

# COMMUNITY CONNECTOR / COMMUNITY RESILIENCE WEST WIGHT REPORT

November 2024 -  
December 2025



Written By  
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[westwight.org.uk/community-connector/](https://westwight.org.uk/community-connector/)

# BACKGROUND

I have been serving as the West Wight Community Connector since 2019, with a focus on fostering community connections and helping individuals feel included and supported. This report summarises the work carried out between November 2024 and December 2025.

In my role, I support people to overcome loneliness, engage with local activities, and access both formal services and informal support networks. By linking individuals to community events, guiding them to appropriate services, and supporting the development of community-led initiatives, I aim to strengthen the social fabric and resilience of West Wight.

Alongside individual support, I work collaboratively with local organisations to build effective community networks. I meet people at the West Wight Sports and Community Centre, within local neighbourhoods, and in people's homes. My support is available to individuals of all ages, helping everyone feel part of an active, connected, and welcoming community.

# FUNDING

This role is made possible through the support of Community Action Isle of Wight's Community Resilience Project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, with additional contributions from the Living Well and Early Help Service and Totland Parish Council. Since 2024, West Wight Sports and Community Centre have kindly helped to bridge a funding gap, while efforts continue to secure long-term financial support. I am grateful to all these organisations for their ongoing commitment, which allows this role to continue supporting people across the local community.



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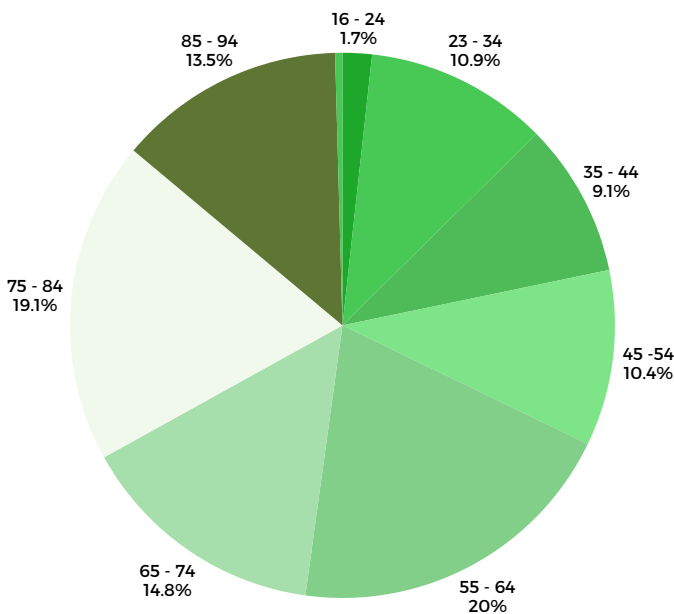
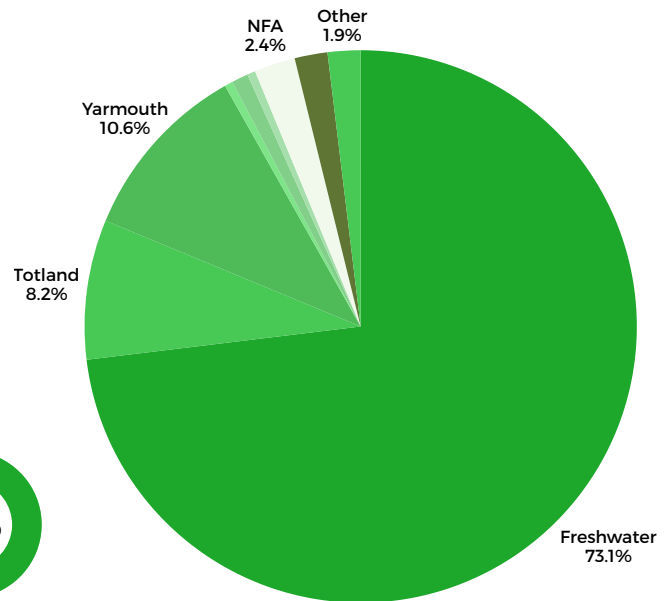
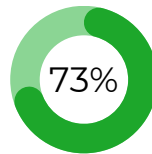


Between November 2024 and December 2025, I worked alongside 230 local residents. During this period, I noticed an increasing number of people needing support with Attendance Allowance and Blue Badge applications, as well as transitions from Employment and Support Allowance to Universal Credit. These processes can be lengthy and complex, requiring a focus on difficulties rather than strengths. Many residents face particular challenges this year, including rising living costs, limited local transport, and social isolation. My role continues to emphasise a strengths-based approach, helping people build on their abilities and lead fuller, more fulfilling lives.

