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Painting the Town Green

How to persuade people to be environmentally friendly

A report for everyone involved in promoting greener lifestyles to the public

Stephen Hounsham



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Painting the Town Green is the outcome of a project set up with the backing of key environmental organisations to investigate how the 'green movement' can better communicate with the public and persuade and help people to adopt 'green behaviours'.

The green movement is defined as any organisation or individual involved in promoting green behaviours, including politicians with an environmental remit, central and local government, statutory bodies and government agencies, non-governmental organisations, consultants, campaigners, journalists, authors, academics and green businesses. Green behaviours are defined as personal lifestyle choices that minimise impact on the environment and for the purposes of this project have been categorised into 13 areas: transport; holidays, leisure and travel; waste; food; energy use; chemicals; materials and resources; water use; consumer goods; savings, banking and mortgages; participation; voting; and bearing witness.

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For anyone who is offended by anything in this report – Sorry...

Foreword

By Polly Toynebee, *Guardian* columnist

How green is your neighbourhood? How green is my neighbourhood? The truthful answer is, probably, not very. Many of us put our bottles and newspapers out into the recycling box but it doesn't go much further than that. If green really is good for us – and people seem to agree it is – why aren't we all green to the fingertips?

Why aren't we all pedalling around on bicycles, holidaying in Torquay rather than Tenerife, rejecting food that isn't organically grown, collecting water in rain butts for use in the garden, repairing items rather than insisting on new ones, and willingly paying a bit more for an ethical mortgage?

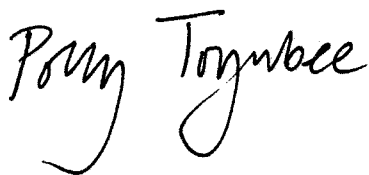
Are we all just rotten people, caught under the spell of the seven deadly sins of pride, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, greed and sloth? I look around me and the answer is an emphatic no.

People are, on the whole, good, responsible citizens who care about things and they are, on the whole, worried about the environment. But they are only human and they stumble and frequently fall when it comes to mounting the multiple barriers on the way to becoming truly environmentally friendly. Sometimes the barriers are real; sometimes they are within people's minds only.

The low take-up of green lifestyles works against itself by reinforcing the niche reality of environmentalism. Environment is seen as belonging to environmentalists. Only when it is seen as belonging to all of us, will it move into the mainstream. This is what we must work towards.

Many of us blame government and business for the problems we face with our environment, local, national and international. We feel helpless. But people-power can be an extraordinary thing, as anyone in today's Eastern Europe would tell you. In our own country, no government could be elected without our votes; no business could survive if we didn't buy its goods or services.

It's easy to forget but people are actually in charge. If anyone's going to change the world, it's them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Polly Toynebee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'P'.

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Summary

“If everyone in the UK washed their laundry just ten degrees cooler we would need one less 250MW power station!!”

What’s wrong with this statement, which appeared in a ‘how to be green guide’ on a county council’s website?

There’s probably nothing wrong with the sums, at least as far as one can tell without going up into the loft to dig out some old physics books from school. The problem is that, in terms of trying to change behaviour – and that’s what it’s trying to do – the statement makes just about every clanger in the book.

First of all, what is a 250MW power station? How big and bad is that? Is it big and bad at all? Are we talking about something the size of an airport or something the size of a tennis court?

Second, the double exclamation implies earth-shattering significance but is a consumer actually bothered by how many power stations we have, so long as they are not actually near where they live?

Third, the statement implores people to change behaviour but apparently only offers a benefit at the society level, rather than the personal, which is a shaky motivator for many people.

Fourth, the wording “if everyone” hints at a key barrier to behaviour change. Unless people can see everyone else changing, why bother themselves because it’s not going to make any real difference and might even put them personally at a perceived disadvantage compared with their neighbours?

Finally, there’s no recognition within the statement of what might be the root cause of the problem: people might *want* to wash their clothes with nice hot water because they believe that is the only way to make

them clean and ‘safe’. After all, they are bombarded with adverts daily that focus on pristine, one could almost believe clinically sterilised, clothing coming out of the washing machine and they are maybe left with the feeling that this is necessary for health, hygiene and good parenting. How can you do that with only lukewarm water?

This might be presenting people as irrational and rather self-centred but human beings are like that. More everyday lifestyle decisions are made at an emotional level than are based on cool-headed, rational thinking. And, like all animals, people have an in-built mechanism to identify close-to-home personal benefits before there is any thought of altruism. This is not even to go into other powerful determinants of behaviour, such as force of habit and what is considered ‘normal’.

This rather unkind demolition of the website campaign is to make the point that achieving behaviour change to benefit the environment is difficult and complex. But it’s not impossible; the green movement just has to be more creative in how it goes about it.

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.” Joel Barker

It's important to realise from the start that the 'green movement' is not just the 'usual suspects' such as campaigning organisations. It is anyone, any organisation or any institution involved in presenting information, developing or implementing policy, making decisions, or campaigning on environmental issues. That includes politicians with an environmental remit, central and local government, statutory bodies and government agencies, non-governmental organisations, consultants, campaigners, journalists, authors, academics and green businesses. It is a very broad church.

“You can chase a butterfly all over the field and never catch it. But if you sit quietly in the grass it will come and sit on your shoulder.” Unknown

Our target audience is society. Our society in the UK is based on the triumvirate of government, business and people, but who exactly is in charge? People, for example, sometimes feel helpless in the face of the power of big business and usually believe it is up to government to act on the environment. But people elect governments and keep businesses afloat by buying their products. People really do have the

power, if only they would wield it. And particularly on climate change, we will only begin to reduce the effects if individuals look critically at their own lifestyles and do what they can to be more environmentally friendly while putting pressure on governments and business to play their part.

The public are crucial in our work. But we've a lot to learn in terms of how to engage with them. Indeed we sometimes tend to follow the *Dad's Army* approach to changing lifestyles. It's an unattractive combination of disaster prediction (Private Fraser's "We're all doomed!"), supercilious criticism (Sergeant Wilson's "Do you really think that's wise?") and condemnation (Captain Mainwaring's "You stupid boy!"). And what response do we often get? Yes, Warden Hodges said it: "Oi Napoleon! Who do you think you are?"

Formal communication with the public on the environment – from central and local government, statutory bodies, NGOs and others – has had a chequered record. Uptake of green behaviours among the bulk of the public has been limited, although some areas have seen more success than others. We face the massive challenge of effectively swimming against the strong tide of consumerism that defines our times. Not that consumerism itself should be identified as wrong; it has given us a comfortable lifestyle in the modern age. But over-consumption of resources is at the root of many of our environmental problems. Coupled with that, green living is seen as unfashionable, something for certain types of people only. Celebrities and others in the public eye rarely promote it and the majority of the public cannot identify a single person or role model they look up to in the green movement. Environment has yet to be a major storyline in any of our popular TV soaps. The message is clear: green lifestyles are still niche and not mainstream.

If the green movement has not succeeding in selling the environment beyond a specific sector of society, where have we gone wrong?

Earth's resource systems are on overload. We do too much, we buy too much, we waste too much. The common response of environmentalists has been to preach a more frugal lifestyle, but even a top salesman couldn't really sell sacrifice, other than perhaps to people like ourselves for whom sacrifice provides some degree of satisfaction, comfort even. Less is hardly ever seen as more and directly or indirectly trying to sell a green lifestyle as giving up everything nice and living in a cave with the light switched off is doomed to fail.

Indeed, when faced with the 'chocolate cake test' most of us find it very hard not to put consumption before sustainability *automatically*: we subconsciously choose the best cake and then the slice with the most chocolate on. In a choice between chocolate cake and ship's biscuit, chocolate cake will always win but we still try to promote ship's biscuit on the grounds that chocolate cake is bad for us and inherently 'wrong'.

The green movement has also busied itself pumping out information, assuming that information on its own leads to awareness of threats and problems, concern and finally action. But it rarely does. Unfortunately most if not all the lifestyle decisions that the green movement seeks to influence are not determined mainly by rational consideration of the facts, but by emotions, habits, personal preferences, fashions, social norms, personal morals and values, peer pressure and other intangibles. In other words, to influence lifestyle choices we must connect with the heart, senses and emotions rather than the head and its brain cells. There is no such thing as Rational Man. He gave up a long time ago, if he was ever around at all...

It gets worse. Much of the language we use is unpalatable to some of our intended audiences. They trip off the green tongue all too readily but words such as environmentally friendly, green, sustainable development, sustainable living, campaign group, pressure group, eco, planet, etc present problems for some people (but not all people) and can lead to them switching off from our message. We've therefore lost them unnecessarily.

We've also misunderstood what consumer goods actually *mean* to people, ignoring their connections with personal identity, esteem and belonging. Nowhere have we got things more wrong than in understanding car use. Pleas for people to cut car use in favour of public transport are on their own more or less a waste of time because they miss the fundamental point. Cars are much more than a means of getting from A to B. Indeed if that were all they were good for, these expensive items wouldn't be needed at all in many, if not most, people's lives. The car is less about transport and more about a sense of freedom, perceived convenience and personal identity. It is, as Solitaire Townsend points out, a status symbol, a means of social bonding (particularly for men), a cocoon, a lover, a best friend and a refuge. People go by car because they largely *want* to, and they don't *want* to take one of the alternative options.

There is one serious error that nearly everyone in the green movement – and I include myself – has made in their attempts to reach out to the public. We tend to assume everyone is like us, with the same thirst for scary details of environment threats, the same triggers for concern, and the same compelling urge to do something about it before we go to bed at night. Too many materials end up being written by green people, very often about green people and therefore inevitably for green people. It might be disappointing, but most individuals are not like people who work for environmental organisations and they don't respond to things in the same way.

Indeed, drawing on the work of psychologists Riesman and Maslow, Chris Rose identifies that a common reason for campaign or 'cause' communications failing is that the communications are conceived by inner-directed personalities – in other words the ethical 'seekers' who make up most of the membership of campaigning organisations – and are expressed in their terms. They are then aimed not at other inner-directeds, but at esteem-driven, outer-directed people and home-focused, security-driven people, who make up the bulk of the population. The propositions do not 'make sense' to these audiences and they often fail. It's a classic error but one that the green movement keeps making. Our campaigns/public education programmes usually assume one size fits all and they fail to recognise people are different with different triggers.

From their side, it's not surprising that most people are not being as green as they could be. They do care about the environment, that's clear, and many of them are worried about it, particularly about climate change. Psychologists tell us that climate change comes within people's 'sphere of concern' but not within their perceived 'sphere of influence'. In other words, they think they can't do anything about it. The problems seem overwhelming and the barriers to doing the right thing high. It all seems so complicated, so expensive, so time-consuming and so, well, going backwards rather than forwards. And even if the spirit is willing, somehow people can't seem to get it together to change. This 'attitude-action' gap is one of our biggest challenges.

Depressingly the society 'traffic lights' on going green seem to be stuck on red for many people. That is not to say we can't get them to change...

How we set about getting those lights to change is to start looking at things in a whole different way. It means taking people from where they are, rather than where we'd like them to be. It means intelligently reaching out to people with the help of psychologists, sociologists and even advertising creatives. It means trying to touch people's emotions and inspiring them, rather than starting an argument with them. It means focusing on the positive with messages of "We can do this" and "Something better is on the way", rather than Nicholas Humphrey's "The world is going to end. I thought you'd like to know." Crucially it means recognising that one size does not fit all and that we must present our message in terms that make sense to particular groupings of people.

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.” Rachel Carson

We talk in terms of carrots and sticks as though the public literally *were* donkeys. Treating them as dumb animals that can be pushed and pulled into doing the right thing is not the right approach. People need to be taken on a shared journey, not exhorted to do things. It must be a journey based on dialogue between active partners about a shared problem.

This research has come up with some interesting and positive findings. The informal public research confirms that people *do* care about the environment (although they might understand different things by the term) and that environmentally friendly living is generally seen as sensible, healthy and something to make you feel good. That's a good start. But the survey work also reveals that some organisations are often better placed to change attitudes and behaviours than others and that the exhortation techniques subconsciously adopted by many campaigning groups do not resonate with enough people. The research also shows that the least popular green lifestyle actions appear to be, as we might have expected, in the areas of car use, holidays and flying, and other 'difficult' areas.

The review of existing research shows that a great deal of work and an incredible amount of deep thinking has already been done in this area, but little of it has so far percolated down to the factory floor of the environmental movement, to the people who must actually engage with the public.

This report also give the views, ideas and vision of some 60 invited key thinkers in environmental policy and communication, many of them national names. Perhaps the most positive sign from

this whole project is that there seems to be remarkable consensus on how the environmental movement could move forward in more effectively persuading and helping the public to adopt greener lifestyles. From national politicians with frontbench responsibilities to 'street' activists, from leading academics to respected authors and journalists, and from the people appointed to statutory bodies to some of the best campaigners within the NGO movement, the story seems to be more or less the same.

The story is that, with a different approach and a bit more imagination, we really can achieve change.

This report has come up with recommendations in 31 areas.

Among those recommendations are that we must:

- Present environment as important not just for environment's sake but also for people's sake. We should market the environment not just as a home for nice animals and plants but as the life support system that we all rely on, directly or indirectly, for food, water, air and shelter. Like a life support system in a hospital, the whole system is complex but fragile and vulnerable. It could break down if we don't keep the machinery in good running order. In other words, if we don't start looking after the environment, it might stop providing what we need. American President JF Kennedy's famous words "Ask not what America can do for you but what you can do for America", now need to be turned around to give: "Ask not what you are doing for the environment but what the environment is already doing for you." It's an approach that's essentially selfish but human beings *are* essentially selfish.
- Move away from exhortation and a pedestal 'I know best' attitude to create real dialogue. We should aim to take people on a shared journey on equal terms where both sides can learn.
- Move from a *modus operandi* of information provision and rational argument to methods aimed at touching emotions, stimulating resonance, inspiring and creating desire. In other words, we should move from a head-focused approach to one that's heart-focused. We need to recognise the potential of peripheral processing and hidden messages and focus on strong, visual images.
- Aim to dispel the green image of negativity and doom and instead focus on positivity, optimism and human ingenuity. We have to stop using shock or guilt tactics and avoid the temptation to exaggerate or go beyond science. The presumption must be that we *will* get through all this, that there *is* light at the end of the tunnel and that it *is* daylight, rather than the train hurtling towards us... Our motto should be to reassure and offer a way through.
- Agree a vision of the future within the movement and make sure it isn't hopelessly unobtainable. This has to be presented as an exciting new way of looking at things and marketed as something better. We should turn from defence to attack by moving away from 'defending' the environment through the reduction of damage and exploitation to 'attacking' on its behalf through promoting a positive vision of a better way of doing things. In this way we can be associated with solutions rather than problems. Our message must be: "Something better is on the way..."
- Look for tangible, personal, close-to-home benefits from environmental actions for individuals. Every environmental action should carry a personal incentive or reward and we should press for non-sustainable behaviours to carry price penalties or other disincentives.

- Create agency, the ability for people to understand a problem in their own way, decide for themselves to do something about it, make a real difference that's noticeable to them, and receive recognition for having done the right thing.
 - Create a sense of every little counts and deal convincingly with the "I can't do everything, so I'll do nothing" reaction by presenting a 'green on balance' framework for personal living. Similarly we shouldn't chastise people for slipping into binges of 'bad ways' now and again.
 - Aim to develop brands – packages of environmentally friendly behaviours – that people will identify with, find attractive, see as a must-have, and above all *like*, just as they identify with a favourite brand in a supermarket.
 - Focus campaigns and calls for behaviour change on what works for the people to be targeted. This means recognising that different types of people have different values and motivations. We should therefore present environmentally friendly behaviours in ways that resonate with different personality groups. A campaign using the words 'green living' runs the risk of failing with some types of people. Following the principles of one model explaining human behaviour and motivations, we could present green behaviours as part of an Ethical Living tag to inner-directed, seeker-type personalities; as Smart Living to outer-directed, esteem-driven personalities; and as Safe Living to security-driven, home values-based personalities. We would need to take people as they are and on their own terms. In particular this might need a ban on all green language when communicating the need for Smart Living to esteem-driven people and use of only that green language that can be brought down to a local level when persuading security-driven people to adopt Safe Living.
- “The more we exploit nature, the more our options are reduced, until we have only one: to fight for survival.”* Morris Udall
- Stop pretending environment is the only issue that should matter to people. There are countless others too, many of them appearing to be more urgent and immediate to people. We need to work towards legitimising and broadening the appeal of green behaviours by wrapping up environment with the other four main families of visionary causes: prosperous, comfortable lives; peaceful, safe communities; social justice; and physical, mental and spiritual well being. Calls for Ethical Living, Smart Living and Safe Living could, in this way, ring multiple bells in people's minds rather than just one and end up being inarguable.
 - Work towards providing 'green living on a plate', as easy as booking a holiday: the equivalent of just making a phone call, handing over a credit card number and turning up on the day. Every local authority should work towards providing a green demonstration house, in which green consumer choices are demonstrated in a practical, constructive and non-confrontational way with friendly staff on hand to offer commentary. A national one-stop telephone advisory service should be set up offering clear, easy-to-obtain practical advice on the best things to do for the environment and how to do them. Government should facilitate and encourage the establishment of 'green make-over' businesses and other private providers of, and crucially maintenance services for, green technology. There should be massive public investment in infrastructure and facilities for green living.

- Similarly introduce 'green starter kit' advice by starting people off with easy actions with obvious paybacks or pleasant effects that fit into existing routines, before building up to the more difficult ones. For example, this could begin with wildlife gardens, action on litter and planting or tending trees in the neighbourhood.
- Aim to create 'bandwagon environmentalism' with a sense of joining in, or missing out if you don't. This is essential if niche is to become mainstream and if we are to overcome the bystander effect where people don't act because they don't see others acting.
- Court influential role models by building bridges with people who strike a chord with the public and working with them to demonstrate green values. Similarly we should put forward 'green leaders' that people can look up to, identify with and more than anything *like*.
- Make more effort to get environment into popular culture and probe opportunities for soft messaging. In particular, build bridges with television executives responsible for drama, soaps, gameshows, comedy, reality TV and so on.
- Widen the green movement further to embrace sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists who understand why people act and don't act. We should draw in too advertising creatives able to 'sell' green as brands that work for people. The green movement relies too much on campaigners and not enough on people with these skills and knowledge areas.
- Build bridges with faiths, focusing on shared principles and values, and 'sign up' religious leaders as public campaigners. It is sobering for environmentalists used to communicating with limited audiences in limited ways with limited budgets to think that 1.7 million people participate in a Church of England service each month, that 1 million children are educated in Church of England schools and that the number of Church of England ministers is as high as 27,000. What could Friends of the Earth do with 27,000 dedicated campaigners?
- Spend more time achieving change by working within and with established and realistic political processes, rather than outside and against. This could mean more inside-track lobbying of decision makers rather than outside-track campaigns to harass them. Taken one step further, some might argue that relying on a separate political party to promote primarily green values may not be as effective as politicians with a strong green conscience moving into the mainstream parties and changing them from within.

A full list of recommendations is given in Section 10.

Selling environmentally friendly lifestyles to a discerning public is not easy. This report argues, however, that it can be done and suggests in detail how it might be done. The green movement really could paint the town green if it put its collective mind to it.

Section 1 **Introduction: Are we adopting a *Dad's Army* approach to saving the world?**

"We're all *doomed!*" Private Fraser used to pronounce in his distinctive gloomy lilt during the 1970s and 80s. None of the *Dad's Army* platoon took him as seriously as he would have liked and, of course, the television audience found it highly amusing, week after week.

Environmentalists often adopt the role of Private Fraser. We thrive on foretelling disaster and ruin and we also don't often get taken seriously. Some even laugh at us. So, we then try the Sergeant Wilson approach to communicating with people, putting on a supercilious, intellectual air and criticising what people do. "Do you really think that's wise?" Wilson always used to say. Worst of all, we throw in a bit of Captain Mainwaring. "You stupid boy," we splutter, as we challenge and berate others for not doing what we think is right.

And what response do we get? "Oi Napoleon! Who do you think you are?" Warden Hodges would say. People resent others telling them what to do, especially when it comes down to how they live their lives. Some people's reflex response to our messages is to run in the opposite direction and avoid taking part in any collective action, perhaps the Private Godfrey response ("Please can I be excused? Sir"). Others simply don't think 'saving the world' is for people like them. As Private Pike would explain: "I don't think my mum would want me to do that..."

But how many times do we act like the old platoon hero Corporal Jones? "Don't panic! Don't panic!" was his approach to anything scary that might unsettle his fellow men. If we reassured people, thought positive and sought their participation on equal terms rather than their submission to a higher way of thinking, could we even expect a Corporal Jones attitude in return? "Captain Mainwaring, Sir... I'd like to volunteer to test the new dangerous-looking rope bridge" could become "Hey, green groups: I'd like to volunteer to be the first on my street to give up my car..."

“Look at those cows and remember that the greatest scientists in the world have never discovered how to make grass into milk.” Michael Pupin

Heaven forbid that the environmental movement is no more than a bunch of ageing, incompetent idiots, ridiculed with peals of laughter in sitting rooms up and down the country for the past three decades. But we do need to look at how we relate to people, and crucially how they relate to us. To connect with people and change attitudes and ultimately behaviour, we need to approach them in a way that they can warm to.

That advert in the bottom right-hand corner of the morning newspaper has a point. The green movement needs to learn how to "win friends and influence people". What we have to say is of course important, but in a media and imagery-fuelled world, our style, approach and tone are absolutely vital. Car salesmen are way ahead of us on this one. It's something we're told time and time again but we tend to forget it time and time again. Perhaps we should take note of the advert in the bottom left-hand corner of the newspaper, the one about being "troubled by memory loss".

How we operate will determine how people see us and that will determine whether they will hear us. Communication is the modern key to changing the world. We must get it right or we will never be able to paint the town green.

This report is an attempt to find better ways to persuade and help people to adopt environmentally friendly lifestyles. It is written for all of us within the green movement in its widest sense and represents the outcome of a Green-Engage Communications project carried out in the second half of 2005. The conclusions reached and recommendations made are one person's assessment and are put forward to be debated, upheld or challenged.

Painting the Town Green is not the final word on things. If anything, it is only the first word. The more people within the green movement who think and talk about the issues raised here, the more successful will be our attempts to encourage the public to 'go green'.

The report starts by looking at the importance of the environment and green living and how we might convince people of this in Section 2. It details the environmentally friendly behaviours we might aim to promote, the fundamental importance of the public in achieving the nation's environmental goals, and how far 'ordinary' people might have taken things so far.

In Sections 3, 4 and 5 it analyses how people receive environmental messages through the media, popular culture and formal communication and compares the likely impact of each.

The main project inputs then follow. These are a literature review of existing research, new informal public survey work and the views, ideas and vision of key thinkers in environmental policy and communication. The information gathered is given in full in the main body of the report and deliberately so due to the stimulating value of many of the individual contributions. Sections 6, 7 and 8 detail these resources in depth.

Readers with less time might move straight to the analysis of the findings in Section 9 and the recommendations for change in Section 10.

This report is long and detailed but the complexity of the issues concerning attitude and behaviour change means it could have been far, far worse...

Section 2 **Setting the scene on the environment and green living**

2.1 The environment: Why on earth bother?

One of the accusations frequently flung at environmentalists in badly chosen public bars is that we are more concerned about the welfare of newts and earwigs than human beings. After all, how can they be as important? Some people even see the environment as a bolt-one extra to human society that we could well do without if we had to. It's only another thing to worry about from an already long list that includes much more urgent and apparently important issues, such as crime, poverty, natural disasters, education, racism, etc. Even among those who enjoy a countryside walk or value wildlife, there is little understanding of the real *importance* of the environment.

In trying to get people to value it, we often seek to gain recognition that the environment is important from an aesthetic and human well-being point of view.

After all, everyone would like their grandchildren to have the chance to see their favourite wild animal or enjoy their favourite area of countryside. We talk too about the interconnected web that is the world of wild plants and animal, and how an upset in one area can send shock waves through the whole system. Neglect the earwig, and you might say goodbye to the skylark too. Wild plants in particular, we tell people, are important for developing new and better food plants, identifying new medical drugs and so on, although people might think that doesn't hold anymore because genetic engineering will enable us to design new plants in the laboratory without needing to put our shoes on and go outside.

Few people seem to understand that the environment is important because it keeps us alive. It provides our life support system, feeding us with oxygen, water, food and the means for shelter. Like someone in an intensive care unit, we rely on it totally. And like the vulnerable mass of tubes, machines, switches

and flashing lights in the hospital, it probably doesn't take much for one small hiccup to bring the whole environment 'machinery' to a grinding halt. Put simply, if we don't take care of the environment, it just might not take care of us.

“Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realise that we cannot eat money.” Cree Indian proverb

In 1991 an experiment in the Arizona desert in the US proved that it would not be easy to create an artificial life support system for humankind. In the Biosphere

2 project, eight people were sealed in a huge glass structure with 4000 species of plant and animal with a mission to be self-sufficient for two years. The 'planet in a bottle' covered an area of just over a hectare and included living areas, farmable land, a mini-tropical rainforest, a bit of desert and even a piece of ocean with coral reef. On paper, the system was self-perpetuating and sustainable, and the inhabitants able to live happily ever after. But the experiment went horribly wrong. The sealed atmosphere inside the biosphere went out of balance, key animals such as pollinators died out, and other animals and plants expanded out of control. A review of the project in 1996 concluded: "There is no demonstrated alternative to maintaining the viability of the Earth. No-one yet knows how to engineer systems that provide humans with the life-supporting services that natural ecosystems produce for free."

“We won't have a society if we destroy the environment.”

Margaret Mead

The fragility of the whole Earth system is perhaps best expressed by counting up the number of planets that we know to support life. It's a chance in a million that things ended up right on Earth and a sobering thought that a dead planet is the norm.

The trick might be to communicate humankind's own selfish reasons for protecting the integrity of the environment without falling into the trap of sounding gloomy, alarmist or apocalyptic. After all, we've been trying that and it doesn't seem to work.

2.2 A slightly shortened history of environmentalism

Environmentalism goes back further than we might at first think. In the 19th century, the first signs of apprehension about how our surroundings were being treated were already emerging, focusing on the threat to special landscapes in particular. In the US the first national park was set up at Yellowstone in 1872, out of awe for nature's splendour, and in the UK the National Trust emerged in 1895 out of concern over the effects of development and industrialisation. Our own national parks started appearing in the 1950s, though more the result of the growing 'countryside for the people' call perhaps than concern over landscape and ecology.

*“I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully.”
George W Bush*

It was not until the 1960s that apprehension over humankind's relationship with nature gave way to growing and widespread disillusionment with 'progress' and a degree of real worry for the future. It was a time of idealism and 'who are we, what are we, why are we' thinking that found its focus from growing environmental degradation, particularly industrial and agricultural pollution of air and water. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* made it clear that the scientists didn't always get it right.

“You can't just let nature run wild.” Wally Hickel

Populations began to explode and simple sums were done that came up with massive projected figures for the number of people on tomorrow's planet. Schoolchildren were told to draw bar charts that looked like an ever steepening flight of stairs. The concept of billions arrived.

In the 70s the forests shrank, the world's big 'game' animals were no longer fair game, acid rain was identified and the fragility of energy supplies became apparent.

Whaling, Antarctica, intensive farming and 'monotonisation' of the landscape, and the ozone layer made it onto the environmental map.

In the 80s growing traffic and its voracious appetite for new roads took the gloss off the 'great car economy', paving the way for showdowns later between people and bulldozers on hillsides in southern England.

“I do have a disregard for the environment. I think the world can look after itself and we should enjoy it as best we can.” Jeremy Clarkson

Towards the end of the 80s, concern over the environment snowballed. In the European elections in 1989 the Green Party spectacularly won 15 per cent of the vote in the UK, although the first past the post system denied them any seats. Many people seemed to have swapped their Thatcher-era Union Jack underpants for green ones. Even Margaret Thatcher. She announced in 1989 at the Conservative Party Conference, that she was a "true friend of the earth".

