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*The Isle of Wight's sustainable
community strategy 2008-2020*



We are proud to introduce Eco Island – the sustainable community strategy for the Isle of Wight from 2008 to 2020.

The Island Strategic Partnership shares an inspirational vision, which it will achieve by ethical, dynamic and determined partnership working across all sections of the community.

Our ambition is clear – we will have the smallest carbon footprint in England by 2020. Together we will achieve that ambition and build a thriving economy by attracting innovative businesses, and encouraging strong and healthy communities.

The Island Strategic Partnership is fully committed to the delivery of Eco Island and, as it moves into the next stage in its development, this document will be our guide to success.



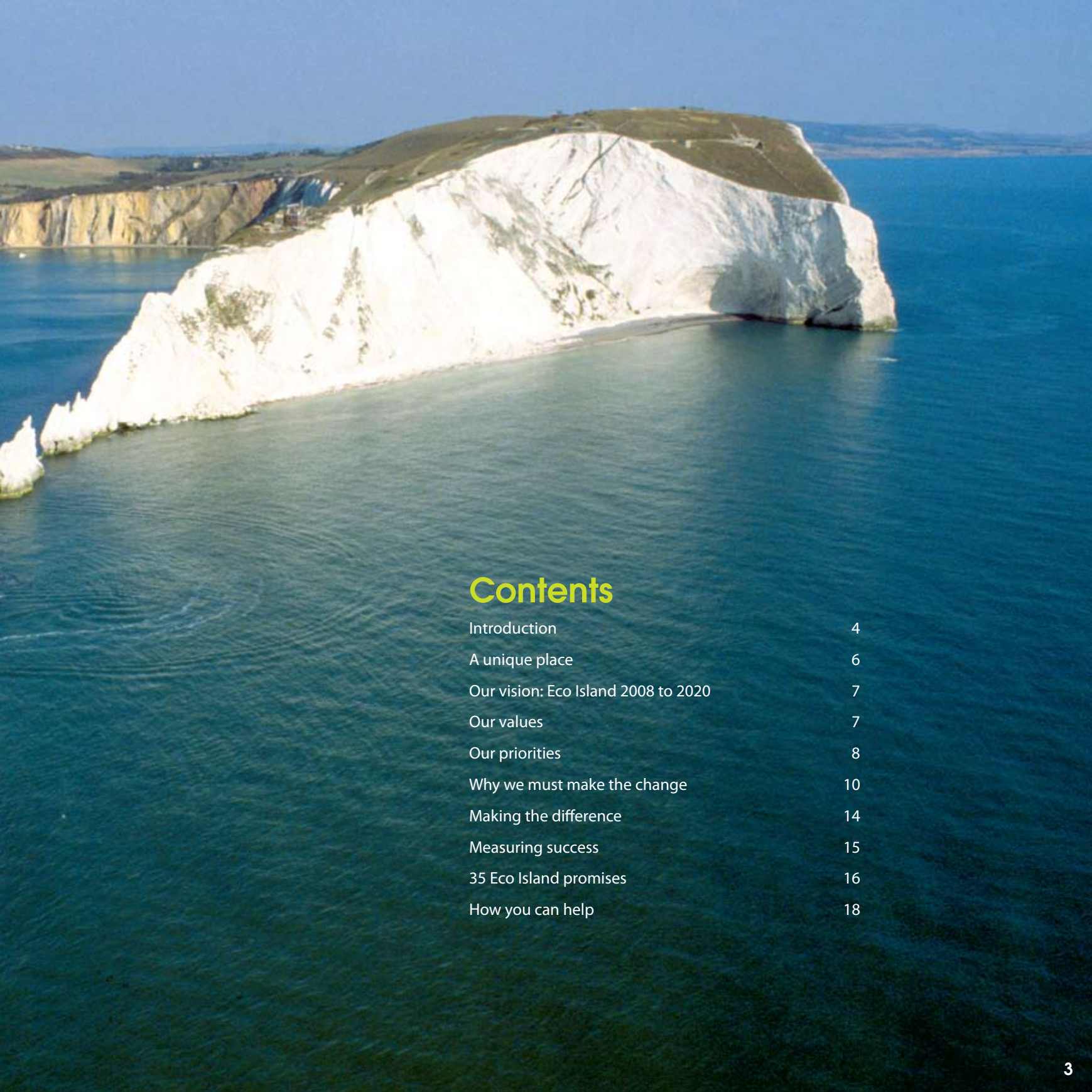
John Owen
Chairman,
Island Strategic Partnership,
2006 - 2008



David Pugh
Leader of the
Isle of Wight Council
Chairman,
Island Strategic Partnership,
2008 onwards

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Introduction

Eco Island is an ambitious strategy, which sets out how the Isle of Wight will become a thriving, dynamic and confident community, in balance with its local environment. This strategy has been developed by the Island Strategic Partnership (the ISP).

