

**Note of a meeting with Martin Gulliver (MG), Wightlink Port Operations Manager for Fishbourne and Ryde held at RVYC on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Martin handed me a “Fast facts document” containing information relevant to Wightlink which I attach to this note FYI.

I had not met MG before so we covered quite a lot of basic information regarding the ferries and particularly Fishbourne, Ryde and Portsmouth ports. The main items arising:

- The repairs to the North Berth at Portsmouth will take 6 months. Meanwhile the set up at the South berth will be improved over the next 8 weeks to more easily take passengers from the FastCat with buggies, bicycles etc less dependent on the tides.
- There are plans in the near future to resurface the car park and to sandblast and repaint the original cast iron railings at the Pier Head in Ryde.
- Wight Sun will have a refit soon and the Yarmouth – Lymington route will go to a 3-vessel service in 2026. Overall combined capacity will be unchanged but it's expected that the extra ferry will smooth traffic flow. The introduction of the Kraken ferry has not affected this route.
- Fishbourne parking issues such as Ranelagh Drive – discreetly obtained photos can be helpful especially if the vehicles are identifiable to businesses.
- The legislation governing vehicle ferry design and size has changed so that a replacement boat the size of St Faith would have a far smaller capacity than the existing ferry. So St Faith's replacement is expected to be a large hybrid diesel like Victoria of Wight. There is currently not enough electrical capacity on the Island and at Portsmouth to run electricity-only powered ferries. Future plans envisage battery powered ferry services.
- Katy Taylor, CEO, is happy to talk to Fishbourne residents about Wightlink plans.
- 70% of journeys from the Island are discounted.
- The replacement ferry will not be built in the UK. Most likely Turkey or China.
- Replacement FastCats can be fully electric and might be built at Wight Shipyards.
- The Fishbourne – Portsmouth ferry route will be 100 years old in 2026.
- Noise monitoring equipment installed for the “bang-bang” noise as vehicles drive on or off the ferry shows a reduction in the noise levels.

Carolyn Dugdale

10<sup>th</sup> November 2025

# Fast facts document – October 2025

## Community, Environment & Investment

### Staffing

- Around 1/3 of our team live on the Island, employed across a range of roles including Crew, Port Operations, Retail and Office based roles.
- In peak season we employ more than 500 people.

### The Island Economy

- Many Island businesses are part of our supply chain, supporting our day-to-day operations. Wightlink contribute around £2.5 million p.a. to the Island's economy.
- This includes more than £700,000 in council tax and £150,000 in harbour fees.

### Wightlink in the Community

- Our Wightlink in the Community scheme has been in operations since 1987.
- We invest **£400,000** a year supporting charities, good causes and talented athletes via our Wightlink in the Community scheme.
- Individuals, Teams, and Organisations are invited to apply annually to benefit from the programme.
- Successful applicants will receive free or discounted cross Solent travel.

### We support:

- 78 individuals as part of the IOW Talented Athletes Scheme.
- 20 sporting teams, including Ryde Harriers, Shanklin Sailing Club and Wight Eagles FC.
- 13 arts organisations including Platform One, Shanklin Theatre and IOW Symphony Orchestra.
- 5 environmental organisations including Surfers Against Sewage, Blue Marine Trust and RSPB.
- 10 charitable organisations including aspire Ryde, Ability for Dogs, WightAID Foundation.

### Investing in our Fleet and Ports

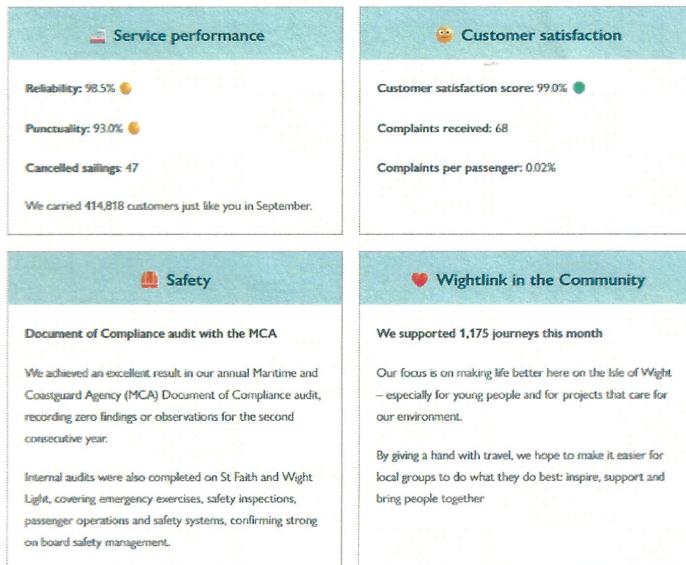
- To ensure we run a safe and reliable service, we have an annual programme of maintenance for our eight strong fleet, typically lasting six-months, rotating ships in and out of refit/service.
- This year we will invest more than £8 million on refits alone, with further investments made in our Port infrastructure to support the operation.
- Each ship is accompanied by a refit captain and crew who undertake much of the work.
- Investment in a new vessel cost upwards of £35m (car ferry).