## ONE TO ONE STATISTICS

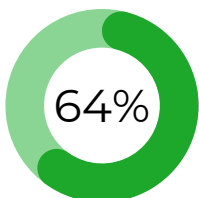
**Freshwater** accounts for the majority of referrals, representing 73% of all introductions—unsurprising given its larger population and the presence of areas of deprivation in West Wight. Our Place attracted people from out of area

**Freshwater**



The age profile shows that my role engages with a broad cross-section of the population, spanning young people through to very old age. While all age ranges are represented, the largest concentration is among adults from working age through to retirement, particularly those aged 55–84. This demonstrates that my role is especially effective at supporting people in later working life and older adulthood, while still remaining accessible to younger and older residents across the community. The youngest individual I am working alongside is 16, the oldest, 94.

**Gender**



**Female**

The gender profile shows 64% of people engaging with my role are women, compared with 36% men. This is not unexpected in a rural context, where women are more likely to seek community support, social activities, and preventative services, while men often engage only when a specific need arises. Rural factors such as social isolation, traditional gender roles, and limited informal support pathways reinforce this pattern. My role is therefore valuable in reaching women, while highlighting opportunities to develop engagement approaches that better reach men.

# INCOME MAXIMISATION



Between November 2024 and December 2025, I worked with **33** people to help them access a range of benefits, guiding residents through complex system changes and supporting those with health challenges to secure essential aid like Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Attendance Allowance. This support is critical as the Isle of Wight faces a unique "Island Factor," where **13.9% of households struggle with fuel poverty** and residents face high travel costs for off-island services. My work comes at a time of significant national shifts, with more people moving onto Universal Credit, where nearly half of households with children face payment deductions, and a rising number of individuals requiring help for long-term health conditions. In an environment where **55% of the population struggles to access basic appointments** and local councils face immense pressure to fund social care, this personalized guidance helps vulnerable residents navigate a fragmented system and overcome the growing digital divide.

## TOTAL INCOME GENERATION

# £260,489

Average £7893 per client.

## BLUE BADGE

A Blue Badge can save an individual between **£600 and £3,300 each year**. For Isle of Wight residents, these savings are often even greater, due to the additional cost and frequency of ferry travel for medical appointments on the mainland. This year, I have supported **8** more residents in successfully obtaining a Blue Badge, bringing the cumulative potential annual savings across our community to around **£26,400**.

Beyond the financial benefit, each successful application represents a real, tangible difference in someone's life: enabling an older resident to attend weekly physiotherapy sessions without stress, allowing a parent to access essential healthcare for their child, or giving someone living with a disability the independence to visit friends and local services freely. These stories highlight how Blue Badges not only ease financial pressure but also restore dignity, autonomy, and quality of life to those who need it most.

## Context going forward:

Significant changes to **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** eligibility rules are projected to impact hundreds of thousands of recipients nationally by 2026, creating high levels of stress and uncertainty for those currently undergoing reviews.

## KATE'S STORY



**Who:** An elderly couple with a son who has significant health issues, impacting his ability to manage daily life. The family has been supported over the last 10 years to navigate care and health challenges.

**Problem:** The father has become terminally ill, and the mother has recently faced her own health issues, leaving her to manage much of the care alone. The family needed guidance to access appropriate services and to renegotiate care arrangements for both their son and the father.

**Action:** Provided ongoing support to the family, helping them navigate the care process and renegotiate care arrangements multiple times over the past year. Assisted the father in accessing services to assess his needs and explored options to

support the mother in managing day-to-day responsibilities. Coordinated with Mountbatten Hospice and Adult Social Services to ensure continuity of care.

**Result:** Additional care is now in place, with support and plans established for both the father and the son. The family is better supported, and the burden of care has been eased.

## NATHAN'S STORY

**Who:** A father managing his children's education, his wife's care needs, and his elderly mother's dementia.

**Problem:** His daughter was struggling with home education, his other daughter had low school attendance, household finances and debt were challenging, and Nathan faced health issues and family tension.

**Action:** Support included liaising with schools, assisting with Free School Meals and home education, advising on finances and debt, helping organise the household, and providing guidance for Nathan's health and wellbeing.

**Result:** Children are re-engaging with education, household routines are improving, finances are better managed, Nathan's health is being addressed, and family relationships have strengthened, creating a more stable and supportive home environment.



\*Stock images have been used and names changed to protect the anonymity of the local residents I have worked alongside.



## HARRY'S STORY

**Who:** An elderly gentleman who has been becoming increasingly frail and has experienced multiple hospital admissions over the past year. He has been supported over a long period to maintain his independence while managing health and social challenges.

**Problem:** The gentleman has been reluctant to accept ongoing care support due to concerns about independence and cost. He also struggles with social relationships in the community, leading to difficult situations that he has found overwhelming. Coordination between health, housing, and family support was needed to manage complex needs.

