ANNUAL REVIEW

Isle of Wight 2024

HiWCF
LOCAL GIVING FOR LOCAL NEEDS

Island Funds for Island Causes
IWCF
Isle of Wight Community Funds

Andrew Cassell Foundation

Pan Together

Care in the Garden

South Wight Area Youth Partnership

Welcome

2024

Mrs Susie Sheldon, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Isle of Wight and President of Isle of Wight Community Fund

As President of the Isle of Wight Community Fund (IWCF), I am delighted to present our Annual Review for 2024. I am again delighted that despite continued economic turbulence, the IWCF, managed by HIWCF, has enabled more than £200K in funding for the Isle of Wight. Of course, it is not the numbers that matter, it is what that funding helps community groups to achieve for our communities that truly makes the difference. We know we face unique challenges on the Island, but it is so heartening to see how small community groups have made an impact on the lives of some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community.

I would like to say a personal thank you to each of you – the staff, volunteers, Trustees – of all these groups, for everything you have done, often on a shoestring, to help so many. And importantly, thank you to the HIWCF donors and Fundholders whose generosity has enabled our communities to flourish. It is one of the many things that make me proud to be part of this unique community.

Michael Smith, Chair of Isle of Wight Community Fund

It has been another wonderful year for the IWCF, with £200,501 funding coming to the Island through HIWCF. These funds are generated both through IWCF endowment funds, ring-fenced for use on the Island, and through the funding unlocked by HIWCF that can also be directed to the Island. It is important that HIWCF manage the IWCF, as their support has meant we have ensured an ongoing flow of new funding into the Island since I joined the IWCF around six years ago. Every year since 2020, with HIWCF support, we have enabled more than £200,000 worth of funding to be distributed to Island causes - and we are proud of that achievement.

I would like to say a personal thank you to my IWCF colleagues who help us make the difficult decisions on funding, often when we are faced with more than double or triple the number of funding bids we are able to actually fund. Although giving away money is a hugely enjoyable experience, we are acutely aware of how much need there is out there that still needs to be funded.

Small grants really can make a difference, and I really do encourage you, if you have the means to consider an endowment or other type of donation, or if you are a Trustee of a Charitable Trust or Foundation focused on the Isle of Wight, to get in touch with HIWCF to talk over how they can help. The way the IWCF funds are managed – Island Funds for Island Causes – really does ensure that funds are directed to where they are most needed using all the local knowledge at our fingertips.

Introducing our new HIWCF Chair, Amelia Riviere DL

In December 2024, Amelia was appointed Chair of Trustees for HIWCF, following the retirement from the Board of Rebecca Kennelly MBE after nearly 15 years of dedicated service. Amelia brings a deep connection to the region, shaped by a career spanning business, charitable work, magistrate tenure, and recently as High Sheriff of Hampshire. Her first-hand experience of HIWCF's impact left a lasting impression - particularly the transformative power of small grants for often overlooked communities supported by grassroots groups.

Amelia Riviere DL, HIWCF Chair

Passionate about addressing homelessness, youth access to sport and outdoor spaces, and rehabilitation in the justice system, Amelia is excited to lead HIWCF at a time of growth and strategic renewal. With a focus on increasing the Foundation's £15 million endowment, HIWCF is committed to expanding our reach and impact across local communities.

2024 Highlights from the CEO

I am delighted that this year we were able to maintain a similar level of support for the Isle of Wight as in the past five years. I was particularly pleased and grateful to Sovereign Network Group (SNG), who significantly supported two programmes of work through us last year. We know that if you are already experiencing poverty, or facing complex disadvantage, when economic indicators are bad for everyone, they are likely to be even tougher for you. SNG has recognised this and generously funded £44,000 for cost of living alleviation work in our region in 2024, of which £18,000 was designated to the Island. SNG also generously match funded a programme of work to support young people who have left the care system, and we were glad to be able to support Isle of Wight Youth Trust to deliver this programme on the Island.

Jacqui Scott, HIWCF Chief Executive

I was also pleased that we were able to increase funding for Young Island Lives, a programme helping young people on the Isle of Wight transition from education into work. Thanks to the anonymous funder, we were able to expand the programme and offer longer term funding commitments. And looking ahead, we're excited to launch Past Futures – a partnership with Creative Island, the Cultural Development Agency for the Island, and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund over the forthcoming two years. This new Isle of Wight initiative will support projects that preserve and celebrate local history and culture, enabling Island not-for-profits to tell untold stories and safeguard traditions - thereby supporting and enabling communities to flourish.