### Environment

- 99% of our waste is either recycled or used to produce electricity
- Since 2006 we have reduced our carbon footprint by 33% (range of initiatives including more fuel efficient vessels, introduction of solar power and more EV chargers)

# Service Performance

We're committed to running a reliable and punctual ferry service, ensuring you get across the Solent when you need to. There are times when we may be running behind schedule, but we work throughout the year to try and keep these disruptions to a minimum, maintaining our fleet of ferries with annual refits and training our colleagues to the highest standards.



## What this means for you

- ✓ Reliable travel – 98.5% of our ferries sailed compared to our timetable available to you 24 hours beforehand.
- ⌚ Punctual travel – 93.0% of our ferries sailed within five minutes of the scheduled departure time.
- 📅 Cancelled sailings – We cancelled 47 sailings. 12 cancellations were due to crew shortage, one was down to engine failure, 17 were mechanical breakdowns, six were the result of emergency fueling and 11 were due to linkspan failures.

<https://www.wightlink.co.uk/about-wightlink#service-performance>

## How reliability and punctuality are calculated

The method used to calculate our performance stats are used widely across the transport industry, particularly in the rail sector. The way we measure our operational performance was independently audited by a third party in July 2023 to verify the methodology. We report by financial period rather than calendar month – this gives a truer reflection when comparing year on year. For example, if Easter falls in March one year but April the next, by reporting by financial period we can ensure the two can be directly compared.

- Reliability is calculated as the number of ferries that sailed compared to the timetable available to you 24 hours beforehand.
- Punctuality is defined as the number of ferries that sail within five minutes of the scheduled departure time.

# Current Works

## Portsmouth Harbour Berth Works

The ongoing essential maintenance of the gangway and berth improvements at our Portsmouth Harbour port means there is a change to the way customers will board and disembark the FastCat.

Instead of using our usual 'North End' gangway to get on and off the FastCat, customers will use our 'South End' gangway at the opposite end of the port instead.

Boarding the FastCat this way includes a steep slope, a small number of steps and a narrow gangway on to the FastCat which means we need to take extra care of what can safely travel on the vessel.

Due to these changes, we will only be able to accommodate bicycles, pushchairs and prams on specific sailings where the tide is high enough to allow safe boarding and disembarkation from Monday, 20 October.

If the tide is too low, or if you're travelling with a wheelchair or mobility scooter on any sailing, please use the Portsmouth – Fishbourne car ferry instead. Alternatively, Hovertravel will accept Wightlink tickets if preferred.

If you're travelling with heavy luggage, please ensure you're able to navigate the slope, steps, and narrow gangway safely.

Full details available here:

<https://www.wightlink.co.uk/plan-your-journey/service-status/portsmouth-harbour-boarding-changes>

## Fares & Ticket Types

- **70% of journeys** made by Islanders are at a discounted rate. (includes Multilink, discount codes, 3<sup>rd</sup> party)
- Prices for Multilink Pass car crossings start at **less than £32**. They can be bought in units of 10/20/40/60 and shared with up to other members of your household.
- The average cost of a crossing for an Islanders in a car (and up to 7 passengers) is less than **£35**.
- In conjunction with IOW Council, we operate a Discounted Fare Scheme for IOW Residents who are in receipt of the Universal Credit, Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit.
- Student discounts are available on our foot passenger tickets.
- We offer a payment option through PayPal to pay in 3 instalments (PayPal pay in 3). Available for online booking (value of booking to be between £30 and £2000).
- In 2024, 90% of Islander bookings were for fixed price ticket types (Season tickets, Multilinks, Foot Passenger tickets etc) and only 10% of bookings were on fluid (public) priced tickets.
- Customers booking a rail ticket which includes a Wightlink crossing, benefit from the associated discount of the rail and ferry components of the ticket. For example, a person booking with a 16-24 railcard will receive a 30% discount on the ferry crossing element.

### Dynamic Pricing

- Islanders booking a standard car crossing at our “public” prices paid an average of £90.52 per booking in 2024
- Less than 4% of these bookings were over £200 (or 96% of bookings were less than £200.)
- Islanders accessed discounted travel offer through over 140 partners organisations (over 20,000 bookings) and Wightlink offered over 25 discount promotions during 2024 (c 7,000 bookings)
- There were no standard car bookings by Islanders costing over £300 (excludes trailers and wide vehicles)
- 65 bookings cost between £250-£299

## Detail: Multilink Vehicle Passes

Our Multilink Vehicle Passes are designed to save you money if you travel regularly to the mainland using your car or motorcycle. You can bulk purchase from 10 to 60 single crossings for as little as £31.35\* per sailing. (new price from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

Useful to know...