**Action:** Provided ongoing support to help him consider care options and future accommodation, addressing concerns about independence and affordability. Assisted in navigating and defusing difficult community interactions, helping him rationalize challenges that felt overwhelming. Coordinated with the housing association, adult social care, GP surgery, and family to manage his care and social needs effectively.

### Result

The gentleman now has a clearer understanding of care and accommodation options, with support in place to manage difficult social situations. Relationships with key services and family are better coordinated, helping him maintain as much independence as possible while planning for future needs.

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## OLIVE'S STORY

**Who:** A lady recently bereaved after the loss of her husband, who had been her sole carer. She was referred via Age UK's hospital service for support with practical and emotional challenges.

**Problem:** She faced multiple challenges: adjusting to life without her husband, identifying support at home, managing practical tasks such as closing accounts and returning an assisted vehicle, planning a funeral, and coping with further bereavement of a pet. She also found it difficult to accept additional health support.

**Action:** Provided emotional and practical support, helping her access home care options and manage essential tasks. Guided her through funeral arrangements and bereavement support, while exploring health support options at a pace she could manage.

**Result:** The lady is gradually moving through her grief and has support in place for home care and essential tasks. Ongoing assistance remains available as needed to help her adjust to life after loss.



\*Stock images have been used and names changed to protect the anonymity of the local residents I have worked alongside.

# FEEDBACK

*"I would never have managed to complete all that paperwork without your help. I'm so grateful as the money will help so much. Here is a small token of appreciation that I would like to be used to support children*

*MG West Wight client who made a donation to WWSCC to support children following a successful benefits application.*

*"I just wanted to say thank so so much for helping me with my PIP review. I was so stressed about it but they have awarded me high care and low mobility so that will make such a difference. Thank you Adam"*

*KT who suffers from anxiety and PTSD who finds it very hard to go out into public spaces but slowly built a relationship with me over a number of months in preparation for this review.*

*"It's so nice just to know that I am thought of. This year has been pretty awful to be honest, but you have reminded me that life will go on and that there are people out there that genuinely care*

*AL. West Wight mum who has family with significant health needs and has worked alongside me to navigate future planning.*

*"You've been incredibly supportive and the one constant presence amongst so many different organisations coming and going. I know I can always trust you, and I know that you're honest with me, without sugar-coating stuff. That honestly has helped me make decisions I might not held off on"*

*SN West Wight client with long-term conditions that I have supported for almost ten years.*

# PROJECTS

## ECO REFILL

In June 2025, the Eco Refill Scheme successfully transitioned from the West Wight Timebank to a permanent home at West Wight Sports and Community Centre, where it has quickly become an integral part of the Centre's community offer. Since the move, the scheme has continued to expand and develop, offering residents an accessible way to purchase eco-friendly, vegan household and personal care products in refillable quantities.

The scheme now operates:

- Tuesday mornings: 10:00-12:00
- Saturday mornings: 09:30-11:30

Additional pop-up sessions have also been trialled, including a late-night session for Christmas, providing flexible opportunities for the community to access sustainable products.

Volunteer involvement has grown considerably, increasing from just three at launch to eight active volunteers, demonstrating strong local engagement and support. Crucially, all profits are reinvested directly into West Wight Sports and Community Centre, supporting its long-term sustainability and enabling a wide range of community activities and benefits. In its first six months at the Centre, the scheme has already raised £500, which has been allocated to support vital projects such as staff training and Centre improvements.

I have actively supported the Eco Refill Scheme in several ways, including:

- Creating advertising and promotional materials to raise awareness
- Supporting design elements for clear and attractive communications
- Liaising with the Centre's Health & Safety Manager on the implementation and printing of customer labels
- Promoting the scheme across multiple channels to reach a wider community audience

Through these contributions, the scheme has not only strengthened its operational capacity but also reinforced its role as a sustainable and community-focused initiative, helping local residents reduce waste while supporting their local charity.

### Eco Refill

Refill your essentials the eco-friendly way!



West Wight  
Sports & Community Centre

### Eco Refill

Try our eco-friendly gift ideas

December:  
Tuesdays 10:00-12:00  
Saturdays 09:30-11:30



# PROJECTS



## SAFE AND WARM COMMUNITIES

I bid for funds through Action Hampshire as part of the Safe and Warm Communities programme through Our Place West Wight. I delivered a series of energy advice sessions and carbon monoxide (CO) awareness workshops to support local residents during the colder months.

Sessions were delivered both in person and online to maximise accessibility, with tailored content designed to help individuals reduce energy bills, improve home heating efficiency, and understand the dangers of CO poisoning.

In addition to group workshops, the team provided one-to-one support for residents facing more complex challenges, including fuel poverty, poor housing conditions, or health-related vulnerabilities. This personalised advice included help with understanding energy bills, accessing available grants and discounts, and implementing low-cost energy-saving measures. CO awareness formed a key part of these sessions, with practical guidance and, where possible, the distribution of CO alarms.

