

You may be aware that the budget presented by the "Caretaker Conservative -UKIP - Chapman Blezzard Jones Evans Gilbey and Priest administration" " voted THEIR budget through. ...i suggest that all areas of cuts and frivolous spending of the ASDA receipt be noted.

The Island Independents put forward OUR budget proposal which showed NO cuts to the Rights of Way monies in the coming year. The sad fact was that the inexperience and lack of thought led all of the "caretakers" to vote in the way which you feared.

During our Island Independent administration the likes of Luisa Hillard, John Medland, and Shirley Smart have continued to safeguard the interests of RoW and promote the qualities of our rural areas....the Independents work as a team and that's how I can give testament to those people.

I hope that you and your number remember how we tackled the coastal route from Colwell to Totland and, against the odds, provided a pathway through the Undercliffe. You may also note the progress made at Fairlee etc.

I think that the Island Independents have championed our paths, bridleways etc throughout the Island, and I would ask that you further my response, as an Island Independent candidate and former IWC Leader, to your members so that they have some background information when deciding on the worthiness of potential elected Members to run the IWC for the next 4 years.

Another ray of sunshine from the Island Independents is that we have stated that we will revisit the budget passed by others in a Budget Review in September....a good reason for voting for our Island Independent candidates. ..don't you think?

Kind regards Ian (Stephens )

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Yes I appreciate all you are saying why make a problem for 50k and lose all the good will of Thousands of people on and off the The island .  
Believe me there are that amount off people involved in RAMBLING walking the Foot Paths .

I know I was directly involved in the designating all right off way and the re designation of others at a later date a long time back yes we did get Government funding as we were the First which enable us then to all that you are saying in your email to me .

I advised Officers And portfolio holds 2 years ago and to date this is a retrograde step backwards not to fund CMS and Right Of way , I will be pressuring this funding matter to we get a positive out come all is no lost ..

I contested the 50k that was removed from the CMS now we don't have a CMS as we all New it ..Remember Ron smith cc and my self Charles Chapman cc we championed the CMS and its set up not forgetting the then TPO commitment and

pond week digging out ponds and bringing them back so Schools could learn hands on a big thank you to the pond wardens then and now ,supported at that time by Southen water.

In those day it paid ,even sending officers abroad to the mainland to help set a CMS up for them .

I will close by saying that the only county so save it Primarily Trees and Clear there Right of way to a proper out come was CMS Right of way IOW in the 1987 storm and more

A Cllr from 1986/7

Thanking you

Kind regards

Charles Chapman cc

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Thank you for your email

On behalf of all 30 IW Labour candidates for the IW Council, can I assure you that when elected we will look to re-instate the cuts to the Rights of Way capital budget agreed by the current Conservative/Ukip/LibDem/Shanklin Independents administration.

As you will be aware the Labour Group at County Hall (of which I am the lead member) this year proposed an affordable increase in the capital budget for Rights of Way of £100,000 as we believed it had become a Cinderella service in recent years.

However, our overall Budget alternative was defeated by 18 votes to 16, with the administration's Budget (which slashed previous expenditure by half) then agreed by a similar vote

IW Labour is very appreciative and supportive of the work undertaken by the IW Ramblers. I myself am a member and have been a footpath representative in recent years.

Labour members of some years also recall that the Ramblers movement grew out of the mass trespassing of the 1930s (Kinder Scout, etc), which had its roots within the Labour movement, and the support of the post-WW2 Labour Government. And it was a Labour government that legislated for a (limited) right to roam in 2000.

The Improvement Plan you have sent us is certainly something a Labour Council would engage with positively. And we do of course support a truly coastal footpath around the Island.

In addition to this email you may also get some more personal responses.

Yours sincerely

GEOFF LUMLEY

IW Councillor for Newport East & lead Labour member

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I think Ian Stephens may have beaten me to a reply but just to say, as always, I – and I know all of my Independent colleagues – are great supporters of all you do and the time and effort you have given to improving access to our countryside community (and other pathways, of course) which is of great benefit to many. Long may it continue.