“It isn’t pollution that’s harming the environment. It’s the impurities in our air and water that are doing it.”
Dan Quayle

“Any man who rides a bus to work after the age of 30 can count himself a failure in life.” Margaret Thatcher

The term ‘sustainable development’ was invented. With the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, hopes were raised but the dreams remained unfulfilled. After the summit ended, many activists felt that the political mainstream may have colonised the agenda but that little action had been forthcoming. A banner hoisted on Nelson’s Column said: “Words failed us.”

During the decade it became clear to more people that our rubbish wouldn’t go on fitting into the holes in the ground we had left for it, global warming became indisputable (although some people continued to dispute it), water stress and more violent weather took hold, and *El Nino* became an unlikely buzzword. Finally burning rainforests filled our television screens with smoke.

A new millennium and there is almost constant news of increasing global temperatures, retreating glaciers, rising sea levels and collapsing ice shelves. Kyoto has arrived, and perhaps almost gone; predictions of peak oil are coming thick and fast; the fuel-hungry 4x4 has burst onto the UK market and accelerated quickly.

Beards and sandals, samba bands and placards, rubber dinghies and treehouses... the traditional images associated with those concerned about the environment are giving way to the white coats of scientists and the suits of politicians as climate change in particular engages the establishment. There are new frightening images of hurricanes, fire and cracking ice to absorb, and the dolphin, the polar bear and even the suburban sparrow have become the unfortunate symbols of a deteriorating environment.

Depressed? Now read on...

2.3 Who are the ‘green movement’ and what are ‘green behaviours’?

Painting the Town Green defines the ‘green movement’ as anyone, any organisation or any institution involved in presenting information, developing or implementing policy, making decisions, or campaigning on environmental issues.

So the green movement is not just the more obvious non-governmental organisations such as Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace, but a broad spectrum encompassing politicians with an environmental remit, political advisers, central government institutions such as Defra, local government departments promoting sustainability, statutory bodies like the Sustainable Development Commission, academics working on the science behind the environment, communications specialists working to promote better and more productive links between providers and receivers of information, green businesses attempting to generate jobs from green behaviour, environmental commentators, campaign groups, consultants, authors and journalists. It’s a huge framework with many interconnections, and sometimes no interconnections at all.

“A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children.”
John Audubon

'Green behaviours' refer to specific lifestyle choices that reduce personal environmental impact and help ensure consumption of resources is sustainable at a society level. This project has focused on green behaviours in 13 areas. Clearly the list is not exhaustive but it has formed a good starting point for research.

- **Transport:** Buying greener cars, minimising use of cars, doing without a car, using public transport, walking or cycling as a means of transport rather than just a form of recreation.
- **Holidays, leisure and travel:** Choosing locations, activities and transport modes to help the environment.
- **Waste:** Refusing excessive packaging, reusing packaging and other items, minimising waste, recycling, composting, disposing properly of unwanted goods.
- **Food:** Buying local produce, choosing organic items, avoiding depleted wild foods, adopting 'seasonality', reducing meat consumption, growing food at home.
- **Energy use:** Turning down heating, using low-energy lighting, switching off appliances fully, reducing energy demand through less 'home mechanisation', insulating properly, sourcing greener energy.
- **Chemicals:** Reducing use of polluting chemicals, such as detergents, bleaches and other cleaning fluids, and garden and houseplant chemicals.
- **Materials and resources:** Refusing items made from depleted resources such as tropical timber, actively seeking goods made from recycled materials such as waste paper, avoiding clothing and other products arising from trade in endangered plants or animals.
- **Water use:** Cutting consumption, cutting waste, reusing, home gathering.
- **Consumer goods:** Repairing rather than replacing, passing on unwanted goods to others, disposing of items properly at the end of their life.
- **Savings, banking and mortgages:** Choosing environmentally responsible savings schemes, bank accounts, mortgages, pensions.
- **Participation:** Donating money, joining organisations, taking part in voluntary activities.
- **Voting:** Casting votes on environmental grounds.
- **Bearing witness:** Promoting environmentally friendly behaviour to others.

“The moral is clear: although it can feel hopeless to be in the minority, you can have a powerful effect. But you’ll never be thanked for it.” Tom Stafford

2.4 What have people got to do with it anyway?

People tend to blame government for environmental problems and expect it to sort everything out; government itself might blame the globalised, consumption-based economy for resource problems; business and industry would probably answer that they are simply providing what the people want at the price they're willing to pay.

“With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions.” Abraham Lincoln

This report will show that people continually underestimate the power of individuals to change the world. One of the reasons often given for not doing more to help the environment at a personal level is “What difference can I make?” There is a presumption that one's own activities are insignificant and therefore irrelevant.

People also often forget that, by definition, they have the ultimate power in a democracy. Although they tend to blame governments for the state of things, they elect those governments. This report will illustrate

that most people involved in promoting green behaviours do not expect that government will ever be as radical as is needed. It perhaps takes too brave a politician to introduce change without first securing a public mandate for it. Political action is very often one step behind the public zeitgeist.

Similarly, although they might distrust business, individuals are the ones who provide companies with their profits and they could disable them at a stroke of the wallet. Imagine, Coca Cola, one of the biggest multinationals on the planet, would be brought to its knees in one week if everyone, everywhere stopped drinking its product. Naturally there are many responsible businesses, and a growing number

of companies making a business out of the environment, but by definition businesses generally operate to make their bottom line as big as possible and environmental care is seen as coming with an unwelcome price tag. We cannot look to them to lead the charge against destruction of the planet.

*“Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead*

Which brings us back to people. Anthropologist Margaret Mead once famously said: “Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” Most people need more reassurance on this. They seem too small a cog, and society too

large a wheel, for this to ring true. The effect individuals can have seems too insignificant for there to be any real motivation to take the plunge and change their way of doing things. They will only act if they think that others are acting too. To bring about mass change in behaviour, we have to convince the individual that everyone is acting together and that they need to get on board or feel left out.

Converting niche behaviour to mainstream occupies the minds of a whole army of advertising professionals. It remains perhaps our key challenge, but it can be done. If one American company, presumably started by a small group of motivated individuals, can persuade people in almost every country on the planet to drink a fizzy brown fluid in a red can, then getting people to help make the world look nice should be easy. People really do have the power; we just have to harness it. Let's not forget that in the UK alone there are 60 million of them...

2.5 What do Joe and Joanne Public think of it all so far?

Joe and Joanne Public are normal people and they live normal lives. They are the focus of this report and people like them will determine whether as a society we can achieve our environmental objectives.

Joe and Joanne live in a normal house in a normal road and have normal jobs and normal opinions. If asked, they say that of course they care about the environment but they don't really think about it too much. They are too busy and preoccupied with other things. They work hard and feel they have the right to enjoy what their money can buy.

“By definition every new idea is entertained initially by only a few people, leaving the majority either indifferent or hostile. The other side of the coin is that once a majority embraces an idea, it becomes an unstoppable force.” Wendy Gordon

Their house in Acacia Avenue on the edge of New Grinstead has central heating, which they like to keep turned up fairly high because of the baby. In the loft there is a couple of inches of loft insulation that Joe

admits has been there “for donkey’s years” and the windows are rather draughty, which means they can’t turn the heating down despite the huge bills. There is a low energy lightbulb in the hallway, which they were given free at a council demonstration in the shopping centre some months ago, but they haven’t bought any others because they’re so expensive.

“An Englishman’s home is his castle, and when an Englishman takes to the road in his car, a part of his castle goes with him.” Kate Fox

In the kitchen there are all the signs of a modern life, including a dishwasher, washing machine with drier, and everything from a sandwich toaster to an automatic juicer. Outside on the patio there is a barbecue and a patio heater for the Sunday evenings when both sets of parents are likely to descend to check how much the baby has grown.

Joe and Joanne each have a car (Joe has a newish Golf GTi; Joanne has an old Peugeot 306), which they use every day for work, although they live on a major bus route to their workplaces. They have bicycles too, mountain bikes, which they load onto

a rack on the back of the Golf to head off into the countryside on Sundays, while Joanne’s sister drives down the motorway from her home in Milton Hempstead to look after the baby. With all the driving he does, Joe constantly complains about the price of petrol but he doesn’t entertain the idea of selling the Golf for a smaller car because he doesn’t want his mates “looking down on him”.

They shop at a large supermarket and pride themselves on cooking good food. They eat a good deal of fish, of course, for health reasons and particularly like Scottish wild salmon, the supermarket’s “It’s Even Tastier” brand cod fishcakes with herbs and, for a treat, tropical tiger prawns. In fact, they eat healthily all year round, enjoying their favourite fruit and vegetables whatever the time of year. They did buy some organic rice from the supermarket organic shelf a while back but stopped when they realised they could get normal rice much cheaper.

The Public family produce two full dustbins of rubbish each week, largely food packaging (including supermarket carrier bags), disposable nappies, plastic containers, food scraps and tin cans, which they don’t like cleaning out for the doorstep recycling box that the council started earlier this year. They do, however, make a point of recycling their newspapers (*Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday* and *Sunday Times*) and bottles (rather a lot of Australian wine, they would admit, which they prefer to the European varieties, having got into it during the year they spent travelling and working Down Under).

At the moment, the front garden in Acacia Avenue is rather unsightly with two discarded armchairs that had started to show wear, an old TV still in working order but now redundant after Joe bought his new digital widescreen a month ago, and the remains of their old bathroom after they decided to treat themselves to a top-to-bottom make-over after watching a programme on television. The chairs and telly in particular are beginning to annoy Joanne (and neighbours have started to raise eyebrows) and she has started eyeing up a piece of wasteground at the end of the next street. She knows it’s not the answer, but what can you do if the council don’t take things away when they should?

*“It remains the same as when Erich Fromm wrote his book *The Sane Society* in 1955: so long as we are more motivated to have than to be, we shall continue down the tunnel of consumerism. We shall do so despite knowing full well that the light at the end is not the sun. It’s the train.”
Oliver James*

The cupboard under the kitchen sink contains plenty of strong cleaning fluids and bleach because Joanne is a stickler for hygiene and after all you can't be too careful with a baby in the house.

Two or three times a year Joe and Joanne jet off for a well earned foreign holiday. Last year they went to Egypt for a week, had a winter shortbreak in Prague and, in something of a fling before the baby was born, went on a safari to South Africa. Both enjoy the thrill of flying and feel it's more than half the holiday.

Naturally Joanne wouldn't be seen dead in a fur coat but neither Joe nor Joanne have the slightest idea where the hardwood timber for their new bathroom has come from. As for water use, both freely admit they use quite a lot. Both have a power shower in the morning (it was already fitted when they moved in), and the baby has a bath each night, often followed by Joanne having a long soak herself. Someone once told them to save water by not flushing the toilet every time but they didn't like the sound of that.

Joe banks with Barclays and Joanne with NatWest, largely a tradition handed down from their parents. They have a number of 'building society' accounts, mostly opened when the mutual societies were converting to banks and there were lots of windfalls to be gained. They have a high street mortgage, chosen purely on cost grounds.

“Many people never stop to realise that a tree is a living thing, not that different from a tall, leafy dog that has roots and is very quiet.”
Jack Handey

Of course Joe and Joanne care about the countryside. Who doesn't? Joe is a member of RSPB; he was given life membership by his father – a keen bird watcher – as an 18th birthday present a good few years ago. He also joined the National Trust five years ago when he had his parents to stay and wanted to take them to the stately home near his town. He let the membership lapse though after visiting all the attractions within reach. He's not sure he likes the images he sees on television of environmentalists in dinghies or standing in front of bulldozers causing trouble and generally refers to them as “Swampies” with something of a smirk.

Joanne voted Labour in the last general election because she always has done. Joe didn't bother because he always says it won't make any difference. Once a friend of his came round to the house and chastised him for not using his vote to get a man elected to the local council on a promise to pedestrianise the town's high street and get more people using the buses. Joe remembers quite an argument. He didn't want the high street pedestrianised because he enjoys driving into town on a Saturday morning to visit the DIY centre. And the buses are “rubbish”, as he well remembers from when he had to catch them to get to school. Besides, he doesn't want anyone telling him how to live his life...

Of course, Joe and Joanne are not the only people on Acacia Avenue. Next door live Edward and Edwina Green. They read the *Guardian*, go everywhere on bicycles and have a compost heap in their back garden (which Joanne says produces a bad smell in hot weather). Joe and Joanne get on with them all right but wouldn't count them as friends. “Let's face it,” Joe said to Joanne one night after they'd been invited over for dinner and given organic lentil casserole with organic brown rice, “they're nice enough, but a bit nutty.”

On the other side live Dave and Davina Hardup. Having five children, and with Dave in and out of work like a yo-yo and Davina stuck at home looking after the kids, money is tight. Despite this, the children always seem to have the latest designer-label clothing and last year Dave and Davina took them to Florida, after they saw it on a holiday programme on TV. They were also at the Green's dinner party. On the way home, Dave muttered to Davina: “It must be nice to afford organic food. They must be rolling in it...”

This is how it is on Acacia Avenue. This has to be our starting point.

Section 3 **Green messages through the main media**

3.1 'Environment' through television

Television is today's most powerful medium, and most people's preferred source of information as well as entertainment. The five main terrestrial channels are today augmented by more additional options than ever before, many of them broadcasting around the clock.

Television has been blamed for everything from the decline of the cinema to the death of the family sit-down evening meal and the advent of lazy children, but it still continues to captivate us and hold our attention. It is far more than a set of programmes designed to entertain, amuse, shock, surprise, inform or even educate. It is a crucial indicator of norms, an introducer of new ideas and a setter of trends. It

“Television has proved that people will look at anything rather than each other.” Ann Landers

reinforces or challenges our view of what is contemporary behaviour and paves the way towards new attitudes and ways of doing things. The power to influence can be enormous when messages or images strike home with the right audience. Would the Live 8 concerts – and the message behind them – have reached and firmly tugged the world's heart-strings without blanket coverage on television? Can a politician, of any political colour, ever be taken seriously without top level

television skills? Is anyone between the ages of six and 26 *not* able to give an accurate impersonation of Vicky Pollard, the teenage tearaway from BBC1's *Little Britain*?

Small wonder that anyone with a message to present to the public tries to get on television first.

But in their quest for viewers, television companies frequently try to be all things to all people. So there might be a useful documentary on climate change one evening, but the next evening the same slot is just as likely to be taken by a motoring magazine programme or an airport reality show. The first message is diluted or lost completely by the subliminal messages of the subsequent programmes.

The National Trust recently took issue with the BBC over a threat to downgrade environmental coverage by cutting the number of environmental journalists and Transport 2000 has had a long running dispute over *Top Gear*, arguing that the programme encourages an obsession with powerful cars, downplays or rubbishes environmental arguments and fails to explore the alternatives to car use. The response of the BBC to Transport 2000 has been to robustly defend *Top Gear* and say there is a market for such a programme and that it should therefore stay.

Green-Engage carried out a rudimentary audit of mainstream, fixed-content (ie not news) programmes during one full week to identify those broadcast with a dominant environmental, or anti-environment, message. The five terrestrial channels were followed through programme listings for the week Sunday 9 October to Saturday 15 October 2005.

Programmes containing dominant positive environmental messages
Countryfile, BBC1
Wildlife on Two, BBC2 (twice)
Bill Oddie's How to Watch Wildlife, BBC2
The Hurricane that Shook America, BBC2
Horizon [on Madagascar's rainforests], BBC2
The Gardeners of Eden [Eden Project], BBC2

“Scientists tell us that global warming will make the south of England like Ibiza. So, let's make it happen!” Ali G

Programmes containing dominant negative environmental messages

The Best of Top Gear, BBC2
Japanese Grand Prix, ITV1 [twice]
Motorsport UK, ITV1 [twice]
World Superbikes, Channel 4 [twice]
Fifth Gear, Channel 5 [twice]
Motorsport Mundial, Channel 5
Motor Racing, Channel 5
Race and Rally UK, Channel 5
Airline, ITV1 [assuming it promotes an interest in airports and flying]
British Superbikes, Channel 4

“Television, the drug of the nation. Breeding ignorance and feeding radiation” Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy

It's a familiar story... plenty of wildlife programmes but also plenty of programmes promoting car culture. If it had been later in the year, holiday programmes suggesting far-flung destinations reached only by air could have been added to the list. That's not to say there are never real 'hits' for environmental interests. This audit was taken shortly after the BBC2 *No Waste Like Home* series with Penney Poyzer reached an end, for example.

Naturally environmental messages appear through current affairs programmes, particularly significant through well watched main news bulletins, but this project has not attempted to evaluate them. Autumn 2005 was struck with hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and this will undoubtedly have fuelled people's awareness of the increasing violence of the weather. Interestingly the connections made between

“The behavioural changes we covet should be displayed by our reality television and dramas. Why can't our heroes and heroines, on Corrie and Eastenders, be separating their rubbish and discussing traffic congestion and organic veg?” Lorraine Mirham for Painting the Town Green

Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma and climate change at the time were sparse, possibly being viewed as in poor taste so soon after human suffering on that sort of scale.

Identifiable 'environmental issues programmes' such as documentaries should be worth their weight in elephants but the truth probably is that a number fail to be watched by mainstream audiences precisely because they are *environment programmes*.

Television will not play its full part in promoting a sustainable future until green messages are incorporated into popular drama, comedy, chatshows, gameshows, makeover shows, reality TV, soaps and shoved much further up the pecking order by journalists in the news gathering rooms. Along with breaking new ground with the first lesbian kiss and a body under the patio, Channel 4's *Brookside* had a brief exchange on climate change a few years ago but has there been much else? If behaviour change is to be achieved, we need to start seeing Vicky Pollard talking about recycling, the next *Big Brother* contestants discussing energy efficiency in the house, and Vic and Bob performing an amusing routine on sustainable transport with Ulrika Johnson. Perhaps too the green movement should be pressing for an 'Environmental Health Warning' on any programmes promoting unsustainable behaviour, such as motoring shows, holiday programmes and series encouraging unnecessary short-term gutting of homes.

As part of this project, the BBC was invited to identify any environmental messages sent out in any form in any of its programmes on its main television channels and radio stations during the week discussed above. It declined.

3.2 'Environment' through radio

Once the dominant means of communication and the focal point of every sitting room, the radio has long since taken a back seat to the television. Probably most people listen to the radio at some stage of the day, but for many what they tune in for is music. Of course, there are always news bulletins, but much of radio is rather superficial in terms of issues, including the environment. This is not to overlook the advent of digital radio stations such as Passion for the Planet, which as the name suggests, focuses on environmental issues and green living.

In terms of mainstream radio, there are nevertheless respected issue-based current affairs or discussion programmes, for example *Today, You and Yours* and *The World Tonight* on Radio 4, the *Jeremy Vine Show* on Radio 2, and *Julian Woracke/Victoria Derbyshire* on Radio 5 Live. BBC local radio is often issue-rich too and should never be overlooked by environmental communicators. Many of these programmes cover environmental issues but one suspects the audience is limited compared with the reach of music-based radio, and of course television...

3.3 'Environment' through the press

That the national press are powerful will come as no revelation to anyone involved in trying to influence public opinion, or indeed seeking to influence government and business. Nor is it new information that nearly all the national dailies and Sundays come with a fairly fixed political and ideological agenda, from the *Guardian* and *Independent* slanted towards left of centre points of view with a strong ethical and environmental strand, to the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday* with an 'environment doesn't matter unless it affects my house price' agenda.

“*The Sun cannot give David Cameron unequivocal support until he convinces us he has the right policies on five key areas affecting our readers' lives. Those crucial subjects are law and order, economy and tax, public services reform, immigration, and Europe.*” *Sun editorial comment*

What sometimes comes as a shock to people, including environmental campaigners, is the fact that newspapers exist purely to sell copies and make money. They are not a public information service set up by altruistic proprietors and editors to tell a democratic society what it needs to know or to responsibly separate truth from rubbish and then report it. All papers have done exhaustive market research to find out what sort of people buy their product – and that's what it is, no more, no less – and what sort of values, concerns and

interests they have. The stories are then chosen and written to cement the readership's loyalty and keep them buying the paper. If a newspaper believes its core readers are not concerned about environmental issues, it will keep telling them the environment doesn't matter; if a readership is made up of people likely to be members of environmental groups, you can be sure the stories will help to reinforce the readers' view that environment is important and so create a bond between product and buyer. 'Tell it like it is' becomes 'tell it like they want it to be'.

Twelve things to bear in mind about the national press...

1. National newspapers only print stories that reflect their readers' opinions, or what they think they are.
2. The news gathering process can often be rather arbitrary and haphazard, and it rarely focuses on what's important as opposed to what makes good reading. The national press are not a public information service. Thus newspapers tend to publish items that are not necessarily *in the public interest* but that might be *in the interest of the public*, something very different.

3. Bad news is very good news for a press journalist. Negative stories – in which someone attacks or is rude about someone else – are much more likely to make it onto a page than positive ones. It often seems there is little point in a spokesperson saying something nice about someone to a journalist because the information is much less likely to be used.
4. Very often a journalist has written a story in his or her head before securing all the facts and will then seek out people to quote who will fill the part left for them. A press officer may well face the question: “Would you mind saying this?”
5. The tabloids tend to strongly identify with consumerism and consumption and a green message is seen as more or less counter to this. They won’t publish things that they think will make their readers feel uncomfortable.
6. There is unlikely to be a sense of social responsibility at a senior level at any national paper, more a responsibility to the bottom line and shareholders.
7. Opinion column writers in some newspapers are not paid to be sensible; they are there simply to ‘stir debate’. Thus they might write things that tend towards the outrageous merely to provoke a reaction and provide debate on the letters page.
8. National newspapers arguably do more to affect public opinion than any other written medium in this country. They are the medium most feared, and most courted, by politicians and frequently set the agenda for the broadcast media. They are also the providers of information that is, among non-partisan sources, most likely to be biased.
9. A journalist himself once explained that journalists are almost by definition ‘alpha-type’ people, in others words fast-living, ambitious individuals focused on consumerism. Many of them see green values as anathemic to this and do not naturally resonate with our way of seeing things. Of course, this is a ghastly generalisation and there are many journalists who are caring people who ride bicycles, but they are probably not the majority.
10. Even on its editorial comment pages, a newspaper might put forward an environmentally responsible message in one edition, only to destroy it in another with an opposing point of view. The green movement should not expect consistency.
11. Newspaper departments are usually run separately with little or no cross-referencing. So the Motoring Supplement is oblivious of, and often contradictory to, any environmental message coming through on the Ethical Living page, while the advertising department even of a quality newspaper with an ethical slant will accept adverts for anything, from anyone, so long as it is not actually illegal. It should come as no surprise to be reading adverts for short haul flights on the next page, or even the same page, as an article highlighting the contribution of aviation to climate change. Unfortunately for the green movement, the reader doesn’t tend to put as much distinction between editorial and advertising as we would like. If something appears in a proper newspaper, it must be right, acceptable and normal...
12. Complaining about the behaviour of a newspaper in terms of how it presents information rarely produces any lasting or measurable result. Corrections are hard to win and usually appear as a couple of sentences at the foot of a column; many people don’t read the letters pages of newspapers to learn of alternative perspectives; taking a newspaper to the Press Complaints Commission over inaccuracy or failing to offer a balanced point of view usually only results in the paper accepting a short letter on the letters page; editors often calculate that they can simply afford to completely ignore even a major complaint; journalists often use as their moral remit the fact that their readers buy the paper and can stop doing so at any moment, so as long as people keep buying it, the paper can’t be doing wrong.

“Drive in the highest gear practicable...” Green tip from Daily Express to readers

In terms of persuading people to adopt green behaviours, national newspapers therefore present environmentalists with both opportunities and frustrations. The opportunities clearly must be pursued in view of the sheer power of the press in shaping how people think, and sometimes massive steps forward can be achieved. But the sword is double edged.

In particular, key print media present their readers with a host of mixed messages on a daily basis. One minute we read about climate change, violent weather or carbon emissions, and then the eye is drawn to the RyanAir advert. How can flying be so bad when there is a great big advert there in black and white

(actually, usually colour) promoting the very thing that's supposed to be so irresponsible? No wonder people are confused.

This project carried out an audit of four national papers: *Sun*, *Daily Express*, *Independent* and *Observer*.

Sun Friday 21 October 2005. Circulation around 3.3 million

Positive sustainability messages included...

- Feature on greener cars in motoring supplement.

Negative sustainability messages included...

- Editorial leader comment: "The *Sun* cannot give him [David Cameron] unequivocal support until he convinces us he has the right policies on five key areas affecting our readers' lives. Those crucial subjects are law and order, economy and tax, public services reform, immigration and Europe." So, environment is not important enough to make the list...
- Full page advert for car emitting 178 grammes/kilometre carbon dioxide (Smart Car equivalent 113-116 grammes/kilometre).
- Trailer for following day's Jeremy Clarkson column, the *bête noire* of environmentalists.
- Double page feature on Jeremy Clarkson driving across Iraq and other motor-exploits to be featured in future *Top Gear* programmes.
- Advert for readers' free flights offer.
- Advert for energy-inefficient lightbulbs.
- Adverts for credit offers for car purchases.
- Features on high powered cars and motorbikes in motoring supplement.

“Each group needs different answers to be convinced of the arguments, and is at a different stage of adoption of green behaviours. Usefully, they tend to consume media in line with these groupings: Guardian, Independent, The Times, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Sun – broadly in order of decreasing green-ness.” Caroline Midmore

Daily Express Friday 21 October 2005. Circulation around 831,000

Positive sustainability messages included...

- Editorial leader comment recognising the decline in cod populations and promoting a traditional fry-up instead.
- News story on call for ban on cod fishing in UK waters.
- The first edition of *Ingham's World*, a new weekly column on the environment but see the *Express's* "Green Tip" below.
- Full page advert for children's bicycles.
- Major feature on 'eco-homes'.

Negative sustainability messages included...

- Advert for energy-inefficient lightbulbs.
- *Ingham's World* "Green Tip" goes no further than to say: "Drive in the highest gear practicable..." Is that the best they can do?
- Several car adverts, including one for a 2-litre SUV emitting 190 grammes/kilometre carbon dioxide.
- Readers' competition to win a luxury motorised camper van.
- Readers' offer for overseas holiday by air, competition to win a holiday in America and readers' offer for a Christmas markets trip to Germany.
- Advert for second homes in Spain.

Independent Tuesday 20 September 2005. Circulation around 263,000*Positive sustainability messages included...*

- Front page advert and special stand-alone 48-page colour supplement entitled *Your Planet and How You Can Save It*. Included features on green 'positivity', hints for low impact lifestyles, being an ethical consumer, green food, organic food delivery, garden composting products, green fashions, low-impact cars, greener household appliances, 'carbon-neutral music', responsible tourism, waste and recycling.

Negative sustainability messages included...

- The *Your Planet* supplement jostled for attention on the same day with the motoring supplement. It included a review of "Skoda's fastest and most powerful road car ever" (190 grammes/kilometre carbon dioxide) alongside a "very fast" Renault, a turbo Subaru that "outperforms" the Skoda and a Volkswagon that "bursts with energy". More reviews/plugs looked at the Grand Cherokee Jeep (270 grammes/kilometre carbon dioxide), and a Vauxhall able to reach 60mph in 4.7 seconds and achieve a maximum of 151mph (emissions figure not given). Adverts included those for a 2.2-litre fuel-injected Honda Sport, a Volvo with emissions of 230-261 grammes/kilometre carbon dioxide, and the Skoda model featured in editorial. Finally, there is an opinion column by motoring commentator Mike Rutherford, urging second hand cars to be donated to Africa where they could become "valuable, desirable assets".

Observer Sunday 11 September 2005. Circulation around 438,000*Positive sustainability messages included...*

- Article drawing the link between climate change and Hurricane Katrina plus the need for society to use less oil.
- Adverts for small cars and holidays in Spain via train journeys.
- Features on Fresh and Wild, organic food and allotments in *Food Monthly* supplement.
- Article on organic food and the sense or otherwise of bottled water in magazine.
- Adverts for small cars and bird feeders in magazine.
- Advertisement leaflet insert promoting Internet shopping at Waitrose.

