



## Costa Boost To Wightlink Terminals



Following the opening of a new Costa unit at its Gunwharf ferry terminal on 24 May, just before the start of the school half term holiday, Wightlink is boosting the range of light refreshments available in its ferry terminals still further with the trialling of a Krispy Kreme doughnut outlet at Gunwharf and two additional Costa units at Ryde Pier and Lymington.

The two new Costa outlets are expected to open during the summer period. As with the Gunwharf unit, Wightlink will offer Costa's full range of coffees and drinks, together with a limited number of the brand's food items.

At Gunwharf, these have been designed to complement the existing range of food available in its Quay Convenience store, which has been renamed Quay Shop and given an extensive

refit. Now divided into two areas, one half of the Quay Shop will continue to offer coffee and tea on a self service basis, alongside sandwiches and bake 'n' bite products. The remaining half has been given over to the new Costa unit, which is staffed by Wightlink personnel, specially trained to operate the brand's Barista coffee machines.

Wightlink Marketing Manager Kerry Jackson said: "Costa is the UK's fastest-growing coffee chain and we are delighted to welcome such a success story to our ferry terminals. Its remarkable growth in recent years is testament to the strength of the brand and we expect this boost to our light refreshment facilities at Gunwharf, Ryde Pier and Lymington to prove popular with our passengers."

Whitbread purchased the Costa brand in 1995, 39 years after it was first founded in London by Bruno and Sergio Costa.

## Police Praise Wightlink Support In Illegal Drugs Swoop

Wightlink passengers and staff have been given a vote of thanks by the Isle of Wight's police force for their support in preventing the supply of illegal drugs across the Solent. Over the past 12 months, drugs with an approximate street value of £9,000 were seized by police officers and search dogs and 20 people arrested on dedicated operations at ferry ports, according to latest figures. Substances found included heroin, cocaine, amphetamines and cannabis.

Sergeant Dave Steele of Hampshire Constabulary's Isle of Wight Dog Support Unit said: "We can prevent drugs coming to the Island at the earliest opportunity by working at the ferry ports. Officers have received terrific support from Wightlink. I would also like to thank the majority of law abiding passengers for their patience and co-operation during these operations. The Isle of Wight is a safe place and we want to stop drugs misuse affecting the community."

Isle of Wight Community Safety Inspector Mark Bell added: "These operations take place thanks to a combined effort involving the Isle of Wight Community Safety Partnership and the Drug Action Team, which are committed to work that demonstrates drugs will not be tolerated on our Island."

## Doughnuts Too

Fast on the heels of the Costa opening at Portsmouth Gunwharf, Wightlink is trialling Krispy Kreme doughnuts – adding to the range of refreshments available to passengers using the terminal. Alongside the signature Original Glazed doughnut, 15 other varieties will be offered at the new outlet, including Chocolate Dreamcake, Cinnamon Apple Filled and Lemon Meringue Pie. Krispy Kreme was first launched in America in 1937 and was introduced to the UK seven years ago when the first store opened in Harrods.

## C-Class Ships Scrapped

Scrapping of Wightlink's C-class fleet, which served the Lymington-Yarmouth route until their replacement by the new Wight-class ships last spring, is now complete. In recent months the three ships – Caedmon, Cenred and Cenwulf – had been towed to purchaser Smedegaarden's scarp yard in Esbjerg, Denmark. Both Caedmon and Cenred have been fully broken up and at the time of going to press, all staff and passenger accommodation have been removed off Cenwulf.

Smedegaarden completed its purchase of the vessels over a year ago in March 2009 and they were initially moved to Marchwood Shipyard in the Solent. However, because their passenger

certificates were not renewed by the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA), the ships were not permitted to sail under their own steam and had to be berthed at Marchwood while arrangements were made to tow them to Denmark for scrapping. The last ship, Cenwulf, left the UK at the beginning of May.

Scrapping of the C-class fleet was inevitable when it became apparent that they would never comply with current European standards and, even if restored to satisfactory working order, could only operate outside European waters.