Impact on the Island

Young Island Lives

Thanks to a very generous anonymous donor, HIWCF launched a transformative new funding stream on the Isle of Wight in 2024 aimed squarely at addressing one of the most pressing local challenges: helping young people transition successfully from education into employment.

The Young Island Lives Fund provides a vital new source of support for community groups working with young people aged 11–25 across the Island. With up to £20,000 available over two years, the fund has so far enabled six local charities and community groups to deliver practical, skills-based programmes that build young people's confidence, resilience and readiness for the world of work.

At a time when the Island faces significant economic disadvantage - with youth unemployment and economic inactivity levels among the highest in the South East - this long-term investment couldn't be more needed. Sadly, many young people on the Island are leaving school without the confidence, qualifications, or life skills they need to succeed. The Young Island Lives Fund is designed to help fill this gap.

A young participant of the Aspire Ryde 'Urban Music Project', which was awarded £18,876, commented: "As part of the project I overcame issues with self-confidence and learned how to play bass and sing with a group. I learned to not give up on things when you are first learning them."

Successful projects supported through the fund focus on developing work and life skills such as teamwork, communication, giving and receiving feedback, and problem-solving. Importantly, it also reaches those furthest from the job market - including young people who are not in education, employment or training, those in insecure or low-paid work, and school leavers who feel ill-equipped for the world beyond the classroom.

We're thrilled that this fund is already helping young people feel more capable and empowered to take their next steps - whether into further education, apprenticeships, volunteering or employment.

Groups that received funding include:

Aspire Ryde:	**£18,876**
Ventnor Exchange:	**£18,300**
Community Action Isle of Wight:	**£19,500**
Care In The Garden CIC:	**£20,000**
Isle of Wight Learning Zone:	**£8,324**
Isle of Wight Youth Trust:	**£20,000**

"As part of the project I overcame issues with self-confidence and learned how to play bass and sing with a group. I learned to not give up on things when you are first learning them"

Isle of Wight Community Fund

The Isle of Wight Community Fund supports local organisations working to reduce poverty and improve health and wellbeing. Grants of between £1,000 - £5,000 were awarded in 2024 to grassroots groups based on the Island. Funded by local donors through endowment giving and managed by HIWCF, this fund helps deliver vital services to islanders of all ages - from counselling to community led wellbeing projects.

For many visually impaired residents on the Isle of Wight, leaving the house is not just a challenge, it's almost impossible without the right support. Sight for Wight's Thursday Mix and Mingle Social Group, funded through the Isle of Wight Community Fund, has become a weekly lifeline for older people living with profound sight loss and extreme isolation. This is just one group funded through IWCF.

Every Thursday morning, three vehicles set off across the Island to collect group members from their homes - many of whom live alone and have no access to local transport. By 10 am, the group is gathered at Sight for Wight's centre, ready for a day of creative activity and companionship before being returned safely home by a familiar, trusted driver.

The group was created in response to direct feedback from members, gathered through Sight for Wight's regular wellbeing calls. These conversations ensure that services are shaped around the real, lived needs of local people. The result is a group that has become a source of joy and connection for people that may otherwise have felt isolated.

One beneficiary shared: "I think it's a terrific programme and I was so glad to be able to have the minibus to take me to sessions with the same person that I got to know and trust. He had a real empathy towards sight loss patients and knew leaving the house was going to be a challenge for me. I can't thank them enough for taking the time to help me. Now I feel much less lonely and more confident getting out and about."

As the Island's population continues to age - it now has one of the oldest median ages in the South East - initiatives like this are not just appreciated, they're essential. For many participants, the Thursday group is the only time they leave their home each week. Beyond the activities, the project provides a sense of safety, routine and belonging.

With additional summer and Christmas outings, and a dedicated team of staff and volunteers, Sight for Wight aim to ensure no one faces the challenges of later life and sight loss alone. Thanks to the support of the Isle of Wight Community Fund, their work continues to make a meaningful difference.