Negative sustainability messages included...

- News-feature emphasising 'gains' from climate change, ie better autumn colours and extra food crops.
- Adverts for BA cheap flights, Porsche cars and the Land Rover 4x4.
- Article putting positive spin on bottled water, Australian wine, white fish and travel to America in *Food Monthly* supplement.
- Article on Lancia cars with Ferrari engines in magazine.
- Readers' offer for holidays in Iceland and Madeira.
- Adverts for holidays in Mauritius, conferences in Cyprus, safaris in Africa, holidays in Egypt, Mercedes cars and top of the range Saab cars in magazine.
- Article putting a positive spin on charity treks in Chile, Mexico and China, visiting Pakistan to watch cricket, new direct flights to Sicily making short breaks possible, and 'celebration' of a new motorway across Sicily as "progress".
- Readers' offer for worldwide travel insurance.
- Adverts for cut price flights and holidays across the globe.

Confused? How do you think the public feel? With such a conflicting array of messages promoting sustainability and environmentally challenging consumption at the same time, it's no wonder that people are left in a daze. People are genuinely confused as to what is okay and what isn't, what's expected of them and what isn't, and what behaviour is normal and what is unacceptable.

This discussion has deliberately focused on national newspapers. There are, of course, other 'tiers' on the 'newspaper rack', in particular the regional mornings and the local evening or weekly papers. In general both these come with much less political agenda and they are often open to environmental messages.

Regional mornings include papers such as *Yorkshire Post*, *Western Mail* (South Wales), *Western Morning News* (Devon and Cornwall), *Northern Echo* (North-east), *Daily Post* (Liverpool), *Eastern Daily Press* (Norfolk), *Newcastle Journal*, *The Scotsman* and *The Herald* (Glasgow). They are mini-national papers reporting from the perspective of an identifiable region of the country. They present real opportunities to present environmental messages, although they lack the circulation of the true nationals.

Local newspapers, produced on a daily (evening) or weekly basis, obviously tend not to report on national stories and focus instead on local activities. They do, however, cover environment in a local context and this can be the key to introducing environmental issues in a form that people find engaging. Many people respond to the local rather than the global, as this report illustrates, and local newspapers therefore have a vital role to play in promoting environmentally friendly behaviours. However, for the environmental movement, the drawback is the huge number and diversity of papers: well over 1000 often very different products covering very different areas.

Section 4 **Green messages through popular culture**

4.1 'Environment' through books

The environment section of most 'good bookshops' is usually dwarfed by the neighbouring shelf on gardening, which in turn is dwarfed by the shelves on football, cars, war, travel and so on, which is not a good start.

Naturally most if not all science appears on paper somewhere and the environment is no exception. But specialist or academic books – whether they deal with the scientific, philosophical or spiritual aspects of environment – are mainly held in university bookshops or the huge, daunting and intellectual underground 'vault' at Blackwell's Bookshop in Oxford and are effectively inaccessible to the general public, both physically and mentally. As such they are limited vehicles for communication with ordinary people.

The following types of book are therefore considered as most significant in communicating environmental messages and the need for green behaviours:

- Natural history and landscape guides and picture books
- 'Science for laymen' factual books
- 'How to be green' type guides
- Fiction containing direct or indirect environmental messages

Natural history and landscape guides and picture books

This is 'soft' environmentalism but possibly highly effective in affecting attitude, if not action. Field guides to wildlife are key in this way, but those simply celebrating nature on a superficial level should not be overlooked. Pictures and descriptions of the vibrant mass of shapes, forms, colours and sizes that make up the natural web of life, or of the stunning variety of landscapes both in this country and others, inevitably lead to a reaction of wonder and perhaps respect. Where these emotions are combined, perhaps at a later date, with information about threats, then concern is likely to result.

There is, as this report shows, often a wide gulf between attitude and action, and the right attitude is not necessarily a prerequisite for the right action, but these sorts of books are inevitably significant in 'softening' up the public to stronger environmental messages from other sources.

'Science for laymen' factual books

There is an art to writing science that is accessible to people with little more scientific understanding than they left school with. Similarly there is a thin line between a successful 'science for laymen' book and an impenetrable door-stop.

But where they work, issue-based factual books on the environment can be iconic. How many people changed their whole view of agriculture and the environment when Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was published in 1962? This damning indictment of chemical farming was instrumental in bringing about the ban of DDT and other highly toxic pesticides in many, though not all, countries. In January 2005 the *Guardian* ran a major feature on the most iconic science for laymen books of the past 50 years. Tim Radford, the paper's Science Correspondent, selected ten landmark books, among them James Lovelock's *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, James Watson's *The Double Helix*, Edward Wilson's *The Diversity of Life* and *The Language of the Genes* by Steve Jones. The paper asked which other book most deserved a place on this bookshelf. The winning entry was indeed *Silent Spring* and the reason given:

“To read is to empower. To empower is to write. To write is to influence. To influence is to change. To change is to live.” Jane Evershed

“Because it shows that scientists don’t always get it right; that science needs a conscience; that the head is no good without the heart.” Truly a book that changed hearts and minds.

There are many other factual books eager to educate the layman on environmental issues, if only he or she could be persuaded to give them a go. Michael Wigan’s *Last of the Hunter Gatherers* and Charles Clover’s *End of the Line*, for example, detail the world’s fishery crisis, Ross Gelbspan’s *Boiling Point* focuses on climate change, and *The End of Oil* by Paul Roberts is self-explanatory.

There is the other side, however. Just as an inspirational book can be a powerful force for good and help bring a shift in the way people see things, the tool can be less useful if it ‘falls into the wrong hands’. Consider the effect of *The Skeptical Environmentalist* in which Danish statistician Bjorn Lomborg argues that action to counter climate change is poor value for money. Consider too the acres of media coverage he has achieved because he handed bored journalists an interesting story on a plate. Whether ‘bad science’ actually sets back progress on the environment is an arguable point but it certainly consumes the time of environmentalists in rebutting it.

‘How to be green’ type guides

There has been something of an explosion in the past couple of years in ‘how to be green’ guides.

Among them are:

A Life Stripped Bare. Tiptoeing Through the Ethical Minefield. By Leo Hickman. Published by Guardian Books and Eden Project Books 2005.

“The conclusion of a book seems to be the time to trot out some sage words that transcend time. I could turn to the likes of Gandhi, Aristotle or Proust, but for me the profound, ageless words of pretzel-loving George W Bush speak loudest about the need to consider in advance the true impact of our actions: ‘Chew before you swallow.’”

A Good Life: The Guide to Ethical Living. By Leo Hickman. Published by Guardian Books and Eden Project Books 2005.

“A classic cooked breakfast with all the trimmings – sausage, bacon, eggs, buttered toast, tomatoes, beans, mushrooms, all washed down with some coffee and orange juice. And if somehow you’re still feeling peckish, how about a poached kipper, a bowl of cereal or a croissant? Not exactly an everyday meal but it’s one that illustrates much about what’s wrong with the food we eat. Examine each part of the meal and there’s a story to be told: the North African migrant workers who picked the heavily sprayed tomato in a Spanish field for a pittance, the cows fed GM maize then intensively milked to make the butter, the illegal traces of antibiotics hidden in the battery farmed egg, the high levels of salt and sugar in the breakfast cereal that’s aggressively marketed at children, the artificial ‘smoky’ flavourings, preservatives and water injected into the bacon to increase profit margins, the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of air-freighting the orange juice from a plantation abroad, the loss of biodiversity caused by growing wheat on an industrial scale for the bread, the coffee farmer in Africa put out of business by giant food companies using their muscle to artificially depress bean prices, the pressure put on the local landfill site by excessive food packaging, the kipper made from herring stocks, already exhausted by overfishing, polluted with dioxins and PCBs from the North Sea, the hydrogenated fat used to bulk up the croissant. Bon appetit!”

Change the World for a Fiver. By Eugenie Harvey. Published by We Are What We Do and Short Books 2004.

“We live in peculiar times. We buy things – more and more things – with more and more money; but they don’t make us happy. Life satisfaction was higher during post-war rationing in the 1940s. Voting in elections is declining and membership of political parties has fallen by two-thirds over a single generation. Yet the UK has recently witnessed its biggest ever street demonstrations designed to change government policies on issues as diverse as world debt, fox hunting and the war against Iraq. We feel things very

“Books are the quietest and most constant of friends. They are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers.” Charles W Eliot

deeply and we want to do something, but what? It was Mahatma Gandhi who said: 'We must be the change we want to see in the world.' In other words, we are what we do. So why is it so difficult? Perhaps it is the scale of the problems which induces the state of paralysis. We think we have to leave change to governments or big business even though we also know that we elect governments and that our spending is what creates big business. Surely the question now is not whether we should act alone but how we can act together?"

Cutting Your Car Use. By Anna Semlyen. Published by Green Books 2003.

"Are you driving to work or working to drive? Do you know how much your car costs you? Analyse your weekly car use and see what you could save by using some alternative means of transport. What would you do with the money you save?"

No Waste Like Home. By Penney Poyzer. Published by Virgin Books 2005.

"Living in a wasteful way harms your pocket and the environment. If you're paying for more things than you need, only to chuck them into the rubbish bin at the end of the week, then you need to wake up to waste. I'm not about to tell you you've got to give up your cars or become vegetarians. I simply want to convince you that being less wasteful just means changing your habits and thinking more about what and why you do things."

Save Cash and Save the Planet. By Nicola Baird and Andrea Smith. Published by Friends of the Earth and Collins 2005.

"Lots of us care for the planet, but find it just too much effort or too tricky to do the right thing. Sometimes it is not even clear which is the most effective way to be greener. Even if you recycle your bottles and newspapers, don't you find it frustrating that so much still has to be thrown away? You may want to eat green beans but, at the height of the UK bean harvest, you wonder why the supermarket stocks just one African-grown variety which has flown many miles. And why do you have to spend so much money heating your home and still find bits of it chilly? By flipping through this book you will find clear answers to help you reduce your negative impact on people and the planet, save you money and make you feel good."

Saving the Planet Without Costing the Earth: 500 Simple Steps to a Greener Lifestyle. By Donnachadh McCarthy. Published by Fusion 2004.

"I am going to explain how, like nearly all personal dreams, it is possible to move towards a totally environmentally sustainable world if we really want to. And it does not necessarily mean the sacrifice of the ease and comfort of our current lifestyles. It just means that we need to be willing to learn the first steps to achieving that goal. For instance, if you want to become a ballet dancer (which I was), you have to learn the five basic positions of the feet upon which ballet is based. Then week by week, with constant application, you learn gradually how to use those positions in more and more complex combinations, until eventually you are able to soar gracefully through the air like a bird. What was initially impossible has become natural!"

To a deep green, or even a mid-green, person, these books are a valuable information source. They provide ideas and can lead to the comforting conclusion that the reader is not alone on the rocky path to sustainability.

But what about other people, all the normal people? Green-Engage Communications gave some of the books to a friend who has an interest in the environment and is displaying mounting concern over environmental problems, with a growing determination to play a part in reducing them. She probably counts as light green. She was quickly overwhelmed by the amount of information, but more than that by its depth and the perceived fussiness in terms of how far you could, or even should, take things. Her response was: "Where do you stop? It's obsessive. I could never be like that. There's too much worry and guilt." The final straw came when, leafing through one guide to being green, she found a large picture of a cat looking remarkably like her own much-loved pet, Toffee. Everyone is aware that the household moggy slaughters wildlife, but not many would have known that cats have been identified as a threat to well being by bringing traces of pesticides into the house from the garden and nearby parks on their paws (visitors'

shoes are also blamed; we should ask people to leave them at the door, the book advises). No doubt it's true, but the point is that this is environmentalism of the very highest order and it is likely to put off people other than the very deepest of green devotees. There's no point trying to take people to the top storey of a building when we're struggling to get them off the ground floor.

Many green 'manuals' assume that information provision and reasoned argument lead to concern and that alone is enough to bring about action. Some add a dose of exhortation. Models of how we make decisions now show that these techniques are unlikely to work on their own. It might win minds but it doesn't necessarily win hearts and most decisions come from the heart more than we would like to admit. A lot of green advice now talks about the promise of saving money by adopting green behaviours but the amounts to be saved are frequently too small, and the number of years before payback too great, to provide any real incentive to break old habits and forge new ones, let alone invest money up front in new equipment or technology.

There is also the very real problem of overload with any guide to green behaviour that encompasses more than just a few actions spread over just a few pages. Anyone writing such a book naturally wants to cram in everything they can think of, but people can be easily overwhelmed, triggering the reaction: "I can't possibly do all of this, therefore I'll do nothing." Finally, we are faced with the truth that many of the public don't actually read factual books of this type anyway, regardless of the subject. It can rarely be classed at bedtime reading or reading for pleasure.

“*Silent Spring shows that scientists don't always get it right; that science needs a conscience; that the head is no good without the heart.*” Unknown

This is not to dismiss green manuals as a waste of, hopefully recycled, paper but to recognise their general limitations. As a source of information, they can, of course, be encyclopaedic, but green messages almost certainly need other media such as television to distil advice down to the basics, and inspire enthusiasm and engagement.

One of the books listed above does deserve special mention. Leo Hickman's *A Life Stripped Bare* is different to most 'how to be green' guides. Rather than bombard the reader with

information, reasons and exhortation, it takes the reader almost on a shared journey of discovery with the author, on equal terms. The book is Leo Hickman's own story of how he and his family attempted, sometimes with success and sometimes without it, to follow advice and go green. What comes out of the book is the *humanity* of going green, and the *fallibility* of people in trying to do the right thing. The message coming through loud and clear is, don't worry if you can't do everything, just do what you can. And it actually *is* bedtime reading, as my friend found out.

Fiction containing direct or indirect environmental messages

'Environment' might not seem an obvious topic for bestseller fiction but there are a surprising range of books with environmental messages contained in them, sometimes obvious and direct, sometimes hidden but perhaps just as effective. Like coffee table picture books on beautiful landscapes or wildlife, fiction can produce an emotional response, which ultimately can be far more powerful as a motivator for action than absorbing a list of facts on environmental threats. And of course fiction is not hamstrung by the mundane limits of reality or science. Consider Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. At first glance, it's a fantasy storybook and a must-read for idealists at a certain time of life, but on closer inspection, it is seen to contain some strong environmental messages, among them the subjugation of beauty, magic and diversity by mankind, the decline of forests, and the horrors of over-industrialisation and consequences of a loss of respect for nature. A major trilogy of dramatic films as well, its impact is probably enormous on a subconscious level.

Naturally too there is a whole shelf of animal stories on the *Watership Down* model (itself more of an issue-based statement than the image of a cuddly rabbit on the front cover would lead you to believe) that undoubtedly affect attitudes towards the natural world.

Indeed the more you look into fiction, the more environment you see. A few minutes on the Internet reveals over 100 recent or contemporary titles with clear messages.

Among them are (in no particular order):

Gridlock. By Ben Elton. Gridlock is about when a city dies, killed in the name of freedom, oil and steel, and choked on carbon monoxide.

Where the Forest Meets the Sea. By Jeannie Baker. A picture book for children about a boy's trip with his father to an endangered rainforest in Queensland.

Zodiac. By Neal Stephenson. An environmental crusader fights a series of battles with large corporations, a deranged genetic scientist and others.

The Last Whale. By Lloyd Abbey. The story of a blue whale driven nearly mad by mercury poisoning as he searches the oceans for his mate and their last surviving calf.

A Friend of the Earth. By TC Boyle. In 2025 a former eco-terrorist, who is currently the curator of a zoo for a pop star, reflects on his past activism as he surveys a world where biodiversity and a healthy climate are just a memory.

Ecotopia. By Ernest Callenbach. The north-western US has seceded and formed an ecology-based government where pollution and cars are a thing of the past.

The Monkey Wrench Gang. By Edward Abbey. A group of eco-terrorists blow up bridges and dams in the US West to protect the environment.

“For me the profound, ageless words of pretzel-loving George W Bush speak loudest about the need to consider in advance the true impact of our actions: ‘Chew before you swallow.’” Leo Hickman

Mean Spirit. By Linda Hogan. The ownership of oil-rich land places the lives of Oklahoma's Indians in jeopardy.

The Day of the Triffids. By John Wyndham. After a series of meteorite explosions blind most of the humans on earth, a group of man-eating plants set out to exterminate humanity.

In the Palm of Darkness. By Mayra Montero. A biologist travels to Haiti to discover if any frogs remain from a rapidly disappearing species.

Farewell to Matyora. By Valentin Rasputin. The natives of a Siberian village see 300 years of tradition lost when the Soviets decide to build a hydroelectric dam that will flood their homelands.

Prodigal Summer. By Barbara Kingsolver. About a farming community in the US, this book weaves arguments for valuing and protecting wildlife and farming organically with stories of people's lives.

It seems there is no lack of environmental messages in fiction, although they cannot compete with romance, love and sex, of course, and you sometimes have to stop reading and close your eyes to find them.

4.2 ‘Environment’ through popular music

The environment is not a topic that generally inspires writers of popular music. Most pop songs are about the familiar boy-meets-girl scenario, but even amongst the serious ‘protest-song’ end of the market,

Painting the Town Green

environmental issues and problems rarely receive attention and messages of sustainable consumption are almost impossible to find. Compare that with the number of songs written about war, peace, nuclear weapons, freedom, urban decay, racism, disaffected youth, drugs, guns and violence, poverty, and struggles against 'the system' and it's easy to see why music is not helping to nudge 'environment' into the mainstream.

A study, albeit cursory, of the lyrics of the Top 40 albums on 9 October 2005 revealed effectively no direct, deliberate environmental messages at all, with the only possible exceptions *American Idiot* by Green Day, whose stance against consumerism and a media-driven world is directed mainly at George Bush; *The Essential Bob Dylan* collection, the 60s messages of which have a certain environmental significance now; and *Prairie Wind* by Neil Young, who has written a number of respected issue-based songs. But nearly all the bands that most people were 'buying into' during that week – Franz Ferdinand, Katie Melua, David Gray, Jamie Cullum, Kaiser Chiefs, Bon Jovi, Faithless, Gorillaz, the Pussycat Dolls, Charlotte Church, HIM, Killers, Foo Fighters and Oasis included – thought better of singing about the environment. In a discussion with the Manager at HMV Islington, it became clear that few if any of today's contemporary bands ever base their songs on green things. A suggestion that Coldplay were at least associated with a 'sustainability message' brought a shrug of shoulders and wry laugh. That may be, he said, but the band were mainly linked to poverty issues in Africa and whatever they said they believed in, "They still ride Concord everywhere they go." When challenged to find a CD of music with an environmental message in his store, he could only think of one: an album called *Plat du Jour* by a rather obscure dance music artist called Matthew Herbert. It mixes environment with associated corporate power, animal welfare and fairtrade issues, but not in a commercially palatable form. Admirable but not in the Top 40 or perhaps even the Top 400.

When environmentally themed pop songs *have* infrequently climbed the slippery pole of pop, they have tended to be the work of what might be termed fringe groups or 'worthy but dull' establishment figures that are unlikely to resonate with many of today's young people. And for every song about green issues and a sustainable world, there seem to be two more promoting a consumerist, get-rich-quick culture, fast motorbikes or a life on the road, or closed 'microcultures' where green issues cannot penetrate.

But if only so the green movement knows who its friends are in the music industry, here is a celebration of songs with special green meaning, followed by some of those presenting a different point of view. Interestingly, most of the songs listed here with a shade of green originated some time ago, and were perhaps more prophetic (or apocalyptic) than providing contemporary comment.

They took all the trees
And put them in a tree museum
And they charged the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em
Hey farmer, farmer
Put away that DDT now
Give me spots on my apples
But leave me the birds and the bees
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
(Big Yellow Taxi by Joni Mitchell)

I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself... what a wonderful world
I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself... what a wonderful world
(Wonderful World by Sam Cooke)

We got department stores and toilet paper
Got styrofoam boxes for the ozone layer
Got a man of the people, says keep hope alive
Got fuel to burn, got roads to drive
(Keep on Rocking in the Free World by Neil Young)

I used to dream
 I used to glance beyond the stars
 Now I don't know where we are
 Although I know we've drifted far
 What about crying whales?
 We're ravaging the seas?
 What about forest trails?
 Burnt despite our pleas?
(Earth Song by Michael Jackson)

One day in a nuclear age
 They may understand our rage
 They build machines that they can't control
 And bury the waste in a great big hole
 Power was to become cheap and clean
 Grimy faces were never seen
 But deadly for 12,000 years is
 Carbon 14
(We Work the Black Seam by Sting)

Well, Americans don't care for much of anything
 Land and water the least
 And animal life is low on the totem pole
 With human life now worth more than infected yeast
 Americans don't care too much for beauty
 They'll shit in a river, dump battery acid in a stream
 They'll watch dead rats wash up on the beach
 And complain if they can't swim
(The Last Great American Whale by Lou Reed)

She has been clear-cut
 She has been dumped on
 She has been poisoned and beaten up
 And we have been witness
 To the rape of the world
 Mother of us all
 Place of our birth
 How can we stand aside
 And watch the rape of the world?
(The Rape of the World by Tracy Chapman)

So you cut all the tall trees down
 You poisoned the sky and the sea
 You've taken what's good from the ground
 But you left precious little for me
(River Runs Red by Midnight Oil)

Your money market goes round and round
 The pound goes up, the dollar goes down
 Another South American forest cut down
 Another valley that you have drowned
 You need the power for your new towns
 'Cause you get scared when the night comes down
 Won't you tell me where it is we are bound?
(Sell Out by the Levellers)

I never said I was a clever man but I know enough to understand
 That the endless leaps and forward plans will someday have to cease
 You blind yourselves with comfort lies like lightning never strikes you twice
 And we laugh at your amazed surprise as the Ark begins to sink
(The World by New Model Army)

“They took all the trees
 And put them in a tree
 museum
 And they charged the
 people
 A dollar and a half just to
 see ‘em”
 Joni Mitchell

Painting the Town Green

Pull down the forests, we need more wood
Extend the grazing, we need more food
Burning our bridges before the flood
Out on the oceans where it's relatively safe
It's not so easy being big as a whale
We're all in a race on a bigger scale
But mountains are holy places
And beauty is free
We can still walk through the garden
Our earth was once green
(Our Earth Was Once Green by Runrig)

Or on the other hand (taking the lyrics literally)...

You know that we are living in a material world
And I am a material girl
(Material Girl by Madonna)

It ain't much I'm asking if you want the truth
Here's to the future for the dreams of youth
I want it all, I want it all, I want it all and I want it now
(I Want It All by Queen)

I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want
So tell me what you want, what you really really want
I wanna, I wanna, I wanna, I wanna, I wanna really
Really really wanna zigzag ha!
(Wannabe by the Spice Girls)

Money, it's a gas
Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash
New car, caviar, four star daydream
Think I'll buy me a football team
Money, get back
I'm all right jack keep your hands off of my stack
Money, it's a hit
Don't give me that do goody good bullshit
I'm in the high-fidelity first class travelling set
And I think I need a Lear jet
(Money by Pinkfloyd)

All the things I could do
If I had a little money
It's a rich man's world
(Money Money Money by Abba)

The best things in life are free
But you can keep them for the birds and bees
Now give me money
That's what I want
(Money by the Beatles)

It's the key to life
Money, power and respect
Whatchu' need in life
Money, power and respect
(Money, Power and Respect featuring Lil' Kim)

We're all going on a summer holiday
No more working for a week or two
Fun and laughter on a summer holiday

*“ You know that we are
living in a material world
And I am a material girl ”
Madonna*

No more worries for me and you
 We're going where the sun shines brightly
 We're going where the sea is blue
 We've seen it in the movies
 Now let's see if it's true
(Summer Holiday by Cliff Richard)

Out in the sun and the sea
 Not in our own backyard
 I wanna see us in the paradise
 Yeah with the heat turned up
(Holiday by Atomic Kitten)

I don't wanna be a busdriver all my life
 I'm gonna pack my bags and leave this town
 Grab a flight, fly away on Venga Airways
 Fly me high, Ibiza sky
 We're going to eat pizza
 Back to the island
 We're gonna have a party
 In the Mediterranean Sea
(We're Going to Ibiza by the Vengaboys)

I'm in love with my car
 Got a feel for my automobile
 Get a grip on my boy racer rollbar
 Such a thrill when your radials squeal
(I'm in Love with My Car by Queen)

I like driving in my car, it don't look much but I've been far
 I like driving in my car, even with a flat tyre
 I like driving in my car, it's not quite a Jaguar
 I like driving in my car, I'm satisfied I've got this far
(Driving in My Car by Madness)

Get your motor runnin'
 Head out on the highway
 Lookin' for adventure
 In whatever comes our way
(Born to be Wild by Steppenwolf)

Which of these songs tend to stick in the mind and leave us humming, and which don't... ? The most memorable pop music can nevertheless be some of the most vacuous with at best empty lyrics and at worst negative messages of money, power and fast living. And which of these musical models do young people aspire to in the forest of mixed messages? Are the young generation 'material girls' and 'born to be wilds' or people who find resonance with the earnest lyrics of protest singers and 'the establishment'?

4.3 'Environment' through film and theatre

This section is, rather necessarily, on the short side.

Again the environment theme isn't generally seen as a crowd-puller for a Hollywood blockbuster. It comes a long way down the list of preferred directors' topics, after love, war, disasters, crime, etc. However, there have been films with environmental messages, sometimes strong ones. *The Day After Tomorrow*, which focuses

“I think the environment should be put in the category of our national security. Defence of our resources is just as important as defence abroad. Otherwise what is there to defend?” Robert Redford

on climate change, is a shining example. There have been others too. *The Emerald Forest, Deliverance, On Deadly Ground, Fern Gully, Silent Running* and *Logan's Run* are admirable. And we mustn't discount the many 'cuddly animal' films, ranging from *The Jungle Book* to *Watership Down, Tarka the Otter* to *Ring of Bright Water*, and *Born Free* to *Bambi*. Like natural history books, they all play a part in raising an emotional response to the countryside and all it contains. Emotions are usually more important than thoughts in terms of creating resonance with people.

Arguably theatre productions are likely to remain fringe territory and many, based as they often are on established work or music and dance, effectively bypass the environment, although some playwrights have explored environmental themes.

4.4 'Environment' through faith

The Church of England tells us to "Plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land..." Or, put another way (to the same tune)...

We drive our cars and damage
The air that's all around
And use up all the water
That gathers in the ground
We throw away what's useful
And use up more and more
Of all the earth's resources
And make our planet poor

*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above
Then thank the Lord
O, thank the Lord
For all his love*

“One of the basic norms of deep ecology is that with maturity, human beings will experience joy when other life forms experience joy, and sorrow when other life forms experience sorrow.” Arne Naess

It's not quite what we might remember from school, but this version of the evergreen harvest festival hymn is sometimes performed in more 'modern' services where churches are keen to draw a link between religion and environment.

And there are actually strong links. As Jonathon Porritt has written: "Every one of the world's major religions or faiths has within it what might be described as an environmental ethic, based either on the notion of a creator God or the inherently sacred nature of all life on earth." And the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, wrote in the *Independent* in April 2005: "The loss of a sustainable environment protected from unlimited exploitation is the loss of a sustainable humanity in every sense – not only the loss of a spiritual depth but ultimately the loss of simple material stability as well." Prince Philip as founder of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (which helps the major religions of the world to develop their own environmental programmes) said: "If you believe in God – which is what Christians are supposed to do – then you should feel a responsibility to care for his creation." Prince Charles has promoted "an understanding of the sacred" in order to determine environmental limits. However, the notion that belief in God brings with it respect for the environment does have some detractors. Environmental commentator George Monbiot once said after reading Jonathon Porritt's views: "Maybe his copy of the Bible differs from mine. The one I've read keeps insisting that God granted man dominion over nature."

At a global level faith is one of the biggest drivers of attitude and behaviour and despite a decline in the UK, it is still of great significance here. It is a significance yet to be realised and harnessed by environmental communicators.

