

Our Ref: E5/AM/ynl

22nd September 2015

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Isle of Wight County Press Annual Statement to IPSO

Overview of Regulated Entity

The Isle of Wight County Press is a locally owned, totally independent weekly newspaper for the Isle of Wight. It currently sells around 29,000 copies per week. It has a main website iwcp.co.uk, which regularly has more than 200,000 unique users and 3 million-plus page impressions per month.

Apart from an annual Holiday News tourist publication, and various in-paper supplements, this is our sole publication.

The Isle of Wight is an English county with its own unitary authority. It has a population of around 144,000.

I, Alan Marriott, editor, am the newspaper's responsible person, with Rachael Rosewell, my deputy, as back up.

Our editorial standards

The County Press adheres to the editor's code of conduct and does its level best to ensure everything published is fair and accurate. As a news team living in a hot-house environment of an island community, we certainly hear about it if we get something wrong.

We deal with all minor and in-house complaints in a responsible manner, with all but the simplest spelling error being referred to editor or deputy.

More serious complaints are dealt with in a more composed fashion, with evidence from reporter and complainant being weighed. We are not afraid to admit our errors, and to put them right in a measured way.

Cont/...

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For instance, we have a For the Record column, for simple corrections and clarifications, which is always on page four.

But, if we have made an error in something such as a wedding report, we are likely to, in addition, send the couple several copies of the corrected report, and sometimes re-run the report in full.

In the rare instances we cannot come to an agreement with the complainant, we will always give them IPSO's details for them to make a formal complaint.

Our highly experienced team of sub-editors, news editors and section editors query stories all the time, with the reporters given a clear brief that they should not just go on one person's word for a claim of wrong doing etc. Again the benefit of working and living in our patch for a long time brings a real "nose" for what can be trusted or not.

I have not had cause to seek guidance from IPSO in the first year, but regularly speak to the editorial law team at the NMA, who provide not only legal, but ethical guidance.

Complaints-handling procedure

Our complaints handling procedure is largely informal at the first point of contact. Being a very local organisation, with an office in the centre of Newport, the county town, people often come in to comment or complain. We take complaints via the phone and there is a contact us button on our website, which often elicits comments.

I also have to reply to complaints from people posting comments about stories on our website, but this is often refereeing disputes between commenters.

We do have a complaints form (attached), which I have not had to use yet as our normal systems seem to do the job well enough.

As previously stated, complaints are dealt with at a senior level and reporters are not encouraged to try to resolve them themselves. I feel that a senior voice is a calming influence on situations, and can be seen as more objective.

If we feel a minor complaint is justified, we will usually offer a simple correction or clarification in our For the Record column. A more major error will probably result in a follow-up story to rectify things, or in the most serious of cases, a correction and apology in a prominent position in the paper. Thankfully these are very rare.

Cont/...

We provide readers with information about how to lodge a complaint, and about our membership of IPSO, on page 2 of our paper each week (attached). This has also recently been added to the Contact Us section on our website.

Training procedures

Although no formal complaints training is given, all new recruits are told at their induction how to deal with complaints ie pass them to a senior member of the team.

Record on compliance

We have had two complaints referred to IPSO during the period. One of these is ongoing and I await the complainant's response to my attempt to settle the matter between us (as advised by IPSO officers). [REDACTED]

The other complaint, CP v [REDACTED] was also dealt with by way of correspondence between myself and the complainant. [REDACTED]

IPSO should have full details of the correspondence, but, in a nutshell, with our agreement to break an e-link between the two stories on our website, and a detailed explanation from myself as to why the matter was in the public interest, the matter was amicably settled.

I can supply further details of this should you so wish.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Marriott
Editor, IW County Press

Enc.

In this week's County Press

MAIN PAPER
Behind the News - page 48
Letters - page 49-51
CP Local 53-57
BMDs 58-61
Sport - 85-92

WEEKENDER
My Island - page 3
Wight Memories - pages 4 and 5
Entertainments - pages 12-27.

