



ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

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Draft - minutes IWALC Executive Meeting 26th March 2026 at The Riverside Centre,
Newport Isle of Wight and via Zoom - commenced 7pm

Present:

Cllr Patricia Redpath (Chair), Cllr Susan Hardy (Treasurer), Mrs Jacky Matthews (Clerk – St.Helen's), Cllr Phil Jordan (Ryde) and Brian Jennings (County Officer),

Members:

Cllr Bob Blezzard (Newchurch), (Shalfleet), Cllr Nick Stuart (Calbourne), Cllr Cheryl Fontana (Fishbourne) Cllr Vivian Roberts (Arreton), Cllr Ian Boyd (Sandown), Cllr Julia Laursen (Chillerton & Gatcombe), Cllr Penny Acton (Gurnard), Cllr Diana Conyers (Ryde), Cllr Sarah Morris (Lake), Cllr Liz Wills (Rookley) and Cllr Richard Whiting (Brading).

1. Welcome

Cllr Repath (IWALC - Vice Chair) chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Cooper who was unwell and welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:, Cllr Lorraine White, Cllr Bill Freshwater, Cllr Vix Lowthion, Cllr Jane Timbrell , Cllr Tony Barry, Cllr Steve Cooper and Cllr Claire Critchison.

3. Minutes

Cllr Blezzard proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th January 2026 be accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings; this was seconded and supported by a show of hands.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer (Cllr Sue Hardy) had submitted a bi-monthly finance report and explained that only four IWALC memberships were outstanding. Cllr Hardy also reported that she has recently transferred £15000 of funds into the high interest account (from the current account) and that the interest accrued will more than pay any fees being charged by Lloyds Bank for hosting the account.

5. Chair's Report

N/A (Cllr Cooper was unwell).

6. County Officer's Report

The CO highlighted his recent attendance at the NALC STAR Council Awards at the House of Lords alongside Cllr Bob Blezzard. While noting that the award winners were primarily larger, well-resourced authorities, the event served as a vital advocacy platform for engaging with Peers and MPs, including East Wight MP Joe Robertson. Building on partnerships from the event, a Zoom training session on "Prudent Investment for Local Councils" with CCLA is scheduled for the evening of May 6th. Additionally, early results from an ongoing training poll show that over 60% of the roughly 40 respondents support the introduction of Saturday training sessions (in addition to weekday training), with the survey remaining open until the end of March to help shape the year's professional development calendar.

7. Protocol 16

Cllr Diana Conyers re-capped that IWALC had written to the Isle of Wight Council Leader Cllr Phil Jordan and requested that the IOWC reconsider adopting the proposed protocol detailing the future relationship between the IOWC and IWALC members. Cllr Jordan had written in response, expressing his personal desire that the relationship between IWALC members and IOWC is further formalised.

Cllr Jordan then explained that in parallel, Cllr Ian Boyd had been in contact about the issue of inter-council co-operation and that as a result Cllr Jordan had approached the CEO of the IOWC (Wendy Perera) and had proposed a new stewardship approach (between the IOWC and the Island's Local Councils) for the Isle of Wight Council to address significant financial challenges, including a projected £11 million deficit over the next three years. This initiative moves away from binary asset transfers toward a collaborative, transitional framework for managing services and community assets across the island. Cllr Jordan emphasised the need for this policy to be established before the next budget cycle, highlighting that government-mandated service transformations - particularly in adult social care - will likely proceed regardless of the upcoming election.

Central to this vision is the clustering of resources among smaller parishes to improve efficiency and the early involvement of local councils in policy discussions. Cllr Jordan criticised existing bureaucratic hurdles and the Isle of Wight Council's tendency to focus on obstacles rather than solutions. Instead, he advocates for leveraging economies of scale and sharing best practices to manage larger, island-wide assets and improve the experience of Island life for all.

Cllr Ian Boyd thanked Cllr Jordan for attending and sharing this update and expressed his belief that this approach will be essential to keep valued assets accessible to the community.

Cllr Redpath acknowledged the value in exploring a new collaborative approach but sounded a note of caution that for local councils to be able to take on assets, they must be well supported by the IOWC and the assets themselves cannot be in a state whereby the local councils will not have the resources to bring them back up to an acceptable standard. As an example, the principal park at Puckpool, which is an Island wide asset, managed by the Isle of Wight Council, has been allowed to deteriorate and is now beyond the resources of the local council (Nettlestone & Seaview Parish Council) to take on.

Cllr Penny Acton also acknowledged that a new approach should be welcomed and investigated thoroughly so that the implications of local councils (in particular, smaller councils with part-time staff) are not left in a position where they are responsible for assets they will not be able to manage as this will not be an improvement for the community.

Cllr Conyers suggested that as the proposal takes shape, IWALC members should have a workshop to discuss the practicalities of going forward with the new approach and this was greeted positively by the members in attendance.

8. Reports from Outside Bodies

- **National Assembly & LGA Workshop:** Cllr Bob Blezzard had circulated a report on the latest NALC National Assembly and it is also available to read on the IWALC website.
- **National Landscapes:** Cllr Nick Stuart reported that unfortunately, the Landscape Connection Project (which was the lottery funding they were bidding for) has been unsuccessful and will not be receiving any further funding.
- **Island Nature Forum:** Cllr Penny Acton has requested that the minutes of the last forum meeting are sent to the CO, who will then share them with IWALC members. One thing Cllr Acton was keen to point out that as it had been noted what a powerful tool the LNRS (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) was with regards to evaluating planning Applications. The next forum will be on the 9th June and Cllr Acton welcomed members to submit their questions for it to her.

The members were thanked for their submissions, and there were no further comments.

9. Close of Meeting

With there being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 8.17pm.