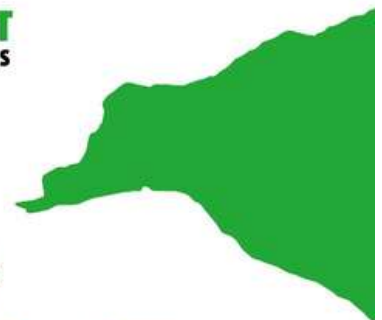
The project successfully increased awareness around home energy use and safety, helping participants feel more confident and better informed. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many residents valuing the friendly, practical approach and accessible delivery. Strong partnerships with local organisations such as housing providers and advice services ensured that residents were also effectively signposted to wider sources of support.

## WHAT'S ON WEST WIGHT

I regularly update the What's On West Wight guide throughout the year to ensure it remains relevant for the community. Copies need to be reprinted frequently as they quickly disappear, and local agencies often comment on how useful it is—both as a reference for activities and as a conversation starter to help people think about overcoming isolation. It's designed to connect residents with local groups, events, and support services, making it a practical tool for staying active and engaged in West Wight.

WHAT'S ON WEST WIGHT  
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR WEST WIGHT



# PROJECTS

## COMMUNITIES AGAINST CANCER



I was successful in securing a £2,500 grant from Action Hampshire to support Communities Against Cancer initiatives. Using this funding, West Wight Sports and Community Centre has been able to offer a range of pop-up classes, including Revolution Indoor Cycling, pop-up Men's Pilates, and dance sessions, providing community members with different ways to maintain their health and reduce their risk of cancer.

Looking ahead to 2026, we plan to expand these activities by introducing pop-up healthy cooking sessions. I will also be producing a leaflet highlighting the early signs and symptoms of the most common forms of cancer. This resource will enable participants to take important information home with them, helping to promote early detection and, together, reduce both the risk and potential severity of cancer.

## FITNESS FOR ALL

The Fitness for All programme has enabled community members to access a six-month reduced-price membership at West Wight Sports and Community Centre, (WWSCC) helping to remove financial and confidence-based barriers to engaging in physical activity. Through this programme, I worked closely with a small number of individuals who faced challenges leaving their homes and accessing fitness opportunities, offering encouragement, signposting, and ongoing support to help them take part.

While participant numbers have been low, the impact has been significant. Feedback from those involved has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting improvements in confidence, motivation, and overall wellbeing. Notably, one young person engaged through the programme has experienced a drastic reduction in antisocial behaviour and interactions with the police, representing a meaningful and tangible positive outcome.

The Fitness for All programme aligns closely with wider Community Connector and WWSCC work, supporting healthier, more connected lifestyles and contributing to improved physical, mental, and social wellbeing. It also complements other projects aimed at early intervention, prevention, and helping individuals feel more engaged within their community.

## COMMUNITY KITCHEN

I have been working with Gouldings Respite Centre and Diane Goring from the local GP surgery to develop a community kitchen project aimed at identifying and supporting people who are isolated at home. The project encourages individuals to attend a weekly meal at the respite centre, providing up to three additional free meals per week for local residents. If successful, the initiative aims to expand to a weekday service, helping people stay socially connected, maintain good nutrition as they age, and enabling community organisations and support workers to identify further preventative measures to support resilience and independent living for longer.



# PROJECTS



## SCHOOL HOLIDAY FUNDED ACTIVITIES AND TESCO STRONGER STARTS



Over the past 12 months, West Wight Sports and Community Centre have been delighted to support 42 children in accessing free summer and school holiday activities—opportunities they might not otherwise have been able to afford.

These sessions have given young people the chance to take part in a wide range of fun and educational activities, helping them to build skills, confidence, and lasting memories.

Bookings for these sessions are handled through Sarah, one of the staff members at the Sports and Community Centre, who has been amazing at supporting families with their applications. I have also supported some community members directly, helping them fill in their applications when they haven't felt confident doing so independently.

I'm very pleased to share that following an application to Tesco's Stronger Starts programme, the local community voted our project as the highest priority of the three advertised this summer. As a result, we have been awarded £1,500 towards the continuation of this project from February 2026. This funding will mean even more children can access activities that they might not otherwise have the chance to take part in.

As in previous years, our sessions have included activities such as intensive swimming lessons, climbing, kayaking, snorkelling, soft archery, Rookie Lifesaving, and pickleball. These activities not only provide valuable physical exercise but also help children develop life skills, teamwork, and self-confidence.

The continued success of this project has only been possible thanks to the generous support of organisations and donors like Tesco's Stronger Starts programme, who understand the importance of giving children opportunities they might not otherwise have. I remain committed to exploring further funding streams to ensure these vital experiences continue to be available to all local children.