There are around 15 Christian religious paths and maybe around a dozen other faiths active in the UK. This report will look briefly at the environmental message promoted by just six: the Church of England, Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.

Church of England

As the dominant faith of many the green movement needs to reach out to, the Church of England offers real communications potential, if only environmentalists would tap into it. And they might find that the Church is pretty much on side already.

The Church of England's Environmental Statement says: "As human beings we are part of the whole and have a responsibility to love and care for what God has entrusted to us. We are called to conserve its complex and fragile ecology, whilst recognising the need for responsible and sustainable development and the pursuit of social justice... As individuals we need an enhanced sense of wonder and gratitude at creation's fragile beauty, leading to changes in our lifestyles."

The Archbishop of Canterbury has gone further in his own writings: "Governments should be doing more. But governments depend on electorates; electors are persons like us who need motivating. Unless there is real popular motivation, governments are much less likely to act... We need a steady background of awareness and small scale committed action, nourished by some kind of coherent vision." He has called for a 'charter of rights' for the environment, safeguarding a "world with wilderness spaces, a balanced variety of species and access to unpoisoned food stuffs" and has thrown his weight behind the contraction and convergence idea of the Global Commons Institute, in which all nations receive an entitlement to consume carbon on a fair-share basis.

A number of key figures in the Church of England have championed the environment. The current spokesperson for the environment is the Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones. The Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, has also spoken out on issues. Every diocese now has an environmental officer, responsible for drawing together faith and ecology.

Roman Catholicism

The Catholic Church teaches that care for the environment is fundamental to the universal good, since the health and well-being of all life depends on a healthy environment. The full human development of every human person both now and in future generations cannot be separated from the fate of the earth. Further, man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by God is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come.

The Church acknowledges that natural resources are limited and using them as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion, seriously endangers their availability. Equally worrying to the Church is the problem of consumerism. In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way.

Speaking in 1990, Pope John Paul II said: "Christians realise their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith." He also said: "The gravity of the ecological situation reveals how deep is the human moral crisis" and that "The dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness – both individual and collective – are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterised by mutual interdependence."

The Catholic Church maintains that to recover health and harmony, the broken relationships between man and nature must be restored and healed. The plight of the earth demonstrates that an individualistic materialism cannot be allowed to drive out responsibility and love, and that care for those in need, and respect for the rights of future generations, are necessary to sustain a proper life for all.

“The loss of a sustainable environment protected from unlimited exploitation is the loss of a sustainable humanity in every sense – not only the loss of a spiritual depth but ultimately the loss of simple material stability as well.” Dr Rowan Williams

The Church also notes that environmental destruction and social injustice often go hand-in-hand. Damage to the environment, it says, will almost inevitably affect the poor most of all, since poor communities inevitably inhabit the worst and most vulnerable locations. In affluent countries, the Church says, we take far more than our fair share of the world's goods and much of our consumption becomes waste almost immediately.

Human activity, say the Catholics, has always shaped the environment but more recently economic growth, technology, urbanisation and the shift in land-ownership from small farmers to powerful corporations have magnified the scale of this human impact. Grasslands and forests are destroyed for commercial gain, the oceans are over-exploited, species become extinct.

Hinduism

Hindus believe all living beings are sacred because they are parts of God and should be treated with respect and compassion. This is on the basis that the soul can be reincarnated into any form of life. Most Hindus are vegetarian because of this belief in the sanctity of life. There is no life that is inferior; all lives enjoy the same importance and all play their roles. And all kinds of life – insects, birds and other animals – contribute towards the maintenance of ecological balance. Even trees, rivers and mountains are believed to have souls, and Hindus are taught to honour and care for them.

According to one expert on Hinduism: “Hindus revere the Earth as mother. She feeds, shelters, and clothes us. Without her we cannot survive. If we as children do not take care of her, we diminish her ability to take care of us. Unfortunately the Earth herself is now being undermined by our scientific and industrial achievements.”

Another Hindu writer proclaims: “Let there be peace in the heavens, the Earth, the atmosphere, the water, the herbs, the vegetation... Let everything be at peace and in peace. Only then will we find peace.”

Hinduism stresses that true happiness comes from within, not from outer possessions. This means that the search for material possessions, and the consumption of materials and energy it brings, should not be allowed to dominate life. Life's main purpose is to discover the spiritual nature and the peace and fulfilment it brings.

Islam

Muslims believe that Allah created humans to be guardians of his creation. In other words, nature does not belong to them to do with as they wish, but is entrusted by Allah to their safe-keeping. The prophet Mohammed taught: “The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you his guardian over it.” It is said in the Qur'an that Allah invites his devotees to enjoy the fruits of the earth, but to avoid excess leading to waste: “O children of Adam... eat and drink but waste not by excess for Allah loveth not the wasters.”

The central concept of Islam is unity. This is reflected in the unity of humanity and nature. Muslims are urged therefore to maintain the integrity of the earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and environment. Their responsibility is to keep balance and harmony in Allah's creation. Islam also teaches that one day Muslims will be judged by Allah for how they have discharged their responsibilities following the guidance of Islam.

A statement prepared for the Muslim World League says: “To survive in a given environment, humans have to adjust what they take from that environment to what can give them sustainable yields... The last 250 years have seen a growing decimation of ever more pristine areas of nature to feed the insatiable industrial cuckoo and its resultant consumerism. Forests – particularly tropical forests – have been systematically hewn down, the seas ransacked, the lands made totally dependent on a host of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides for food production. Wastes galore have filled the seas, the rivers, and the lakes, not to mention the landfills.”

“When science and the Bible differ, science has obviously misinterpreted its data.” Henry Morris

Judaism

“When God created Adam, he showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: ‘See my works, how lovely they are, how fine they are. All I have created, I created for you. Take care not to corrupt and destroy my universe, for if you destroy it, no-one will come after you to put it right.’” This passage from Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7, representing Jewish teaching, tells it straight.

The Jewish attitude to nature is based on the belief that love of God includes love of all his creations: the inanimate, plants, animals and humans. Nature in all its beauty is created for mankind, and people’s connection to nature restores them to their original state of happiness and joy.

The Bible is interpreted as saying the earth was given to man to use and protect. A statement for the World Jewish Congress says: “When approaching the subject of environmental protection, we must be careful to maintain the proper balance between protection of the environment and protection of man. The proper balance in this context is certainly not one of equality between man and nature. The relationship between man and nature is one of ownership albeit limited. In our enthusiasm for protecting the environment, we must not forget man’s interests or his role in the scheme of creation. Love of nature may not take precedence over love of man.”

The final line might be slightly worrying but the Bible tells followers of Judaism they must preserve the natural balance of creation. Every species was created for some purpose and should not be interfered with. Jewish teachings prohibit the destruction of anything from which humans may benefit. This applies to animals, plants and even inanimate objects. Even in time of war, the Bible forbids the destruction of fruit-bearing trees.

“As a bee gathering nectar does not harm or disturb the colour and fragrance of the flower, so do the wise move through the world.” Buddhist proverb

But the Jewish perspective is not one of exploitation without responsibility. A statement for the World Jewish Congress says: “In our own time, the number of threats to the environment has increased greatly as a result of the growth of large urban centres and the development of industry. Smoke, industrial waste, untreated sewage,

dumping sites in close proximity to residential areas, damage to the ozone layer, and various other ecological evils represent a real danger not only to the environment and the quality of life, but to life itself. Today, the danger to the environment is many times greater than at any other time in history.”

Buddhism

In many ways Buddhism can be seen as a true ‘ecological religion’ with nature seen as a teacher, a spiritual force and a way of life. Buddhists emphasise the natural relationship between deep ecology and Buddhism. The religion teaches that the idea of separateness is an illusion. The health of the whole is inseparably linked to the health of the parts, and the health of the parts is inseparably linked to the health of the whole. This means that caring for the environment begins with caring for oneself.

Respect for life is fundamental. Buddhist practice makes one feel one’s existence is no more important than anyone else’s. If someone treats nature as a friend and teacher, he or she can be in harmony with other creatures and appreciate the interconnectedness of all that lives.

Buddhists believe in the power of karma, or actions based on desire. Such actions, either good or bad, make a person continue in the cycle of reincarnation, being reborn repeatedly until achieving enlightenment. Among the Five Precepts for everyday life are “Do not harm any living creature” and “Do not take more than you need.”

In the words of Maha Ghosananda: “When we respect the environment, then nature will be good to us. When our hearts are good, then the sky will be good to us. The trees are like our mother and father, they feed us, nourish us, and provide us with everything; the fruit, leaves, the branches, the trunk. They give us food and satisfy many of our needs.”

The Dalai Lama has said: “Peace and the survival of earth as we know it are threatened by human activities which lack a commitment to humanitarian values. Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth’s living things. Many of the earth’s habitats, animals, plants, insects and even micro-organisms that we know as rare may not be known at all by future generations. We have the capability and the responsibility. We must act before it is too late.”

Interdenominational links

There are several initiatives linking environmental interests within and between denominations in the Christian movement in particular, including the European Christian Environmental Network and the Eco-Congregation network through Churches Together in Britain.

“Every one of the world’s major religions or faiths has within it what might be described as an environmental ethic, based either on the notion of a creator God or the inherently sacred nature of all life on earth.” Jonathon Porritt

There is also the Christian Ecology Link, a multi-denomination UK-based organisation. This has an informative website which in mid-November 2005 had front page links to stories on Stop Climate Chaos (the new NGO umbrella movement) and how to calculate your ecological footprint, plus a “prayer diary” focusing on the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill, a private member’s bill in the House of Commons. Not only that, but the Christian Ecology Link publishes a magazine called *Green Christian*.

Is it time for the green movement to see the light?

There is tremendous opportunity for the green movement to find common ground with faiths in the UK in order to promote environmental responsibility. There is probably little or no contact between mainstream players in the green movement – NGOs and statutory bodies – and religious groupings but much of what environmentalists want to achieve seems to be echoed (or is that the other way around?) by religious leaders.

Of course, there are differences between religion and a more science-based approach in terms of ‘the fundamentals’ but there is plenty of common ground to create consensus on ways to promote greater environmental concern and action.

It is sobering for environmentalists used to communicating with limited audiences in limited ways with limited budgets to think that 1.7 million people participate in a Church of England service each month, that 1 million children are educated in Church of England schools and that the number of Church of England ministers is as high as 27,000. What could Friends of the Earth do with 27,000 dedicated campaigners? And that represents one strand of one faith; around the world there are around 1 billion Catholics. It is sobering too to ponder that, unlike environmental groups, devout faiths have well honed communications systems tried and tested over hundreds if not thousands of years. It might be sobering, but it is potentially exciting too and a clear pointer to the need for the green movement to build bridges with religions more effectively than has been done so far.

Apart from memorable slogans such as “What would Jesus drive?” (which has never really been adequately answered) and the work of figures like Bishop Hugh Montefiore (now sadly deceased), who combined an ecclesiastical life with a role in Friends of the Earth and Transport 2000, the door has not really been opened in this direction. People accuse greens of preaching at them but until now we’ve made no attempt to formalise this...

Section 5 **Formal communication on the environment**

5.1 Central government communication

Up until recently the main government communication initiative on sustainability since 1997 was the Are You Doing Your Bit? campaign, launched in 1999 and lasting for three years. It was fronted by Deputy Prime Minister and then Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and the Regions John Prescott with a huge advertising budget (reportedly £21 million for TV, radio, press, hoardings, etc) and offered an arm-round-the-shoulder partnership approach with NGOs. In green circles it might be best remembered for the distinctive campaign kit produced to resemble a green briefcase.

The campaign distilled environmentally friendly behaviour down to a short list of simple behaviours, focusing on home energy use, saving water, recycling, cutting car use, ethical shopping and resources in the workplace. It used high profile celebrities to present the messages, including Zoe Ball and Chris Evans (rival national breakfast time radio DJs at the time), George Best, Ian McCaskill, Chris Eubank, Nigel Mansell, Jackie Stewart and Eddie Izzard. Public pamphlets, videos, cassettes and campaign newsletters were produced. A lot of the public probably remember something about it.

“As a nation, we are living beyond our environmental means. If everyone in the world consumed the natural resources we do in the UK, we would need three planets to support us. I see Defra’s mission as enabling a move towards ‘One-Planet Living’.”
Rt Hon David Miliband MP

And yet it is widely viewed as having failed. But why? The campaign was pulled after three years with the official reason given as the need to reallocate money to the foot and mouth crisis raging at the time. Insiders suggest that it was also seen as too light hearted and was accused by key policy advisers of ‘dumbing down’ the environment, that key information predicting the campaign could become groundbreaking in time was not seen by Ministers, and that it was judged far too soon.

There may have been other reasons too. The campaign may have boiled things down to a few actions that were relatively easy to do, but there was little reason for people to actually do them: there were no incentives, and no penalties for not doing them. Although there was some focus on personal benefits from the actions suggested, they were rather minor and unconvincing and inevitably gains from the environmental behaviours suggested were at the level of society as a whole, not really a strong motivator for many people. Incidentally, money savings at the individual level are often overplayed in any campaign of this sort. The relatively modest amounts of money to be saved through, for example, energy efficiency measures are unlikely to be enough to get people over the hurdle of making the effort, let alone putting up the often significant upfront costs. Savings are nearly always ‘set in the future’ rather than immediate. No doubt too there was a feeling among many that Are You Doing Your Bit? all seemed a bit at odds with the live-fast, highly consumerist status quo around them. If people did leap in and make the effort, how could they be sure others would do so too to make it all worthwhile? These threads will be picked up later in this report.

One critical thing is that changing behaviour is very long term. And it’s one thing changing a habit, but maintaining that change beyond a ‘novelty period’ is another matter. All the major behaviour change

campaigns that *have* had an impact have taken place over many years: smoking, drink driving, seat belts, teenage pregnancy awareness and safe sex. Are You Doing Your Bit? needed to be programmed to run for at least a decade.

Finally, as this report will illustrate, the way forward to gaining big take-up of green behaviours might be to sell 'green' as a brand to buy into, rather than a framework of advice or set of instructions or even exhortations. Unfortunately almost by definition, 'government' is not a 'brand' with mass appeal. Imagine Brand Government aftershave or shampoo, a chocolate bar or a type of lager, all sold through the image of a smiling Environment Minister...

But Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has moved forward since Are You Doing Your Bit? bit the dust. A lot of research and thinking has taken place into methods of environmental public education. In December 2005 Margaret Beckett, then Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, launched a new Government public communications programme on climate change. The three-year Climate Change Communications Initiative is being presented under the slogan "Tomorrow's climate, today's challenge" with the key message "Together this generation will tackle climate change". It is a significant leap forward from Are You Doing Your Bit? and adheres to many of the principles raised in this report.

“It has become clear that the usual methods of government communications just won't work. To reach hearts and minds – to really change attitudes to climate change – will take a whole new approach. We need to engage people much closer to home, so that instead of national advertising or other top-down communication by government, we spread the message of climate change at a lower level, where it can be linked to locally or regionally relevant issues, and where it can come through trusted and recognised channels.” Elliot Morley MP

Key features of the communications initiative are:

- It seeks to inspire people rather than merely supply them with information. It focuses on the need to win hearts and the need to draw links with things people already care about rather than simply present rational arguments. It says: "We need to educate, excite and inspire people so that we can start working together."
- It moves away from a 'government brand' to a system of bottom-up networking and 'grape-vining' through messaging systems that people trust. Through the £8 million Climate Challenge Fund, Defra is financing around 80 charities, campaign groups and community networks to communicate in innovative ways the need for society to tackle climate change.
- It emphasises the need for government, business, NGOs and the public to pull together in a shared challenge.
- The message is that climate change "is a serious challenge but one we can do something about". It recognises the need for ordinary people to feel empowered and positive about tackling climate change. It encourages agency by saying: "Most of the tools to tackle climate change already exist."
- It correctly identifies some of the barriers that must be overcome – such as the belief that climate change won't affect people personally and that it can't be remedied by individual action – and aims to turn the issue into a 'front of mind one' rather than one pushed away to the back.
- Similarly it recognises the common traps of environmental communications such as creating fear, criticising behaviour that people consider normal and presenting debilitating threats to people's own future.

- There will be a focus on bringing the effects of climate change down to a more local level with predictions of changes here at home together with a global to local 'bridge' in radio adverts. The message is that climate change will affect us all.
- The initiative focuses at first on changing attitudes rather than simultaneously promoting behaviour change. The thinking is that a change in public mood would create headroom for policy makers to be more bold.
- Communications will focus in particular on groupings effectively missed by current messaging, such as young people, older people, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged communities, and those who might be labelled 'Gadget Man' and 'White Van Man'.

There is also a suggestion for a one-stop public advice service, provisionally called Environment Direct. This would presumably gather information on all forms of environmentally friendly behaviour and dispense advice in a practical way to people wanting to move from the 'what' and 'why' stages to the 'how'.

With the arrival of the new Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, David Miliband, in 2006, tackling climate change is set to continue to be a key priority for the department. David Miliband has said: "As a nation, we are living beyond our environmental means. If everyone in the world consumed the natural resources we do in the UK, we would need three planets to support us. I see Defra's mission as enabling a move towards 'One-Planet Living'." He is keen to develop the idea of an 'environmental contract', which would set out the rights and responsibilities of citizens, businesses and government in achieving environmental goals. It would be based on reciprocity and fairness with the aim of making environmentally friendly behaviour the social norm. "To have any impact," said the Secretary of State, "such a contract needs to be rooted in the way people live their everyday lives and the areas that have the biggest impact: homes, household products, food, personal travel and tourism."

5.2 Local authority work

Campaigns and programmes by local authorities understandably vary tremendously. In many ways, local authorities are responsible for putting government's policies on sustainability into action at a local level but without targets and timescales (and even where there *are* targets and timescales), these can be interpreted to varying degrees of importance and urgency.

Witness the vast range in recycling levels achieved by councils from some 46 per cent at Lichfield to around 4 per cent in Liverpool. Consider too the bewildering variation in provision for buses around the country, from the beacons of success in London, Brighton and York to the more spartan arrangements in Cumbria, Northants and Southend. Look at European Car Free Day. Held in September each year, it is enthusiastically supported by some councils but not others. In 2005 just 68 local authorities out of potentially hundreds took part. Although some – including Camden and Brent in London, and Bristol and Newport outside – have been highly praised for their projects, many local authorities ignored the guidelines (which asked for a whole week of promotions including a car free zone and a permanent measure) and did their own thing, often no more than a street jamboree. When the bunting came down, it all went back to normal.

To be fair, local politics can act as a restraining strap on sustainability initiatives at a local authority level. There is often an uncertain relationship between the professional officers who devise policies and initiatives on the one hand and, on the other, the elected councillors. These elected members – drawn from diverse walks of life – are fed recommendations by, and rely on information and advice from, their officer advisers but it is they who, on paper at least, make the key decisions. Sometimes it's not clear who is driving whom, whether you are looking from an outside perspective or from the inside. The truth is, they depend on each other: the officers have the expertise and motivation and the elected members the democratic mandate.

All this is not even to touch on the issue of the enthusiasm with which a council controlled by one party might put into action guidelines from a Whitehall department that might be controlled by a different party.

But there are many nuggets of good practice in terms of local authority work in promoting sustainability up and down the country. Local authorities are generally full of hard working, committed people doing their best in an exhausting minefield of procedures, committees, personalities, civic pride, consultation exercises, legal notices and appeals. And if Brand Government is unpopular, it can hardly be further back on the shelf than Brand Council. Most people reserve special levels of boredom for the work of their local authority.

To gain some idea of how local authorities tackle sustainability, this project sought inspiration and guidance in two parts of the country, Islington in North London and Craven in North Yorkshire.

Review: Imagine Islington: A green day-out for all the family, organised by Islington Borough Council, London

Islington is a vibrant area of inner London usually associated with left of centre politics, media and arts, and a cosmopolitan mix of people. Imagine Islington was a 'how to be green' open day held in the centre of Islington in June 2005. It aimed to pull in families and entertainment, which included an organic vegetable puppet show, reflected that. There were stalls provided by local green groups and information services, a wind turbine, a focus on local food, music produced from recycled junk instruments, a bicycle-powered sound system, jugglers and a garden installation. The recurring theme seemed to be, as indeed was implied by the title, a 'day-out' for all the family.

But the day-out was light on providing a clear, attractive path to sustainable behaviour and on engaging people with green choices in a participatory way based on joint ownership of the problems and solutions. It also fell into the trap of defaulting to children's entertainment and what might be called 'samba-band environmentalism', rather than presenting a clear message that green is something for adults and, above all, something that is normal rather than mainly for people who make musical instruments out of old vacuum cleaners or juggle for a living.

The day seemed to be well attended by young families with a sprinkling of confused looking, obviously very green Islingtonians wheeling their bicycles among the darting, face-painted children. But where were all the other people? Were they at the home improvement store, the car showroom or the supermarket, or just plain not interested?

Of course, this brief critique is rather harsh and possibly very unfair. Islington council should after all be congratulated for taking the initiative in putting on an event of this type. As with the efforts of the rest of the green movement, the difficulty comes in getting the content, tone and approach right.

“Hello. I’m a householder in Daleton. Do you have any information on being environmentally friendly?” Green-Engage Communications in a phone call to a district council office

“Have you got a problem with a neighbour, you mean?” Council employee

Review: Green advice from local councils in the Yorkshire Dales

Pennine North Yorkshire couldn't be more different from Islington. The local authorities with responsibility for the southern area of the Yorkshire Dales (Craven District Council and North Yorkshire County Council) cover huge areas of sparsely populated but beautiful countryside, peppered with delightful stone-built villages and the odd market town. In November 2005 Green-Engage Communications, based in the Yorkshire Dales and within the areas covered by the councils, contacted the councils by phone and asked for information on "environmentally friendly behaviour for householders".

Transcripts of the conversations that followed...

[Call to Craven District Council]

"Hello, I'm a householder in Daleton. Could you put me through to someone who can give me information about environmentally friendly behaviour please."

"Errm... in what connection?"

"Well, about things we can do as a household to be environmentally friendly."

"I'll just put you through."

"Hello, Environmental Health."

"Hello. I'm a householder in Daleton. Do you have any information on being environmentally friendly?"

[Sounding confused] "Have you got a problem with a neighbour, you mean?"

"No, no. We want to do our bit for the environment and wonder if you have any information available... leaflets and so on."

"Oh, I see." [Checks with colleague] "Well, if you want information on energy saving, I'd suggest you go to the public library. They have loads. Or a colleague here was looking at a really good website on energy saving, it's at www.saveyour20percent.co.uk Or if you want information on recycling, I'll give you the number. It's 779620."

"Will the recycling department be able to give me advice on others areas of environmentally friendly behaviour?"

"Not really."

"You don't have an umbrella department on all this sort of thing?"

"No, it's all different departments really."

[Call to the recycling department]

"Brrrr, brrrr... brrrr, brrrr..." [Continues for some time]

[Second call to the recycling department]

"Hello, Waste and Recycling."

"Ah, hello. I'm a householder in Daleton. Have you got any information on being environmentally friendly?"

"What sort of bins have you got?"

"Pardon me... ? Well, we already recycle newspapers on the doorstep and take our cans and bottles to a communal bin. We probably do as much as we can on recycling. Is there anything else you can advise we could be doing?"

"Have you got a composter?" [In the voice of someone about to make a magnanimous offer...]

"No."

[Even more magnanimously...] "Would you like one?"

"Well, er yes, that sounds interesting."

"Okay. I'll send you a leaflet about that." [In a voice suggesting the end of the conversation has arrived]

"Is there any other information you can provide? About transport, food, energy, chemicals and so on?"

"Not really. We're just waste here and I don't think we could get you a brown bin up there."

"A brown bin... ?"

"The lorry's too big, you see. You could try Environmental Health."

"Ah no, I spoke to them this morning. They put me on to you."

"Oh, right." [Chuckles] "Have you tried the county council?"

[Call to North Yorkshire County Council]

"Hello. I'm a householder in the Yorkshire Dales. Could you put me through to someone who can give me information about being environmentally friendly please."

"Just a moment." [Long pause] "Sorry to keep you waiting. I'm not sure exactly who you need to speak to."

[Click then sound of extension ringing] "Hello Heritage Department. Can I help you?"

"Oh, err, I'm not sure if you're the right people to speak to. I asked to be put through to someone who could tell me about environmentally friendly behaviour. I'm a householder in the Yorkshire Dales."

"You've come through to the Ecology Department."

"Really?" [Thinking, but you said Heritage Department...] "Well, can you help me with any information?"

"Hmmm... You could try the district council."

"I've spoken to them and they told me to ring you. They deal with recycling and that but not much more, I

think. What about transport, food, energy and so on?"

"Oh, well, we do have people who deal with sustainable transport and local sourcing of food." [Thinking...]

"You know, one person to speak to here is Nigel Johnson. He wrote a really good article on energy efficiency in the office for other staff here at the county council. You know, only filling the kettle with the water you need and making sure you use both sides of the paper..."

"Really? But I stress that I'm a householder, not an office."

"Oh that's all right. You really should speak to him. His number is 01989 780998."

[Call to Nigel Johnson at North Yorkshire County Council]

"Brrrr, brrrr... brrrr, brrrr..." [Continues for a while]

[Receptionist] "I'm sorry, there's no reply on that number. Would you like to be put through to anyone else?"

"Well, I don't know. I wanted information on environmentally friendly behaviour. Is there anyone else to speak to?"

"I'll put you through to someone who can take a message."

"Hello, Executives Office."

"Oh... hello. I was trying to get through to Nigel Johnson but I don't think he's there. I'm a householder in the Yorkshire Dales and I want information on being environmentally friendly. Is there anyone else who can help?"

"Whoa-huh-arrghh..." [Pause while checks with colleague] "Not really. Would you like him to give you a ring?"

"Yes please. My number is 01760 776887."

"Okay, I'll get him to call you."

[Green-Engage Communications then waits patiently for the afternoon for a return call... and continues to wait patiently... Meanwhile, the next morning a leaflet detailing a special offer on composters, sent by the district council, is delivered by the postman. Actually, it seems Craven District Council could have blown its trumpet much louder in other areas too. I find out from another source that the council has teamed up with the local Energy Saving Trust advice centre in York (see later), offering a self-assessment home energy check, but this didn't come across during the phone calls. As for North Yorkshire County Council, it all goes quiet until nearly two full weeks after the enquiry, when the elusive Nigel Johnson calls back...]

"Hello, I understand from my colleague that you're interested in what you can do to be environmentally friendly?"

"Yes, that's right!"

"Well, if you're interested in saving energy and that sort of thing, you could have a look at our website under sustdev. It's being redeveloped at the moment and I don't know what stage it's got to – I haven't looked at it myself for a couple of weeks! We're also putting together a roving exhibition to go round the libraries, including the mobiles, on what is sustainable development and what people can do themselves. I hope that will become live in around a month's time."

"Great! Do you have any leaflets or anything like that?"

"We've got no leaflets as such but I could send you the county council's own statement on environmental policy."

"Hmmm, well..."

"There is a lot going on. Just as we speak, I'm looking at a release about solar panels for use in road signs, things like 'Slow down, children ahead'. Also we're doing work into using recycled materials in road repairs."

[Later, a perusal of the website (it's not clear whether the site is pre or post redevelopment) reveals handy hints on environmentally friendly behaviour arranged as downloadable pdf files under the following headings: Save electricity; Save heat; Save water; Reduce, reuse and recycle waste; Transport; and Protect wildlife. The information is good although, like most information in this area, it relies rather too much on exhortation and the 'incentive' of saving only slight amounts of money over a whole year. The key point is though that you'd never find this information if you didn't know it was there. It's part of a page called "Sustainable development", itself a doubtful heading to attract interest, in the county council's *Planning* section, of all places, complete with a masthead showing a man, presumably a planner, in an

outdoor work coat and yellow helmet. There is no mention of advice on environmentally friendly behaviour on the home page. A few days later, the promised statement of the county council's environmental values arrives. The booklet seems to be an internal document for county council staff and councillors and of little or no practical use to householders. Among the stated objectives of the council's sustainable development policy, however, are to "promote understanding of sustainable development by... our communities and raise awareness of the need to work towards sustainable objectives" and to "work with and provide opportunities for... individuals to contribute towards sustainable development objectives".]