## View From The Top

Holiday disruption from riots, strikes and volcanic ash - not to mention the plunging pound - may have cast a black cloud over air travel to Europe and beyond this year, but the silver lining to this spells good news for the Isle of Wight and the reassuring safety of a UK staycation on home soil. If our intelligence is correct, this looks to be one of the best ever years for Isle of Wight holiday business as our partners in the Green Getaways holiday programme - due for relaunch this September - report record bookings.

At Wightlink, we will be doing our level best to support Island tourism and in this issue we spotlight some of the ways in which we will be actively promoting the attractions of the Isle of Wight to the holidaying public. Our summer giveaway campaign, profiled in The Link, shows a determined move by Wightlink to attract more visitors to the Island, while the brand new *Isle of Wight Passport* provides an additional incentive to cross the Solent this year. And our new *Secret Wight* booklet, just published, offers families ideas for adventurous fresh-air trips that won't break the bank.

After what has been voted the best ever line up for the Isle of Wight Festival, we have a host of music events to whet the appetite of music fans during the summer months and you will find news of these in this issue.

Most of all, we hope that you will be pleased to hear of the enhancements to the facilities we offer customers at our mainland and Island terminals. The addition of Costa coffee units at three of our terminals and the trialling of a Krispy Kreme doughnut outlet at Portsmouth Gunwharf are the latest customer service developments put in place by Wightlink and we look forward to hearing your feedback on these initiatives.

Russell Kew  
Chief Executive



## Step Back In Time



History buffs can travel back in time for an action-packed weekend of battles, contests and parades when members of the Medieval Siege Society converge on Appuldurcombe House to re-enact battles and victory parades from the Wars of the Roses or the Hundred Years War. Sponsored by Wightlink, the two-day *Medieval Spectacular* on 24 and 25 July allows onlookers to get a flavour of what campaign life was like in the Middle Ages.

A family of four can use the Wightlink attraction and travel-inclusive Days Out ticket valid for Appuldurcombe House and its Isle of Wight Owl & Falconry Centre to get into the event for £45. Find out more about the *Medieval Spectacular* at [appuldurcombe.co.uk](http://appuldurcombe.co.uk) or call 01983 852484.

## Welcome Onboard

Readers of Isabel Ashdown's debut novel *Glasshopper* will find that parts of the book, described by both the Observer and Evening Standard as one of 2009's outstanding first works of fiction, are set on the Isle of Wight. Acknowledged by the Chichester-based author as one of her favourite places, the Island was also the inspiration for her forthcoming novel, since chapters of *Awake All Week* were written while relaxing on the beach at Freshwater,

Now Isle of Wight residents and visitors will be able to meet the author while crossing to and from the Island on Wightlink's flagship, St Clare, on a specially-arranged book signing

## Viva Verdi

The Isle of Wight's Medina Theatre will play host to international opera stars as the Island stages a performance of the Verdi Requiem on 10 October, featuring a 120-strong choir of local singers and an orchestra of 80 musicians. Organised by Margrette Jones in aid of the Orchid Cancer Trust, the concert will be led by the acclaimed Welsh-born conductor Phillip

The *Medieval Spectacular* is one of a range of special activities supported by Wightlink that are taking place at Appuldurcombe this year. During the summer children can acquire Harry Potter-style wizarding skills by learning to fly an owl or a hawk at special one-day courses held in the grounds of Appuldurcombe House at the Isle of Wight Owl & Falconry Centre. The *Become a Junior Falconer* day courses take place weekly on Wednesdays during the school holidays between 29 July and 25 August. Pre-booking is essential on 01983 840188 or 852484 and the price for a child and accompanying adult is £22.

Later in the year a week-long *Spooktacular* is scheduled during the October school half term holidays and relives the ghostly goings on in one of the Isle of Wight's most haunted houses.

scheduled for 26 July. Isabel Ashdown will be signing copies of *Glasshopper* on four round-trips, starting with the 10am sailing from Portsmouth and culminating with the 4pm crossing from Fishbourne to the mainland.