## THE QUIET CORNER

I supported the launch of The Quiet Corner at Colwell Baptist Church, a volunteer-led space offering a peaceful and welcoming environment for unpaid carers, those who have been bereaved, or anyone experiencing isolation. My involvement included helping to set up the project, the design of promotional materials, and spreading the word to local networks to raise awareness of this new support. The Quiet Corner is a flexible space where visitors can sit quietly and reflect, chat with volunteers or other



community members over tea or coffee, get creative with crafting, tend to and grow in the gardens, or simply be still in a peaceful setting. It can also serve as a springboard for visitors to develop their own groups or activities within the community. Led by volunteers Joy and Janet, who bring both passion and lived experience of caring for loved ones.

## FOODBANK

During this reporting period, I issued **56** food bank vouchers to local residents. The Freshwater Food Bank remains one of the lesser-used food banks on the Isle of Wight, which may reflect concerns in a small community about being seen accessing support.

I promote the food bank at West Wight Sports and Community Centre, share updates online about opening times and needs, and remind voucher holders how to access support. I also offer peer support to the two Community Wellbeing Practitioners who operate at food bank sites across the island, sharing knowledge and ideas about the support available to those who access the food bank.

Beyond issuing vouchers, I work alongside people to build resilience, helping them manage challenges without ongoing reliance on the food bank. Rising food and fuel poverty on the Isle of Wight mirrors national trends, highlighting the importance of local services like our food bank in supporting those in need while encouraging longer-term stability.



## COMMUNITY SESSIONS



# MONDAYS: TOTLAND

The Our Place sessions at Christ Church in Totland, held weekly on Mondays from 2.00pm to 3.30pm, provide a valuable opportunity to engage with residents who may not otherwise attend our main Tuesday drop-in in Freshwater. My regular attendance at these sessions ensures that support is accessible to people in Totland, helping us reach a broader and often less visible section of the West Wight community.

With the support of several committed volunteers, the Totland group has grown into a welcoming and supportive space. Participants take part in regular quizzes and shared activities, and the group has also successfully contributed crafted items for the Festival of Trees in Freshwater at Christmas, helping to build confidence, connection and a sense of contribution among attendees.

The sessions have also enabled strong links with partner organisations. We have been fortunate to attract regular input from a local PCSO, allowing residents to raise neighbourhood concerns and build trust through monthly contact. In addition, Safeguarding Technologies have attended to provide information and devices that help people remain independent in their own homes for longer., Age UK, who also attended, have offered advice and support for residents aged 50 and over.

However, the session has faced challenges following the removal of the FYT afternoon bus service, which has had a direct impact on accessibility. A number of regular attendees have been unable to continue attending, as alternative transport arrangements have not been possible on a consistent basis. Despite this, the sessions continue to provide meaningful support to those who are able to attend and remain an important point of access for practical and preventative support in Totland.

As the Totland sessions are generally quieter than their Freshwater counterpart, they provide an ideal setting for more in-depth, practical support. This has allowed me to complete Attendance Allowance and Blue Badge applications on site, reducing the need for separate appointments and removing barriers for individuals who may struggle to access support elsewhere. This flexible use of time ensures that residents receive timely, person-centred help while making effective use of session capacity.

For more info visit [www.westwight.org.uk/our-place](http://www.westwight.org.uk/our-place)



## COMMUNITY SESSIONS



FREE WEEKLY COMMUNITY CAFE  
EVERYONE WELCOME

Information & advice  
Digital Device Support  
Drinks  
Chat  
Games

Plus guest organisations each week

TUESDAYS 10:30 - 12:30  
WEST WIGHT SPORTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE  
MOA PLACE, FRESHWATER PO44 9XH  
MORE INFO: 01983 240 722  
WESTWIGHT.ORG.UK/OUR-PLACE

# TUESDAYS: FRESHWATER

This year, Our Place Tuesday sessions at West Wight Sports & Community Centre have continued to be a vibrant hub for the community, attracting 30–40 residents each week. These sessions have become a key space for connection, support, and practical assistance, and I am proud to be part of it as the Community Connector. At most sessions, I am on hand to provide face-to-face triage support, answering questions and helping residents with a wide range of issues. I consistently have a queue of people seeking support, and it is clear that word of mouth has helped people understand that Our Place is a safe, welcoming space to access information and guidance.