I wanted to write back swiftly because I also wanted you to know that as a group of Independents, we proposed an alternative budget this year [in the face of the seized council control budget of the conservatives, ukip and individual members group] that demonstrated our support for the ‘rights of way’ and for the Ramblers generally who work so hard in this respect, which would have delivered no cuts to the council spend on RoW.

I am particularly disappointed that the conservative led budget attacked your work and the rights of way by cutting funding so viciously (maybe even slipping into not delivering their statutory duties on rights of way) and it seems without any regard. It will be interesting to see if anyone other than the Independent Councillors respond to you with positive support and if they do, how they square that with their own previous actions of supporting budget cuts to the rights of way council spend. I’m confused as to how one could now voice support for you having previously supported the cuts to funding....

At least you know from me, and the work and determination we all put in for the Totland sea walk path, for example, that we do demonstrate support for you and the Ramblers as well as vocally supporting the ‘cause’. I even think we’ve improved the Undercliff from a walkers perspective (even though the actual ROW sit just below the road level) and it is now rather like a developing country park around the area generally there.

You can assure your members that rights of way are very much an issue that Independents are concerned about and have tried to do something about. There’s more to do, we all know, but the first place to start is not cutting the funding.... that’s counter-productive and works, contradictorily, against so many other aspirations that we all have for the Island and for our residents.

I know you know I support your efforts but sometimes it’s good to hear it again.....

Very best Wishes,

Phil Jordan, Independent Ryde NW

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Hello David, I refer to your email sent to Isle of Wight Councillors. At the budget meeting I voted against reducing the Rights of Way budget. This is a backward step. It is vital I feel to keep access to rights of Way and to keep them in good condition. Walking in the countryside promotes physical and mental well being and the more people who can use take part the better. I am fully supportive of the Ramblers. Kind regards Rodney Downer Independent Godshill and Wroxall.

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Many thanks for the informative email.

I would like to assure you that I fully support funding put back into place for our rights of way, these areas are vital assets to this glorious island.

I along with other executive members have already found potential areas of other savings that would enable us to put back up to £50k (or even potentially more) into these areas.

If re-elected I will work with the administration, who ever that maybe, to deal with your concerns.

I hope this helps, and if I can be of further assistance please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Jon Gilbey Independent group Shanklin central

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Dear David,

The Island Independent group proposed a fully costed and legal budget in February which would have retained full funding for the maintenance and improvements of rights of way.

We unanimously opposed the Conservative/ UKIP/ LibDem budget which cut rights of way funding. Rights of way across the Island are a vital element of our heritage, supporting the health and wellbeing of residents and of course our tourist economy.

If returned with a majority in May the Island Independents have pledged to undertake an emergency budget to seek to reverse those funding cuts that aren't beyond the point of no return, including revisiting and reinstating the funding to rights of way.

Thank you for the work you do across the island. Just last night residents of Whippingham raised concerns regarding the accessibility of stiles in the area and I would be keen to talk to about your scheme to see how we might make improvements in the Whippingham area.

Kind regards

Julia Baker-Smith Independent Whippingham

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Labour Councillor Geoff Lumley has forwarded your concerns about Island footpaths to me and I would like to endorse the comments in his reply. We have recently seen long delays in getting footpaths repaired and maintained and in the event of a Conservative administration returning to County Hall on May 4th this situation looks to get worse, with further cuts to budgets.

As a runner, I often use footpaths and appreciate their value to users. I would like to see all footpaths on the Island maintained and improved and would support a budget to allow for this.

Yours sincerely,  
Mick Lyons  
Labour Candidate for Ryde South.

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As a Member of Totland Parish Council of 40 years and 12 years Isle of Wight Council I have always supported public rights of way and I will continue to do so.