Wightlink passengers will also be able to meet John Hendy, author of a new book, *Solent Seaways*, which chronicles the history of Wightlink and its predecessors in providing ferry links between the UK mainland and the Isle of Wight. Published in June, Wightlink will welcome long time ferry enthusiast Hendy on board for a book signing later this summer.

Thomas and lead parts will be sung by four internationally-known soloists including the soprano Dame Josephine Barstow. Wightlink is supporting this unique event in the Island's musical history by providing travel across to the Isle of Wight for singers and musicians.

## Great Summer Giveaway Spearheads Peak Season Promotional Thrust



In a repeat of last year's successful Great Summer Giveaway, Wightlink is launching a seven-week promotional campaign in which every booking made during the school holidays between 19 July and 5 September will be entered into a draw. The prizes on offer range from free Wightlink ferry crossings and accommodation-inclusive weekend breaks at Gurnard Pines to tickets for top Island attractions and free Solent travel on any Wightlink route for a year.

Clive Tilley, Wightlink Commercial Director said: "The giveaway aims to promote travel to and from the Isle of Wight during the school holidays. Everyone who books a ferry crossing qualifies for the prize draw and there will be 45 weekly winners with a total prize fund of over £30,000 more than the course of the seven-week promotion.

"Although the Great Summer Giveaway is an important way for us to reach a wide variety of potential customers, we are particularly keen to incentivise the local community, both

Island residents and mainlanders living within an hour's catchment of the Lymington and Portsmouth terminals," he added.

The giveaway promotion spearheads Wightlink's summer campaign, which also includes a radio and local press advertising campaign scheduled to take place close to the ferry terminals in Portsmouth, Lymington and Isle of Wight. TV advertising promoting Isle of Wight day trips will also air in three separate one-week bursts during July and August on ITV Meridian.

The TV campaign features the new 30-second commercial first aired on Meridian at Easter and is part of a series of regular TV advertising bursts scheduled tactically during peak months to generate interest in UK 'staycations' or family day trips. Using the theme 'Your link to the Isle of Wight' and focusing on the varied reasons for taking a leisure trip to the Island, the advertisement promotes keenly-priced day trips from £36 for a car and four passengers.

The campaign includes a promotion on Wave 105 and will feature a competition to win a short break with Vintage Vacations and free travel.



## Passport To Wight

Holidaymakers visiting the Isle of Wight this year may be taking a 'staycation' in the UK but they will still be issued with a passport in a new marketing initiative launched by Wightlink for summer 2010. The brand new Isle of Wight Passport is based on the traditional British passport that has now passed into history and will be handed out to all Wightlink customers travelling from Portsmouth Harbour, Portsmouth Gunwharf and Lymington.

The Isle of Wight Passport features a range of exclusive discounts and special offers for customers visiting the Island - including incentives offered by top attractions like Dinosaur Isle and Amazon World as well as from retailers including Oasis and Morrisons.

Developed for Wightlink by Island Holiday Media, over 200,000 passports have been

produced for the first season and these will be distributed at the three mainland ferry terminals by a team of dedicated staff. Anyone purchasing a Wightlink ferry ticket will automatically be given one of the passports and it will also feature on the home page of Wightlink's website, [wightlink.co.uk](http://wightlink.co.uk), with a full digitised version available for 300,000 monthly visitors to view online.

Wightlink Marketing Manager Kerry Jackson said: "We want the Isle of Wight Passport to demonstrate Wightlink's commitment to value by providing our customers with recommendations on how to get the most out of a visit to the Island and offering the added benefit of special discounts and offers to some of the most popular attractions and retail outlets."

**The GREAT WIGHTLINK SUMMER GIVEAWAY**

Your link to great prices and great prizes.

From £36 Day Return Car + 4      From £51.50 Short Stay Return 1 night Car + 4

Every booking is entered into a prize draw to win:

- Ferry travel for a year
- Short breaks at Gurnard Pines
- And many more fantastic prizes

Every winner receives a free Isle of Wight Passport filled with great discounts.