This year, we have continued to host a wide range of organisations, offering specialist advice and support. These include:

- Safeguarding Technologies, providing devices that help people stay safe and well in their homes, particularly as they age
- Carers Isle of Wight, supporting unpaid carers with advice and guidance
- Paragon, the domestic abuse charity, visiting to provide confidential support
- Becca Cameron, our local councillor, available once a month to help residents with local issues
- Age UK's volunteer service, now supporting older people alongside our team
- Community Action's Community Law Service, offering housing, benefits, and legal advice
- Glanvilles Damant Solicitors, running a free monthly legal clinic
- NHS Health & Wellbeing Roadshow, offering flu and COVID vaccinations, blood pressure checks, lifestyle advice, and guidance on conditions such as heart disease and cancer
- Our local PCSO, providing advice on community safety

Alongside this support, our volunteer team continues to do a fantastic job. A particular highlight is the monthly community lunch, most recently a Christmas lunch, prepared by Mel from Just Ask, Freshwater Parish Council, with support from the volunteers. This creates a warm and welcoming environment where residents can stay longer, socialise, and feel part of the community.

Our sessions also offer free access to games tables, including pool and table football, and surplus fresh food and bakery items from local supermarkets to help reduce food waste.

Being part of Our Place Tuesday allows me to connect residents with the right services, provide practical support, and strengthen community links. It is incredibly rewarding to see people leave feeling supported, informed, and connected. These sessions truly are a one-stop hub for advice, wellbeing, and social connection in the West Wight area.

For more info visit [www.westwight.org.uk/our-place](http://www.westwight.org.uk/our-place)



**COMMUNITY  
SESSIONS**

**Our Place THURSDAYS**  
JOIN US FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES  
EACH WEEK INCLUDING:

- THE GAMEBOULEVARD
- Health & Wellbeing
- Remember when... Reminiscence Sessions
- GET ACTIVE
- AND MORE!

ALL WELCOME 2PM-3.30PM THURSDAYS  
WEST WIGHT SPORTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE  
01983 240 722 [HELP@WESTWIGHT.ORG.UK](mailto:HELP@WESTWIGHT.ORG.UK)  
[WESTWIGHT.ORG.UK/COMMUNITY/OUR-PLACE](http://WESTWIGHT.ORG.UK/COMMUNITY/OUR-PLACE)

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [YouTube](#) [WhatsApp](#) [Zoom](#)

OurPlaceWestWight

## THURSDAYS: FRESHWATER

I'm delighted to reflect on another successful year of Thursday sessions. Attendance has been very good, and it's been wonderful to see so many older residents enjoying the social connection and variety of activities we offer.

This year, we were very sad to lose our lead volunteer, Sheena, whose dedication and warmth were at the heart of the sessions. We are also extremely grateful to Angie, who stepped in to run the sessions for several months before needing to focus on other volunteer opportunities. Thanks to the ongoing commitment of our volunteers, we have now introduced a rolling lead system, with different volunteers taking charge over a few sessions at a time. This ensures that this important and welcome group continues smoothly.

Hazel Britton, as Our Place Coordinator, and Mel Gardner, Just Ask Support Officer from Freshwater Parish Council, have been integral in supporting this transition and ensuring the continuation of the group. Their guidance and commitment help make these sessions possible.

We have been very fortunate to enjoy some fantastic activities this year, including a free trip to Mottistone Manor through the National Trust. Other highlights included creative crafts, reminiscence sessions, a guest talk from the Shipwreck Museum on local history, as well as regular games and music sessions that encourage interaction and fun. A favourite for many has been the gentle exercise routine at the start of each session, expertly led by Emily from West Wight Sports and Community Centre, helping participants improve mobility and maintain an active lifestyle in a welcoming setting.

Our Place Thursdays provide a supportive and engaging environment for older residents, offering a diverse range of activities designed to promote well-being, social connection, and enjoyment. Each six-week block is carefully planned and led by our dedicated volunteers, with invaluable support from Hazel and Mel, ensuring every session is enriching and accessible.

I am proud of the positive impact these sessions have on our community, fostering a sense of belonging, boosting mental and physical health, and creating opportunities for new friendships to blossom.



# OUR PLACE LEAFLET

During 2025, additional leaflet runs have taken place across different parts of the community, helping to attract more people to Our Place sessions and encouraging more residents to get in touch directly about my role. The Foodbank has also reported a direct positive impact following these leaflet drops. We are always keen to welcome more volunteers to help leaflet their own streets, enabling us to reach more people and reduce the load on existing volunteers.

**WEST WIGHT**

**A COMMUNITY SPACE FOR EVERYONE!**

Looking for a friendly spot to meet new people, enjoy a hot drink, and connect with local services? Our Place runs free community sessions in Totland and Freshwater, open to all. Whether you're looking for advice, a friendly chat, or a fun activity, we've got something for you! Everyone is welcome – come along, relax, and see what our community has to offer. Find out more inside!

OurPlaceWestWight

**Our Place**

**TOTLAND**

**MONDAYS**  
2pm-3:30pm \*  
Christ Church, Alum Bay New Road Totland, PO39 0ES

Join your community for hot drinks, cakes, chat, quizzes and more! Plus information, advice and support available from Adam, our West Wight Community Connector.

