



2020-2021

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# WightFibre Environmental and Social Annual Report



## Our Story

Since 2000 WightFibre has provided broadband, telephone and tv services to Isle of Wight homes and businesses. We are currently enjoying a period of rapid growth as our Gigabit Island project will see the rollout of full-fibre ultrafast broadband to 80,000 homes and businesses on the Isle of Wight.

Whilst full-fibre broadband will provide tremendous environmental and social benefits – through reduced commuting and improving digital connectivity – as a company we want to ensure our growth is achieved in line with best practice on environmental impact and sustainability.

WightFibre’s “because we care” ethos extends beyond caring about our customers to include caring about our employees and, more broadly, the Island on which we live and work as we seek to give back to our Island community. The company is committed to digital inclusion so that all sections of our Island community can participate in the increasing digitisation of society.

### Quote from John Irvine, CEO

“WightFibre is a local Island company and we care passionately about our Island community. Our Gigabit Island project is delivering a world class digital infrastructure for the Island. This will set the Island apart in terms of digital connectivity which will benefit the Island for decades to come.

We want to do this sustainably and with care for our environment. We also wish to give back to our Island community where we can.”

### Quote from Brian Robertson, Chairman, WightFibre

“Our principal shareholders are funds managed by Infracapital, a leading infrastructure investor. In addition to delivering an attractive long-term return, Infracapital seeks investments which are able to make a positive impact on society. Accordingly WightFibre aims to deliver social and economic good to the Isle of Wight as well as generating value for our investors. Our shareholders work closely with WightFibre to manage ESG issues and risks effectively and to improve ESG standards. We ensure strong governance and oversight of WightFibre through regular reporting on relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) and ESG metrics.”.

This is WightFibre’s first Annual ESG report and covers the period 1st October 2020 – 30th September 2021



## Environment

WightFibre plans to become Carbon Neutral by 2025. The three principles at the heart of the company’s environmental policy are:

- Measure
- Reduce
- Offset



## Recent Environmental Activities

WightFibre has appointed a dedicated ESG manager to drive the development of our ESG programme.

WightFibre is developing an environmental management system based on the international standard, ISO 14001. WightFibre’s approach to environmental management may be found in the WightFibre Environmental Policy Statement with its clear commitments to pollution prevention, legislative compliance, and continual improvement.

Already in place to support the policy are robust and rigorous processes to monitor and report on WightFibre’s environmental performance. This year will be the first for which Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions are reported as well as a partial report for Scope 3 emissions and work has been completed to review historical data and to establish a greenhouse gas baseline for the year 2018/19.

As part of WightFibre’s Gigabit Island project, the WightFibre primary data centre in Cowes has been upgraded to use latest generation power and cooling systems. These are much quieter and much more energy efficient compared to previous systems. Power consumption in the data centre has been reduced by over 30% since 2018 despite growth in the size of the network. Further, WightFibre’s new full-fibre network consumes significantly less power than the legacy cable network.

Implementation of an improved waste management system in association with BIFFA has seen an increase in reuse and recycling to reduce landfill. This includes reuse of small items of electronic equipment and use of cardboard rather than plastic and polystyrene in packaging. Further

improvements will be ongoing and will become business as usual.

External areas around our office and data centre have been landscaped, much improving the visual appearance for our neighbours. The ground has been levelled and set to turf, and picnic benches have been installed, providing an area for staff to relax. Ongoing work on the project will see the planting of some cherry trees and the introduction of wildflower borders.

Partially in response to the COVID pandemic, WightFibre has adopted a hybrid working approach for office-based workers and will continue post-pandemic – reducing commuting based emissions.

WightFibre has joined the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife as a corporate member with a view to engaging, via the Trust, in a number of environmental initiatives on the Island.





## Quantifying Environmental Performance

WightFibre's total greenhouse gas emission for the year 2020-21 was 387 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. This works out at 41 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per customer.

The main source of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the provision of this service is electricity, which is used to run the data centre and street cabinets. These Scope 2 emissions total 177 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. However, it should be noted that whilst this is reported in strict accordance with government reporting requirements, the electricity used which represents 51% of WightFibre's electricity consumption is bought on a green tariff and is thus 100% green.