- Passes are valid for 12 months from date of purchase or top-up.
- Up to 7 passengers (including the driver) may travel in the same vehicle.
- Your ML pass is valid if you’re travelling in the vehicle, you don’t have to be the driver.
- You can register a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> passenger on a ML Vehicle Pass if they live at your address.
- An average of 30% of available space is allocated to multilink, and the minimum of 15% of space is always available.
- We publish updates on Multilink availability on our websites three times a week.

## Details: Multilink Foot Passenger Passes

You can bulk purchase from 10 to 60 single crossings for as little as £7 per sailing for an adult, with further reductions available for students and children.

Things you should know.

- Valid for 12 months from the date of purchase or top up.
- No booking or amendment fees
- You can register a family member on an Adult Multilink Foot Passenger Pass and a second child on Child Multilink Pass. Second named passholders do not have their own account, however, and will have to use the main passholder's account to make bookings.

## Best Fare Finder

Our Best Fare Finder tool will help customers find the most affordable days to travel with us without having to do multiple searches. Much like choosing flights for an overseas holiday (on Google Flights, for example), the tool is ideal for those that can be flexible with when they travel.

Customers put in their preferred travel dates and Best Fare Finder will return prices for those and neighbouring days, giving a clear picture of which days are the cheapest to travel on.

Additional Notes

- *We have intentionally removed sailings between 23:59 and 05:00 from the tool as we know that few of our customers book this. They're still bookable, of course, so even cheaper sailings may be available.*
- *When launched, it will enter a beta phase where we welcome feedback from customers.*

## **Loyalty Rewards - Multilink + Season Ticket Rewards (now launched)**

Our Multilink passes and Season tickets offer great value for money and are very popular with Islanders. Following feedback from our ML/Season ticket customers we are adding enhanced benefits for our most loyal customers.

Multilink 20 and upwards and Season tickets of 90 day and upwards will receive discount codes to share with friends and family to make savings against travel with Wightlink.

With each purchase or top up, we'll send discount codes (which can be shared friends and family) via email within 10 working days of their transaction. (The vast majority of emails will be sent quicker than this).

It's a tiered system, so the more you travel, the more your friends and family will save:

- Multilink 20 Vehicle Pass and 90 Day Season Ticket get two 25% discount codes
- Multilink 40 Vehicle Pass and 180 Day Season Ticket get three 25% discount codes
- Multilink 60 Vehicle Pass and Annual Season Ticket get three 33% discount codes
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## **Pay in 3 instalments**

We also accept payment via PayPal's Pay in 3 (interest free instalments) available against any booking between the value of £30-£2000.

## **Travelling for NHS Appointments**

- Car crossings are capped at a maximum of £35 per crossing, if the fare you wish to book costs less than this, using the 50% discount, then you'll pay the lower fare.
- Fixed price foot passenger crossing receives a 50% discount.
- During the past 2024 over 10,000 crossing have been made under our discounted NHS appointment scheme. (a YOY increase of 38% following concerted efforts to raise awareness of the scheme).

## **Details: NHS Fare Scheme**

- If you need to travel from the Isle of Wight to the mainland for an NHS-funded hospital appointment, you can get 50% off your ferry crossing with Wightlink.
- You will pay a maximum of £35 per single crossing in a vehicle ensuring you a low price, even at peak times of travel.
- The NHS discount is available for the patient plus one other traveller, or if the patient is a child, two parents are permitted to travel alongside. The offer does not apply to appointments with GPs, dentists, pharmacists, or opticians.
- You will be required to produce your appointment card, letter or SMS showing your appointment date and time only when you check in at port. You won't need to provide the appointment reason or details.

## How to book

- Give us a call in advance on our dedicated Assisted Travel line at [0800 093 8236](tel:08000938236) and our team will be on hand to make sure you can travel confidently when you need it most. Quote the Wightlink Healthcare Discount and our skilled staff will ensure that you are charged lowest price possible using the 50% discount.
- Call our dedicated Assisted Travel line on 0800 093 8236, Monday to Friday 9am-6pm and Saturday and Sunday 9am-5pm, to discuss your requirements.

## Timetables

- Fishbourne-Portsmouth – sailing round the clock.
- FastCat - first sailing from Portsmouth 05:15, last from Ryde 23:10
- Yar-Lym- first sailings 06:05, last from Yarmouth 21:50 (Fridays).
- We consult with railways when planning our timetables to ensure services are as well connected as they can be.
- When an incoming train service is running behind schedule it isn't always possible for us to "hold" our service as other passengers may have connections to make with public transport on the mainland or Island.
- On certain sailings, we have to restrict the number of customers who can travel, this is generally due to the sailing being designated to carry "dangerous goods" an example of which could be a fuel tanker going across to the Islands.