Let **FYTbus** help with free transport to/from your home. Book via the 'Book a Journey' app (download at [www.FYTbus.org.uk](http://www.FYTbus.org.uk)) or phone 01983 752917.

*\*sessions do not run on Bank Holidays or during August.*

**Our Place**

**FRESHWATER**

**TUESDAYS**  
10:30am - 12:30pm \*  
West Wight Sports & Community Centre, Moa Place, Freshwater PO40 9XH

Join us for hot drinks, biscuits and chat, free use of our pool tables, plus advice and support on a range of topics from organisations including:

- West Wight Community Connector
- Freshwater Parish Council Just Ask Support Officer
- Digital Device Support
- Veterans Outreach Support
- Employment Advice
- Energy advice
- Legal clinic
- Community Policing and more!

Let **FYTbus** help with transport to/from your home. Visit [www.FYTbus.org.uk](http://www.FYTbus.org.uk) or phone 01983 752917 to find out more.

*\* sessions do not run during August.*

**Our Place**

**FRESHWATER**

**THURSDAYS**  
2pm - 3:30pm \*  
West Wight Sports & Community Centre, Moa Place, Freshwater PO40 9XH

Join us for games, music, crafts, quizzes, reminiscence, gentle exercise and more! Find the latest programme at: [www.westwight.org.uk/our-place](http://www.westwight.org.uk/our-place) or pick one up from West Wight Sports and Community Centre reception.

Let **FYTbus** help with free transport to/from your home. Book via the 'Book a Journey' app (download at [www.FYTbus.org.uk](http://www.FYTbus.org.uk)) or phone 01983 752917.

*\* Thursday activity sessions run in blocks with short breaks in-between.*

**WHAT'S ON WEST WIGHT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Beyond Our Place sessions, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved and find support in West Wight.

Pick up a copy of What's On West Wight from the West Wight Sports & Community Centre reception, or download it at [www.westwight.org.uk/community-connector](http://www.westwight.org.uk/community-connector) to explore local groups and activities for all ages.

To add, update, or remove an activity in What's On, contact Adam on 01983 240 722 / 07498 496 719, or email [adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk](mailto:adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk).

**WEST WIGHT**

**USEFUL INFORMATION**

**COMMUNITY CONNECTOR WEST WIGHT**

West Wight Sports and Community Centre, Moa Place, Freshwater, PO40 9XH

Serving Freshwater, Totland, Yarmouth, and Shalfleet, Adam helps residents overcome loneliness and connect with their community. He provides information on local events, access to support services, and assistance in launching community initiatives. His free support is available to all ages, with no time limits. Contact Adam at 01983 240 722, 07498 496 719 (call, text, WhatsApp), or [adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk](mailto:adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk). You can also meet him at the West Wight Sports and Community Centre, in the community, or at your home.

**Isle of Wight Foodbank**  
Together with Trussard

Freshwater Methodist Church  
Brookside Road, Freshwater PO40 9AN  
Tuesdays 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Isle of Wight Foodbank helps those struggling with food poverty and short term crisis by providing 3 days' worth of food using a voucher system. In crisis? Get a voucher from Adam Tucker, Community Connector: 07498 496719, Mel Gardiner, Freshwater Parish Council: 07599 465722, Dale Sloan, Social Prescriber: 01983 758998 or Foodbank Headquarters: 01983 292040.

**FYTbus**

Wight Community Access, Winchester House, The Broadway, Totland, PO39 0AX

FYTbus - Your Friendly Local Transport Service helps you get where you need to be in Freshwater, Yarmouth, and Totland. Offering:

- Scheduled morning services on weekdays
- A flexible, bookable afternoon service (use the 'Book a Journey' app)
- Regular shopping trips
- Door-to-door transport for medical appointments (available to West Wight residents)

Local residents can enjoy great value journeys with a FYTpass. Find out more at [www.FYTbus.org.uk](http://www.FYTbus.org.uk) or call 01983 752917.

# CHALLENGES: FUNDING

As a Community Connector and on behalf of West Wight Sports and Community Centre Charity, one of our ongoing challenges is securing sustainable funding so that our services can continue and grow. Each year we fundraise and submit multiple grant applications, and this year we've also asked the community to support us through initiatives like the Benefact Movement for Good Rolling Awards, which was unfortunately, unsuccessful.

However, the wider funding landscape is extremely competitive: many charities now face low success rates for grant applications, with sector analysis suggesting overall success rates often sit around 15-30% for first-time or general applications, and some major foundations average around 20-25% or lower for new awards.

Even when charities target appropriate funds and refine their bids, national surveys show a relatively small proportion are successful on more than half of their grant bids, and only a minority are successful on all those submitted. These realities reflect a wider trend of increased demand for limited funds and heightened competition from across the sector.