John Howe Independent Totland

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Dear Mr. Slater,

Further to the response by Geoff I would be very happy to meet to convey your concerns and those of the Ramblers group in person, or perhaps highlight particular issues, which I will be able to put forward at Island Labour's next party meeting after May's local elections alongside a synopsis of the Improvement plan.

The Island's pathways and the walks they offer to visitors and residents are an asset which ought to be protected for their importance to our community and economy as jobs, public services and schools.

As you will note from Geoff's response the Labour Party has a strong connection with the Ramblers movement and is committed to protecting our footpaths and rights of way as the asset they are.

I appreciate it may be ambitious to arrange a meeting this month with the efforts Island Labour's council candidates like myself are making with our free time and your existing commitments but if you think something would be convenient for you please do let me know.

Regards,

Will Bossman

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Dear David,

I would like to state that I voted against the proposed cuts to ROW put forward in the Cons budget. This is quite simply unacceptable and I would look to get the budget line reinstated. I have worked extremely hard to get a lot of work done in my ward throughout Fishbourne and the Quarr estate onto Binstead over the past 6 years and I fully support the work of the Ramblers. I am pleased that the Independent administration is able to fully acknowledge your excellent work and look forward to receiving your new 10 year plan in the summer.

Best wishes

Ivor

Ivor Warlow

IWC Member for Binstead and Fishbourne

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Dear Mr Slater

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I am a frequent long distance walker. I am always grateful for the extensive rights of way network we have, especially when I discover for myself new routes and new vistas! I also, of course, recognise a good number of the comments about problems with the network as set out in the paper.

My impression is that the ideas set out in the Island Ramblers' paper are comprehensive, appropriate and reasonable.

I believe our public rights of way are a significant asset to the Island – both for its residents and its visitors – and deserve to be invested in on that basis. Reductions in budget for public rights of way are not, in my view, either sensible or justifiable.

Your email on behalf of Michael Slater has been sent to me as one of the Liberal Democrat candidates. I am standing in the Parkhurst ward.

I'm emailing so that you have my email address and to let you know that I will be responding in due course.

Yours,  
Andrew Garratt, LibDem candidate

The Island has an opportunity to be a leader in how it manages and promotes its public rights of way. I am very pleased to hear of the work to digitise the definitive map. I have from time to time found myself puzzling over PDFs downloaded from the Council web site while in the middle of the countryside!

I welcome the comments about performance measurement. It seems only right that communication with the network's users should involve a means of assessing their satisfaction (or otherwise) with the network and the services provided to maintain and improve it. Sample surveys are useful for monitoring trends and for analysing changes in a statistically testable way. I would like also to see work done to encourage users to report their experiences all year round. It would be great if this could make use of modern technology – is there an app for reporting issues as they are encountered (using GPS and perhaps on-phone cameras)?

It is likely implicit in the paper but to your list of criteria on upgrading footpaths I would add something that recognises the need for consultation that has delivered clear public support.

If I may, I would like to raise two particular issues.

The first, though it may be outside the remit of your paper, is the need to maintain all-year-round access to beaches such as those at Chilton, Compton and Brook. Poor steps or crumbling concrete slipways can both present a slip hazard and, if requiring a big step down, also make the beaches 'out of bounds' (such as for those with hip replacements). In other places the replacement of stiles with gates has been enormously welcome. They are safer for all and, of course, allow access for those who otherwise cannot negotiate a stile.

The second, is for the department to be able to pursue re-establishing paths that have been closed. I think particularly of Whale Chine. This is a special place that is inaccessible to those who a) cannot manage the shingly beach walk or b) are willing to risk the scramble up and down (although, of course, this is signposted against). This would, of course, require investment and it may be that this will need to come from the department working within an umbrella grouping with those such as the Ramblers in order to secure funding.

I hope, if elected, to be able to discuss these issues at greater length with you and, of course, to be a vocal supporter in the Council Chamber for investment in our network.