PROPERTY
48-page guide.

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COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint about this newspaper contact the editor, as listed above, or, if you wish to take the matter further, contact the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) on 0300123 2220 e-mail inquiries@ipso.co.uk



Left, Emily Robson-Dack, five, cuts the ribbon with help, from left, Helen Wood, dad Christopher Dack and Cllr Phil Jordan, with David Howarth of the Ramblers, left, looking on. 0915-p68508
Right, Kathy Mills, with children Winnie, six, and Bryn, 11 and their dog, Gibson, on the walk.



Emily, 5, declares coastal path open

MUSIC and fun celebrated the reopening of the coastal path between Totland and Colwell on Sunday.

More than 1,000 people attended the launch, with hundreds more enjoying the walk in the afternoon.

The IW Council has spent more than £200,000 on a make-do-and-mend repair to the seawall, which was severely damaged by a landslide in December 2012.

Entertainment was supplied by the

By Mai Butler
editor@iowcp.co.uk

FaT Samba Band and the Brightonse Bananas, who sang sea shanties.

Helen Wood, of Totland, who has campaigned for the access to be reinstated, said: "I would like to thank all local people for their hard work to get this done. We had 4,000 signatures on our petition and that made a difference."

Cllr Phil Jordan, member of the IW Council's executive for public protection, said: "We were determined from the outset to get the coastal path reopened."

"I know how important it is to the people of the West Wight, both for residents and tourists."

The Ramblers' national president, Kate Ashbrook, who was also there, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to see the coastal path opened again."

"A year ago, we were a long way from this point but with the communi-

ty and businesses pulling together, we have got there and, hopefully, we can move on to getting full coastal access across the whole Island."

Emily Robson-Dack, five, from Totland, who handed in the petition to the council, cut the ribbon at the ceremony.

The large crowd set off from The Waterfront pub and restaurant, Totland, and the walk finished at Longbeach Bar, Colwell.

● Visit www.iowcp.co.uk for a video of the opening.

'Win' with deal for new toilets

THE building of new public toilets in exchange for parking spaces has been described as a "win for all".

Two Seaview property owners have offered to knock down the ramshackle toilets at Seaview Bay and build new conveniences nearby, making way for garage and off-street parking spaces for their homes.

The new toilets will be managed and maintained by Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council.

Tuesday's meeting of the IW Council executive agreed to designate the property owners as "special purchasers" for the toilets.

Ward councillor Reg Barry said: "This is a perfect example of a win for all. In exchange for parking spaces, the property owners are going to build new, state-of-the-art toilets, with disabled facilities."

"They are only open in the summer at the moment and pretty dilapidated."

"It's going to be a really good toilet."

Cllr Steve Stubbings said: "I'm delighted to see opportunities like this for keeping public toilets open."

Plea over prisoner

CALLS for the release of a prisoner, accused of terrorism and tortured to obtain a confession, have been made by Island campaigners.

The Amnesty International group has appealed to the Moroccan authorities for justice for Ali Aarras, a Belgian Moroccan national forced to return to the country from Spain, where he was caring for his elderly father.

He was accused of terrorism offences, held in a secret detention centre, and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

The group has called for an impartial investigation into his case and treatment.

Pier repairs start

REMEDIAL work has started to restore Totland Pier back to its former glory.

The pier opened in 1880 but closed 100 years later, when it was declared unsafe.

Totland cafe is closed and parish clerk, Helen Gibbs, said: "Work to replace the lattice steelwork and timber decking has started and divers have been encasing the underwater iron supports to stabilise the structure."

"The car park level has also been raised to provide a safe

means of escape during any extreme tidal surge/storm."

She added: "The works have been delayed due to issues with ownership and providing the necessary services for the pier."

"These have now been resolved and the pier and cafe come under one owner."

"The owner is in talks with the IW Council on amendments to the cafe building and, assuming the feedback from the pre-planning application is positive, an application will be put in."

Works at Totland Pier.



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MISS SARAH SMITH
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