TO BOOK, CALL 0871 376 1000 up to two hours before you wish to travel [www.wightlink.co.uk/summergiveaway](http://www.wightlink.co.uk/summergiveaway)

WIGHTLINK PART OF ISLAND LIFE

The *Ultimate Ticket to Ryde* competition, which attracted over one thousand entries when it first ran on Wave 105 last year will also re-run at the end of the summer, focusing on foot passenger travel on the new cats.

During August the 'Its No Pussycat' campaign will commence in Portsmouth with advertising on bus backs and bus stops along with local press (including the IOW County Press), promoting the foot passenger catamaran route between Portsmouth Harbour and Ryde Pier Head.

The campaign will allow the first 10,000 daytrip tickets purchased online from 1 August for just £5.00 per person, just perfect for travelling across the Solent this Summer.



## Island Secrets Revealed



Wightlink has responded to the surge in interest for family 'staycations' in Britain by publishing a new brochure that reveals some of the Isle of Wight's most closely-guarded secrets. Isle of Wight locations that are loved by locals but hardly known to visiting holidaymakers are put under the microscope in **Secret Wight**, a free 28-page colour booklet, which features a range of challenges designed for adventurous families with enquiring minds.

Taking as its inspiration the simpler family holidays enjoyed when today's parents were children, **Secret Wight** sets a range of discovery challenges for parents and children to conquer together on 10 different adventures. Using Ordnance Survey grid references to guide them, families can set out on foot to find miles of virgin sand, rocky ledges sheltering below towering cliffs, other-worldly monster vegetation covering huge

expanses of rock pools, flora and fauna rarely found on mainland Britain and even dinosaur bones that have been hidden for millions of years.

With hidden locations all around the Isle of Wight, each of the 10 adventures has a different theme. The *Towers of Adventure*, for example, sets a challenge to find an old lighthouse and a centuries-old monument to a Russian Tsar that share a strange, other-worldly quality – one looking like a medieval rocket ship and the other like a homing beacon to attract aliens.

Another, the *Road to Adventure*, leads families along the long-forgotten Blackgang road to an area known by insiders as 'Little Colorado' overlooking St Catherine's Point in the far south of the Island. The challenge set for this adventure is a wildlife one: to find the flowering Hoary Stock and the Glanville Fritillary, one of the UK's rarest butterflies.

On the *Trees of Adventure* the quest is to find a tree resembling one of the talking Ents from *The Lord of the Rings* and another known to local children as the Dragon Tree. This adventure also provides the low-down on the best places to find the elusive red squirrels that thrive in the safe grey-free environment of the Isle of Wight.

The aim of **Secret Wight** is to prompt parents who enjoy outdoor holidays to explore some of the 60 miles of beaches around the Island



Pepper Pot

coastline and the unspoiled green landscape, more than half of this classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Kerry Jackson, Wightlink Marketing Manager said: "The Isle of Wight is well known for its beaches but many people visit the Island and never find the hidden gems that are treasured by local families. **Secret Wight** provides parents with the inside track to find these special places so they can turn back the clock and give their children the type of holiday they enjoyed when they were young. Even better, these adventures don't cost cash-strapped parents any extra money. Fresh air comes for free!"

**Secret Wight** is the latest themed booklet produced by Wightlink to broaden the appeal of the Isle of Wight for year-round leisure breaks. Others include the *Wight History Trail*, the *Rare Plant Trail* and the *Wight Taste Trail*.

"Our previous guides have proved extremely popular with visitors who have specific interests and we expect the new booklet to be a hit with parents looking for an extra dimension to their family holiday," said Kerry Jackson.

The booklet is available to download from Wightlink at [wightlink.co.uk/secretwight](http://wightlink.co.uk/secretwight) and free printed copies can be obtained by calling **0871 376 1000**.



The Dragon Tree at Brighstone

## Local Food Is Miles Better

Island residents and visitors will now have three good opportunities to get a taste of local Wight produce with the opening of two specialist shops, the Dairy Deli Farm Shop and the Real Island Food Company, and the re-opening of an old favourite, Farmer Jack's.

Farmer Jack's Farm Shop first opened at Arreton Old Village five years ago with a mission to provide flavoursome home-grown produce, which had travelled fewer miles to 'market' than typical supermarket food. Now Farmer Jack's has moved to a larger site adjacent to the village's Corn Exchange Shop. "With treble the space, we can now offer a far wider range of local produce," said partner Ben Brown.