The use of fuel is the next source of greenhouse gas emissions. These Scope 1 emissions total 133 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. Of these Scope 1 emissions 97% arise from the WightFibre vehicle fleet. The fleet has grown significantly in the last few years as the company has grown. In 2021 WightFibre initiated a programme to phase out petrol/diesel vehicles and replace with electric vehicles where possible and hybrid vehicles where not. The aim is to achieve an all-electric fleet by 2026.

The final component of greenhouse gas emissions are the Scope 3 emissions which total 78 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. As noted previously this figure is a partial figure and does not include emissions associated with staff commuting nor the embodied carbon associated with the use of purchased materials; a programme is underway to calculate these.



## Looking Ahead

The main environmental objectives for WightFibre in the year 2021 – 22 will be to consolidate and build on the progress achieved this year.

The analysis of Scope 3 emissions will be expanded to include a first estimate of the greenhouse gas emissions attributable to staff commuting and methodologies developed for analysing the scope 3 emissions associated with the procurement and use of materials.

Once completed this will be used to set realistic and achievable reduction targets.

The programme to green the WightFibre vehicle fleet will continue with the delivery of the first electric and hybrid vehicles.

Development of the environmental management system will continue with a formal assessment of legislative compliance and the development of an environmental programme.

WightFibre will engage further with the Isle of Wight Council and the NUS to explore the introduction of the NUS Green Impact to help embed sustainability into its day-to-day operations.

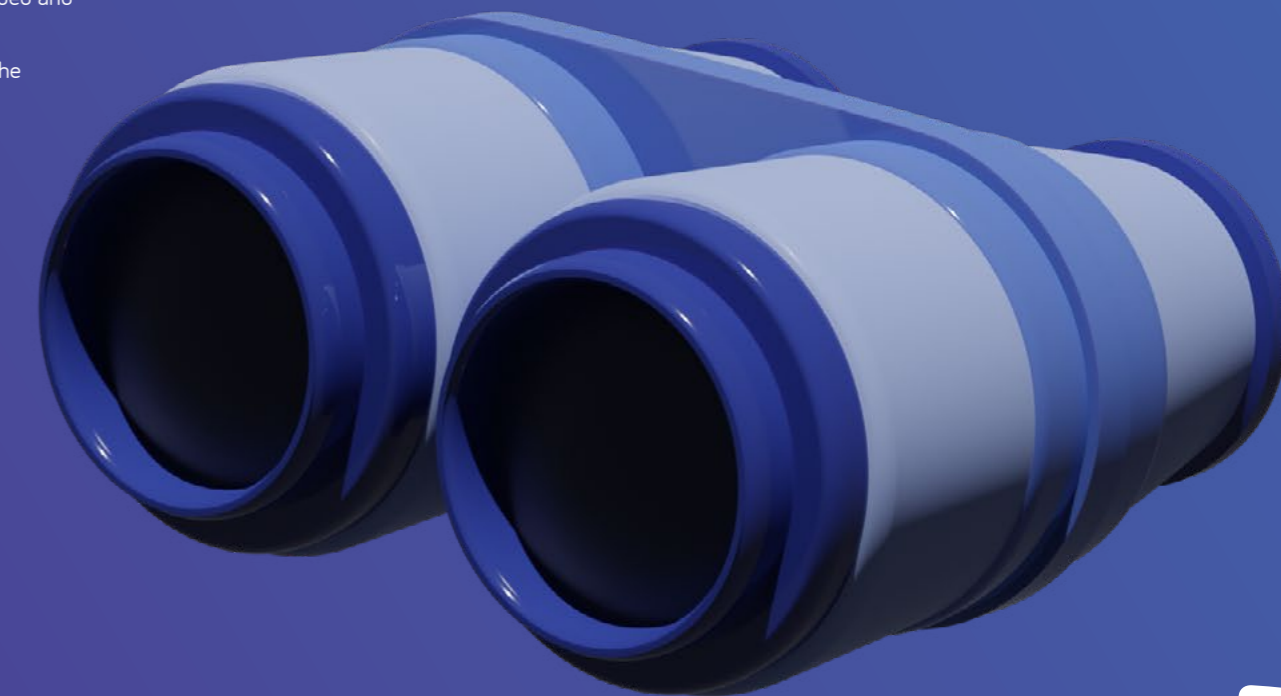
Work will be undertaken to identify those actions required first to achieve carbon neutrality and next carbon net zero, along with the resources needed and the timescales involved.

