

Island composite companies design and engineer sustainable footbridge at Newchurch Shute

8th June 2022, Cowes, UK – STRUCTeam, the Cowes based composite engineering consultancy, and Apex Composite Structures, a Ryde based bespoke composite manufacturer, have worked in partnership to design and engineer a 12.5 metre footbridge. The newly installed structure provides pedestrian access through Newchurch meaning walkers no longer need to navigate the narrow and busy stretch of road through the village.

Newchurch Parish Council commissioned the building of the bridge and were seeking an economical and robust crossing solution for this section of ‘Norah’s Way’ – a dedicated rights of way footpath, opened in 2019 by Norah Boswell’s family in her memory.

STRUCTeam and Apex’s engineers specified lightweight materials and sustainable manufacturing methods wherever possible to allow for efficient production, easy transportation, and rapid installation of the bridge.

The composite bridge design was pitched against steel and hard wood alternatives. However, these traditional building materials require maintenance and repainting every twenty-five years. By comparison, it is estimated the composite bridge will need very minimal upkeep and will not need to be replaced for one hundred years.

The bridge’s foam core is made from 30,000 reprocessed plastic bottles. George Downer, Company Director of Apex Composite Structures, remarks, “By selecting plastic bottles over the other options available to us, we have achieved a 33% reduction in CO2 emissions.”

Apex Composite Structures took inspiration from a similar footbridge commissioned by Network Rail in 2009 to improve pedestrian safety at dangerous level crossings. In fact, it was George Downer’s father, Mark Downer, who designed and built the first prototype bridge for a Network Rail initiative.



STRUCTeam maintains a varied portfolio of clients both locally and around the world. Jon Evans, STRUCTeam's Composite Design Engineer, comments, "Since our formation in 2010, we have delivered bridges, canopies and facades for many high-profile architectural designs. However, it is always a privilege to work on a project closer to home that will directly benefit the community and support other Island businesses."

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