That wider range includes an in-house butcher with fresh cuts of local meat and sausages prepared in the shop; locally-reared poultry and game, more seasonal fruit and vegetables and a much expanded delicatessen that will offer more than 15 varieties of cheese, cured meats, olives and antipasti.

"We have worked productively with Wightlink for several years now, particularly to help create their *Wight Taste Trail*, and we are displaying some of the images of local producers featured in the trail booklet on the walls of the new Farmer Jack's shop as well as handing out copies of the booklet," said Ben Brown.

Jackie Phillips and Rachel Foy are enjoying a well-deserved success with their new Real Island Food shop in Niton High Street, specialising in Island-sourced foods, deli products and local meats. "Our master butcher is proving popular and sales have been very encouraging with Isle of Wight lamb and beef proving great favourites so far," said Jackie Phillips.

Further north the Calbourne Classics team has just opened the Dairy Deli Farm Shop on the site of the old garage at Shalfleet Corner and is offering an extensive range of dairy produce, freshly-baked cakes, pies, bread, meats and, on Fridays and Saturdays, local fish. Thanks to a grant from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) the Dairy Deli has been able to install new equipment so that it can offer a wider range of locally-reared meats.

Dairy Deli partner Louise Hart said: "The SEEDA grant has been a real godsend to us as it means that right from the outset the shop has been able to stock a really comprehensive range of local produce. We're also delighted that Wightlink is going to help us to promote the Dairy Deli by featuring the shop on the *Wight Taste Trail* section of its website."

All three farm shops are championed in Wightlink's food-themed booklets – the *Wight Taste Trail* and *Eat Wight* – as well as on its website and they also feature in the 2010 edition of Wightlink's holiday brochure *Green Getaways*, which promotes rural breaks for eco-conscious visitors. Due for publication in September, the new edition is being revamped to include more 'back to nature' holidays that feature stays under canvas and to spotlight the best of the Island's rural accommodation.

First launched in 2007, Wightlink Marketing Managing Kerry Jackson said that *Green Getaways* had been popular with newspaper and magazine travel editors who were keen to feature UK holiday destinations that could boast good green credentials.

"We are relaunching *Green Getaways* this autumn as it is one of the best ways that we can support year round tourism to the Isle of Wight. This time around our focus has



Ben Brown, Farmer Jack's

broadened from eco-tourism to pivot on Island accommodation located in our extensive green belt. The *Green Getaways* concept provides a great opportunity for us to highlight the excellent range of farm shops now available in different areas of the Island."

Farmer Jack's Ben Brown welcomed the additional exposure that the brochure will offer for Island food: "Wightlink has really helped to put Island producers on the map and the new *Green Getaways* is just what we need to introduce more people to the fresh taste of Wight."

## Midsummer Music

The Isle of Wight Festival may already be a distant memory and September's Bestival a complete sell-out, but the Island's 2010 music calendar is by no means over. From classical music to pop legends, Wightlink is sponsoring a range of events throughout the summer, giving music-lovers a variety of unique concerts to choose from in July and August.

Kicking off the summer line-up is a weekend of classical music and fireworks at one of the Island's most popular tourist attractions, Osborne House, where Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra will perform two open-air concerts on 23 and 24 July. Sponsored by Wightlink, an ABBA Symphonic Spectacular al fresco concert on the Friday is followed by the Last Night of the Osborne Proms on Saturday, complete with fireworks finale and choreographed fountains of fire.

On the following weekend, Osborne House goes pop, welcoming the original 'Pop Idol' Will Young as well as 80s legends, Bananarama, Rick Astley, Belinda Carlisle and Go West for the ultimate retro party night. Also supported by Wightlink, the summer concerts take place on 31 July and 1 August respectively.

Meanwhile, Summer Madness is scheduled to return to Carisbrooke Castle Fields on 29 August with an eclectic line-up including Paul Weller, The Coral and Brand New Heavies.