[Names, locations and telephone numbers have been changed.]

Local authorities must be pivotal in any swing to greener lifestyles but their participation in this area is somewhat haphazard, as these experiences show. In theory, local authorities are the ideal springboard to deliver green lifestyles and services to their communities. They are in closer touch with the people in those communities and are aware of local aspirations, concerns and stumbling blocks. They are also perhaps best able to identify the leaders and trendsetters within local communities (this will be discussed later) able to spread new ways of doing things. As it's been said already, a lot of good work is being done all over the country in councils at district, county and unitary level, not to mention National Park Authorities. The challenge must be to spread good ideas and ways of doing things to make the best the norm. There is work to occupy a whole industry in terms of climbing the barriers of civic pride and natural competitiveness and disseminating good practice.

5.3 Advice centres

The Energy Saving Trust runs a network of advice centres around the country that offer information, advice and in particular a do-it-yourself energy efficiency audit.

Green-Engage Communications called the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre at York and requested an information pack for people starting at a basic level of knowledge. Perhaps to be expected, *warmth* and *efficiency* were exuded by the person who answered the phone – and it was an 0800 number and therefore a free call too.

The pack arrived a few days later. It contained a booklet entitled *Save Your 20%: How will you save yours?*, a home energy check questionnaire and a technical guide to renewable energy equipment – microgeneration – for homes in rural locations. The booklet was readable and covered just enough background about climate change and carbon dioxide to put into context the Energy Saving Trust's Save Your 20% Campaign, which aims to inspire householders to cut energy consumption by a fifth (this campaign is backed by television advertising). Advice covered energy ratings of white goods; heating, hot water and boilers; insulation, draught proofing and double glazing; renewable energy options; transport and cars; plus signposts to further information and even possible grants. There was even a section entitled "What you can do right now." Although there was a focus on how much each action might save you in the future, some of the sums actually seemed enticing, albeit requiring substantial upfront investment. The energy check questionnaire took ten minutes to fill in and send off with the promise of an individual report on saving energy in our own house in return. The technical manual was probably aimed mainly at architects and renovators of properties, but looked interesting.

To adopt green behaviours, people need to be inspired and these materials went some way towards achieving that. Perhaps most significantly, the information left you feeling you could then just pick up the phone and speak to someone who would personally guide you on the path to greater sustainability. This approach needs to be built on. Few people have the time or inclination to labour over 'how to be green' documents under a reading lamp: ideally they would like an 'on a plate' service from someone who has already done all the reading and researching. This report will argue that people should be offered a 'greening service' that is as easy as booking a holiday.

5.4 NGO campaigns and information

The amount of paper literature, web-based information and other resources originating from environmental organisations is enormous and usually well written and of great depth, but who is it aimed at and does it actually work?

Green-Engage Communications looked at materials produced by (in no particular order) Greenpeace, WWF-UK, Friends of the Earth, Energy Saving Trust, Woodland Trust, Transport 2000, Liftshare, RSPB, Centre for Alternative Technology, the Wildlife Trusts, Sustain, Environmental Transport Association, National Trust, Soil Association, YHA, Council for National Parks, Marine Conservation Society, Environmental Investigation Agency, Green Alliance and grownupgreen.

NGO information studied was divided, rather arbitrarily perhaps, into five general categories:

- Flagship magazines/newsletters
- Literature in support of specific campaigns
- Publications/services aimed predominantly at existing supporters/members
- Leaflets designed to recruit new supporters/members
- Web-based information

Flagship magazines/newsletters

Most NGOs produce a flagship magazine that provides that necessary ‘something in return’ for the supporter/membership fee. It also often doubles up as a general shop window and flag-waver for the organisation.

“A common reason for campaign or ‘cause’ communications failing is that the communications are conceived by inner-directeds and expressed in their terms. They are then aimed not just at other inner-directeds, who will make up the vast majority of the membership of radical campaigning NGOs for example, but at esteem or security-driven people. These propositions do not ‘make sense’ to the audiences they are aimed at and they fail.” Nick Gallie, Chris Rose, Pat Dade, Ginny Smith and John Scott

Because these products are often primarily aimed at supporters/members, their primary audience comprises people who are already warmed-up to environmental issues. Frequently they seek to convert this concern into participation, which is a different matter altogether. This attitude-action gap is a key issue discussed in this report.

All the best communication workshops teach that to communicate successfully, you must first identify your market, your audience. Then you consider your message, what you want to tell them. Finally you consider your medium, ie do you go for a

leaflet, pages on a website or something else? It’s the three M’s and it usually works. However, it does mean it’s very difficult to address different audiences with just one product.

But flagship magazines are by nature something of a catch-all in terms of audiences, if only because of the resource implications for small organisations of producing more than one publication of that quality, and they can end up in all sorts of places, not just the coffee table in lounge rooms of warmed-up supporters, but also libraries, dentists’ waiting rooms and even politicians’ tearooms. They are a real potential link

with people who need to be brought into an organisation's sphere of influence. Arguably, if they are to reach their full potential and provide maximum value for money, these products must somehow buck the three M's rule and try to draw in as many types of people as possible. One way of doing this might be to segment a magazine with branded sections for different reader groups.

Three NGO magazines that deserve special mention are the WWF-UK member magazine *Action for a Living Planet*, the Woodland Trust's *Broadleaf* and the Wildlife Trusts' *Natural World*. They employ some of the techniques highlighted later as good practice in publications.

Literature in support of specific campaigns

NGOs usually support key campaigns with literature designed to set out reasons behind the campaign. The three M's loom large here in terms of guiding principles, and what might work well for one audience might have to be completely rethought for another audience.

When published campaign materials are aimed at the general public, we must remember that most people will struggle to find the interest, time or motivation to read them through to the end. Again the pitfall is to provide detailed cerebral arguments for people to do something and then confidently sit back and wait for them to do it. This report will show that information alone is rarely enough to stimulate action. Most people, if asked, would say that, of course, they would like to live their lives in the right way, but very often they struggle to actually do it. Again, communications must galvanise at an emotional level. We must remember too that most people are nowhere near as interested in the background to our campaigns as we are and won't put the time in to gather all the information together. They might want to do the right thing but often that right thing needs to be presented on a plate, with all the cooking already done.

One demonstration of how to simplify messages in an attractive way came from the Soil Association, which produced postcard size advice notes on environmental behaviour, such as saving water and saving on packaging, distilled down to the absolute minimum of information. The cards seemed to be aimed at people with no pre-knowledge or commitment and were part of the Soil Association's Waste Minimisation Project, sponsored by Marks and Spencer, and carried advice under three headings: Why, How and Find out more. The cards' simple messages connected well with 'the head', although perhaps relying too much on exhortation, but may have done more by touching emotions and providing an irresistible role model to emulate.

Publications/services aimed predominantly at existing supporters/members

Many organisations have taken on board that a good way to gain and retain support from members is to provide them with exclusive materials, benefits or facilities. It generates loyalty and underlines the *quid pro quo* basis of the 'contract' between organisation and supporter.

To take just one example, shopping services might fall into this category, although these are usually open to non-supporters too. This is a good way to reinforce brand and messages in an attractive way. The challenge must be to sell goods that 'normalise' the environment rather than 'niche it' and that might mean a move away from candles, crystals and cds of ocean sounds. These merely carve out a stereotype that many 'normal people' will not resonate with.

Leaflets designed to recruit new supporters/members

The ultimate test for any communicator must surely be to write something that will get people reaching for their wallets, or better still filling in a direct debit form. Some people are very good at it; most of us aren't.

However, it's essential, perhaps not from behaviour change point of view, but to provide the funds and the mandate for NGOs to continue, literally. Successful 'membership leaflets' stand out through adopting imaginative approaches and designs, presenting joining up as a must-do action or life accessory, using celebrity endorsements as role models, and making sure that joining brings that all too important 'something in return', whether it's the magazine, a free bottle of organic wine or a voucher for entry to the Eden Project.

Web-based information

Putting all website information into one category is plainly silly and misses the point that the web now provides opportunities to reach a whole range of audiences, with a range of 'products' for a range of purposes in an even greater range of ways. An NGO's website is now usually the first port of call for information by most people and can be a make or break in terms of forging a link with audiences, particularly the general public.

For the organisation itself, publishing on the web has the attraction of being very cheap (once the site has been set up), very quick and, best of all, very reassuring in terms of how easy it is to correct gaffes or even completely rewrite information if necessary.

Like people, absolutely no two websites are the same. Design and programming are developing all the time and what was cutting edge soon becomes last year's thing. And if it doesn't look impressive, people are less likely to be impressed by what it actually says. There is a case for keeping up with the Joneses here and it's worth putting some time and money in. The Transport 2000 website, for example, was set up at the end of 2001, probably rather late in the day in terms of the march of the Internet as the new medium. It was done on a limited budget but attracted plaudits at the time. Now just a few years later, it has been overtaken somewhat in terms of design, technology and structure and could do with a comprehensive make-over.

There are obviously technical tips to be gleaned from a study of good and bad sites but these are beyond the scope of this report.

One big plus of web-based communication is the opportunity for an interactive, two-way approach with the viewer inputting personal data and receiving specific information in return. A simple application of this can be found on the Centre for Alternative Technology site under the heading "See how you rate in this simple evaluation of green your lifestyle is!" It's a quick quiz-style self-assessment that adds your score up at the end and then delivers the verdict. The RSPB website has a Green living page that has a similar, though not interactive, quiz awarding people the accolades of light green, green or dark green. There is probably a very fine line between a green quiz that's fun and engaging and an over-long checklist that makes people feel rotten and turns them away from the issues. It is certainly an area to be looked at more closely, not least because, if lifestyle magazines and TV gameshows are anything to go by, people generally love quizzes and if they can be made engaging, entertaining and uplifting, they might well make a contribution towards humanising green living.

Towards better NGO written materials for the general public

Much of what NGO communications officers write down and publish, in whatever form, is outstanding. Some of it though just doesn't 'work' however well-written the words and eye-catching the design; much of it is produced to tight budgets and usually tighter deadlines; in most cases it represents the best a particular individual can do. Clearly to criticise other people's creations is not a recommended way to court friends and I have been on both sides of the fence. But in the spirit of positivity, here are some general points for us all to dwell on.

- The three M's dictate that what is a success in one situation, might not be in another, and different rules apply to the web as opposed to a leaflet. Naturally, many NGO materials are aimed specifically at people with greater knowledge or motivation than the general public, for example postcard campaigns or write-a-letter-to-your-MP materials, but where they do aim for the public market, they must do so on the public's terms. After all, people can be given a leaflet but they can't be forced to read it or take any notice of it.
- Whatever the message, the trap to avoid, as this report shows, is to rely purely on rationally presented factual arguments. Achieving a result in terms of changing how someone sees something, or producing an action or behaviour change, needs more than connection at a cerebral level. It needs joining with the heart too and that means touching emotions and encouraging wonder, curiosity and respect more than setting up an artillery barrage of facts and figures.

- Where factual information is fed to the reader, communicators must make a special effort to keep it simple and as short as possible. They must think more imaginatively, for example using graphics to present complicated scientific principles.
- NGOs must connect with the contemporary culture of their audiences, whoever they are, and nowhere is this more important than with the general public. Stories in the news, popular television programmes, celebrity culture, people in the public eye, music... these should all be tapped and used to promote ideas as part of the mood of the moment.
- Connecting with audiences in a people-rich, local-focus way helps to humanise environmental issues and bring them sharply into focus. For example, climate change is not just degrees of temperature and height of sea water; it is flooded houses in Watersville in Sussex, standpipes in Drytown in Norfolk, and burning woods and heaths near Brockenwood in Hampshire.
- Similarly the language used by NGOs must be the language of the reader, not that of the writer. Writers have differing views on the Plain English Campaign, but this definitely means less 'NGO-ese' – words such as briefing, campaign, lobby – and more popular catchphrases, buzz words, street-talk, playground-talk, even yesteryear-talk, depending on who we want it to appeal to. It might lead to a gritting of teeth but it could mean slipping in things like: "Yeah, but no, but yeah, but...", "RUin2nite?", "They think it's all over: it is now", "It's life but not as we know it", "Reasons to be cheerful...", "I don't believe it!" and so on... Communicators who don't recognise where these fit into popular culture perhaps need to get out *less* and watch more television, listen to cds and play with gadgets instead.
- Big bold statements of mission and vision that people find impossible to disagree with should be sought. These can tug at the strings of universally held values, such as: "We want to see a world where every young child can breathe fresh air today, walk in safety, be healthy, and look forward to a long and full life with a fair share of all the planet has to offer..." There's not much there for even a member of the Association of Anti-Environmentalists to challenge, but compare it with: "We want a world where vehicles without catalytic converters are taken off the road at once, where there is a 20mph speed limit on all roads, where the school run is banned, and where natural resources are carefully rationed..." Actually it could be saying pretty much the same thing but hardly in a universally appealing way.
- Images are more important than words in connecting with the heart and, again, people will find themselves brought on side, subconsciously perhaps, by images they find appealing: beautiful people, nice homes, cuddly pets, charming children, mountains, forests, crashing waves on a seashore, birds singing in an apple tree, for example. These don't actually have to have anything to do with the campaign; they count as indirect or hidden communication. And it works. Have you ever seen a car advert *without* mountains or beautiful people in?
- On the same note, if NGOs want to communicate well with ordinary people, they should consider going light on things that might turn them away, for whatever reason. So, perhaps no eco-paraphernalia like placards and tabards, no abseil ropes, no 'demos' or shouting, no 'night under a hedge' personal fashion statements, no custard pies, no happy-clappy-hugginess and so on.
- The web in particular is a free-for-all orgy of information. Its accessibility to so many different types of people is its *raison d'être* but this can be a disadvantage too. Images of protesters in treehouses might score well with the people that the 'green activism' section is aimed at, but might leave curious browsers from Middle England reaching for their mouse buttons in horror. Any content must clearly be devised to be seen by the 'wrong' people as much as by the 'right' people.
- There is a serious problem that faces nearly everyone in an NGO attempting to reach out to the public, or even sometimes to its supporters. They tend to assume everyone is like them, with the same thirst for scary details of environment threats, the same triggers for concern, and the same compelling urge to do something about it. Too many materials end up being written by green people, very often about green people and therefore inevitably for green people. It might be disappointing, but most individuals are not like people who work for NGOs and they don't necessarily respond to things in the same way. There is a need to take people as they are and go from there. This report describes how different types of people need to be approached entirely on their own wavelength, rather than that of the green movement.

Section 6 **Main project inputs: Review of existing research**

Much research and thinking has already been done on how to influence behaviours that affect the environment. What follows is a series of excerpts from the many published reports and books on the theory and practice of achieving behaviour change, with emphasis on more recent work. There is often overlap between different pieces of work and the choice of findings listed here is not meant to imply they are unique to that report or that other findings in that report are insignificant. Similarly this list is inevitably not comprehensive and the omission of any piece of work is not meant to signify its lack of relevance or worth.

***Appropriate Framing of Climate Change Communications and the Creation of Effective Calls to Action.* By Nick Gallie, Chris Rose (see also Section 8), Pat Dade, Ginny Smith and John Scott 2004**

“Real change involves the social resolution... of two forces: urgency and feasibility. If a public mood or an individual’s need is to see evidence of feasibility, then providing urgency will not spur action. Likewise, showing a possible solution will cause little pick-up if there’s a need instead for evidence of why the problem is urgent.”

“... Two related aspects of... communications [are] framing and psychological segmentation. The first concerns discovering the ‘frames’ people use to recognise and make sense of issues. The second concerns how segments of the population with differing psychological needs must be addressed differently if they are to agree to take action.”

“Think of a frame as a... story in your head that allows you to make sense of new information... These frames embody your values and beliefs. And it is through these that you interpret the... world around you and find your place within it. When new information is received it is assigned to a pre-existing frame. The frame will then determine your interpretation of the information... If the facts don’t fit the frame, it’s the facts that are rejected, not the frame. We need to understand the dominant frames that are currently being used to categorise and interpret... messages, and where these frames are inappropriate as triggers of positive response, to replace them with others.”

“The three principle psychological groups [of people] are: the inner-directed or pioneers of change [Pioneers], the outer-directed status seekers [Prospectors] and the security and sustenance-driven [Settlers]. Each group has very different emotional needs and has very different attitudes towards risk. But their needs... define the ways in which they will take action, how they respond to propositions, and how communications with them can and can’t work. Driven as they are by different needs, people behave differently, think differently and are motivated differently in each group. They may have the same specific behaviour but will have different motivations for doing it and will respond of course only to a proposition which works in their terms.”

Segmentation of people according to values and responses

Inner-directed Pioneers

Dominant motivation... Exploration

Action mode... Do it yourself

Why I want to save the dolphins in Seatown...

‘I feel I could be one myself – and for their own worth’

I want a brand to... ‘Bring new possibilities’

I like to meet... ‘New challenging and intriguing people’

I like to be associated with... ‘Good causes that put my values into practice’

I most respond to threats to... ‘Visions and causes’

Outer-directed Prospectors

Dominant motivation... Status and esteem of others

“Studies show that people who are strongly motivated by the pursuit of money, fame and appearances are much less likely to be concerned about the environment... Such people tend to be the ones who end up running countries and corporations.” Oliver James

Painting the Town Green

Action mode... Organise

Why I want to save the dolphins in Seatown... 'It's good for the town's image and economy (and my house price)'

I want a brand to... 'Make me look good'

I like to meet... 'Desirable and important people'

I like to be associated with... 'Success'

I most respond to threats to... 'What I've worked for'

Security-driven Settlers

Dominant motivation... Being safe and belonging

Action mode... 'Someone should do something about it'

Why I want to save the dolphins in Seatown... 'So long as the dolphins keep coming back, Seatown will be Seatown'

I want a brand to... 'Make me secure'

I like to meet... 'People like me and people I know'

I like to be associated with... 'Tradition'

I most respond to threats to... 'My way of life'

"The action modes of the different needs groups are antagonistic, leading to what has been termed 'violent agreement'. When becoming aware of a problem, the action mode of inner-directeds is DIY: they are the activists and most naturally accept NGO messages. By contrast, the esteem-driven action mode is to organise (they scale up, build organisations and brands, become managers, want to run successful things, eschew risk). Security-drivers don't really have an action mode and say: 'Someone should do something about it.' The 'someone' being those in authority, hence they oppose most NGO campaigns by default but are more open to authority messages... However, inner-directeds start things, including social trends, and start change. Outer-directeds... follow fashion and build things including brands, movements and organisations. Big brands are natural message sources for them. Security-drivers follow on last and resist any departure from what (traditional) authority says should be done (hence they are usually opposed to any form of 'campaign')."

"A common reason for campaign or 'cause' communications failing is that the communications are conceived by inner-directeds and expressed in their terms. They are then aimed not just at other inner-directeds, who will make up the vast majority of the membership of radical campaigning NGOs for example, but at esteem or security-driven people. These propositions do not 'make sense' to the audiences they are aimed at and they fail. Are You Doing Your Bit? is probably a case in point, where the proposition did not resonate with esteem or security-driven groups, based as it was on the implicit assumption that 'the planet needs saving'."

"Avoid the 'violent agreement' logjam: segment propositions by psychology. Inner-directeds: right thing (moral). Outer-directeds: clever thing (smart). Security-drivers: safe thing (identity)."

A Tool for Motivation-Based Communication Strategy. By Chris Rose (see also Section 8). Campaign Strategy 2004

"Campaigns often fail for reasons which organisations could put right... Frequently campaigns fail to identify motivation triggers."

"It is not unusual for campaigns to draw heavily on over-interpreted polling data (that is, quantitative surveys of answers to questions taken at face value), even though this is known to be next to useless in uncovering real motivations. It gives plenty of opportunity for self-delusion by the polled, the pollsters and the consumers of the poll. Polling is useful in other ways but should be avoided in creating communication strategies."

"A striking example of the impact of a values-mode based campaign attack is the US Detroit Project. This set out to dissuade Americans from using SUVs but instead of the usual criticisms of SUVs meted out by NGOs – such as damage to the planet and society, which are heavily inner-directed in tone – the Detroit Project deals in Settler terms. Video and text at its website, and ads screened on TV, use the classic Settler FUD Factor of Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt to turn people against SUVs. In one, the viewer is informed that SUVs use lots of gas, and gas dollars go to Arabs, and Arabs with money means some goes to terrorism (Arabs pictured with AK47s). So to keep America safe, buy less gas and avoid SUVs... The text from one TV ad says: 'I helped hijack an airplane. I helped blow up a nightclub. So what if it gets 11 miles to the gallon. I gave money to a terrorist training camp in a foreign country. It makes me feel safe. I helped our enemies develop weapons of mass destruction. What if I need to go off-road? I helped teach kids around the world to hate America. I like to sit up high. I sent our soldiers off to war. Everyone has one. My life, my SUV.'"

“The environmental movement is increasingly consolidating but shows many signs of being becalmed, not breaking through... Pioneers started the environmental movement, Prospectors organised it, and Settlers joined in once it was safe to do so...”

“Most of the media resort to a historical framing in which campaigning is equated with protest and thus by definition a fringe activity. This is particularly the case with groups such as Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth whose ‘brand’ was founded in the years when environmentalism was a marginal, almost solely inner-directed concern.”

“Campaigning is an inherently risky business – the likelihood of failure is high. To succeed a campaign often has to be socially intrusive and controversial: there is a social risk to the campaigners and supporters. All this may be meat and drink to Pioneer types but is uncomfortable for Prospectors and may be unintelligible to Settlers.”

Bad Habits and Hard Choices: In Search of Sustainable Lifestyles. By Phil Downing, Jayne Cox and David Fell. Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 8) 2004

“The people of Britain don’t appear to behave in a very sustainable way. We don’t recycle as much as our European neighbours; we drive cars all the time; we’re wasteful with energy, consumer goods and resources of all kinds; and most of us live lifestyles that somehow manage to despoil the environment and promote social inequality at the same time.”

“Older people and council tenants are both more likely than average to agree that [environmental degradation] has been exaggerated.”

“The most sensible strategy looks to be to concentrate resources and campaign messages on those segments that are most likely to change behaviour and to accept that some people are very unlikely to change.” Anna Dudleston, Emma Hewitt, Steve Stradling and Jillian Anable

“... Older people grew up during or immediately after the Second World War and the experience of austerity has profoundly influenced their view on the use of resources. Today’s young people by contrast are completely steeped in the contemporary capitalist culture of consumerism and... find the idea of reusing or repairing things difficult to fathom.”

“... Only a small minority of the population, around one in 15 (7 per cent)... habitually undertake a range of

sustainable behaviours. In contrast, almost half (48 per cent)... are classified as mediums, regularly undertaking some sustainable activities but not others. Approaching half (45 per cent) of the population are lows, undertaking only a few – and in some cases none – of the sustainable behaviours...”

“Young people (18-24) are more likely to buy organic food... but are the least likely group to recycle and among those who own a car, least likely to make fewer journeys to protect the environment. Older people (65 plus) are more likely than average to recycle, make fewer journeys by car to protect the environment... but are less likely to use energy saving light bulbs... Social class ABs are committed recyclers but this does not extend to making fewer journeys by car to protect the environment... Social class DEs are less likely to recycle. Council tenants are less likely than average to recycle or buy organic food.”

“... The British public: believe the environment is being damaged by human activity; feel well informed about the kinds of things they personally could do to help; don’t actually do many of these things; are looking for a strong lead from central government.”

“Information and awareness are not enough: people seem to have quite a lot of information and awareness already. The young and the old are different and will require very different kinds of help to become sustainable consumers. The public will pay as long as it’s fair and as long as it’s seen to be fair. But the car is the exception and changing people’s attitudes towards their cars will be exceptionally difficult.”

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“Two-thirds... acknowledge that making fewer journeys by car would make a lot of difference to the environment. However... seven out of ten... believe it would be unfair to increase the price of petrol... to reduce the amount we drive.”

“... The car has come to provide a series of non-functional roles, for example in the way it symbolises affluence, status, individualism and identity... Providing safe, reliable and cheap public transport is an integral part of the solution; but so too is dealing with the many other barriers. This will require us... to explore... smarter interventions that draw upon psychological, sociological and ecological theories of behaviour... In the case of cars, overcoming the barriers will require a prolonged, steady and unambiguous period of preparatory pressure and considerable political courage.”

“... People don't necessarily have to be environmentalists in order to behave in environmentally responsible ways... this demands a better understanding of the influence of non-environmental drivers, for example social and cultural norms, or health and financial benefits.”

“Progress on the *consumption* of goods appears much slower than progress on their *disposal*, eg through recycling.”

“More than one in three (38 per cent) think that government does not have the right to require people to behave in a more sustainable way, including close to one in five (18 per cent) who strongly take this position. However, almost half (48 per cent) believe government does have the right to intervene in this way, including a significant minority of one in four (24 per cent) who do so strongly.”

“Is it worth trying to make consumers sustainable across a whole raft of measures if tackling only one or two outweighs the benefits of all the others, however unpopular it may be? Do consumers really know, for example, that one flight to Ibiza outweighs by far any good they can do by recycling bottles every week?”

“Does sustainability by stealth work... ? Can consumers be encouraged to make good environmental choices by appealing to more immediate self interest (such as saving money through energy efficiency or protecting local jobs by buying local food)?”

Brand Green: Mainstream or Forever Niche? By Wendy Gordon. Green Alliance 2002

“By definition every new idea is entertained initially by only a few people, leaving the majority either indifferent or hostile... The other side of the... coin is that once a majority embraces an idea it becomes an unstoppable force.”

“It's a common fallacy that effective persuasion is driven by rational argument... people... rarely change long-established habits and behaviours simply because someone has presented a strong intellectual case.”

“AIDA (attention-interest-desire-action) is a famous linear and sequential model of consumer behaviour. According to this model, to buy a product/brand, a consumer must first become aware of it, awareness requires conscious attention, factual information will create interest, which in turn generates desire that turns into action, ie the decision to buy. It is not an effective market strategy today. Yet the linear model is the one that green has been using. First, the green movement has been making people aware of the environmental or ethical dangers, then it provides us with information about alternatives. This in itself is believed to be sufficiently convincing and motivating, increasing desire and resulting in action, whether it be changing from a familiar brand of coffee to an ethical alternative or beginning to recycle newspapers and bottles. This is not how people interact with brands. They do not follow a linear decision-making process.”

“Ordinary people are guzzlers of gas, paper and all the other natural resources and energy that are involved in bringing products to market. They remain unmoved by eco-products and ethical services. This is because nowadays people in sophisticated consumer cultures such as the UK buy brands rather than commodities. We are drawn to brands we trust, brands that are different from the rest, brands that are innovative, brands that appeal to the emotions, brands that signify something intelligent or interesting about the user... It isn't that people don't care about green products and services but simply that they aren't prepared to give them special dispensation...”

“There is a gap between what people say they want and what they actually buy when faced with the moment of truth about what to put in the shopping trolley.”

“Statistics now reveal a correlation between green attitudes and green behaviour dubbed the 30:3 ratio: 30 per cent of people claim to be concerned about the environmental and ethical integrity of products and services they purchase and yet only 3 per cent translate this attitude into behaviour.”

“Giving consumers more facts and figures about what is going on ‘out there’ does little or nothing to change personal behaviour. It enlarges the circle of concern but does not widen or activate the circle of influence.”

“Most people, concerned or not, continue to consume products in the way they have in the past. They remain immune, on the whole, to the propositions of ‘green’ products and are adept at rationalising why they do not buy them.”

“On the one hand, consumer-focused mainstream brands remain lukewarm about the environmental cause. On the other hand, issue-focused ‘green’ brands have painted themselves into a marginal, niche corner, appealing only to the passionate few.”

“In this age of choice, fashion, innovation and heady individualism, we are missing a trick if we don’t play by the rules of the branding game.”