The ISP is the partnership of the leading organisations on the Island (Isle of Wight Council, the health authority, the police, voluntary and community organisations, IW College, the business community and

government departments). The ISP has worked with residents and the many sectors of the community to develop this strategy, which will shape the Island from 2008 until 2020.

Eco Island ambitions are set out under four themes:

- Thriving Island
- Healthy and supportive Island
- Safe and well-kept Island
- Inspiring Island

This is a broad-based strategy for improving the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Island. This strategy will build stronger, healthier communities, with more opportunities for everyone to be part of local life. Our communities will be proud of their surroundings, will work hard to protect them and, as a result, will be able to enjoy a better quality of life. Eco Island offers a framework for improving the quality of life for all who live and work on, visit or invest in the Isle of Wight.





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A unique place

An area of 380 square kilometres sitting just under five kilometres from the south coast of England by the Solent; the Island is reliant on sea travel connections with Portsmouth, Southampton and Lymington.

The Isle of Wight has a distinct local identity, with a wide variety of natural, rural and urban landscapes. There are sites of internationally important geology, and the Island is home to a rich variety of important habitats and species, with 70 per cent of the Island protected by UK or European environmental designations.

Its rich, natural and historic environment attracts large numbers of tourists, with the population of 142,000 more than doubling during the busy summer holiday season. The unique beauty and lifestyle of the Island has also drawn many retirees and second home owners. This document sets out how we want it to continue to develop, but to make the changes sustainable and beneficial to all.

Our Vision: Eco Island 2008 to 2020

We want the Isle of Wight to become a world renowned Eco Island, with a thriving economy and a real sense of pride, where residents and visitors enjoy healthy lives, feel safe and are treated with respect.

Our values

Our vision is driven by shared personal and community values, which will define how the ISP leads the Island towards its success.

The Island has a:

- strong sense of community involvement;
- passion and enthusiasm for its development;
- desire and willingness to improve what we do and what we have;
- commitment to get things done;
- positive, outward-looking approach;
- respect of others and their contribution.



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Thriving Island

We will:

- protect and enhance our Island's natural beauty;
- create wealth whilst reducing our carbon footprint;
- produce as much of our energy as possible from renewable sources;
- support economic development and regeneration, enabling everyone to share in the Island's economic success, by increasing the skills of the whole community.

Inspiring Island

We will:

- ensure our children achieve better than the national average at school and college;
- reduce childhood inequalities by tackling poverty, neglect and domestic violence;
- support families and carers to provide a safe and positive environment for our young people.





Healthy and supportive Island

We will:

- reduce levels of obesity in all ages;
- improve health, emotional wellbeing and life expectancy across the Island;
- support vulnerable people to live independent lives;
- ensure people of all ages have places to live and things to do in their local area.

Safe and well-kept Island

We will:

- reduce crime and substance misuse;
- reduce anti-social behaviour and disorder;
- reduce the fear of crime and increase public confidence;
- improve the visual appeal and ambience of our Island, now and in the future.

Why we must make the change

The ISP is determined to tackle this list of priorities but is realistic in the challenges it must face on the way. These take many forms: from the variable health and wellbeing of residents to the ageing population; from the low wage economy, which is largely dependent on the service sector, to the need to raise aspirations, particularly in young people. And enabling everyone to achieve their potential.

Lifestyles

The Island's low-wage economy and increasingly unhealthy lifestyles have resulted in pockets of deprivation among the highest in the UK.

In these areas, life expectancy is up to eight years shorter than the life expectancy of people living in wealthier areas. Obesity is a problem that, irrespective of what age we are, threatens us all.

All Island communities and businesses can do their part to tackle this and promote positive change by proactively encouraging healthy eating, healthy workplaces, greater take-up of active lifestyles and locally produced food.

We will make the most of the natural potential for the whole Island to improve the health of residents and visitors. We have a 500 mile network of fully-maintained and managed rights of way, equal in length to the Island's road network, that can be used for walking and cycling.

Safer communities

Although our local neighbourhoods are some of the safest in the UK, residents say they do not always feel safe. With more than half the population of pensionable age, we have a much higher proportion of vulnerable people in our communities than other areas of the South East.

To make sure we can support these people for the long term, we will make sure services from all the relevant organisations are sharing the same vision and joined up at a local level.





Economy

The Isle of Wight is part of England's 'South East' – one of the wealthiest regional economies in the world. In order for the Island's communities to share in this prosperity, the Island must develop its economy as part of the regional economy.

Skills

Compared with the rest of the South East, the Island is a place with relatively low productivity, low wages and low skills levels. Local businesses find it difficult to hire Islanders for some higher-paid roles because of the skills shortage.

