carried out on the highway network. Smaller-scale works may therefore proceed without specific advance communication.

It is also important to recognise that the majority of roadworks on the Island are carried out by utility companies such as water, gas, electricity and telecommunications providers. These organisations are responsible for their own communications and notification arrangements.

Emergency works, whether undertaken by Island Roads or utility companies, may also need to be carried out at short notice to address safety issues and restore essential services.

For the latest information on planned roadworks and road closures, residents can visit the Island Roads website or use one.network.

Can I contact you via social media?

Social media is not monitored as a formal customer service channel and should not be used to report highway defects or service requests. To ensure enquiries are logged, tracked and directed to the appropriate team, issues should be reported via the Island Roads website, FixMyStreet, email or telephone.

8. Social and Community Impact

Does Island Roads support the local community?

Yes. While Island Roads is responsible for maintaining the highway network, we also work to deliver wider benefits for the Isle of Wight's communities, economy and environment.

As a major local employer, Island Roads provides jobs, apprenticeships, training and career development opportunities for Island residents. We work with local schools, colleges and community organisations to promote careers in engineering, construction and highways management.

We also support a wide range of community initiatives through volunteering, educational activities, work experience placements, charity partnerships and local events. Wherever possible, we seek to use local suppliers and contractors, helping to support the Island's economy.

In recent years, Island Roads has expanded its focus on social value, working with partners to create opportunities for young people, support vulnerable groups, improve employability and deliver lasting benefits for local communities.

How does Island Roads support the local economy?

Island Roads is one of the Isle of Wight's largest infrastructure employers, providing skilled jobs and long-term career opportunities for local people. We invest in apprenticeships, training and professional development to help develop local skills and create future career opportunities on the Island.

Supporting the local economy is an important part of how we operate. Since the start of the contract in 2013, Island Roads has spent more than £100 million with Isle of Wight-based businesses, helping to support local suppliers, contractors and service providers. This investment has helped retain spending within the Island economy while supporting jobs, growth and local expertise.

In addition, £746,142.35 of social value was delivered during 2025, through activities including apprenticeships, work experience placements, community volunteering, charitable initiatives and educational engagement.

We also work with schools, colleges and community organisations to provide work experience, careers engagement and educational opportunities that help inspire the next generation of engineers, technicians and infrastructure professionals.

Beyond direct employment and local spending, a safe and reliable highway network helps support businesses, tourism, public transport, emergency services and the movement of people and goods across the Island. By maintaining and improving the network, Island Roads helps create the conditions for the Island's economy and communities to thrive.

9. Who is Responsible?

What is Island Roads responsible for?

We manage and maintain the highway network, including roads, pavements, drainage, lighting, and street furniture. A full list of areas for which Island Roads is responsible is available on the Island Roads website <https://islandroads.com/our-highway-service/>

It should be remembered that the Isle of Wight Council owns the highway network. Island Roads manages it on their behalf.

Who is responsible for utility works?

Utility companies (e.g. water, gas, electricity) are responsible for their own works on the highway. Utility companies are responsible for the majority of work on the network.

10. Complaints, Claims & Feedback

Do you welcome feedback?

Yes. Whether positive or negative, feedback helps us understand what matters most to residents and road users. We regularly review comments, compliments and complaints to identify trends, improve service delivery and inform future decision-making.

How do I make a complaint?

We are committed to providing a high-quality service and welcome feedback from residents, businesses and road users. If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, please contact us through our website, by email or by telephone so that we can investigate your concerns and respond appropriately.

How do I make a claim?

If you believe that damage, loss or injury has occurred as a result of the condition of the highway or the actions of Island Roads, details of our claims process can be found on the Island Roads website. Claims are assessed individually and in accordance with the relevant legal requirements.

What happens when I make a complaint or claim?

All complaints and claims are logged and reviewed by the appropriate team. We aim to investigate concerns thoroughly and respond within the timescales set out in our customer service procedures. Where improvements can be made, customer feedback helps us identify opportunities to improve our services.