“The green cause would be boosted no end if brands took ‘green’ to their hearts... consumers show little sign of letting environmental concerns transform their purchasing and consumption habits.”

“Products, services and organisations that have green credentials or ambitions can learn from successful niche brands...”

“Perhaps we’ve been coming at it from the wrong direction. We may not yet have persuaded people to be green but we’ve persuaded them to... use mobile phones, drink in coffee shops or spend £80 on branded trainers. There’s a skilled group of professionals whose job it is to persuade people to change their behaviour. Why not ask them how to make us green?”

“All brands communicate in code. There is the surface message (what they say) and the hidden message (how they say it). The hidden message is often more heartfelt than the surface message because it uses sensory and emotional cues (colours, symbols, shapes, textures, images) rather than purely rational ones. The hidden messages play a very important role in how people make decisions at point of choice.”

“... Many environmental and ethical brands consciously or unconsciously communicate that the environmental or ethical benefit of the product supersedes all other possible reasons for choosing it. But this may not mirror the reality of how consumers choose... an altruistic or rational message is not on its own sufficiently motivating for the majority of people to change their consumption habits.”

“The challenge for products and services with environmental and ethical credentials is to find the way to connect with people through the heart and senses rather than the mind and logic.”

“Green is generally far too depressing and far too serious... Green must learn how to connect with people in a positive, fun and engaging way.”

“Green brands can work... Connect with what matters to people in a way that engages with feelings and emotions... Think about the sensory cues communicated through the packaging design and construction... Think about the essence of the promise encapsulated in the DNA of the brand and communicate this powerfully. Use overt and covert cues: facts to support the core promise of the brand and metaphor to engage with people’s feelings... Think holistically. Ask yourself the question: how will customers touch this brand... and make sure every encounter is a positive one... Are we over reliant on green credentials when the market is being defined differently by consumers? Remember that we all suffer from information overload and information scepticism... Facts help people post-rationalise a purchase; they rarely motivate in advance... Build a brand that people trust, that is different from the rest, that is innovative and that signifies intelligence for its customers.”

“The green message is unlikely to become a main marketing message but rather a complementary one...”

“Business can transform ‘green’ into a lifestyle aspiration... so it inspires people, becomes part of their everyday life... Extending values such as quality to include environmental and social standards would be one approach... Linking environmental values to other consumer benefits such as health and well being [would be another]...”

Carrots, Sticks and Sermons: Influencing Public Behaviour for Environmental Goals. By Joanna Collins (see also Section 8), Gillian Thomas, Rebecca Willis (see also Section 8) and James Wilsdon. Demos and Green Alliance 2003

“Wendy Gordon contrasts the ‘circle of concern’ – issues that concern or worry people – with the ‘circle of influence’, the ability of the individual to influence events. Environmental problems are perceived to be within the circle of concern but not the circle of influence.”

“Environmental behaviour... action is not compelling because benefits are generally intangible and are experienced at the level of society rather than the individual.”

“The environment is a collective good. People recognise this and are understandably reluctant to change behaviour unless they think that others will do likewise.”

“A key challenge is bridging the gulf between high levels of public agreement on conservation issues and the low priority accorded to environmental concerns in personal lifestyle decisions.”

“The first serious attempts by government to influence public behaviour were wartime propaganda messages. These were based on a top-down, expert-led model in which government departments imparted information and made clear the type of behaviour it expected from the public. Such campaigns often demanded personal sacrifice or behaviour change for the sake of the greater good. But their applicability outside wartime, or a situation of serious societal upheaval, is limited... The expert-led, command-and-control approach to public influencing which came to the fore in wartime propaganda, and persisted in public awareness campaigns until the 1970s and 1980s, is no longer adequate for the complex, diverse and individualised society of [today].”

“It is important not to over-estimate the power of providing information. Information does not necessarily lead to increased awareness, and increased awareness does not necessarily lead to action.”

“Theories of consumer preference used to be based on a linear model of behaviour known as AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action)... In reality it is rarely this straightforward... Purchasing decisions are rarely rational and linear and are more often opportunistic and emotional impulses, based on cultural cues and wider trends. In the past 20 years, marketing theory has changed to reflect this. There is now a growing focus on ‘brand’ and the need to create an identity that resonates with the consumer.”

“Decisions are rarely rational... and are more often opportunistic or emotional impulses, based on cultural cues, family, friends, role models and wider trends. Hence the change in commercial advertising from old-style adverts designed to provide information, to modern approaches aimed at building a brand.”

“Eco-labelling is perhaps the best example of a policy which relies on a naive conceptualisation of human behaviour. The assumption is that information drives action, so that an eco-label on a product will be sufficient to change purchasing decisions. However, all the available evidence suggests this is a false assumption: people do not purchase in a rational, information-seeking way. This may be why eco-label schemes have been such a failure.”

“Social learning theory holds that people change by aligning their behaviour to that of their role models, rather than by considering their conduct philosophically or by reading public education leaflets.”

“Although there is rising awareness of environmental issues, there is still a long way to go in communicating the benefits of environmentally beneficial behaviour in ways that connect at an emotional level.”

“The five-a-day message [that we should eat five portions of fruit or vegetables a day]... may be difficult to embed in sustainable behaviour change because it is based on a ‘resolution’ model of behaviour change. Aiming to achieve five-a-day is psychologically similar to other resolutions, such as diets, which are notoriously difficult to maintain.”

“A single message cannot hope to influence all of the people all of the time.”

“Environmental problems are often complex and long term. They need to be broken down into manageable actions.”

“The goal of more creative communication models is to create a buzz through word of mouth.”

“... Methods of building public trust... the user-centric methods which encourage people to form and reformulate their opinions interactively, consensually and consciously.”

“Spreading the idea virus: influencing behaviour through networks... Certain attitudes and sympathies can remain dormant until they are activated by an idea or practice becoming more visible and public... The viral nature of behaviour change has been well described by Malcolm Gladwell, who coined the term ‘tipping point’ to describe the point at which an idea or practice is being transmitted to more than one person at each transaction... The process of influencing becomes much more about managing, cultivating and spreading change. Key to this process is identifying the intermediaries or ‘network hubs’ able to influence others to change behaviour. Seth Godin, author of *Unleashing the Idea Virus*, refers to such people as sneezers. He insists that ‘Sneezers are at the core of any idea virus. Sneezers are the ones who when they tell ten or 20 people, people believe them.’”

“Opinion Leader Research... suggests that influence now revolves around the interactions of two personality types: protagonists and perceivers. Protagonists are skilled friendship makers and know a wider variety of people... persuasive people... good information gatherers... Perceivers are the majority in any group and society, are more likely to listen to the ideas of others... hold onto positive or negative opinions for longer periods... For any organisation – including government – to communicate successfully, it must influence and engage with protagonists. These are the people who will ensure ideas are carried and circulated through the wider communities.”

“The people of Britain don’t appear to behave in a very sustainable way. We don’t recycle as much as our European neighbours; we drive cars all the time; we’re wasteful with energy, consumer goods and resources of all kinds; and most of us live lifestyles that somehow manage to despoil the environment and promote social inequality at the same time.” Phil Downing, Jayne Cox and David Fell

“New forms of communication... [have] made it easier to maintain extended networks of acquaintances, which often become the anchors of identity and behaviour... Andrew Curry argues: ‘People’s trust is migrating towards ‘my world group’ and away from sources of authority. So what we will end up with is people in those ‘my world groups’ acting as gatekeepers, where trust is formed around word of mouth.’”

“Methods of environmental persuasion can take a variety of different forms. NGOs, such as Greenpeace, sometimes bypass traditional channels to spread campaign messages through viral or ‘guerrilla’ marketing tactics... These more radical approaches appear to have latched onto something... to change behaviour, you need to connect with the heart and not the head.”

“Public influencing is only effective if it is sustained over time... Strategies should be planned, measured and refined over years or even decades.”

Changing Behaviour Through Policy Change. A Model of Behaviour Change. Defra 2005

“Government... has to find a way of engaging with... the public in supporting the development of new social norms and fostering facilitating conditions in a strategic and long-term approach to behaviour change.”

“Consumers often find themselves locked into unsustainable behaviours by a combination of habit, disincentives, social norms and cultural expectations.”

“... We have tended to rely on big publicity campaigns to give information – but that has rarely led to lasting changes in action.”

“... Too often governments say one thing and do another themselves – which... creates cynicism and makes people reject the message.”

“We need to help people make responsible choices... by making those choices easy...”

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“In some cases we can change actions without first changing attitudes. For instance, access to kerbside schemes leads to an increase in recycling behaviour but not necessarily in attitudes to recycling.”

“Campaigns for sustainable behaviour change should employ a wide range of tools... a targeted approach observing differences between subgroups should be adopted.”

“Unsustainable behaviour may be deeply entrenched and require powerful catalysts to change habits...”

Climate Change Communications: Dipping a Toe into Public Motivation. By Chris Rose (see also Section 8), Pat Dade, Nick Gallie and John Scott 2005

“Decades of research indicate that what drives behaviours and attitudes are motivational needs... Maslowian psychology identifies three main sets of needs: security or sustenance needs (need for belonging, identity, security/safety), people for whom these needs are dominant are Settlers; esteem or outer-directed needs (the need for esteem of others and self-esteem), people for whom these needs are dominant are Prospectors; and inner-directed needs (needs such as an ethical basis for life, self exploration, finding new meaning in life, discovering new truths), people for whom these needs are dominant are Pioneers... Settlers tend to look backwards, to yesterday (which was better) and dislike anything new or different as this threatens identity, belonging and security. Prospectors live in the now, for today, and seek rewards in terms of fashion, status, success, achievement and recognition. Pioneers look forwards, both in time and to new horizons. They like change, discovery, the unknown, so long as it is ethically acceptable, but are unworried about status... [This report] identifies... Settlers, who currently make up 21 per cent of the UK population; Prospectors, currently making up 44 per cent of the population; and Pioneers, making up 35 per cent of the population... Faced with a call to action... the different groups will respond according to whether it meets their needs – whether it ‘makes sense’. Many campaigns fail because they present a proposition in terms that work for one part of the population but not others... The abiding problem with campaigns by ‘cause’ groups is that they tend to be founded, like most social initiatives, by the Pioneers, who are society’s experimenters and activists. They then tend to project what works for them onto the rest of society, often with poor results. An appeal for living to stay within global limits, for instance, has natural resonance with Pioneers but is an invitation to ‘think globally’ and is thus an anathema to Settlers. Prospectors may dismiss it as ‘do gooding’... You can’t argue Settlers into seeing things like Pioneers or Prospectors into seeing things like Settlers and so on. You can’t sell messages which make sense to one group, to another.”

“Despite its popularity amongst campaigners, only 11 per cent [of people] believe that climate change can be typified as an emergency. In other words, about 90 per cent of people exposed to a message that states that climate change is an emergency will experience dissonance and probably reject the message as not relevant to them. It may well be seen as ‘environment for environmentalists’.”

“Different groups may elect to do the same thing but for very different reasons because they are meeting different needs.”

“Framing is a shorthand for the mental processes we use to construct understanding. It’s a ‘Ah-ha, it’s one of those’ recognition process which is largely unconscious. Once a frame is triggered, we accept what fits within it and discard what doesn’t. The facts that don’t fit are discarded, not the frame... The Frameworks Institute conducted a study of the frames Americans use to understand climate change. The dominant frames for climate were either that it was made by God or by Nature. In neither case was it plausible that people could change it, so climate change seemed an implausible proposition to start with. As a consequence, many Americans were predisposed to discount any evidence that human-made climate change was taking place. If the cause was alleged to be fossil fuels, the proposition became even less resonant. For many Americans fossil fuels were framed as part of ‘building America’ and ‘good for the economy’. A call to cut fossil fuels was inherently unattractive, even unpatriotic, and to do so because of ‘climate change’ was a no-no.”

Delivering Sustainable Development: What Role for Education, Information and Awareness? By David Fell and Jayne Cox. Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 8) 2004

“... Few people even recognise the term sustainable development, let alone understand it...”

“... Overall awareness [of sustainability issues]... actually appears pretty good.”

“People can behave environmentally without being ‘environmentalists’ and can be highly informed without actually translating their awareness into action... Taking the car as an example, a clear majority are already aware of the

negative environmental impact of driving – the problem is that far fewer are willing to do anything about it... Our on-going love affair with the car is clearly more than just a function of our desire for mobility and convenience. Though these factors are undoubtedly important, the car... has a deeper psychological presence. It provides a series of non-functional roles, for example in the way it symbolises affluence, status, individualism and identity. Therefore, while providing safe, reliable and cheap public transport is an integral part of the solution, so too is dealing with our co-evolved, psychological and oft irrational attachment to the car. This requires us to go beyond the idea of ‘rational man’ and explore alternative, smarter models of decision making that draw on psychology, sociology and ecological theories of behaviour.”

“... The existing framework may even mean that the unsustainable option is in fact the rational choice. What is the incentive to conserve energy if it only saves a few pounds a quarter? Why should people use Eurostar if budget airlines are cheaper? And is it fair to expect people on estates to travel to their nearest recycling bank when it is easier, less time consuming and possibly safer to just throw it away? Using as a template the few committed individuals who are willing to do these things may be no more than a case of the ‘Mississippi fallacy’ – pointing out the few boats sailing upstream when the main body of water, and with it the majority of boats, is flowing in the opposite direction.”

“Thinking that we can convince people through altruism alone – by appealing to their ‘better nature’ – is a political disservice. Public awareness campaigns in this context may simply be a waste of money.”

“From a behavioural perspective, surely what matters most are the practical steps that people can fit into their daily routine...”

“We need to acknowledge that the ‘new environmentalists’ will not necessarily be a mirror image of ourselves [the sustainable development practitioners]. Finding alternative ways of engaging different groups is the key challenge we as practitioners face. The transition from niche market and ‘early movers’ to widespread appeal among the mainstream is a complex one; perhaps in this respect we could learn much from those who sold us the personal computer and the mobile phone, the uptake for which indeed followed this very pattern.”

Desperately Seeking Sustainability. By Paul Steedman (see also Section 8). National Consumer Council 2005

“Providing information and advice cannot be a substitute for making sustainable choices easier and more attractive for consumers. Indeed, without that wider action, information and advice could be, at best, ineffective and at worst counter-productive.”

“Information alone, even when simple, accurate, well presented and action-focused, will be insufficient to produce a shift towards more sustainable patterns of consumption.”

“The National Consumer Council recently estimated it is possible to find as many as 500 ‘top tips’ for a more sustainable lifestyle.”

“When asked where they had passively come across information or advice on sustainable consumption topics, television and newspapers were the most common answers. Local authorities and shops or supermarkets were also key sources. In contrast, the more technical or expert bodies set up by the Government to provide information and advice, such as the Energy Saving Trust and its Energy Efficiency Advice Centres, registered relatively poorly. [Environmental groups or charities also scored less well.]”

“Consumers are more likely to seek further information on issues where taking action has not only an environmental dividend but also appears to deliver tangible close-to-home benefits... Consumers are also more likely to seek information on topics where key messages are focused on simple actions they can take and where there are fewer barriers to action.”

“Sustainable consumption must develop in a way that recognises the realities of consumers’ lives.”

“... While a number of specific sustainable behaviours (such as recycling paper and glass) have become more common, very few people are systematically undertaking an integrated range of sustainable behaviours – perhaps as low as 7 per cent of the population.”

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“Women take more action on food issues, buying locally grown, free range, organic or fairly traded foods more frequently than men. They are also more likely to cut down household waste, recycle and choose environmentally friendly products. By contrast, men claim to be more likely to purchase a less polluting car.”

“Social marketing recognises that there is often strong competition for rival behaviours and that marketing interventions can be carefully designed and targeted to fit into daily life, to increase benefits and to decrease barriers...”

Driving Public Behaviours for Sustainable Lifestyles. By Andrew Darnton. COI/Defra 2004

“... Only around a third of the public claimed to have heard of the term ‘sustainable development’... far fewer people (perhaps one in ten) understood what the term meant... running a communications campaign explicitly on the concept of ‘sustainable development’ would be unlikely to build public engagement with the concept...”

“If a policymaker’s ultimate aim is to change a behaviour, he should set out to change that behaviour and ideally persist until the changed behaviour has become a habit.”

“Behaviour change initiatives should be based on a package of measures; ensure that any physical or infrastructural (external) barriers are addressed first, then address attitudinal and psychological (internal) factors...”

“Different groups of the public will respond to different combinations of measures; a targeted approach should be adopted to behaviour change campaigns.”

“[Defra should] heighten the profile of community involvement in sustainable development communications work and explore the potential for working with (and funding) community groups in order to support public behaviour change...”

Face the Facts. By Oliver James. Article in Heat supplement in Guardian 30 June 2005

“Sigmund Freud... was spot-on about our need to repress uncomfortable truths... We live in a rose-tinted bubble of positive illusions, highly defended from reality... This kind of self-deception is a universal core of mental health.”

“All too often the environment is one worthy cause too far for our limited inner resources and it’s just too depressing to take on board.”

“About 15 per cent of Britons and Americans have repressor personalities. This type avoid negativity like the plague, unable to recall bad childhood experiences and quickly using mental tricks to distract themselves if exposed to painful events... TS Eliot [said] that ‘humankind cannot bear much reality’.”

“Studies show that people who are strongly motivated by the pursuit of money, fame and appearances are much less likely to be concerned about the environment... Such people tend to be the ones who end up running countries and corporations. But the core problem is that, while most of us would put sustainability ahead of dosh in theory, in practice we are not as different from our rulers as we would like to think.”

“It remains the same as when Erich Fromm wrote his book *The Sane Society* in 1955: so long as we are more motivated to have than to be, we shall continue down the tunnel of consumerism. We shall do so despite knowing full well that the light at the end is not the sun. It’s the train.”

Green Choice: What Choice? A Summary of NCC Research into Consumer Attitudes to Sustainable Consumption. By Maxine Holdsworth. National Consumer Council 2003

“Consumers have a positive but passive view of sustainable consumption. They are generally happy to do their bit towards sustainable consumption – to be responsible – but convenience in pressured daily lives takes precedence... Low income consumers have a much more local outlook than higher-income consumers... For policy measures to encourage [disadvantaged consumers] they should look to improve quality of life as well as the environment.”

“Everyone has more immediate and pressing concerns than sustainable consumption. To engage consumers, the issues needs to be tangible and close to home and for low income consumers it should not put pressure on tight household budgets.”

“Consumers see habit as a barrier to change and are honest about their unwillingness to change habits. This perception often leads to people overestimating the inconvenience of behaving sustainably.”

“Consumers assume that environmentally friendly products are automatically the most expensive.”

“People react against being ‘talked at’ and told what to do without the other party fully acknowledging its own role in sustainable consumption. Consumers... want to be part of a dialogue...”

“Sustainable consumption is seen as an extra time burden on already hard-pressed schedules. Time spent on sustainable actions is seen as requiring a sacrifice of some other activity – notably leisure or family time.”

“Older consumers feel they have done their bit for society... they feel they are entitled to enjoy the rest of their lives without the inconvenience of sustainable consumption actions.”

“No consumers have faith that government or industry will spend public or private money on the necessary sustainability measures... This has bearing on consumers’ attitudes to responsibility, to policy measures and to motivation.”

“... Ninety per cent of consumers said they were happy to do their bit for the environment but discussion groups revealed that people feel they lack power to change things and believe government and industry need to do more to make sustainable consumption easier for consumers.”

“There needs to be a balance of investment, taxation, incentives and regulation to win acceptance and trust from consumers. Any policy measures that rely on consumers’ voluntary action or goodwill need to minimise inconvenience and have tangible short term benefits for their households or local environments.”

“People want to be able to choose between a range of sustainable products...”

“... Consumers are most positive about policy measures that do not disrupt their daily routine and where they can see tangible benefits for their household or local environment.”

“Consumer reaction to policy measures that attempt to deter them from unsustainable activities depend partly on how they judge the effect on their own household or immediate environment. They also analyse whether the policy is likely to work... As part of this analysis consumers consider whether the policy seems fair or if instead it might disproportionately affect low income households or large families.”

“The environmental concern of disadvantaged groups tends towards a material environmentalism with a focus on the effects of local environmental problems on health and well being.” Kate Burningham and Diana Thrush

“Consumers believe that government and industry have an important role in taking unsustainable products off the market... Cars are a notable exception to the general support for phasing out unsustainable products. Many consumers feel a more personal bond with their cars than with other products and for them... sustainability would not be a consideration.”

“Consumers favour incentives to consume sustainably over financial disincentives that try to discourage them from behaving unsustainably.”

Green Psychology: Why Do People Act in Ungreen Ways? Martin Parkinson (see also Section 8) 2005

“A despairing viewpoint has also started to be occasionally aired. ‘We all know what we should be doing – but we still don’t do it!’ runs the complaint. ‘That must be because people are hopelessly selfish, morally bad or inescapably short-termist.’ This kind of talk is underpinned by a ridiculously over-simplified model of what makes people tick. The causes of human behaviour are amazingly complicated: why be surprised when a simple mixture of education and exhortation fails to get people to do ‘the right thing’? Any psychologist or anthropologist could have told you that.”

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“Is there a smart approach to take? One that takes into account the social embeddedness of human behaviour? There seems to be a great deal of research and thought going on in this area but little of it has percolated downwards as yet.”

“Frightening people can be completely counter productive if they feel they have no agency. Similarly if you draw attention to someone’s attitude-action gap, they are very likely to amend their attitudes than clean up their act.”

“People with young children, it seems, respond less to appeals on behalf of future generations.”

“We do not make exclusively personal choices in an abstract marketplace. We take our cues from others.”

“Because of the complexity of the causes of behaviour, a re-presentation of green living [as a pleasant, enjoyable and satisfying option] probably will not have a powerful effect on its own. It would be like saying: ‘Hey, dive in! The water’s lovely; doesn’t it look inviting?’ Sure, it’s true, the water does look tempting but why should it divert you if you were off to play football (equally fun, and besides you’ve got your boots with you, didn’t bring a towel and all your mates are expecting you...)?”

“Pro-environmental behaviour often takes the form of a ‘Prisoner’s Dilemma’. The best result for *everyone* occurs if *everyone* makes the ‘green choice’. Therefore I would prefer to make the green choice. However, if *I* make the green choice but most others do *not*, I am (or perceive that I will be) put at an actual disadvantage (not just financially and practically but also socially in terms of ‘not fitting in’ or appearing uncool). This can only be avoided by arranging things so that everyone is pretty sure everyone else will make the green choice... Legislation which pushes us in the right direction might be welcomed as a way out of the prisoner’s dilemma but only as long as it is perceived to be appropriate and fairly applied across society.”

“There is a distinction between adaptable and non-adaptable changes. If you get a new improved job with a new improved salary, the boost it gives you will not last because you get used to it and start wanting to climb to the next rung. This effect is encapsulated in the phrase ‘the hedonic treadmill’. Similarly if our salary is lowered (within limits), we experience a dip but bounce back. But there are some changes to which we do not adapt, such as chronic cold, food shortage or excessive environmental noise... The distinction between adaptable and non-adaptable changes parallels the distinction between positional and non-positional goods. Income is positional: it isn’t the absolute amount that matters, it is where that puts us in relation to others. There is the famous finding from one experiment that Harvard University students would prefer a world in which they earned \$50,000 and the average income was \$25,000 to a world in which they earned \$100,000 but the average was \$250,000. Consumer goods are likewise positional... There is no reason at all why our desires should make us happier but those desires are going to be resistant to learning.” [Interpretation of information in *Happiness: The Science Behind Your Smile*]

“Students at Princeton Theological Seminary were recruited to take part in a study related to ‘religious education and vocations’. Each participant in turn was briefed to give a short talk over in a nearby building and to think about the talk as they walked across to give it. Some were instructed to talk about ‘job possibilities’ and the others about the Good Samaritan parable. In addition, each person was either told they had a few minutes to spare or that they should hurry as they were already late. The real experiment took place as each student crossed to the other building through an alley. Just as in the Good Samaritan story, they encountered someone slumped over in audible distress. Which of these future religious ministers would stop and help – surely those who had the parable foremost in their minds? It turns out that the subject of the forthcoming talk was irrelevant. Those who thought they had the time to spare tended to stop and those in a rush did not. Having an inspiring story in one’s head made no discernible difference to the likelihood of stopping. This underlines startlingly how trivial the basis of our decision making can be, or how easily a desire to do the right thing can be derailed by the urgencies of everyday life.” [Interpretation of information in *Human Information Processing*]

“The Bystander Effect is the name given to the phenomenon whereby the more people present when help or action is needed, the less likely any one of them is to provide assistance or to act. Imagine it for yourself: you find yourself in a crowd watching an apparent violent assault. What would be going through your head? Although worried or disturbed, you might think that because no-one else is doing anything, it must not be what it seems: perhaps a film or a piece of street theatre is underway. It cannot be an emergency because no-one else seems perturbed. And besides, if it *is* a real emergency, surely someone else must have already called the police. There is nothing to suggest that *you* should be the one to take responsibility. The Bystander Effect has been studied extensively because it is easy to set up and manipulate simple experimental emergencies. For example, in one study participants were asked to fill in a survey form and as three of them sit together doing so, they can hear the occupant of the next office as she moves around. After a few minutes they hear a crash and a scream followed by cries for help, indicating clearly that a bookcase has fallen on her and she’s trapped and injured. Of course the ‘emergency’ is a recording and two of the participants are

confederates of the experimenter and make no response to the appeals for help. In this situation only 40 per cent of people tried to help. Participants who are alone, however, feel freer to respond – 70 per cent of them went to the woman's aid... We are each of us surrounded by that unconcerned bystander crowd the moment we step out of the door into the traffic-filled high street. When I read the sober environmental article in the newspaper, I turn the page to find a travel section assuming that an holiday involving air travel is the norm. The same government which asks me if I'm 'doing my bit', assumes that the best interests of the country are served by airport expansion, road building and house building with little increase in energy standards. And everywhere, but everywhere, there are more and more, bigger, flashier, louder cars and vans. The implied message is unmistakable: *nobody is actually concerned*. What are the bystanders doing? Nothing – and I find it almost impossible to resist the feeling that therefore it can't really be an emergency. The Bystander Effect underlines how all attempts to move society in a green direction must take account of the way our behaviour changes in response to other people's. We look to other people to tell us how to act. The Bystander Effect underlines the importance of role models. There is another way of mitigating the Bystander Effect: teaching people about... the Bystander Effect." [Interpretation of information in *Introduction to Psychology*]

***Happiness: The Science Behind Your Smile.* By Daniel Nettle. Oxford University Press 2005**

"The psychology of aspiration is not that of satisfaction. We do not always want what we like or like what we want."

[See also *Green Psychology: Why Do People Act in Ungreen Ways?*]

***Human Information Processing.* By Peter Lindsay and Donald Norman. Academic Press 1977**

[See *Green Psychology: Why Do People Act in Ungreen Ways?*]

““ People find themselves ‘locked in’ to unsustainable consumption patterns. Consumer ‘lock-in’ occurs in part through economic constraints, institutional barriers, inequalities in access and restricted choice. But it also flows from habits, routines, social norms and expectations and dominant cultural values. ”” Prof Tim Jackson

***Influencing More Sustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption in the UK.* By Andrew Blaza, Stephen Horrax and Hilary Hurt. Imperial College London 2002**

"All the market research shows no particular lack of interest or awareness among consumers [about sustainable consumption]."

"Just to tell people to give up their air miles, their food miles and their precious family car is not the best way to win people over to follow a more sustainable lifestyle. Exhortations to make sacrifices and consume less often fall on deaf ears – or perhaps are met with the response that it really is the job of Government, not me personally, to bring about change. Sustainable lifestyles may involve consuming less but the best way to achieve support at the start is to talk about consuming differently."

"There is clearly a need to adopt the right language... We should avoid use of such terms as ‘sacrifice’, employing instead the notion of ‘responsible choice’ and linking to a concept of what the truly sustainable lifestyle (the ‘good life’) would mean and the benefits it would bring to everyone."