Despite this, we will continue to pursue all suitable opportunities in the coming year, working closely with support organisations such as GetGrants and the Isle of Wight Council's grant finder team to maximise our chances of attracting income so we can offer a diverse range of vital support to our community.

# CHALLENGES: PA NOTICEBOARD

The Isle of Wight PA Notice Board provides a platform for individuals seeking personal assistants (PAs) to connect with available support. In West Wight, we are fortunate to have some very skilled and dedicated personal assistants. However, the pool of PAs is currently very small. This limited availability, combined with our local demographic—characterised by a higher proportion of older residents—makes it particularly challenging for people to find the support they need.

A further complication has arisen due to a recent change in the PA Notice Board service. A fee of £15 is now charged to any person who is self-funding their care and does not receive direct payments from the council in order to place an advert on the website. From personal experience, I am aware of several vulnerable individuals who do not meet the criteria for direct payments but have chosen to delay advertising for care due to the cost involved.

This development may have unintended consequences. By discouraging early engagement, some individuals may wait until their needs become urgent before seeking support. This delay is likely to create additional pressure on NHS services and adult social care, as more intensive interventions may be required when care needs are not addressed promptly.



# CHALLENGES: FYT BUS AFTERNOONS

The FYT bus charity provides vital transport services across our community, supporting access to activities, healthcare, and essential services. Recently, due to a loss of funding, the charity was forced to withdraw its afternoon service, which had been used by community members to attend activities such as the Our Place Thursday sessions. This change has created significant challenges for vulnerable individuals without their own transport, highlighting how increased costs and funding pressures are directly impacting charities' ability to serve their communities.

Despite these challenges, we are very grateful that the FYT bus continues to regularly serve the West Wight Sports and Community Centre and the adjacent GP surgery. Their hospital transport and medical appointment services have also been invaluable to a number of people I have worked alongside, ensuring access to essential healthcare and supporting community wellbeing.



# CHALLENGES: COMMUNITY PANTRY

The mobile community pantry project operating in Freshwater came to an end in May 2025. The initiative, which allowed Island residents to purchase £15 worth of groceries for just £5 per session, faced several logistical challenges throughout its run. Frequent changes to its schedule, venue, and ongoing issues with vehicle maintenance, staff illness, and cancellations led to confusion and low attendance.

While delivery support was offered through the

Keert bike service for those unable to attend in person, uptake remained low due to limited awareness of the option. The pantry was also unable to provide fresh or frozen food, as it lacked a refrigerated vehicle. With no renewed funding and continued operating losses, the project could not continue.

Isle of Wight Foodbank  
Together with Trussell  
**Freshwater**

| DAY     | TIME            | WHERE                       |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| TUESDAY | 3:00PM - 5:00PM | 2 BROOKSIDE RD.<br>PO40 9AN |

isleofwight.foodbank.org.uk | 01983 292040 | Love Lane, Cowes, PO31 7ET  
Registered Charity in England & Wales (1144044)

# TRAINING

I am committed to the ongoing development of my skills to better support people within the community. I am currently undertaking a Level 2 course in Counselling Skills through Bournemouth and Poole University, which is due for completion in February 2026. This training is enabling me to further develop effective conversational skills to support individuals in exploring and overcoming issues that may be preventing them from moving forward and building greater resilience in their lives. Alongside this, I actively ensure my practice remains up to date by regularly attending safeguarding conferences relating to both children and adults.

# NEXT STEPS

This has been a busy but highly rewarding year, with significant progress made across a range of community-focused activities and partnerships. Over the coming 12 months, this work will continue, with a strong focus on further developing ideas, strengthening relationships and creating new opportunities that respond to local need.

I have been linking in with Creative Island, who are exploring ways to expand opportunities for creatives across the Isle of Wight. More recently, I have also been liaising with a new local resident who is keen to develop drumming workshops within the community, which presents an exciting opportunity to broaden our creative and wellbeing offer.

Alongside this, I am leading a project to redesign the West Wight Sports and Community Centre website in preparation for an upcoming change in booking software, ensuring the Centre is well-placed to transition smoothly when the new system comes into action.

I will continue to explore the development of the community kitchen and will build further on the existing strengths of Our Place. A key priority will be identifying and pursuing funding opportunities, both to support my role, which will lose a significant funder in October 2026 when the Community Resilience Project through Community Action comes to an end, and to enable further ways of supporting our community directly through West Wight Sports and Community Centre. This will include continuing to strengthen partnerships with local town and parish councils, faith groups and community organisations.

## QUESTIONS / FEEDBACK

For any questions or feedback on this report,  
please contact me via:

07498496719

[adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk](mailto:adam.tucker@westwight.org.uk)