We need to create an environment where businesses can thrive and residents can prosper. The Island does have strengths in existing and emerging business sectors on which Eco Island can build and by encouraging sustainable economic growth we will improve Island residents' job opportunities and attract skills-based enterprise and investment.

Education

The Island's current education and skills development arrangements have contributed to a relatively low skills base, and the need to support our young people and workforce to achieve their potential has been recognised. In addition, a general acceptance of low levels of ambition and aspiration has been allowed to develop. This must change. **Eco Island's success rests on the young people of the Island being hungry for opportunities to fulfil their potential, by being able to learn to higher standards, becoming more involved in the running of their local communities, and by achieving more.**

Housing

The Island needs more affordable homes of a decent standard, warmer homes and equal access to local healthcare and public transport, particularly in rural areas. There is a very high dependency on state benefits for household income which has to change if our economy is to thrive. **It is therefore an Eco Island priority to get local people into local jobs.**



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Environment

The natural beauty of the Island is largely sustained by rural communities and the rural economy. The environment is dependent on the vitality and commitment of communities and businesses. **Our economy must develop and diversify further to meet new needs, markets and climate change,** and do this sympathetically with the environment on which it relies.

We will encourage and support demand for local goods for local people, with more local businesses and organisations buying and selling local goods and services, particularly food. We need to cut down the food miles our food has to travel, encouraging local producers to do more to help.

Communities

The Island needs strong and economically and socially active communities with local services and facilities that will enable sustainable towns and villages. Local planning policies will have an important role in **creating strong, local communities where local residents have a say in their development.**

Tourism

Tourism is the cornerstone of the Island's economy. Competition is global and increasingly diverse; the Island has to compete to keep its visitors coming year after year. We play to our strengths: clean air, clean beaches and unspoilt landscapes. **The Isle of Wight will become known for its eco-tourism,** with visitors able to enjoy the Island's beauty with minimal impact on the environment.

Carbon footprint

The Island faces a particular environmental challenge. This is because our ecological footprint (the amount of resources and energy we use) is three times more than the amount we can sustain. We cannot keep using the amount of resources we currently consume. We must seize this opportunity to change the way we live and work on the Island, to safeguard it for future generations. **The ISP wants the Island to have the lowest carbon footprint in England by 2020.**



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Climate change

There is also the global challenge, which faces us all – climate change. This presents economic and environmental threats, yet also opportunities. As an Island, we are vulnerable to a changing sea level and its impact on our distinctive coastline, so we will plan how to manage this. Climate change will put pressure on our unique natural environment and the precious bio-diversity we want to protect. Eco Island will reduce the high ecological footprint of the Island, so we use only the energy that we need. **We will invest in renewable energy technologies and use energy and water more efficiently.** We are determined to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Isle of Wight.

Recycling

We will recycle more domestic and commercial waste on the Island and reduce our level of landfill including initiatives to reduce unnecessary waste such as replacing plastic bags with re-useable alternatives.

Transport

Our rural economy and local communities require greater access to sustainable transport systems that can help to reduce car miles.

Markets

We will work together to develop a supportive environment, so that our ideally positioned businesses can take advantage of the significant market opportunities in the UK and worldwide from the growing demand for environmentally sensitive goods and services.

Shaping the Island's future

The Isle of Wight as a place provides a unique opportunity to monitor and measure the impact of sustainability strategies. The Island is in a position to take a national and international role in understanding how an entire community can make changes that will lead to environmental, social and economic sustainability.



Making the difference

The ISP is committed to making Eco Island a reality. The vision, values and priorities, which it has set for itself and for the Island, make this shared passion and commitment clear. Together, we will deliver Eco Island.

All of the projects, which are to be delivered as part of Eco Island, will happen as a result of many different organisations working together to plan, organise and provide better local services. The ISP has made its members accountable for making things happen. It will monitor their progress through the publicly reported Eco Island action plan. The ISP will use this report to update residents on how well Eco Island is developing.

The ISP will report progress under the four themes of Eco Island and their priorities for improvement. These themes will involve many local partnerships and projects that share the Eco Island vision (see page 4 for details of the four themes).



There are many strategies which will make sure Eco Island is a success:

- The new Island Plan will be the main framework, which guides planning policy and how Eco Island is put into practice.
- Developing a strong, diverse and stable economy is an Eco Island priority. The Isle of Wight's economic strategy will support sustainable economic growth and prosperity that is in balance with the natural environment.
- The local transport plan will guide the Island's transport objectives and aspirations, improving our ability to move people and goods sustainably.
- The public health strategy and commissioning plans for health and social care services will focus on healthier lifestyles and sustainable care services.
- The crime and disorder reduction strategy will help our communities to be safer and better cared for.
- In addition to these major strategies, there is a new local area agreement between the ISP and the Government, that the Island's most important priorities and targets for change will be achieved by 2011.