***Introduction to Psychology.* By Rita Atkinson, Richard Atkinson, Edward Smith and Ernest Hilgard. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1985**

"Often it is the presence of other people that prevents us from intervening. Specifically the presence of others serves to define the situation as a non-emergency and to diffuse the responsibility for acting."

[See also *Green Psychology: Why Do People Act in Ungreen Ways?*]

***Motivating Sustainable Consumption: A Review of Evidence on Consumer Behaviour and Behavioural Change.* By Tim Jackson. Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey 2005**

“... The assumption of individuality is also suspect. Individual deliberations clearly do play some part in our behaviour. But behaviours are usually embedded in social contexts. Social and interpersonal factors shape and constrain individual preference.”

“... The social psychological evidence suggests that some behaviours are not mediated by either attitude or intention at all. In fact the reverse correlation, in which attitudes are inferred from behaviours, is sometimes observed... It suggests that behaviours can be changed without necessarily changing attitudes first.”

“... Learning by trial and error, observing how others behave and modelling our behaviour on what we see around us provide more effective and more promising avenues for changing behaviour than information and awareness campaigns.”

“... Resistance to pro-environmental messages and behaviours has to be understood, at least partly, in the context of social identities... Just as environmentalists construe themselves in opposition to certain social groups, so too do those who resist pro-environmental behaviour... I simply won't recycle no matter how easy it is or how often I am asked, not because I perceive the individual costs to be too high or too low, but because recycling for me is associated with a certain kind of person belonging to a certain kind of social group and this is not the one I belong to.”

“Material goods are important to us, not just for their functional uses but because they play vital symbolic roles in our lives. This symbolic role of consumer goods facilitates a range of complex, deeply engrained ‘social conversations’ about status, identity, social cohesion, group norms...”

“People find themselves ‘locked in’ to unsustainable consumption patterns. Consumer ‘lock-in’ occurs in part through economic constraints, institutional barriers, inequalities in access and restricted choice. But it also flows from habits, routines, social norms and expectations and dominant cultural values.”

“Consumers build affective relationships with consumer goods... emotion [can] precede [thought] in decision contexts.”

“Everyday behaviours are carried out with very little conscious deliberation at all.”

“We are often constrained by what others think, say and do... Behavioural change must occur at the collective social level.”

“Making sense of behaviour inevitably requires a multi-dimensional view which incorporates... motivations, attitudes and values; contextual or situational factors; social influences; personal capabilities; and habits.”

“Effective persuasion relies on observing a number of basic principles. These include understanding the target audience, using emotional and imaginative appeal, immediacy and directness, commitments and loyalty schemes, and use of ‘retrieval cues’ to catalyse the new behaviour.”

“A vital ingredient for changing habits is to unfreeze existing behaviour.”

“Changing behaviour is difficult... Policy makers need to proceed with care and to ‘consumer proof’ policies through careful design, piloting and testing. But this does not suggest that government should be faint-hearted...”

***Personal Responsibility and Changing Behaviour: The State of Knowledge and its Implications for Public Policy.* By David Halpern, Clive Bates, Geoff Mulgan, Stephen Aldridge, Greg Beales and Adam Heathfield. Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2004**

“The achievement of major policy outcomes requires greater engagement and participation from citizens – governments can't go it alone... There are strong moral and political arguments for protecting and enhancing personal responsibility.”

“The fundamental building block of behaviour, and therefore of behaviour change, is argued to rest on the learning of associations between stimuli. Classical conditioning refers to when an ‘unconditioned stimulus’, such as food,

becomes associated with another stimulus, such as a bell. Even highly complex behaviours can often be explained through long chains of such associations. Behaviour change is achieved through learning new associations, or removing existing associations. Hence advertising seeks to associate a new product with existing stimuli that are experienced as positive (such as a car with sexual attractiveness).”

“People are motivated to seek consistency between their beliefs, values and perceptions. Where there is a clash between their actions and values/attitudes (cognitive dissonance), people often resolve the discrepancy by changing their values or attitudes rather than their behaviour.”

“... Humans use mental short-cuts... in certain situations the use of these short-cuts can make people systematically prone to misjudgement... Individuals are limited in how much information they can process and in order to increase the usability of information... they employ decision rules to make choices faster and more easily.”

“‘Green’ appears to have overtones of being worthy, alternative and hippyish; in the context of products, ‘green’ can also mean expensive to many less affluent consumers. As such, ‘green’ tends to be considered marginal and not to be a call to action for the broad mass of the public. Men in general seem to have a problem with ‘green’: as with ‘environmentally friendly’ it is considered unmasculine (and could not be used effectively in connection with cars).” Andrew Darnton

“People assume that events they can easily call to mind or are easy to imagine are more frequent and therefore more likely to happen. Hence people tend to be more nervous about flying than driving because airplane crashes are easy to recall.”

“... People tend to value things that are scarce or likely to run out... Price can be a proxy for scarcity and therefore there is a risk that goods or services that are free may lose their scarcity [and therefore the degree to which they are valued].”

“... People value things differently depending on whether they are gaining or losing them. Loss tends to be felt more keenly than gain.”

“People place greater emphasis on short-lived extremes of experience than they do on average experiences... People also place greater weight on things that have just happened...”

“People place greater emphasis on the immediate – the experience closest to them in time... All people tend to [discount the future] but those living chaotic or impoverished lives apply especially high discount rates...”

“Social marketers stress the importance of a durable relationship [between public and those encouraging change] based on trust which will enhance confidence to change rather than a one-off intervention.”

“One hazard in [trying to effect change] is psychological reactance. Whenever it becomes clear that someone is trying to persuade us of something, we instinctively take the opposing view.”

“Behavioural interventions tend to be more successful where there is an equal relationship between the influencer and the influenced and where both parties stand to gain from the outcome.”

“Social proof... hinges on how people look to those around them – including strangers – for guidance on how to behave... The behaviour of others provides us with clues about the prevalent social norms and with evidence about how we should act. The use of canned laughter to signal that a joke is funny is an example... A key aspect of social proof is that under conditions of uncertainty, people look to cues in [their surroundings] and others around them to guide their behaviour. Of course, others around them may be doing much the same. In a famous illustration of this, subjects who did not know each other were arranged in a waiting room into which smoke began to pour through a vent. It was found that the larger the number of people in the waiting room, the less likely it was that anyone would raise the alarm...”

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“Diffusion of innovations theory addresses how new [behaviours] spread within a society... Relative advantage [is] the degree to which an innovation is seen as better than [what it replaces] [and how this] shapes whether it is adopted... Compatibility [is] the degree to which an innovation is consistent and compatible with values, habits, experience and the needs of potential adopters [and how this] shapes whether a new behaviour is adopted... Complexity [is] how people are more likely to be attracted by innovations that are easy to understand and use... Trailing [is] the extent to which innovation can be [tried] by individuals... before a commitment to adopt is required. Trailing can be influential in the success of behavioural change schemes: people are... more likely to commit to behaviours and lifestyles they have tried and liked.”

***Polishing the Diamond: Values, Image and Brand as a Source of Strength for Charities.* By Joe Saxton. nfpSynergy 2002**

“The environmental motivation is the simplest of forces: people do things because their peers are doing it, or their immediate environment will change, or they may directly benefit. The environmental is the hardest motivation to use to build a brand yet it probably motivates more people to support [environmental groups] than anything else. People’s interests are entirely self-centred at this level.”

***Public Perceptions of Travel Awareness.* By Anna Dudleston, Emma Hewitt, Steve Stradling (see also Section 8) and Jillian Anable. Scottish Executive 2005**

“The population falls into seven distinct groups with respect to... various attitudes... relating to travelling by car, the environment and the desire to reduce car use. The four car-using segments display stark differences in the extent to which they exhibit attachment to the car, feel willing and able to reduce their car use, believe in and identify with environmental problems, and in their awareness of transport issues. The Die-Hard Drivers like driving and are resistant to reducing their car use; Car Complacents are less attached to their cars but currently see no reason to change; Malcontented Motorists find that current conditions make driving stressful and would like to reduce their car use but cannot see how; Aspiring Environmentalists are actively trying to reduce their car use, already use many modes and are driven by an awareness of environmental issues and a sense of responsibility for their contribution to planetary degradation.”

“... Distinct segments exist in the population, each representing a unique combination of attitudes, awareness and preferences with respect to travelling by car and alternative modes. The same behaviour can take place for different reasons and the same attitudes can lead to different behavioural intentions... Different groups need to be serviced in different ways by transport policy in order to optimise the chance of influencing mode choice behaviour.”

“Marketing can influence an individual’s perception of the benefits derived from travelling by a particular mode and reinforce favourable attitudes they already hold.”

“The most sensible strategy looks to be to concentrate resources and campaign messages on those segments that are most likely to change behaviour and to accept that some people are very unlikely to change... Future travel campaigns [should] not use ‘one size fits all’ messages but [should] target certain sectors’ motivations and perceptions, such as the stress of driving, the desire to be less dependent on the car and the feelings of altruism that can be felt by some people when they use their cars less.”

***Public Understanding of Climate Change.* Andrew Darnton. Defra 2005**

“While the public sees climate change as linked to human behaviour, they tend to believe that climate change will not affect them personally. Climate change is generally perceived as something which most affects other parts of the world and which will have profound effects on future, not current, generations. As such, many people think climate change is not relevant to them and not urgent.”

“[When asked] the question ‘On what level do you think global warming should best be tackled...’, ‘on a global level’ was the most common answer given... the question gave ‘on a household level’ as an option and only 9 per cent of respondents selected that option. The common perception that climate change is a problem facing the whole world is often used by respondents as the rationale behind their claims that it would be useless for them personally to take action...”

“... The public is less likely to associate weather patterns in the British Isles with climate change than they are to associate weather patterns overseas with climate change.”

“... Any sense of urgency is lacking from the public’s view of environmentalism.”

“Unwillingness to acknowledge the environmental impacts of their behaviours may lead some of the public to claim non-awareness of the links between certain of their behaviours and climate change.”

“A large majority of the public is aware of [the term] ‘global warming’, more than are aware of [the term] ‘climate change’. ‘Global warming’ seems to be the more engaging of the two terms and it is certainly less contested a concept than ‘climate change’... A small and informed minority of the public doubts the whole concept of ‘climate change’ and is likely to reject messages involving the term; these individuals tend to be in their late 50s or older.”

“... For most people, climate change, global warming and other big environmental concepts appear not to be part of their repertoire of conversational topics.”

“Most of the public seem confused when confronted with the term ‘carbon’ in the context of environmental impacts... Those who would encourage the public to ‘cut their carbon emissions’ or ‘live low-carbon lifestyles’ must recognise they are starting from rock bottom in terms of public understanding.”

“Most of the public seem happy to think about human environmental impacts in terms of [the term] ‘pollution’...”

“Considering [the term] ‘environment’ in its global sense... there is evidence of some fatigue among the public in response to the term...”

“On the one hand, [‘environmentally friendly’] could seem an approachable term... but on the other, it could seem at once soft (ie feminine) but also marginal, being something associated only with the most conscientious people in society or killjoys.”

“‘Green’ is a term which the public seem comfortable with... However, ‘green’ appears to have overtones of being worthy, alternative and hippyish; in the context of products, ‘green’ can also mean expensive to many less affluent consumers. As such, ‘green’ tends to be considered marginal and not to be a call to action for the broad mass of the public... Men in general seem to have a problem with [the term] ‘green’: as with ‘environmentally friendly’ it is considered unmasculine (and could not be used effectively in connection with cars...)”

“... Public awareness of [the term] ‘sustainable development’ is low... and public understanding is even lower... Giving people definitions of ‘sustainable development’ only further confuses them... ‘Sustainability’ is not a term used by the vast majority of the public.”

“... In the context of climate change, only a small proportion of the public associate [the term] ‘energy efficiency’ with environmental benefits; for nearly all people the main attraction of ‘energy efficiency’ is saving money. Indeed, in the eyes of many people, those who pursue energy efficiency measures consistently are either ‘stingy’ or ‘oddballs’.”

Rainforests Are a Long Way from Here: The Environmental Concerns of Disadvantaged Groups. By Kate Burningham and Diana Thrush. Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2001

“... Poor people are often those worst affected by environmental problems and... environmental policies may at times be in conflict with the social and economic well being of certain groups and communities...”

“The environmental concern of disadvantaged groups focuses on the impact of local problems on health and well being... Participants were largely unfamiliar with the language of environmentalism... Environmental organisations were largely seen as important though little was known about them beyond media stereotypes... Practical and financial considerations are the prime motivators for individual environmental action.”

“The environmental concern of disadvantaged groups tends towards a material environmentalism with a focus on the effects of local environmental problems on health and well being.”

“What may appear from outside to be the most obvious environmental problems for a particular locality are not necessarily of most concern to the people who live there.”

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“Environmental policies with a strong local focus are more likely to attract public interest and engagement than those which rely on a global consciousness.”

“Individual environmental action may best be encouraged by emphasising practical and financial benefits.”

“Local environmental improvements must be tackled in tandem with social and economic improvements. Careful evaluation of the social equity implications of planning, transport and environmental policy is crucial.”

“It is unrealistic to expect everyone to be ‘doing their bit’ for the environment unless it is made cheap and easy for members of the disadvantaged groups to do so.”

“... Motivating young [disadvantaged] people to participate could present a particular challenge.”

“Local environmental improvements have little chance of survival unless employment and activities are available for young people...”

“If environmental groups want to increase their relevance beyond a predominantly white, middle class membership, they must consider ways of raising their profile amongst disadvantaged groups and engaging with their everyday concerns.”

“... Environmental attitudes and concerns are not fixed but develop in the course of dialogue with others.”

Securing the Future. UK Strategy for Sustainable Development. Chapter 2: Helping People Make Better Choices. Defra 2005

“Thirty per cent of people claim to care about companies’ environmental and social record but only 3 per cent reflect this in their purchases.”

“Information alone does not lead to behaviour change or close the so-called attitude-behaviour gap... One of the key elements of the new approach is the need to engage people close to home. The new Community Action 2020 – Together We Can programme... will support communities to work together to make the world more sustainable for themselves and future generations.”

“While there will continue to be a very important role for regulation and enforcement, regulation alone will not be able to deliver the changes we want to see... The new approach therefore focuses on the need to enable [for example remove barriers, give information and provide facilities], encourage [for example through the tax system, reward schemes, recognition, penalties and enforcement], and engage [through community action, co-production and media campaigns] people and communities in the move towards sustainability, recognising that the Government needs to [exemplify], lead by example [through achieving consistency in policies].”

“The [new] toolkit for climate change communications is designed to provide a model for future behavioural change campaigns on other issues. Key components are using positive and inspirational messages rather than fear or concern, avoiding ‘above the line’ advertising, eg TV or billboard, galvanising local and regional communicators for climate change through financial support and guidance, high profile national communications to support the local and regional initiatives, and developing a new inspirational goal and branded statement.”

“Sustainable development principles must lie at the core of the education system, such that schools, colleges and universities become showcases of sustainable development among the communities they serve.”

Sixteen Pain-Free Ways to Help Save the Planet. By Maxine Holdsworth and Paul Steedman (see also Section 8). National Consumer Council 2005

“There is increasing and widespread concern about the environment, and about future generations’ quality of life. Policy makers have so far failed to harness this concern. It has not been reflected in a shift to more sustainable behaviour.”

“... In reality, the UK is a long way from becoming more sustainable... People are actually quite passive about making sustainable consumption choices.”

“Information-based consumer policy has failed to make a significant shift towards sustainable consumption.”

“Sustainability is often associated with a lower quality of life or being denied valued products of services... For consumers, positive incentives appeal by making daily lives easier, cheaper or more convenient.”

“Understanding consumer behaviour crosses the disciplines of economics, psychology, sociology, cultural theory, anthropology and biology.”

“Much of the consuming we do on a day-to-day basis is what is termed ‘inconspicuous consumption’... utility bills, mortgage payments, pensions and insurance. Because these aspects of routine consumption are not always conscious or optional, it is argued that we are locked into these consumption patterns.”

“People often judge how likely something is to happen on the basis of how easily they can call it to mind. People are often more scared of flying than car travel, for example, because air crashes are dramatic and easy to recall.”

“We learn by trial and error and by observing others.”

“Changing [consumer behaviours] requires effort at a higher level of conscious behaviour than putting on a wash load, for example, usually merits.”

“... Research reveals some key barriers to sustainable consumption... We engage with issues that are close to home, rather than far-off threats of global environmental disaster... We are preoccupied with short-term household budgets... We are creatures of habit and we are reluctant to make changes that inconvenience us or challenge our routines.”

“Consumer barriers to sustainable behaviour are the priorities of close-to-home concerns, household budget, time pressures, and convenience of routine. These combine with specific barriers around perception of cost, lack of awareness, lack of facilities and lack of trust in providers.”

“Our behaviour as consumers is influenced by many factors, including social norms, our emotional responses, our morals, and the limited amount of information we can process. But one overriding factor affects our behaviour as consumers and makes us reluctant to change: habit.”

“People place greater emphasis on costs or benefits in the near future or recent past. So they ‘discount’ the future. This is particularly true of consumers on low incomes who, because of immediate difficulties, are less likely to make long term savings investments. We also place greater emphasis on those things that are fresh in our minds and short-lived, extreme experiences rather than average experiences. And people tend to feel loss more keenly than gain.”

“Breaking habits requires ‘unfreezing’ existing habits... To... sustain behaviour change (‘refreezing’) involves providing the structures that reinforce behaviour change.”

“... Preaching to people is a poor substitute for enlisting them as active partners.”

“There is no grand solution to the [need for a] shift towards sustainable consumption. First, sustainable consumption encompasses an enormous range of consumer activity... Policies that are successful in promoting eco-friendly household products will not necessarily translate into policies that promote waste minimisation or water saving... Second, many of the goods and services associated with unsustainability maintain our basic standard of living... Third, even if policy and markets could overcome these challenges, consumers still have a choice...”

“Sustaining behaviour change is another hurdle, as anyone who has ever dieted or tried to give up smoking can testify.”

““Decisions are rarely rational and are more often opportunistic or emotional impulses, based on cultural cues, family, friends, role models and wider trends. Hence the change in commercial advertising from old-style adverts designed to provide information, to modern approaches aimed at building a brand.”” Joanna Collins, Gillian Thomas, Rebecca Willis and James Wilsdon

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“Any change stands more chance of being maintained if it is supported by a social and institutional framework which involves industry, government, regulators and non-governmental organisations, as well as consumers.”

“One challenge will be shifting schemes based on a participating minority into schemes that capture and engage the majority.”

“There are some imaginative positive incentive schemes in other countries which policy makers and providers should consider for piloting in the UK. Early introduction of some of the low-cost, quick-win options would provide an evidence base for evaluation, which would assist in designing more expensive programmes.”

“Elements of persuasion strategies include the emotional appeal of the message, the directness of the message (its immediacy and relevance), the commitment as in loyalty schemes, using retrieval cues to enable people to easily recall the message, and reinforcing factors like offers.”

Sustainability and the Three Bears: A Seasonal Tale for Children of All Ages. Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 8) 2003

“Once upon a time there was a concept so obvious that no-one could gainsay it. ‘Of course,’ the people would cry, ‘we all want a world in which everybody is treated fairly, in which we are all prosperous and in which the environment is healthy and safe.’ But even as they said these things, the people... threw their rubbish and drove their cars without looking. ‘What can we do?’ they cried. ‘We are each so small.’ The people looked to their leaders for help... ‘What can we do?’ the leaders cried. ‘We live in a globalised, de-regulated world.’ And the leaders looked to the businessfolk for help... ‘What can we do?’ the businessfolk cried. ‘We are only providing the people with what they want.’ What a sorry state of affairs – everybody managing to blame everybody else! Little Billy Loveluck gazed at the whole mess with a mix of bemusement and chagrin. Are they just greedy? he wondered. Or scared? Confused? Ignorant?... He noticed that everyone always saw the problem at a certain scale: in particular, everyone seemed to be able to convince themselves that they were a different size from the problem. And Little Billy hatched a plan. He decided that the answer lay in finding solutions that were neither too big, nor too small, but just right. And if everyone had an answer for them that was the right size, the problems could be solved. So for the people, he began to devise small things – little labels on the insides of bin lids to remind people to recycle... And for the leaders he devised big things – big strategies that showed how to mainstream, big reports that showed how to regulate markets... And for the businessfolk, he devised medium sized things – new marketing strategies, environmental management systems... ‘It’s not very exciting,’ said his friend Sawar. ‘Seems to be working though,’ said Billy.”

The Day After Tomorrow: Public Opinion on Climate Change. By Andrew Norton and John Leaman. MORI 2004

“Research... on the eve of the release of the disaster film *The Day After Tomorrow* shows that most people in Britain do not share Tony Blair’s concern about the seriousness of global warming. This reflects the dominance of public concerns about international terrorism and other domestic issues, and a widespread feeling that trying to tackle global warming in Britain is a waste of time without international agreement.”

“Half of Britons have never heard of the Kyoto Agreement.”

“The key to engaging people – as with business – is to make it easy and to show what’s in it for them.”

The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World. By Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus. Breakthrough Institute and Evans/McDonough 2004

[This paper criticises the modus operandi of environmentalists in the US with particular focus on climate change. It has lessons for the green movement here in the UK too.]

“Shellenberger and Nordhaus suggest it’s time to re-examine everything we think we know about... environmental politics, from what does and doesn’t get counted as ‘environmental’ to the movement’s small-bore approach to policymaking...”

“In their public campaigns, not one of America’s environmental leaders is articulating a vision of the future commensurate with the magnitude of the crisis [of climate change]. Instead they are promoting technical policy fixes

like pollution controls, proposals that provide neither the popular inspiration nor the political alliances the community needs to deal with the problem.”

“The environmental community’s narrow definition of its self-interest leads to a kind of policy literalism that undermines its power... What could happen if progressives created new institutions and proposals around a big vision and a core set of values?”

“Today environmentalism is just another special interest... What stands out is how arbitrary environmental leaders are about what gets counted and what doesn’t as ‘environmental’... Environmentalism is today more about protecting a supposed thing – ‘the environment’ – than advancing the world view articulated by Sierra Club founder John Muir: ‘When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.’”

“The environmental movement acts as though proposals based on ‘sound science’ will be sufficient to overcome ideological and industry opposition. Environmentalists are in a culture war whether they like it or not. It’s a war over core values and over our vision for the future and it won’t be won by appealing to the rational consideration of our collective self-interest.”

“For the vast majority of Americans, the environment never makes it into their top ten list of things to worry about. Protecting the environment is indeed supported by a large majority – it’s just not supported very strongly.”

“Environmentalists... arrived at their identity and politics through a rational and considered process. They expect others in politics to do the same and are constantly surprised and disappointed when they don’t.”

“Most people wake up in the morning trying to reduce what they have to worry about. Environmentalists wake up trying to increase it... Talking at the public about this laundry list of concerns is what environmentalists refer to as ‘public education’. The assumption here is that the American electorate consists of 100 million policy wonks eager to digest the bleak news we have to deliver.”

“Why is a human-made phenomenon like global warming – which may kill hundreds of millions of human beings over the next century – considered ‘environmental’? Why are poverty and war not considered environmental problems while global warming is? What are the implications of framing global warming as an environmental problem and handing off the responsibility for dealing with it to ‘environmentalists’?”

“Whenever it becomes clear that someone is trying to persuade us of something, we instinctively take the opposing view.” David Halpern, Clive Bates, Geoff Mulgan, Stephen Aldridge, Greg Beales and Adam Heathfield

“The environmental movement’s failure to craft inspiring and powerful proposals to deal with global warming is directly related to the movement’s reductive logic about the supposedly root causes of any given environmental problem. The problem is that once you identify something as the root cause, you have little reason to look for even deeper causes or connections with other root causes... For most within the environmental community, the answer [to global warming] is easy: too much carbon in the atmosphere. Framed this way, the solution is logical: we need legislation that reduces carbon emissions. But what are the obstacles to removing carbon? Consider what would happen if we identified the obstacles as trade policies... our failure to articulate an inspiring and positive vision, overpopulation, the influence of money... our inability to shape the debate around core American values, poverty... The point here is not just that global warming has many causes but also that the solutions we dream up depend on how we structure the problem.”

“By thinking only of their own narrowly defined interests, environmental groups don’t concern themselves with the needs of [others]. As a consequence, we miss major opportunities for alliance building.”

“What’s frustrating about so many visionary environmental books... is the way the authors advocate technical policy solutions as though politics didn’t matter.”

“The marriage between vision, values and policy has proved elusive for environmentalists. Most environmental leaders, even the most vision-orientated, are struggling to articulate proposals that have coherence. This is a

Painting the Town Green

crisis because environmentalism will never be able to muster the strength it needs... as long as it is seen as a 'special interest'. And it will continue to be seen as a special interest as long as it narrowly identifies the problem as 'environmental' and the solutions as technical. In 2003 we joined with... to create a proposal for a 'New Apollo Project' aimed at freeing the US from oil and creating millions of good new jobs. Our strategy was to create something inspiring. Something that would remind people of the American dream... The New Apollo Project represents a third wave of environmentalism. The first wave was framed around conservation and the second around regulation... the third wave will be framed around investment... The New Apollo Project recognises that we can no longer afford to address the world's problems separately."

"The way to win is not to defend – it's to attack. Industry opposition claims that action on global warming will cost billions of dollars and millions of jobs... Environmental leaders... tend to reinforce the industry position by responding to it, in typical literal fashion, rather than attack industry for opposing proposals that will create millions of good new jobs."

"Global warming is an apt example of why environmentalists must break out of their ghetto. Our opponents use our inability to form effective alliances to drive a wedge through our potential coalition. Some of this is a cultural problem. Environmentalists think: 'You're talking to me about *your* job – I'm talking about *saving the world!*' ... The tendency to put the environmental into an airtight container away from the concerns of others is at the heart of the environmental movement's defensiveness on economic issues [which] elevates the frame that action on global warming will kill jobs and raise electricity bills."

"The world's most effective leaders are not issue-identified but rather vision and value-identified. These leaders distinguish themselves by inspiring hope against fear, love against prejudice, and power against powerlessness. Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream speech' is famous because it put forward an inspiring, positive vision that carried a critique of the current moment within it. Imagine how history would have turned out had King given a 'I have a nightmare' speech instead. In the absence of a bold vision... environmental leaders are effectively giving the 'I have a nightmare' speech... A positive, transformative vision doesn't just inspire, it also creates the cognitive space for assumptions to be challenged and new ideas to surface. And it helps everyone to get out of their 'issue boxes'."

"Environmentalists... tend to see values as a distraction from 'the real issues' – environmental problems like global warming... If environmentalists hope to become more than a special interest we must start framing our proposals around core American values."

"Environmentalists... are so certain about what the problem is, and so committed to their legislative solutions, that we behave as though all we need to do is to tell the literal truth in order to pass our policies. Environmentalists need to tap into the creative worlds of myth-making, even religion... to figure out who we are and who we need to be."

The Impact of Sustainable Development on Public Behaviour. By Andrew Darnton. COI/Defra 2004

"'Sustainable development' should not be made the subject of a communications campaign to the general public. The concept is not understood and cannot be defined in a way that most of the public would be satisfied with... 'Sustainable lifestyles' offer a model for public behaviour change by laying out a framework for behaviours which individuals could adopt..."

"Behaviour change campaigns should be action-orientated, focused on only a narrow range of behaviours, community-led, immersed in local issues..."

"Campaigns for sustainable behaviour change should employ a wide range of tools... a targeted approach observing differences between subgroups should be adopted."

UK Communications Strategy on Climate Change. Including: The Rules of the Game. Principles of Climate Change Communications. By Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 8) and Ed Gillespie, Futerra. Defra 2005

"The strategy [to change attitudes towards climate change] recommends using positive and inspirational messages rather than fear or concern... It does not recommend 'above the line' TV or billboard advertising... We plan to galvanise local and regional communicators for climate change through financial support and guidance... High profile national communications will be used to support the local and regional initiatives... A new inspirational Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal and a branded statement are recommended to link the communications of different organisations."

