ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

County Officer: Brian Jennings
Tel 07464 894216
Email: countyofficer@iwalc.org

Draft - minutes IWALC Executive Meeting 24th September 2026 at The Riverside Centre, Newport Isle of Wight and via Zoom - commenced 7pm

Present:
Cllr Patricia Redpath (Chair), Cllr Ian Boyd (Vice Chair), Cllr Susan Hardy (Treasurer) and Brian Jennings (County Officer).

Members:
Cllr Bob Blezzard (Newchurch), Cllr Nick Stuart (Brighstone), Cllr Vivian Roberts (Arreton), Cllr Steph Toogood (Ventnor), Cllr Penny Acton (Gurnard), Cllr Diana Conyers (Ryde), Cllr Sarah Morris (Lake), Cllr Monique Gallop (Northwood),Cllr Mick Lyons (Havenstreet),Cllr Harriet Brabazon (Bembridge), Cllr Patrick Farrell (Yarmouth), Cllr Bill Freshwater (Yarmouth), Cllr Giles Alldred(Shorwell), Cllr Nick Stuart (Calbourne, Newton & Porchfield) and Cllr Dan Wavell(Brighstone).

1. Welcome
Cllr Redpath (IWALC Chair) welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies
Apologies were received from: Cllr Joanne Ballington, Cllr Jane Timbrell , Cllr Sally Chaucer, Cllr Jonathan Hill and Cllr Jon Ellis.

3. Minutes
Cllr Blezzard proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 30th July 2026 be accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings; this was seconded and supported by a show of hands.

4. Chair's Report
Cllr Patricia Redpath provided an update on two key upcoming events:

Isle of Wight Council Workshop (14th October 2026):

Background & Leadership: Clarified that the upcoming parish workshop was originally initiated by IWALC in conjunction with Cllr Jonathan Bacon. Following initial communication oversights by the Isle of Wight Council regarding invitations and IWALC's involvement, discussions were held with officer Melanie White. It was confirmed that IWALC will be involved in structuring the session.

Timing & Format: Based on a survey of parish councils conducted by the County Officer, an evening session was overwhelmingly preferred over a Saturday morning. The session duration has been extended from two hours to three to allow sufficient time for discussion.

Venue & Attendance: The meeting will be held at Westridge. Invitations extend to one representative from every parish council (including non-member councils), alongside designated IWALC representation. Slide materials provided by Isle of Wight Council officers have been received.

Combined Authority Online Briefing (19th October 2026 at 18:00):

Dr. Ruth Adams, Chief Executive Officer of the new Combined Authority, will lead an online Teams session open to all local councillors and staff.

The session aims to discuss how parish councils will fit into the structure of the new Combined Authority.

IWALC Organisational Review Working Group:

Members of the working group appointed in July met briefly and agreed to pause further formal proposals until after the October 14th and 19th meetings, using the outcomes of both sessions to inform next steps.

5. Treasurer's Report
The Treasurer (Cllr Sue Hardy) had submitted a bi-monthly finance report. Its contents were approved with no queries.

6. County Officer's Report
The County Officer shared the following report:

1. Budget and Finance Training

We are pleased to announce that our upcoming Budget and Finance Planning Training is scheduled for Thursday, October 29th at The Riverside Centre in Newport.

We currently have a dozen attendees signed up, but there is still room available. Members wishing to reserve a place or send additional representatives from their council are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

2. Business Plan Development Session

Following interest from several councils, we are exploring the possibility of hosting a specialised session on Business Plan Development, delivered in collaboration with the CEO of Sussex CALC.

If your council would be interested in participating in this training, please let me know so we can gauge total numbers and help finalise arrangements.

3. Upcoming Calendar & Reminders

- October 29th: Budget & Finance Training Session (The Riverside Centre, Newport)
- Next Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday 26th November.

7. External Body Representation – to assign IWALC representatives to the following bodies:

7.1 Voluntary Sector Forum – unfortunately, funding from Community Action IOW is no longer available so the forum will not be running, therefore no representative will be appointed.

7.2 Isle of Wight German Twinning Association – No members present were nominated for the postion so the County Officer will request nominations via email.

8. NALC AGM Motion from Newchurch PC – "NALC notes that the Government is moving apace towards the creation of Mayoral Combined Authorities and a nationwide system of Unitary/Parish local government notwithstanding the recent pause announced for Hampshire and other areas. In these circumstances HM Government is called upon to ensure local council (parish) representation on Mayoral Combined Authorities."

