



2023

WightFibre Environmental and Social Annual Report



Introduction

2023 has been a busy year at WightFibre with the rollout of the Gigabit project extending full-fibre broadband to the west of the Isle of Wight. The fibre network is now 600 km long. 68,000 homes are now able to receive service from WightFibre.

"At WightFibre we care about our customers, our employees and our Island community and our Island environment. It is important for us to give back to our Island community and to help improve our environment. This report documents some of our activities on how we are doing this."

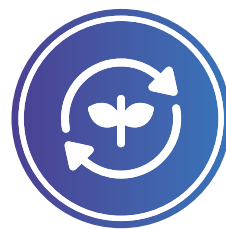
John Irvine
CEO

This is the second WightFibre ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) Annual Report and is based on the data for the year 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

"Infracapital Partners are committed to responsible investing. We aim to make economic growth more sustainable and inclusive and, as part of M&G plc, are signatories to the UN Global Compact on sustainable development. We support WightFibre's commitment to giving back to the Isle of Wight community and to helping safeguard the Isle of Wight environment."

Nicolas Macke
Director





Because we care about our environment

WightFibre continues to develop its environmental management system which is aligned to BS EN ISO14001(2015) with the intention to seeking accreditation to that standard. The WightFibre Environmental Policy Statement is available at <https://www.wightfibre.com/about-wightfibre/#environment>.



Initiatives

A number of projects have been undertaken to improve WightFibre's environmental performance:

- Significant improvements to the energy efficiency of our office building and warehouse
- Replacement of petrol-powered plant and equipment with electrically powered plant and equipment
- Continued membership of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.
- Continued sponsorship of a PhD study by the University of Bournemouth into red squirrel populations on the Isle of Wight. There are approximately 3,500 red squirrels on the Island. This study is looking at (i) Inbreeding in the Red Squirrel population and any resulting impact this may have on the population and (ii) an analysis of the Red Squirrel genetic makeup to determine their adaptability to climate change.



Carbon footprint

WightFibre's most significant environmental impact is its carbon footprint. For the period covered by this report (2022-23) this has been calculated to be 452 tCO₂e, excluding emissions from the WightFibre supply chain. This is an increase of 65 tCO₂e over 387 tCO₂e reported in 2020-21. This increase can be attributed to improvements in the calculation methodology as well as organisational growth. The footprint comprises:

Scope 1 emissions of 172 tCO₂e. These have increased from 133 tCO₂e last reported. This is attributable to an increase in the vehicle fleet required to provide service to WightFibre's customers as WightFibre has expanded across the island. WightFibre has explored the possibility of electrifying its fleet. The high costs of building the charging infrastructure required to support this, and the absence of suitable public charging infrastructure, make this unaffordable.

Scope 2 emissions of 157 tCO₂e. These have decreased from 177 tCO₂e last reported. These savings have been achieved through continual upgrading of the equipment in the WightFibre data centre. It should be noted that the street cabinets supporting the fibre network are now supplied by electricity on a green tariff so 100% of the electricity reported in this section is now renewable, compared with 51% reported in 2020-21.

Scope 3 emissions of 122 tCO₂e. This is an increase from 78 tCO₂e last reported. The calculation for 2022-23 now includes an estimate of the emissions associated with staff commuting, emissions from leased space in third-party facilities, as well as improvements in calculation methodology.

Whilst the overall carbon footprint for 2022-23 has increased since 2020-21, the increase in customer numbers means that the emissions per customer have reduced from 41 kgCO₂e to 26 kgCO₂e. It should again be noted that these figures exclude emissions associated with the WightFibre supply chain.



Net zero

WightFibre is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions, and a carbon reduction plan is under development. However further work is required to gain a full picture of the WightFibre carbon footprint, particularly those emissions associated with its supply chain, and this will inform the carbon reduction plan. WightFibre's priority is to reduce its carbon footprint before considering offsetting. Following this approach WightFibre intend to achieve net zero by 2040, in line with the timescale set by the Isle of Wight Council.

