

Draft Statement on a Yaverland Plan

Following the meeting held at Browns Café of Friday 3rd March 2023, the notes below are a summary of the discussions and information that was shared at that event together with information about some more recent developments. It was agreed that it was a good meeting and that it was useful and important to share ideas on projects or issues impacting on the Yaverland area.

It was agreed that another meeting would be arranged with a longer attendance list so as to share the initial work and proposals more widely.

In the meantime work as necessary and possible continues in respect of all the elements identified herein.

In addition to the unifying aim of the Place Plan noted below the view is that a more structured approach needs to be undertaken with regards the overall governance arrangements and interaction in respect of the vision and proposals set out.

Presentations were received on the following;

- a. EA/IWC sea defences
- b. Swim The Wight Sea Pool
- c. Artecology Campus/Imagination Refinery
- d. IWC Browns future
- e. Wildheart Trust extension
- f. Dinosaur Isle future
- g. Place Plan

EA/IWC sea defences.

Yaverland has an ageing Victorian seawall and groyne structure. The defences are coming to the end of their useful lives and require regular ongoing patch and repair maintenance. We estimate that a breach in the defence could occur within the next 5-10 years. Capital investment is now required to secure a sustainable future.

We are appraising potential interventions needed over the next 100 years but looking to progress initial projects within the next 5 years. The initial scheme is expected to extend the life of the coastal defences by 30-35 years. This aligns with the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) policy for this frontage, which is to 'hold the line'.

One of the objectives for the scheme is to investigate and incorporate where feasible wider Isle of Wight Council objectives, such as regeneration and tourism initiatives that facilitate economic recovery following the Covid pandemic. The following are examples of opportunities in the immediate scheme area which could be incorporated into the scheme design.

- Opportunities to integrate pedestrian walkways and cycle lanes, cycle stands, shelter and seating into the engineering design to provide a high quality, high-capacity public realm with minimal clutter and visual separation from the sea
- Ramped access to beach and beach boardwalks for wheeled mobility devices
- Provision for services for pop up stalls and water bottle refill stations
- Features and conditions for increased biodiversity in line with our 20% Biodiversity Net Gain target

We have also identified wider opportunities which are more ambitious or spatially located further from the seafront but could be delivered by stakeholders or through partnership working:

- Opportunity to develop a signature design approach through involvement of local artist with access to Royal Academy artists and Arts Council Funding
- Design guide to inform future development of private facilities over time to reduce dominance of car transport and parking along the seafront
- Ideas for footpath linkages to create a gateway to Brading Marshes
- Interpretation strategy which might include the story of changing landscape over time and palaeontology, animal conservation and welfare, natural history, coastal flooding and erosion protection
- Climate resilience/Biodiversity Net Gain measures for Browns golf course
- Consider/investigate habitat enhancements for red squirrel

Swim The Wight - Yaverland Eco Sea Pool Project

Swim the Wight aims to make IOW sea swimming safe & accessible for all. To inspire & enthuse people about their surroundings, have an active lifestyle & connect with their community

Our vision is to develop a safe, sheltered & accessible 50m+ tidal ECO SEA POOL at Yaverland that is low maintenance & worthy of the island & its designation as a UNESCO Biosphere. It would cater for those who want to be in the sea year round or who are wary of the open sea. It would be a multifunctional asset providing open water swimming, training, leisure, water sports, wildlife and educational experiences for the local community, local businesses and visitors across the seasons.

We would aim to work with other stakeholders to integrate an eco tidal pool naturally with the sea defences and the coastline, to attract new users of the water & the beach with inclusive access and facilities and a blue training & events space for triathletes, cross channel qualifiers, kayakers, paddleboarders etc.

Arteology Campus/Imagination Refinery

The work of Arteology is rooted in Sandown, and strongly connected to the Browns and Yaverland public estate, not only because of its corporate location, but through the on-site testing of prototypes (on The Science Beach), and through an annual programme of free public science events (Discovery Bay) that make use of Browns café and venue and the surrounding public realm. The investment that Arteology is now seeking will enable it to increase local employment, build educational opportunities at every level, establish Sandown (and the Island) as a centre of global expertise in ecoengineering, and deliver against the objectives of the Island's UNESCO World Biosphere reserve.

Arteology's connection with the Biosphere designation is of particular significance since its work combines high-level art and craft skills with materials science and ecological design to create features that are both productive for biodiversity and positive in their contribution to human interest in the public realm. These twin themes of cultural distinctiveness and biological value are central to the Biosphere project; Arteology is therefore in a position to strongly

represent the Isle of Wight across the international network of Biosphere reserves as exemplary in its approach.

This same combination of cultural and natural priorities also gives Artecology an important role in supporting the Island's influence in the Solent region, especially through the Solent LEP and its 2050 industrial strategy. This sets out proposals for investment in cultural and natural capital as key regional priorities for enterprise and for sustainable development. Artecology brings an international reputation to this work.