Bananarama



Will Young

## Eye Love Sight Appeal Launched



© Isle of Wight County Press

Colin McArthur's latest initiative to raise funds for the pioneering new stem-cell research needed to help restore the sight of people blinded by retinitis pigmentosa was launched at Priory Bay Hotel, Seaview on 4 July. Sponsored by Wightlink, over 100 people paid £17.50 each to attend a tea-and-jazz afternoon in the grounds of the hotel as the first step in fundraising for the new Eye Love Sight Appeal.

Last October 58-year old Colin took to the controls of Wight Ryder 1 and piloted the Wightlink catamaran across one of the world's busiest shipping lanes to raise funds for his Cats Eyes appeal, even though he has been blind for 20 years. That appeal has raised over £1,000 and now McArthur, from Sandown, wants the Eye Love Sight campaign to contribute further to the £250,000 needed for ground-breaking research by the RP Fighting Blindness charity of which he is a trustee ([brps.org.uk](http://brps.org.uk)).

The research project, which began last September and is led by the University of Southampton's Professor of Ophthalmology, Andrew Lotery, will test whether stem cells from the iris and cornea can be re-grown in the retina, in order to restore sight.

Colin McArthur explained: "After years of painstaking research, we are at the exciting stage of gene therapy trials and on the verge of breakthrough stem cell research. With the new Eye Love Sight appeal, money raised on the Isle of Wight will directly benefit the 40 Islanders affected by retinitis pigmentosa, many of whom are patients of Professor Lotery."

Two future Eye Love Sight fundraising events are planned for 2010. On 11 August Colin McArthur will take on a new challenge: to drive one of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's steam locomotives, accompanied by actress Louisa Lytton who played Ruby in EastEnders. The Calbourne was the first engine acquired by the railway, back in 1967, and has just returned to service after an extensive overhaul. Admission to the Isle of Wight Steam Railway on the challenge day will be donated to Eye Love Sight in a generous move by Jim Loe and his team.

A second event takes place from 24-27 September when the Whitecliff Weekend is staged at Whitecliff Bay. Visitors can join a fundraising Stride for Sight, take part in a Splash for Cash or simply enjoy Electric Eighties music by tribute bands. Find out more about this by visiting [whitecliff-bay.com](http://whitecliff-bay.com)

To donate to the new campaign, visit [justgiving.com/eyelovesight](http://justgiving.com/eyelovesight)

## Surprise Award For Wightlink



© Julian Winslow

Young Chamber Annual Awards sponsor Wightlink was taken by surprise when, in addition to handing out an award, the ferry operator also found itself on the receiving end. Students from St Catherine's School gave Wightlink an award for the 'Most Valued Employer Contribution' in recognition of its

ongoing support for the Ventnor-based school.

Marketing Manager Kerry Jackson was on hand to receive the award at a ceremony held in May at Cowes Yacht Haven and said: "It was the most wonderful surprise and totally unexpected. It was so lovely to learn that the students all voted for us

because of our close relationship and the support that we have provided over the past year. Most recently we welcomed students from St Catherine's to Gunwharf to spend the day finding out how a ferry company functions."

## Wight Bites

### Working together

Wightlink was one of four transport companies who provided raffle prizes for the St George's Day charity event, held in aid of St George's School for special needs children in Newport. Gifts donated by Wightlink, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Island Line and South West Trains raised £850 for the school at the event held in April at the Bargeman's Rest pub.

### International Charity Classic Car Extravaganza

Wightlink has pledged its support for the return of a two day Classic Car show on the Isle of Wight. This spectacular event, which enters its ninth consecutive year, will take place at Newport Quay on Saturday 18 September where the charity to benefit from the monies collected on that day will be the Barely Born Appeal at St Mary's Hospital, Newport and at Ryde Esplanade on Sunday 19 September and all monies raised there through collections will go to the Earl Mountbatten Hospice in Newport. Both shows are free to attend.

## Wightlink Five Race For Life

After hearing that a workmate was suffering from breast cancer, five of her Wightlink colleagues decided to enter this year's Isle of Wight Race for Life at Seaclose Park in July.