WightFibre will work with Biffa to identify opportunities to climb the waste hierarchy through the reduction of waste, increasing the

reuse of unwanted items (either within the company or outside), increasing the quantity and quality of recyclable materials and reducing landfill as far as possible. Realistic and achievable targets will be set and these will be used to reduce the Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste.

Engagement with staff, customers and the wider community is essential if progress is to be made and appropriate information and training will be provided to ensure that the necessary support is given. The environmental management system will guide the development of this programme.

WightFibre is conscious of its relationship with the natural environment and is committed to supporting the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust through its corporate membership programme.





## Social

WightFibre is a local Isle of Wight company and wishes for WightFibre to be a great place to work and to make a contribution to the social well-being of our Island community. This is illustrated by the company's 'because we care' ethos which is embedded throughout the company at all levels.

WightFibre has a number of social initiatives in place to achieve these aims:



## Digital Inclusion

WightFibre has appointed a full-time Digital Inclusion Officer. This role is to work with Island groups, charities and not-for-profit organisations to ensure all sections of the Isle of Wight community can benefit from WightFibre's Gigabit Island project. Activities range from providing direct one to one support to customers with less advanced digital skills, supporting charities who do the same and working with community groups supporting the less well off or more vulnerable residents to ensure they too can fully participate in our increasingly digital society.

WightFibre also provides a special social tariff for less well-off residents to ensure they are not left behind in our digital rollout.





## Connected Communities Programme

WightFibre supports several community projects and organisations through our Connected Communities Programme. This programme aims to support community charities, groups and not for profit organisations on the Island through the provision of free or discounted broadband and telephone service and, occasionally, through direct financial contributions.

Organisations currently supported by WightFibre's Connected Communications Programme include:

- Age UK
- Isle of Wight Youth Trust
- All Saints Church Gurnard
- Gurnard Scout Hut
- John Cattle Skate Club
- Newport Congregational Church
- Shanklin Reform Church
- The Beckford Centre
- Isorropia Langley Court
- Ryde Sea Cadets
- Revive Newport
- Gurnard Village Hall Association
- Independent Arts Gallery



## Local Procurement

WightFibre has chosen to partner with Wight Crystal for the supply of chilled spring water in its' offices. Wight Crystal employ Isle of Wight residents with physical or mental health issues and who would otherwise find it difficult to gain suitable employment. Where possible WightFibre procures from local Island companies.



## Community Sponsorships

WightFibre supports several community sports teams through shirt sponsorship which covers the cost of supplying players with the team strip and playing equipment. Teams supported include:

- Sandown and Shanklin RFC
- First Team Cowes Football Club
- Cowes Ladies Football
- Cowes Girls Football
- Wight Eagles and Academy Football
- Oakfield Football
- Gurnard Youth Guardians Football
- Gurnard Youth Lightning Football
- Newport Girls Football Club

Curtailed by the COVID pandemic, WightFibre sponsors several community events. Recently these have included:

- The Isle of Wight County Show, helping the show return to its' former glory by underwriting the cost of bringing the Household Cavalry to the Island for the County Show in June 2019. This was a very successful event made possible only by WightFibre's sponsorship
- Isle of Wight Radio Child of Wight Awards, an event which recognises the achievements of young people on the Island or those who have overcome significant challenges or adversity
- Isle of Wight Radio Local Heroes Awards, recognising Islanders who have done something special to give back to their community.

## Great Place to Work

WightFibre wants the company to be a great place to work. A number of initiatives are in place to facilitate the well-being and development of our employees:

- Training and Qualifications. All employees are encouraged to participate in training which leads to formal qualifications or recognised accreditation. Some of this is mandatory for their specific role in the company – such as Institute of Customer Service accreditation for Customer Service representatives. Other training can be broader with a focus on career development and wider personal development.
- Employee Support Lines for mental health and well-being including a number of trained Mental Health first-aiders.
- Free gym membership for all employees.
- Regular company funded social events, although these were recently curtailed by the COVID pandemic.
- Employee and Friends and Family discount for the supply of broadband and phone lines.
- Officevibe, an online survey and employee feedback tool which measures employee sentiment on an ongoing basis and allows anonymised feedback by employees on matters which concern them.



## Our Accreditations and Affiliations





01983 300 000  
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