Enhanced premises and facilities for Artecology at Browns will support local business, Island enterprise and regeneration in the Bay, protect public and community assets, strengthen Solent economic development and advance global goals for nature.

Browns Golf Course and Café – The future

Browns is an important Community and Heritage Asset. It has wide public support and the aim is to maintain the building and the golf facility it offers going forward. We are currently seeking a new leaseholder and offering options in terms of the area to be leased so as to maximise the chances of enabling any tenant to operate a sustainable business.

A condition Survey of this building has been commissioned and the outcome of that will determine that needs to be done to the building prior to any new lease. It is also anticipated that the Golf Course itself will need considerable works as the course has not been well maintained for many years.

To try and further assist with the Café offer, officers from the council are currently working with local Grounds Maintenance contractors to come up with a maintenance regime that is more in keeping with this site. It is suggested that the land to the rear of the Cafe is managed in a more ecological way and that golf is no longer available on the entire site. There is an 18 hole putting course to the front of the café and the recommendation is that the maintenance of this area is improved.

Wildheart Trust Extension

The Wildheart Trust (WHT) provides a mixture of habitats that supports a diverse range of wildlife, as evidenced by recent ecological surveys of it and the immediate surrounds. It is of huge economic importance to the local area, providing 37 FTE jobs year-round and a further 15 seasonal jobs (FTE hours) from April to October. In addition, in an average year it will spend in the region of £160,000 on local contractors and services.

As well as these direct benefits to local communities, it attracts some 80,000+ visitors each year, which is a huge injection of tourism and associated spend into the Bay.

The WHT wishes to expand and diversify its income base to allow it to better support the bay, its communities and the biodiversity of the Island and as such to take on an area of approximately 5 acres to the rear of its existing site. The land extension has been set to allow Browns, as a heritage site much loved by local communities, to continue to operate. Public access to the "willow walk" will also continue unaltered.

The land will be used for a rewilded glamping facility, using a habitat first model to develop the area to proliferate wildlife and allow guests to immerse themselves in and connect with the biosphere. Glamping lodges have proved an immensely successful business model across

the UK and we believe the intoxicating combination of a peaceful site rich in wildlife, overlooking the Sandown levels will be irresistible. Connecting visitors in such a way to nature is a critical element of a successful biosphere.

The current area is devoid of wildlife, so the above plan will hugely increase biodiversity. We will work with local ecologists to masterplan an area that will proliferate species already present and provide essential new habitat for others. Many endangered species will benefit, including red squirrels, rare bat species and reptiles, as identified in our ecological surveys. This is not to mention the increase in carbon capture and natural land use, which are key priorities of the IOW Council's climate strategy.

From an economical stance, this development will create jobs year round and further and, critically, it will hold visitors in the area, increasing spend in local businesses. It can be used to link with other activities, providing a base for themed holidays, therapy breaks and educational visits adding value and success to other local organisations.

As an organization that has been at the heart of the Island community since 1976, we feel that this development sits perfectly in line with the Island's evolution – conserving our environment and connecting people to the biosphere, whilst allowing the communities within it to develop in a sustainable way.

Dinosaur Isle

The collection of fossilised dinosaur bones at Dinosaur Isle is second only in importance to that held by the Natural History Museum in London. It has national and international significance and is one of the Island's most important heritage assets. It is therefore important that the collections itself should always be owned by the Council.

The report carried out by Julia Holberry Associates identifies that Dinosaur Isle punches well below its weight in terms of visitor numbers compared to others especially as annual losses for the museum have risen significantly between 2017/18 and 2021/22, giving an increasing burden to the Council. The Eastern Bay Regeneration Vision¹ identifies Dinosaur Isle as a key component in the regeneration of the Bay and it sits at the heart of a proposal to develop the surrounding environment into a nature reserve or eco-park with a range of other embedded attractions.

There is a need to identify funding for the necessary repairs and future maintenance of the premises, while understanding the role that this building is to play in any regeneration projects.

Julia Holberry and Steve Green from Julia Holberry Associates were appointed to help the Isle of Wight Council and stakeholders agree on a future development strategy for Dinosaur Isle in the summer of 2022. Twenty stakeholders were invited to two workshops in October and November 2022 to discuss Dinosaur Isle's future and recommend a preferred option. Stakeholders were in agreement that they wanted Dinosaur Isle to become a sustainable visitor attraction, with high standards of curatorial care, underpinned by research and collaboration with national and international partners.

Full details are contained in the Report going to Cabinet in May.

Place Plan

The Regeneration Directorate at the IWC have commissioned a place plan for Shanklin, Sandown and Lake.

A contractor will be appointed to create a place plan with the following timetable

- Contractor appointed in March 2023
- Data gathering exercise between March and end of May
- Report Back in June
- Place plan to be agreed within 6 months

The role of the place plan is to try and link up all projects in the area of the place plan.

The Plan will consider existing pieces of work such as the Conservation Plan for the Browns site.