Wightlink has sponsored five employees by funding their entry fee for the big race and on 25 July Sharon Gates, Lina Silva, Pauline Crisp, Nicole Crisp and Anthea Wedge will join the 16th annual fight against cancer to help raise thousands of pounds for Cancer Research UK's lifesaving work. To date more than £327 million pounds has been raised in aid of the cancer charity and in 2010 it is hoped to raise a further £60 million to fund crucial research work.

The Isle of Wight run is one of more than 230 women-only Race for Life events taking place around the country this summer. Since the first race in 1998, 4.7 million women have taken part across the UK, some of them cancer survivors, others walking, jogging or running to celebrate or remember the lives of friends or family.

To find out more visit [raceforlife.org](http://raceforlife.org) – and watch out for collection boxes at the Fishbourne Terminal.

## Island Games Get Major Lottery Funding Boost For Opening Ceremony



Over 1,000 young Isle of Wight students will help to create a spectacular opening ceremony for the NatWest Island Games 2011 in a 14-month creative arts programme made possible by an Arts Council grant of £94,099 awarded to the Island Games Association (IW).

The National Lottery-funded grant will enable students to help in developing a themed and choreographed carnival parade through the streets of Ryde on 25 June next year, culminating in a special performance on the seafront where the official opening ceremony will take place. This is expected to be watched by up to 30,000 people locally and by a worldwide television audience.

David Ball, Chairman of the 2011 Organising Committee said "It is already clear that because our Games are the largest multi-sporting event in Great Britain in the year before the Olympic Games there will be an unusually high level of publicity both at home and abroad. It is therefore important that we create the right image from the start of the Games and this very welcome grant from the Arts Council will be of great assistance to us in creating that image and involving so many members of our local community in this event."

The project will be managed by the Ryde-based Carnival Learning Centre, Britain's first centre dedicated to increasing skills and knowledge for personal and community development using carnival and the



Ryde Carnival

celebratory arts. An outline plan has already been formulated following discussions involving school teachers, carnival groups and community leaders as well as the Extended School Service, the Island Games Association and the Carnival Learning Centre.

Chris Slann, Manager of the Carnival Learning Centre said "The Arts Council grant is great news for the Island Games and will also leave a legacy of greater, in depth carnival arts skills within the communities of the Isle of Wight, and a significantly strengthened youth based arts sector."

Supported by Wightlink, the Island Games will be the largest international multi-sport event ever held on the Isle of Wight. Around 4,000 athletes and supporters from 24 Islands worldwide are expected to attend and compete in several hundred events across 14 sports during the course of the Games. More information is available at [natwestislandgames2011.co.uk](http://natwestislandgames2011.co.uk)

## Games Gears Up



Delegates from Islands taking part in next year's NatWest Island Games visited the Isle of Wight recently for the Annual General Meeting of the International Island

Games Association and were able to see the sporting venues and accommodation planned for up to 4,000 athletes and officials taking part in the event.

## Best Ever

Held on the first weekend in June, the 2010 Yarmouth Old Gaffers Festival was rated by its organisers "the best ever". Blessed by superb weather and with a record attendance of nearly 40,000 visitors, the festival exploded into life with the grand opening ceremony on 4 June, performed by Bestival's Rob da Bank who arrived on a pirate ship to be greeted by Peter Kingston, High Sheriff of the Island.

Rob da Bank had Yarmouth rocking on the opening evening with the help of the Cuban Brothers and Correspondents, while the Silver Beatles and Abba Fever tribute bands gave Saturday's 'after hours' entertainment a party atmosphere.

The harbour was filled to the brim with over

100 Old Gaffers, which made a glorious sight as they raced in the Solent and Yarmouth was filled to capacity all weekend with visitors who came for the craft and food markets and to see street performers from Covent Garden.

Old Gaffers Festival Chairperson Debbie Cotton said: "This has been the biggest and best festival we have had so far, thanks to the moral and financial support we received from both Wightlink and the Harbour Commissioners who together provided the means for the show to go on! There really was something for all the family to enjoy this year – including a children's fair and a dog show."