The ISP and its partners cannot do this alone. The whole Island: residents, investors, businesses and visitors, will have to make a commitment to change.

Measuring success

The delivery of Eco Island will be a long-term programme of work, all connected by a common vision and delivered according to shared priorities. The initial phase of this programme is set out at the back of this document, as the Eco Island action plan.

The plan will be reviewed and renewed annually. Everyone will be able to check how well the ISP is doing in meeting its promises in quarterly public reports. The reports will also be available on the ISP's Eco Island website, at www.eco-island.org.uk

Eco Island promises

This is what success will look like, by 2020:

Eco Island

- The Isle of Wight will have the lowest carbon footprint in England by 2020.

A safe and well-kept island

- Renew Island infrastructure to highest ecological standards.

A thriving island

- Develop new sectors of employment, creating centre of excellence in renewable energies and generating capacity of over 100Mw of electricity by 2020.

A healthy and supportive island

- 20 per cent reduction in preventable deaths from tobacco, through the uptake of healthy active lifestyles.

An inspiring island

- The majority of island children and young people make better than average progress in school and achieve results at 16 that place the Isle of Wight in the top 10 per cent nationally.



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35 Eco Island promises – 2008 to 2010

Eco Island

- Island agencies to produce action plan to reduce carbon emissions by three per cent each year.
- Three parish/town councils piloting low carbon communities across the Island.
- Annual Eco Island conferences in March each year and Big Green Picnics in May each year.
- 200 Green Island tourism awards.
- Zero plastic bag scheme.
- Five additional charging points for electric vehicles.
- Submit bid for renewable energy research centre.
- Public sector fleets to run on low-carbon fuels, starting with 13 Isle of Wight Council vehicles.

A safe and well-kept island

- £1.75m for Island roads, making routes safer.
- Three new anti cold-calling zones, to tackle doorstep crime,

- 'Lights On' crime prevention advice to over 3,000 Island households, using low-energy lighting.
- 'Island Safe' initiative – the Handyperson scheme making homes safer for 1,000 vulnerable residents.
- CCTV rolled-out to Cowes, Shanklin and Ventnor.
- 1,000 'SmartWater' security marking kits for vulnerable residents.
- Roll out One Million Blooms to three showcase areas and 20 community-led areas.

A thriving island

- Gasification plant, converting waste to energy, to open June 2008.
- Sir Terry Farrell new design champion for Island, to create low-carbon design manifesto.
- Three new local nature reserves delivered by Natural England with communities across the Island by 2010.
- Isle of Wight Council and NHS Primary Care Trust green

transport plan by April 2010.

- Five projects demonstrating sustainable living in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Three new renewable energy systems in community buildings across the Island.
- Use planning powers to generate sustainable development across the Island, through the Island Plan.

A healthy and supportive island

- £500,000 towards insulating up to 1,500 homes
- Every town/parish council will have a health trainer to support community programmes to provide advice and support for weight management and healthy active lifestyles.
- Establish LINKs advocacy scheme to represent patient views in the delivery of care services.
- Bring up to 180 empty homes back into use.

- Generate up to 340 affordable homes.
- Encourage 22,000 more people to use leisure centres.

An inspiring island

- Start work on new carbon-neutral high school in Cowes.
- Reduce teenage pregnancies.
- Make sure all children have opportunities for jobs or training when they leave school.
- Four 'PURE' drug-free events for 800 young people.
- Get 120 young people back in school from exclusions.
- Establish a new 'children in care' council by September 2008



How you can help

This strategy is going to shape the Island's future, so it will be, in part, shaping yours too. Why not get involved in making Eco Island a reality?

Here are just some of the things you can do now:

As an individual

- Turn off your computer, TV and mobile phone charger when not in use.
- Take the bus, cycle, or walk – leave the car at home as much as possible.
- Join a local heritage group to learn more about where you live.
- Turn off taps and fix leaks.
- Report empty properties so that we can bring them back into use for Island families.
- Get involved in making your community healthier – join or start a group for healthy eating, walking, weight management or reading.

As a family

- Buy locally-produced food, ask for it where you shop.
- Involve local people in the life of your community.
- Use renewable energy in your home and community.
- Use low-energy security lighting.
- Use degradable refuse sacks.
- Walk and play together – keep active and healthy.

As a business

- Use commercial recycling
- Encourage staff to volunteer in the local community.
- Use renewable energy.
- Switch off at work – turn off photocopiers, printers, PC screens, lights.
- Cut out wasteful packaging for your products.
- Join a local car-share scheme.

Small steps locally will mean big changes for our Island.



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Eco Island

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