Best wishes,  
Andrew Garratt  
Liberal Democrat candidate for Parkhurst

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Many thanks for your email. Having been born & brought up in Surrey but having spent most of my working life close to the sea I would be strongly against any changes that would take away our heritage of being able to stroll through the countryside with your family because of financial cuts. Savings can & should be made where mis-management is the reason I am with you 100%. Best Regards,  
Graham Perks.

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I support in full the Ramblers proposals as a candidate in the local elections, and made appropriate representations in advance of setting this year's budget.

Should I be re-elected, I will continue to support additional funding for Rights Of Way.

Kind Regards,

Paul.

**PAUL FULLER JP, CC.**  
**Independent Isle of Wight Councillor for Cowes West and Gurnard.**

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Hi Mr Slater,

I can only echo Geoff's words on this matter. The footpaths on this island are a great asset, both for tourists and islanders (I have at one time or another been both). You have my full support, and keep up the good work.

Kindest regards

Mark Rees

Labour candidate for Nettlestone and Seaview

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Dear Sir,

I received your email via our local party secretary. I am grateful for the opportunity to express my views on this important issue.

I must first declare an interest, as I myself am a keen walker. My family and I have recently returned from Scotland where, for the third Easter in a row we managed to “bag” a Munro (Beinn Ghlas). Actually, I think the first one was a Corbet, but I digress.

As so often, government fails to see the long term picture. Investment in walking is an investment in the health of the nation. At a time when the NHS is under so much pressure and we are seeing an epidemic in diabetes and other diseases caused by a sedentary life style, it makes absolutely no sense to make cuts in this area. Successive governments have put millions into elite sports in the hope of Olympic glory but has failed entirely, in my view, to provide active recreation opportunities for the wider public.

On the Isle of Wight there is a clear opportunity to promote the Island as a centre for walkers. I have spoken throughout my election campaign for the need to invest in the Island’s future. Tourism will inevitably form an important element of that future and walking or nature holidays will hopefully attract not just families, but perhaps older and more affluent holiday makers to our Island.

So, you may take it that were I to be elected in Binstead and Fishbourne on May 4<sup>th</sup>, I would oppose any attempt by the council to make cuts to the footpaths and Rights of Way budget, indeed I would seek to work with groups such as yourself to promote all forms of sport and leisure on the Island. I’m afraid that the present council has, not for the first time, simply made a bad, poorly thought through decision.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Cory.

Liberal Democrat candidate Binstead and Fishbourne.

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Dear David

Many thanks for taking the trouble to contact me regarding rights of way.

I am a champion for slowing down speeds in our residential streets, town and village centres and also to create more Quiet Lanes for the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists and equestrians. Walking is the “miracle drug” for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and I am committed to creating more opportunities and conditions to enable people to walk more.

I argued against the cuts to the ROW budget and was assured that money would be found from elsewhere to support the service. I also had £100k allocated to the 20mph implementation, which will help the wider aims of encouraging active travel.

Our hundreds of miles of footpaths and bridleways are an asset not only to our health and environment but also to our economy. They are a precious resource to be invested in for our total wellbeing.

Best wishes

Julie

Councillor Julie Jones-Evans |  
Elected Member for Newport Central |  
Executive Member for Regeneration |

County Hall | Newport | Isle of Wight

Mr Slater (C/O Mr Howarth)

Thanks for email and I have championed re-opening of footpaths, and rights of way, during the time I have served as a Town and County Councillor.

I am fully supportive of officer efforts caring for the Island's Network (I am a keen walker, so have knowledge of their efforts), and would work to ensure the availability of resources, but recognise the need to set a lawful and balanced budget, as well as maximise the total benefit of all resources (inc grant income).

Hope this helps, and happy to have a chat in the future.

Regards

Richard

**Councillor Richard Priest**

Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Councillor for Shanklin South

Isle of Wight Council

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