Groups that received funding include:

Sight for Wight:	**£4,850**
Pan Together:	**£5,000**
People Matter IW:	**£4,925**
Andrew Cassell Foundation (Racing For The Disabled):	**£5,000**
Breakout Youth:	**£4,750**

"I can't thank them enough for taking the time to help me. Now I feel much less lonely and more confident getting out and about."

Support from near and far: a collective investment in the Island

HIWCF's funding for projects on the Isle of Wight comes from a wide range of generous sources, both local and regional. Support comes from corporate partnerships with organisations such as Sovereign Network Group, as well as from private donors based on the Island and across Hampshire and the wider region. Additional grants are made possible through HIWCF's wider funds, such as Including Communities, ensuring that charitable work on the Island benefits from a diverse and far reaching funding base.

Community Spirited Café

In East Cowes, Community Spirited Café has become a vital support hub for residents facing food poverty and isolation. Founded in 2007, the charity now runs a thriving community pantry, used by around 70 people weekly and supporting 460 members overall. Stocked with fresh produce, pantry staples and popular branded items, the service helps members cook nutritious meals at home - while creating space for meaningful connection.

With a £6,702 grant from HIWCF, through the Sovereign Network Group (SNG) funding for cost-of-living alleviation, the café continues to offer practical support, from food provision to personal touches like early opening for those with anxiety. One pantry user said: "I would be lost without it. If you are having a bad day, they can help. It's great that I can speak to them… the food they offer at the pantry allows you to make your own homecooked food."

The impact stretches across the Island, with members from major towns and rural areas accessing the support they need.

"I would be lost without it. If you are having a bad day, they can help. It's great that I can speak to them… the food they offer at the pantry allows you to make your own homecooked food."

Other Island groups supported through HIWCF funds in 2024, including those ring-fenced for the Island and those sourced from beyond the Island:

Bobby Scheme:	**£7,542.80**
Newclose County Cricket Ground:	**£5,335.12**
Isle of Wight Youth Trust:	**£15,000**
West Wight Sports & Community Centre:	**£5,000**
Arreton Cricket Club:	**£1,500**
South Wight Area Youth Partnership:	**£10,000**
Frontline Advice Centre:	**£8,028.41**
Cowes Baptist Church:	**£7,410.84**
Pan Together:	**£7,000**
Community Spirited Café:	**£6,702.11**
Grace Church Isle of Wight:	**£5,000**

With your help, there’s more to do

At HIWCF, we are proud to be the largest independent funder of charitable activity on the Isle of Wight, helping to strengthen local communities and improve the lives of those most in need. Through our Isle of Wight Community Fund and other grant programmes, we support grassroots organisations working to tackle poverty, improve wellbeing, and build stronger, more connected communities.

Our commitment to the Island continues to grow, and we’re excited to launch a new programme in 2025: Past Futures. Delivered in partnership with Creative Island, the cultural development agency for the Isle of Wight, and due to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, this initiative will support local projects that celebrate and preserve the Isle of Wight’s rich history and culture. Grants will be available to small not for profit organisations that want to capture and curate a people’s history of the Island - highlighting untold stories, safeguarding traditions, and creating a sense of place and belonging. We look forward to reporting more on this in 2025.

Whether through supporting day-to-day services or investing in the Island’s cultural heritage, HIWCF’s role is to champion local causes and ensure that funding reaches the people and communities who need it most – enabling those communities to flourish. If you can help us expand our work on the Island, or you are a grant making Trust or Foundation considering handing over grants management or transferring the Trust's assets, please get in touch. We can provide a bespoke service to support the aims of your Trust and would be happy to discuss it in detail with you.

HIWCF Team

HIWCF President

Nigel Atkinson Esq, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire

President of Isle of Wight Community Fund

Mrs Susie Sheldon, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight

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The Bulldog Trust
The Ellis Campbell Charitable Foundation

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Virginia Lovell JP DL

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Amelia Riviere DL, (Chair of Trustees, appointed 2024)
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Richard Barton-Wood (Treasurer, retired 2024)
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Josh Hensman
Matt York (appointed 2024)
Michael Smith
Oliver Stanley (appointed 2024)
Rob Wood
Simon Cleverly
Suki Sitaram

Thank you

We are grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our Endowment Fundholders and Flow-Through Funders. The grants this generosity enables have a huge impact on our communities and the ability to change lives for the better. On behalf of all the community groups we support on the Isle of Wight, thank you.

Contact us

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