Waste and water

WightFibre disposed of 54 tonnes of waste in 2022-23, 0.02 tonnes of which was hazardous and 5 tonnes of which was recyclable. The annual water consumption was 147 cubic metres.



Because we care about our communities

WightFibre have rolled out gigabit connectivity across the Isle of Wight, connecting communities across the Island. 2023 saw the network extend to Totland and Freshwater serving an additional 4,366 customers which compares to 3,086 customers added in 2022. WightFibre connect with their customers through regular customer surveys which inform improvements to the service provided.

While WightFibre offer a range of tariffs to suit most customers, it is recognised that Island communities include those who require additional assistance. WightFibre therefore offer a discounted Social Tariff to those who currently claim one of five means-tested benefits.

WightFibre run an active Connected Communities programme which provides sponsorship and donations to a wide range of Island-based organisations and projects. The initiatives range from sponsorship of local sports teams through to wrapping damaged street cabinets with art from Community Murals across the Island. WightFibre not only support awards such as the Isle of Wight Radio Child of Wight awards which reward community action, but also the Isle of Wight Business awards which encourage business innovation on the Isle of Wight. WightFibre also give a voice to local organisations by producing community videos for them in which they can promote themselves on the Island.

Amongst the community events supported by WightFibre this year are:

- Child of Wight Awards
- WightAid Garden Party
- UKSA Test the Water Programme



Organisations who have joined our Connected Communities Programme this year include:



Sandown Rotary Charity Shop



Church on the Roundabout



1st East Cowes Scout Group

Amongst the many community sports teams supported by WightFibre are:

- SSRFC
- Wight Eagles
- Arreton Cricket Club
- Newport FC
- Lanesend Primary
- Newport Girls
- Gurnard FC U7
- Gurnard FC U11
- Gurnard FC U13
- Over 45s Netball





Because we care about our staff

The team of 120 people at WightFibre are at the heart of our “because we care” ethos. All but a few of our staff are islanders with an enthusiasm for delivering excellent service and support to our island communities.

WightFibre holds an Investor in People Silver Award which demonstrates our commitment to people management and development. This award indicates that WightFibre stands out as an employer of choice, attracting top talent and retaining motivated staff.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Silver

WightFibre recruits six apprentices each year into our Installation Engineering team and currently has three degree apprentices in our Operations and IT team – local young school leavers attending university part-time to achieve a degree qualification whilst working for WightFibre. WightFibre currently has a total of 15 apprentices at various stages of training.

The health, safety and wellbeing of WightFibre staff is paramount. The company ensures that best practice is implemented throughout the organisation. WightFibre also provides employee wellbeing support through an employee helpline and one to one support.



Because we care about the future

To build on the success of 2022-23, WightFibre plan a range of initiatives for 2023-24.

Development of the environmental management system (EMS) will continue to ensure that WightFibre meets the requirements to protect the environment, fulfil its compliance obligations, and has processes to continually improve.

WightFibre will continue to develop its carbon reduction plan and to include carbon management in all its strategic thinking. As part of this work WightFibre are currently working with Infracapital and Novata to develop an understanding of its supply chain carbon emissions and human rights impact.

WightFibre recognise that its recycling rate is low and will continue to work with Biffa, its waste partner, to increase recycling and reduce landfill. Improvements in this area will also help reduce scope 3 carbon emissions.

In 2019 the Isle of Wight was awarded UN Biosphere status. WightFibre will work with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to explore ways in which it can support this important Island initiative.

We will continue to give back to our island community through our Connected Communities Programme, community sports and community event sponsorships.

WightFibre care passionately about the Isle of Wight and takes a leadership role on the Island through its “because we care” ethos. Significant progress has been made in 2022-23 and this has been recognised by a Gold Award in the Students Organising Sustainability Green Impact programme. However, many challenges remain and WightFibre will continue to push the boundaries to improve its ESG performance.





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