Wightlink has supported the event since its inception in 1997 and for 2010 raised its



Old Gaffers

sponsorship by a further £5,000 to ensure that the high spot in the West Wight calendar could go ahead. Marketing Manager Kerry Jackson said that Wightlink was delighted to support the event because "it is one of the key opportunities available to encourage new visitors to check out Yarmouth and West Wight."

## Wightlink Gets Environmental Bronze



Wightlink is going for an environmental silver award after successfully completing the bronze level of Big Green Island Project's Business Accreditation Scheme. The Isle

of Wight scheme, based on the nationally and internationally recognised BS8555 standard, encourages business to set up an Environmental Management System, which has clear and defined targets and goals to achieve throughout the process.

Wightlink first gave priority status to the implementation of an Environmental

Management Action Plan as long ago as 2007 and it undertook an environment audit the same year. This enabled Nick Hey, Wightlink Health, Safety and Environment Manager to develop an action plan encompassing waste management, energy and water use, pollution prevention and purchasing policies.

Since then the ferry operator has progressed through the action plan and more recently joined the Big Green Island Project's Business Accreditation Scheme with the aim of attaining its gold standard. In order to meet the first hurdle, the bronze standard, Wightlink underwent eco-mapping at its ferry terminals with the help of Big Green Island Project's Lois Prior and Wightlink's David Jewell.

Nick Hey welcomed the confirmation that Wightlink had passed Big Green Island's bronze level. "Green issues are crucially important to Wightlink and we recognise that our passengers are more interested than ever before to understand how we manage our operation to minimise damage to the environment. We are now working actively to achieve the silver standard, which involves both an audit of our operation and a customer interest questionnaire, and hope to progress through this within the next few months so that we can move on to the final gold standard."

## Customer Satisfaction Logged Online



The latest Customer Satisfaction Index has revealed improving ratings for Wightlink from both Isle of Wight Residents and Island visitors. Compared with Spring 2009 when Wightlink scored 52 from residents and 68 from visitors, Autumn/Winter 2009/2010 ratings

rose by two and three points respectively. With the aim of tracking responses from passengers on an ongoing basis, the Index scores 100 for excellent, 66 for good, 33 for satisfactory and 0 for poor.

Over 1,000 valid responses were included in the latest quarterly Index, which was conducted on Wightlink's website between August 2009 and February 2010. 83% of visitors and almost two-thirds of Island residents said that they would definitely or probably recommend Wightlink ferry travel.

The latest survey results can be accessed by visiting [wightlink.co.uk](http://wightlink.co.uk), going to the About Us section of the site and clicking the Service Performance tag.

## Hospital Discount Scheme Launched



Island residents travelling to the mainland to attend hospital appointments can now claim 50% off their ferry fares in a new initiative launched by Wightlink after consultation with NHS Isle of Wight.

Open to patients and one companion travelling to an NHS funded hospital appointment, the scheme applies to Isle of Wight Residents' tickets, Saver & Super Saver car fares and Fully Flexible foot passenger fares – but excludes season and multilink tickets or special offers where a discount has already been applied.

Residents who qualify for the Wightlink Healthcare Discount Scheme should call the Wightlink call centre in advance to make a booking – which is subject to availability – and quote their appointment details. They will

need to present this appointment card/letter and complete a form at the port in order to collect tickets. Patients who do not have written proof from their hospital because they have been given a short notice appointment will have to pay full price for their travel, but can reclaim 50% retrospectively, provided they supply a travel receipt and proof of the appointment from their hospital within one month of the travel date.

The new initiative is one of series of community commitments made to the Office of Fair Trading after its 2009 report on the cross-Solent ferry market and aims to assist Island residents who need to travel regularly across the Solent for specialist treatment at hospitals in Portsmouth and Southampton. Full details about the scheme can be found at [wightlink.co.uk/healthcarediscount](http://wightlink.co.uk/healthcarediscount)

## Summer Timetables

Don't forget that bookings over the summer period are strongly advised to ensure there is space on the sailing of your choice.

To book call 0871 376 1000 or visit [wightlink.co.uk](http://wightlink.co.uk)