## Customer feedback

- Our Best Ferry Operator in the UK awards in 2023 and 2024 reflect our determination to deliver outstanding customer service. Customer satisfaction scores are above 95%.
- British Travel Awards was voted for by the public.
- National Transport Awards was judged by a panel of industry experts.
- We collect our own in-house reviews, emailed out to our customers, the results of which are used to monitor and improve performance.
- We also work with the independent review platform "Feefo" to gain customer feedback; these reviews are published on both our own and the Feefo website.
- Feefo review ratings for our service (booking process) are currently 4.4 out of 5 and for our product (ferry service) are 4.5 out of 5.
- On average we receive 30 formal complaints per month (total annual passenger carryings of 4.3 million).

To provide further feedback you can visit [Wightlink.co.uk/contact-us](http://Wightlink.co.uk/contact-us).

Other useful ways to contact us.

Contact Centre: 0333 999 7333

Assisted Travel line: 0800 093 8236

Business Support: 023 9285 5260

## Tourism: Visit IOW update November 2024

(Q3, 2024 – Jul/Aug/Sep)

- Overall visitor numbers in the summer increased by 1% during Q3 (YTD Jan-Sep 2024 shows visitor numbers down –2.1% YOY)
- Total of 741,521 visitors for Q3
- Average overnight visitor spend was down 11% YOY (£115)
- 14% of visitors were visiting the Island for the first time
- 66% of overnight trips were for leisure/holidays
- 41% of day trips were for leisure purposes.
- Average length of stay was 4.62 nights
- 62% of visitors came from areas of the South East including London

### Youth Travel initiatives – launched June 2025

Wightlink are providing 2 free foot passenger crossings to all young Islanders in the equivalent of Year 12 –13 (6<sup>th</sup> form years) in education or training. These are administered via educational establishments and training providers in the form of Single Use Discount Codes (issued by marketing). The first batch of codes were sent out in June 2025 to launch the scheme (valid for travel to the end of 2025).

Codes will then be issued at the start of each academic year (September)

NEETS – not in education or training (approximately 400) 16-18 year olds on the Island. The IOW Trust has a supply of 50% off codes that can be used by this group if travelling to the mainland for interviews. IOW Trust also has a supply of free travel codes to be provided at point of need to young people travelling to the mainland for mental health appointments (if they are unable to get an appointment on the Island).

### Sunset Flyer – launched 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025

The Sunset Flyer is an exclusive fixed price car ticket for Islanders only. Travel between the hours of 6pm and 9.05am (island or mainland) for a £45 per leg price (now reduced to £40 per leg until the end of 2025).

The ticket is valid for a duration of up to 30 days, so offers great flexibility for Islanders wishing to travel for longer than a day return/overnight stay.

This product is aimed at islander that travel infrequently, and do not need a multilink pass (or can't afford the upfront cost). The Sunset Flyer can also be paid for in 3 interest free instalments via PayPal.

The product is on sale until 31<sup>st</sup> December, we will review the performance to determine whether to extend or make the product permanent.

## Railcard Options

Railcard	Valid on Wightlink	Savings	Notes
16-25	Yes	Save 1/3 off rail fares	£30 for 1 year or £70 for 3 years. Mature students can also apply
Senior Railcard	Yes	Save 1/3 off rail fares	Aged 60 and over. £30 for 1 year or £70 for 3 years.
Disabled Person Railcard	Yes	Save 1/3 off adult train travel	£20 for 1 year or £54 for 3 years. Criteria: <a href="https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/are-you-eligible/">https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/are-you-eligible/</a>
26-30 Railcard	Yes	Save 1/3 off rail travel	£30 per year
Family & Friends Railcard	Yes	Save 1/3 off adult rail travel and 60% off for kids	£30 for 1 year or £70 for 3 years. Up to 4 adults travelling with 4 children. Must travel with a child to get the discount.
Network Railcard	Yes	Save 1/3 off rail travel in London and South East Network.	£30 per year. 16 or over, you can also take up to 3 adults with you and they get the saving too. Take up to 4 children 5-15 and save 60% on fares. Kids under 5 go free.
Veterans Card	Yes	Save 1/3 off rail travel for veterans	£30 for 1 year or £70 for 3 years.
Two Together	NO		
16-17 Save	NO		<b>Wightlink Foot Passenger Season tickets</b> offer discounted rates and in addition students will get 50% of the already discounted adult season ticket
Gold Card	NO		
Island Line Residents Card	NO		

Notes: There are some minimum fare and ticket restrictions with most railcards, so won't always save 30%. On our website, we should link back to the railcards.co.uk website. Purchase of the railcard and subsequent tickets is done via the rail network and not Wightlink. Customers are therefore purchasing from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party when travelling with us.