It was resolved that IWALC would submit the motion for the NALC AGM in November.

9. IOWC/Local Council Partnership Working Session
There was a discussion about suitable representation of IWALC at the workshop session the IOWC will be hosting (Wednesday 14th October 2026, from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm, in the Conference Room at Westridge, Ryde) to explore greater cooperation between the IOWC and Local Councils. It was decided that the Chair and Vice Chair (Cllr Redpath and Cllr Boyd) plus Cllrs Acton, Lyons and Conyers would attend to represent IWALC – individual local councils have all been invited to send a dedicated representative.

10. Reports from Outside Bodies.

Cllr Conyers had already circulated a report from IWBRUG, Cllr Stuart thanked Cllr Conyers for raising issues about West Wight bus services during the forum and the report was noted.

Cllr Nick Stuart gave a verbal report regarding National Landscapes (formerly AONB) and related initiatives:

National Lottery Grant Funding Application:

Although an initial lottery bid was turned down, National Landscapes was invited to submit a revised application. The new application focuses on "landscape connections" covering several West Wight parishes (following previous work in East Wight).

Bouldnor Forest Campaign & Forestry England:

Background: Forestry England had planned to place long-term caravan dwellings (intended for up to 10 years) in Bouldnor Forest, taking advantage of a exemption loophole in the 1960 Caravan Sites Act without proper consultation.

Successful Opposition: Following pressure from Shalfleet Parish Council, the Bouldnor Forest Group, and local representatives, Forestry England backed away from the proposal.

National Landscapes' Role: National Landscapes sent formal letters protesting Forestry England's failure to consult them and maintained their opposition after Forestry England attempted to justify the plans.

Isle of Wight Council & Wider Legal Action:

Cllr Stuart successfully passed a motion through Full Council rejecting this type of development and urging the Isle of Wight Council to pursue legal remedies to close the 1960 Act loophole across the entire island. The goal is to prevent similar developments on other Forestry England or private landowner sites.

Shalfleet Parish Council (led by Cllr Hill) and officer Giles Aldrich continue to work on resolving the issue island-wide with support from the Planning Department.

Cllr Penny Acton gave a verbal report on topics from the Island Nature Forum:

Peat Project (Porchfield & Southampton University):

She highlighted an ongoing peat project in Porchfield involving work with Southampton University.

Coastal Bird Projects:

She noted interesting local wildlife conservation initiatives discussed at the forum, specifically projects centered on oyster catchers and sanderlings.

Work Experience Youth & The Commonspace:

She mentioned that Commonspace had recently hosted four work experience students/young people. She noted that schools are currently struggling to secure work experience placements and suggested parish councils look into whether they or local organizations can offer placements to help.

SINCS:

SINCs (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation): She noted a discussion where three SINC applications were evaluated against environmental criteria - two were accepted as submitted and one was slightly amended - encouraging parishes to explore local SINC designations.

Building on Cllr Acton's report, Cllr Ian Boyd reported the following:

Update on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
Definition & Status: SINCs are local planning designations representing Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (similar to small, locally designated SSSI sites). There is a presumption against development on designated SINC sites within the adopted Island Planning Strategy map.

Criteria & Approval Process: SINC criteria are managed via the Local Record Centre (Richard Grogan and team at National Landscapes). Applications are reviewed by the Local Nature Partnership, after which approved sites go to the local authority for formal adoption.

Resumption of Process: The process has restarted after being stalled for over ten years (the last designated SINC was the Newport–Cowes Cycleway). Five sites recently passed, with around eight more in the pipeline (including local orchards).

Action for Parishes: Parishes are encouraged to inspect the SINC layer on the online Isle of Wight Council planning map to identify nearby sites and to consider putting forward missing local sites of ecological importance through the new application route.

Local Authority Amenity Land & Event Fees
Increase in Charges: Attention was drawn to a steep rise in local authority charges for hiring amenity land/public spaces (e.g., land hire fees rising from £400 to £1,600).

Impact on Local Events: This cost increase has led directly to the cancellation of community events (e.g., Appley Day). Combining high land charges, increased parking fees, and licensing constraints will probably result in lost net revenue for the principal authority and harming public health/community initiatives.

Role of Parish Spaces: Parishes that own or manage their own public open space (such as Brighstone) were advised to keep event fees minimal to support community access and local events while principal authority rates remain high.

11. Close of Meeting

With there being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 7.50pm.