“The rules for successful Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals are an extensive time frame, ranging from ten to 30 years... [and that they are] clear, compelling and easily expressed in plain English.”

The Rules of the Game: Principles of Climate Change Communication

- (1) Challenge habits of climate change communication: don't rely on concern about children's future or human survival instincts... people without children may care more about climate change than those with children... fight or flight human survival instincts have a time limit measured in minutes; don't create fear without agency... fear can create apathy if individuals have no agency to act upon the threat; don't attack or criticise home or family... it is unproductive to attack that which people hold dear.
- (2) Forget the climate change detractors... those who deny climate change are irritating but unimportant.
- (3) There is no 'rational man'... we rarely weigh objectively the value of different decisions.
- (4) Information can't work alone... remember also that money messages are important, but not that important.
- (5) Climate change must be 'front of mind' before persuasion works... currently telling the public to take notice of climate change is as successful as selling Tampax to men.
- (6) Use both peripheral and central processing... attracting attention to an issue can change attitudes but peripheral messages can be just as effective; a tabloid snapshot of Gwyneth Paltrow at a bus stop can help change attitudes to public transport.
- (7) Link climate change mitigation to positive desires/aspirations... linking mitigation to home improvement, self-improvement, green spaces or national pride are all worth investigating.
- (8) Use transmitters and social learning... people learn through social interaction and some people are better... trendsetters than others. Targeting these people will ensure that messages are transmitted effectively.
- (9) Beware the impacts of cognitive dissonance... confronting someone with the difference between their attitude and their actions... will make them more likely to change their attitude than their actions.
- (10) Use a clear and consistent explanation of climate change.
- (11) Government policy and communications on climate change must be consistent.
- (12) Create agency for combating climate change... agency is created when people know what to do, decide for themselves to do it, have access to the infrastructure in which to act, and understand that their contribution is important.
- (13) Make climate change a 'home' not 'away' issue... it is a global issue but we will feel its impact at home – and we can act on it at home.
- (14) Raise the status of climate change mitigation behaviours... energy efficiency behaviours can make you seem poor and unattractive.
- (15) Target specific groups... a classic marketing rule and one not always followed.
- (16) Create a trusted, credible, recognised voice on climate change.
- (17) Use emotions and visuals... changing behaviour by disseminating information doesn't always work but emotions and visuals usually do.
- (18) The context affects everything... the prioritisation of these principles must be subject to on-going assessments of the UK situation.

*“Few people even recognise the term sustainable development, let alone understand it.”
David Fell and Jayne Cox*

(19) The communications must be sustained over time... all the most successful public awareness campaigns have been sustained consistently over many years.

(20) Partnered delivery of messages will be more successful... partnered delivery is often a key component for projects that are large, complex and have many stakeholders.

Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour. By Kate Fox. Hodder 2005

“The first thing we need to be clear about... is that the car is not primarily a means of transport – or rather, if that sounds a bit too extreme, that our relationship with the car has very little to do with the fact that it gets us from A to B. Trains and buses get us from A to B; cars are part of our personal territory and part of our personal and social identity. A bus can take you to the shops and back, but you do not feel at home in it or possessive about it. A train can get you to work, but it does not make socially and psychologically significant statements about you.”

“Behavioural interventions tend to be more successful where there is an equal relationship between the influencer and the influenced and where both parties stand to gain from the outcome.”

David Halpern, Clive Bates, Geoff Mulgan, Stephen Aldridge, Greg Beales and Adam Heathfield

“... The ‘personal-territory’ factor is an important element of our relationship with the car. When Ford described their 1949 model as a ‘living-room on wheels’, they were cleverly appealing to a deep-seated human need for a sense of territory and security. This aspect of car-psychology is a cross-cultural universal, but it is of particular significance to the English because of our obsession with our homes, which is in turn related to our pathological preoccupation with privacy.”

“An Englishman’s home is his castle, and when an Englishman takes to the road in his car, a part of his castle goes with him. We have seen that on public transport. The English go to great lengths to maintain an illusion of privacy: we try to pretend that the strangers surrounding us simply do not

exist, and assiduously avoid any contact or interaction with them. In our mobile castles, this self-delusion becomes much easier: rather than an invisible ‘bubble’ of stand-offishness, we are enclosed in a real, solid shield of metal and glass. We can pretend not only that we are alone, but also that we are at home.”

“Talking about cars is a commonly accepted tool to ease conversation and achieve social bonding among men, along with sport, ie not to have a car prevents you from participating in accepted macho etiquette.”

Would You Kill for £3? By Tom Stafford. The Ecologist June 2003

“People who appear to ignore dissent have been found to adopt minority opinions when asked for their views privately, later or in a different form...”

“... Minorities tend to influence people by conversion – slow acting changes on their private thinking. This... may be so subtle as to affect people without them even realising it.”

“... The moral is clear: although it can feel hopeless to be in the minority, you can have a powerful effect. But you’ll never be thanked for it.”

Section 7 **Main project inputs: New informal public surveys**

Green-Engage Communications carried out informal market research through a variety of channels and at a number of locations around the country during the period August to September 2005. The survey was divided into two parts. Part One looked at attitudes and opinions on the environment and green living; Part Two focused on specific personal lifestyle choices and green behaviours adopted.

Important

This survey work was essentially informal. The results give clues to public attitudes and lifestyle choices but are not sufficient on their own to provide an accurate assessment. In essence, this research is something of a scoping exercise, making the case and paving the way for more extensive, detailed and scientific work by others.

A proportion of respondents were people who volunteered to do the survey and tended perhaps to be people more interested in green issues and therefore more likely to be environmentally active. The results are therefore likely to indicate greater awareness, concern and action than is actually the case. In addition, the sample was slanted towards south-east England.

Surveys of this kind are also inevitably fraught with the ‘I’d better give the right answer’ problem. On issues of ethics and responsibility people tend to slip into providing the answer they think they *ought* to provide, rather than respond truthfully, which might not present them personally in as good a light. As well as telling us what people think they *ought* to think, simple polls also reflect what people *think* they think, not necessarily what they really think. Inevitably some of the results here are consequently skewed towards what people thought was the ‘right answer’ or the ‘obvious answer’ and are likely to provide more optimistic reading than the real situation deserves.

The Part Two survey, which asked respondents to volunteer which green behaviours they had carried out recently, should be treated with particular care. All respondents were those who had specifically volunteered to do the self-assessment and it is likely that the sample was skewed towards those who thought they would ‘score well’. In addition, the assessment of behaviour is qualitative rather than quantitative. For example, someone who said they had bought organic food in the previous six months might have bought a substantial number of items or just one experimental purchase: the survey data doesn’t distinguish between these. The figures can only really be used to measure the relative popularity of different behaviours.

However, some interesting patterns are apparent in the survey results and form a useful basis for discussion and further work. These patterns must be tested against the in-built biases detailed above and also weighed up against those patterns identified in the other two main project inputs: existing research and the thoughts of key thinkers.

Part One: Attitudes and opinions on the environment and green living

Surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviews at a number of locations around England, through websites, through a radio station, through personal contact, through workplaces and through a tourism business. A total of 645 responses were received.

Face-to-face interview locations

London: Westminster, Redbridge,
Hammersmith, Ealing, Merton, Crystal Palace
Guildford
Hastings
Eastbourne
Chertsey, Surrey
Runnymede, Surrey
Reading
Sheffield
Yorkshire Dales

“The psychology of aspiration is not that of satisfaction. We do not always want what we like or like what we want.”
Daniel Nettle

Websites and other media

Transport 2000

grownupgreen

By Nature

Requests stemming from news articles in local newspapers in Bradford, Mansfield and Northampton

Passion for the Planet Radio

Personal contact/word of mouth

Belfast

Llandoverly

Edinburgh

Other locations

Other outlets

Tourism business, rural location near Skipton, North Yorkshire

Survey questions and results

1. Here are some statements about how you view the environment. Which is most accurate for you?

17 per cent said "I don't do anything to help the environment"

57 per cent said "I do a bit for the environment"

20 per cent said "I do a lot for the environment"

6 per cent said they didn't know

Analysis

People are naturally tempted to exaggerate their own actions and the difference between "a bit" and "a lot" is after all subjective. There is not much of comfort here... only a fifth of respondents felt able to say they did "a lot" to help the environment, which is probably the level of involvement that is needed.

2. How important do you think looking after the environment is?

69 per cent said "Very important"

27 per cent said "Quite important"

1 per cent said "Not very important"

<1 per cent said "Not at all important"

2 per cent said they didn't know

Analysis

People might have been tempted to give the 'right answer' here but the result is nevertheless encouraging with an overwhelming majority of 96 per cent saying they thought looking after the environment was important. That's a good starting point.

3. Do the following words produce positive or negative feelings in you? In other words, do they switch you on, arousing feelings of support, warmth, interest or agreement in you, or alternatively do they switch you off, arousing feelings of disagreement, boredom, hostility or alienation? It's about how the words make you *feel*.

Environment

80 per cent said they had positive feelings towards this word

1 per cent said they had negative feelings towards this word

10 per cent said they were neutral towards this word

3 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning

5 per cent said they didn't know

Environmentally friendly

80 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words

2 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words

8 per cent said they were neutral towards these words

5 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning

5 per cent said they didn't know

Green

70 per cent said they had positive feelings towards this word
 7 per cent said they had negative feelings towards this word
 17 per cent said they were neutral towards this word
 2 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 4 per cent said they didn't know

Conservation

72 per cent said they had positive feelings towards this word
 4 per cent said they had negative feelings towards this word
 12 per cent said they were neutral towards this word
 7 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 5 per cent said they didn't know

Sustainable development

74 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words
 3 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words
 11 per cent said they were neutral towards these words
 6 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 7 per cent said they didn't know

Sustainable living

50 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words
 6 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words
 14 per cent said they were neutral towards these words
 12 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 18 per cent said they didn't know

Pressure group

30 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words
 35 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words
 23 per cent said they were neutral towards these words
 5 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 8 per cent said they didn't know

Campaign group

42 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words
 17 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words
 30 per cent said they were neutral towards these words
 3 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 9 per cent said they didn't know

Save the world

58 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words
 9 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words
 22 per cent said they were neutral towards these words
 2 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 9 per cent said they didn't know

The planet

69 per cent said they had positive feelings towards these words
 3 per cent said they had negative feelings towards these words
 17 per cent said they were neutral towards these words
 4 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 6 per cent said they didn't know

Nature

83 said they had positive feelings towards this word
 1 per cent said they had negative feelings towards this word
 10 per cent said they were neutral towards this word
 <1 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
 6 per cent said they didn't know

“Our behaviour as consumers is influenced by many factors, including social norms, our emotional responses, our morals, and the limited amount of information we can process. But one overriding factor affects our behaviour as consumers and makes us reluctant to change: habit.” Maxine Holdsworth and Paul Steedman

Eco

61 per cent said they had positive feelings towards this word
11 per cent said they had negative feelings towards this word
20 per cent said they were neutral towards this word
4 per cent said they were unsure of the meaning
5 per cent said they didn't know

Analysis

The illuminating aspect of these responses is not what the majority answered, which perhaps was never in doubt, but the amount of dissent to the popular answer in each case, in other words the size of the minority. These words are all used by the green movement – and NGOs in particular – on an everyday basis but some of them didn't resonate with significant numbers of people in this survey. And this was before the words were even put into a sentence and acquired some sort of distinct message. The green movement's choice of words should really aim to resonate with everyone. If they turn people away, or leave people indifferent or confused, then the words might not be the right ones to use. It might be suggested that where more than 25 per cent (and this is something of an arbitrary benchmark) can't respond positively to particular words, there might be a problem.

The more popular words here were "environment" and "nature". Perhaps obviously. They present a popular concept and do not automatically come with an agenda. Other words in the list are loaded in that, to varying extents, they represent a slanted view, ie the green movement's perspective. These words tended to be less popular. In particular, there seemed to be a problem with use of the words "green", "pressure group", "campaign group", "save the world", "the planet" and "eco".

The picture with the expressions "environmentally friendly", "sustainable development" and "sustainable living" is more confused. This survey showed "environmentally friendly" to be a popular term but other work suggests that men in particular find it more difficult to resonate with this. The big difference in response here between "sustainable development" and "sustainable living" is not immediately explained; other work suggests there might be a problem with the words "sustainable" and "sustainability".

4. This question is about your views of different organisations. Do you react to the following organisations in a positive or negative way in terms of how you view their work and what they say about things?

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK)

88 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
1 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
7 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
2 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
4 per cent said they didn't know

Friends of the Earth

70 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
7 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
16 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
2 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
5 per cent said they didn't know

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

78 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
2 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
11 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
2 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
7 per cent said they didn't know

National Trust

73 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
 3 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
 11 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
 7 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
 6 per cent said they didn't know

Greenpeace

50 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
 16 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
 22 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
 6 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
 6 per cent said they didn't know

Transport 2000

30 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
 6 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
 24 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
 29 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
 11 per cent said they didn't know

Green Alliance

25 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
 7 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
 29 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
 25 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
 13 per cent said they didn't know

Sustain

28 per cent said they reacted in a positive way to this organisation
 5 per cent said they reacted in a negative way to this organisation
 17 per cent said they were neutral towards this organisation
 38 per cent said they hadn't heard of this organisation
 13 per cent said they didn't know

Analysis

All the NGOs mentioned here are key players in the environmental movement. They stand for more or less the same principles, albeit applied in different areas of work, and indeed they often work together. Some are large while some are smaller; some use different working methods to others, but usually to a common end.

The figures clearly reveal some big issues here. The most popular organisations seemed to be WWF-UK, RSPB and the National Trust. Greenpeace suffered from a significant negative/neutral block. The smaller organisations – Transport 2000, Green Alliance and Sustain – while not experiencing much of a negative backlash, suffered from indifference, a lack of recognition and a degree of confusion.

Why should this be? The three 'winners' all have agreeable visual images associated with them: animals, singing birds and beautiful houses with fine countryside. They are big organisations, perhaps exuding stability and normality. The three smaller groups perhaps suffer from a lack of these icons and from their smaller size. Some people don't warm to the idea of pressure or campaign groups (see earlier) and this might be because they find the idea of a group of people trying to change things to their own agenda rather unsettling. To some it might even go in the same mental compartment as a coup or anarchic behaviour. This effect might be greater when the group is relatively small, removing the sense of familiarity, normality, mandate and even respectability that comes with increased size of organisation. This is apart from the obvious observation from the survey results that many people just hadn't come across these organisations before. Greenpeace perhaps suffers from an unfortunate image in the eyes of many of the public. It's enduring icon is the rubber dinghy bristling with angry young men. If the idea of a 'pressure group' unsettles some people and runs counter to their subconscious need for comfortable stability, this is likely to lead to an even more severe reaction.

5. This question is about 'being green'. To what extent do you think the following statements are true about having a green lifestyle and helping the environment?

Having a green lifestyle "is gloomy or miserable"

4 per cent said this was strongly true
7 per cent said this was slightly true
77 per cent said this was not true
12 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is hippy or New Age"

10 per cent said this was strongly true
27 per cent said this was slightly true
48 per cent said this was not true
15 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is normal"

40 per cent said this was strongly true
42 per cent said this was slightly true
6 per cent said this was not true
11 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is sensible"

76 per cent said this was strongly true
19 per cent said this was slightly true
No-one said this was not true
5 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is nerdy or silly"

4 per cent said this was strongly true
11 per cent said this was slightly true
75 per cent said this was not true
9 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is complicated or difficult"

9 per cent said this was strongly true
25 per cent said this was slightly true
52 per cent said this was not true
14 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is expensive"

9 per cent said this was strongly true
26 per cent said this was slightly true
52 per cent said this was not true
13 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is boring"

9 per cent said this was strongly true
10 per cent said this was slightly true
70 per cent said this was not true
11 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "is healthy"

66 per cent said this was strongly true
26 per cent said this was slightly true
1 per cent said this was not true
6 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle "makes you feel good"

50 per cent said this was strongly true
28 per cent said this was slightly true
6 per cent said this was not true
16 per cent said they didn't know

Having a green lifestyle “is trendy or ‘cool’”

18 per cent said this was strongly true
 28 per cent said this was slightly true
 40 per cent said this was not true
 14 per cent said they didn't know

Analysis

As before, it is not the most popular response that is of interest here but the size of the dissenting minority. These statements deliberately play on people's perceptions and prejudices and while the 'right answer' effect must surely have come into play here, the number of people unable to give the answer the green movement would want to hear could be the crucial factor.

There is good news: generally people thought leading a green lifestyle was sensible, healthy and likely to make them feel good. However, significant numbers of people considered green living to be (or were confused over whether it might be) hippy, complicated or difficult, expensive, boring and not trendy. A majority said that green living was normal but this is contradicted by another finding in this survey and by thinking from other research.

6. Environmental organisations like the ones mentioned earlier often tell us that we should do more to help the environment. Which statement is true for you?

55 per cent said “It encourages me to do more”
 3 per cent said “It encourages me to do less”
 29 per cent said “I still do about the same”
 13 per cent said they didn't know

Analysis

This is bad news for campaigning NGOs hoping to influence public behaviour: the current way of selling environmental behaviour didn't appear to work with almost half the people in this survey.

7. If we were honest, probably all of us could do more to help the environment but we all have reasons why we don't. Do any of the following reasons stop you doing more?

Of the people who gave reasons...
 57 per cent said “I don't have time”
 38 per cent said “I don't know what to do”
 32 per cent said “Others around me aren't doing anything”
 23 per cent said “I can't afford it”
 20 per cent said “Action by me won't make much difference”
 13 per cent said “I've got bigger problems to deal with”
 12 per cent said “It's all too much trouble or such hard work”
 8 per cent said “I don't think it's important”
 7 per cent said “It's not something for people like me”

 24 per cent said “None of these/don't know”

Analysis

First of all, around a quarter of people appeared to have no easily understood reason why they didn't do more for the environment. There might not have been a reason at all... just inertia. Sometimes reasons are sought, when there simply are none.

Second, the common reasons given underlined the perception that being green is time consuming, expensive and futile without a combined effort from everyone. There was also a feeling of helplessness apparent in what to actually do at a personal level. Interestingly not many people were prepared to say it was “not something for people like them”, possibly because, as explained before, this would not present them personally in a very good light, particularly in a face-to-face interview. Other work suggests this might actually be a more significant factor subconsciously than this survey suggested.

8. Would any of the following things encourage you to do more for the environment?

Of the people who said things would encourage them...
 82 per cent said “More facilities to help greener lifestyles, such as recycling bins”

Painting the Town Green

81 per cent said "More advice from experts on what to do"
74 per cent said "More information on environmental threats and problems"
61 per cent said "Clearer guidance from government and councils on what's expected"
60 per cent said "More encouragement in newspapers and on TV"
53 per cent said "Regulations that mean others have to do their bit too"
53 per cent said "It becoming more normal or acceptable to go green"
44 per cent said "Financial incentives"
26 per cent said "It becoming more trendy or less nerdy to go green"

5 per cent said "Nothing would make me change"
15 per cent said that none of these applied or they didn't know

Analysis

Perhaps predictably people said they wanted more facilities, advice, information and guidance. A large number of people agreed that more encouragement in newspapers and on television would lead to them doing more for the environment. Many wanted others to be forced to toe the line and some wanted financial incentives. In an apparent contradiction to a previous question in which most people agreed that being green was "normal", a majority here appeared to indicate they were held back in terms of going green by it not being seen as normal or acceptable.

9. Can you think of any good green role models or leaders of the green movement that you look up to?

The following were among people identified – omitting Wayne Rooney and other hopeful but rather doubtful suggestions – and are in no particular order.

Alan Titchmarsh, Tony Juniper, Jean Lambert, Crispin Tickell, Tony Robinson, Joanna Lumley, Richard Mabey, Ray Mears, Prince Charles, Rick Stein, Sting, David Bellamy, David Attenborough, Jamie Oliver, Bill Oddie, Satish Kumar, Anita Roddick, George Monbiot, Jonathan Porritt, Richard Leakey, Michael Palin, John Craven, Caroline Lucas, Tony Blair, Charlie Dimmock, Brian Blessed, Max Hastings, Naomi Klein, Monty Don, Tim Smit, David Begg, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow, Geoff Hamilton, John Whitelegg, Chris Baines, Peter Scott, Tom and Barbara from *The Good Life* TV series, Eddie Izzard, Zac Goldsmith, Kim Wilde, Janie Lee Grace, Ken Livingstone, Michael Meacher, Penney Poyzer.

63 per cent of respondents had no green role model or person they looked up to at all.

Analysis

This is perhaps one of the green movement's key problems. Almost two-thirds of people in this survey, which was possibly biased towards people with environmental leanings anyway, had no-one to look up to in the green movement. A lot of respected research work – and most television advertising – suggests that the presence of role models promoting a particular behaviour, activity or product can be a powerful force, perhaps even an essential tool.

Respondents fell into the following categories

Sex...

56 per cent were female
44 per cent were male

Age...

1 per cent were aged up to 15
18 per cent were aged 16-24
24 per cent were aged 25-34
20 per cent were aged 35-44
18 per cent were aged 45-54
12 per cent were aged 55-64
8 per cent were aged 65 or over

Ethnic origin...

9 per cent were Asian
3 per cent were of Black/African descent

*“Iron rusts from disuse,
stagnant water loses its purity
and in cold weather becomes
frozen; even so does inaction
sap the vigours of the
mind.” Leonardo Da Vinci*

5 per cent were of Black/Caribbean descent
 <1 per cent were Latino/Hispanic
 5 per cent were Middle Eastern
 1 per cent were Mixed
 75 per cent were White/Caucasian
 1 per cent were of other origin

Newspapers read...

6 per cent read the *Daily Express/Sunday Express*
 13 per cent read the *Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday*
 5 per cent read the *Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror*
 2 per cent read the *Daily Sport*
 2 per cent read the *Daily Star*
 11 per cent read the *Daily Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph*
 7 per cent read the *Financial Times*
 30 per cent read the *Guardian/Observer*
 15 per cent read the *Independent/Independent on Sunday*
 11 per cent read the *Sun/News of the World*
 21 per cent read *The Times/Sunday Times*
 26 per cent read none of these

Analysis

This survey was biased towards females, who appeared more willing to talk about the environment in a face-to-face situation or more likely to volunteer to do a questionnaire in their own time. This bears out suggestions elsewhere in this report that being environmentally friendly is slightly on the softer, feminine side of human psyche, appealing less to those with a harder, masculine slant.

This survey also clearly failed to engage with enough readers of tabloid newspapers, and readers of the more ethical quality newspapers were consequently over-represented. Again, this underlines the differing levels of interest in the environment between different groups. It was clearly harder to have a dialogue (either verbal or written) on the environment with a *Sun* reader than with a *Guardian* or *Independent* reader.

Part Two: Personal lifestyle choices

Part Two surveys were distributed as a take-home follow-up to the on-the-street interviews and also through the other outlets detailed for the Part One surveys. A total of 393 responses were received. Respondents gave information about their lifestyle choices over the previous six months (roughly the first half of 2005).

Survey questions and results

Transport

9 per cent had bought a particular car or other vehicle mainly or partly because of its environmental performance
 47 per cent had used public transport for journeys even though they had access to a car
 29 per cent had taken up cycling or started walking more for everyday journeys
 32 per cent had left the car at home and walked or cycled for journeys they were tempted to use the car for
 12 per cent had consciously decided to do without a car for environmental reasons

Leisure

11 per cent had avoided flying for environmental reasons
 15 per cent had chosen a holiday destination as close to home as possible for environmental reasons
 25 per cent had chosen holiday activities with their impact on the local environment in mind

Waste and recycling

54 per cent had refused plastic bags or other packaging when offered in shops to cut waste
 74 per cent had reused bags or other packaging materials to cut waste
 83 per cent had recycled paper, glass, plastic or cans
 45 per cent had composted items at home
 33 per cent had chosen to repair goods in preference to replacing them, regardless of which was cheaper

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75 per cent had made a point of passing on unwanted items to people who could make use of them, eg by giving to charity shops, rather than disposing of them as rubbish

49 per cent had made sure any items of furniture, electrical goods, vehicle parts, etc at the end of their life were disposed of properly

Food

44 per cent had made a point of buying locally produced food in preference to imported items

61 per cent had bought organic food

19 per cent had avoided buying or eating fish or other food products from depleted wild stocks, such as cod, haddock or wild salmon

34 per cent had avoided eating 'out of season' foods, eg strawberries in winter time, brought in from abroad or grown in heated glasshouses

26 per cent had reduced consumption of meat in favour of vegetarian dishes for environmental or ethical reasons

31 per cent had grown food at home

Energy

48 per cent had turned down heating levels at home to save energy to help the environment

56 per cent had used low energy light bulbs

64 per cent had made a point of not leaving electrical appliances, eg TVs, DVD players, computers, etc, on stand-by because of the energy wasted

33 per cent had avoided 'home mechanisation' by doing as many tasks as possible by hand, such as washing up, drying clothes, etc to cut energy use

35 per cent had ensured heat loss at home was kept to a minimum through insulation or other energy conservation measures to at least recommended standards

19 per cent had bought electricity from an electricity company using energy from renewable sources

Chemicals and pollution

31 per cent had used environmentally friendly detergents, eg Ecover, or reduced use of polluting materials such as bleach-based products

47 per cent had consciously avoided using chemicals on the garden or houseplants

Conserving natural resources

17 per cent had checked tropical timber products or other materials before buying them to ensure they came from legitimate and environmentally responsible sources

55 per cent had bought goods made from recycled materials, eg writing paper made from recycled fibre or bin liners made from recycled plastic, in preference to new materials

34 per cent had avoided clothing or other items arising from trade in endangered animals or plants

40 per cent had consciously reduced water use at home to help the environment

23 per cent had made a point of re-using waste water at home, eg using vegetable-preparation water for watering the garden

28 per cent had collected rainwater for garden use

Finance

19 per cent had used bank accounts, mortgage providers or savings schemes that promoted ethical and environmental considerations

Taking part

47 per cent had donated money to, or been a member of, an environmental charity or organisation, or had carried out voluntary work in the environmental field

33 per cent had voted for politicians, local or national, at least in part based on their promises on the environment

49 per cent had promoted environmentally friendly behaviour to others

Analysis

It has been suggested already that people most willing to volunteer information about their personal lifestyles are likely to be those with 'less to hide'. Someone unable to tick many boxes on this survey form would understandably have been reluctant to post it back. Therefore, at first glance this part of the survey work might give a very rose-tinted view of the take-up of environmental behaviours. What it does usefully show is the *relative* popularity of different behaviours. It is suggested that any behaviours scoring less than 25 per cent might be seen as particularly unpopular or difficult and they therefore sound an 'alarm signal' to those promoting them.

The greatest take-up among respondents here was in the areas of waste/recycling, organic food, domestic energy consumption and use of recycled materials, probably paper. The less popular actions appeared to be in the areas of car use, holidays and flying, choosing sustainably harvested fish, signing up to green electricity, taking care to check timber for sustainability, re-using waste water at home and using ethical finance or savings schemes.

Respondents fell into the following categories

Sex...

63 per cent were female

37 per cent were male

Age...

<1 per cent were aged up to 15

14 per cent were aged 16-24

23 per cent were aged 25-34

21 per cent were aged 35-44

22 per cent were aged 45-54

13 per cent were aged 55-64

7 per cent were aged 65 or over

Ethnic origin...

3 per cent were Asian

1 per cent were of Black/African descent

1 per cent were of Black/Caribbean descent

<1 per cent were Latino/Hispanic

1 per cent were Middle Eastern

1 per cent were Mixed

93 per cent were White/Caucasian

<1 per cent were of other origin

“Thinking is easy, acting is difficult; and to put one’s thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.”
Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Newspapers read...

5 per cent read the *Daily Express/Sunday Express*

11 per cent read the *Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday*

3 per cent read the *Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror*

2 per cent read the *Daily Sport*

1 per cent read the *Daily Star*

12 per cent read the *Daily Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph*

7 per cent read the *Financial Times*

24 per cent read the *Guardian/Observer*

13 per cent read the *Independent/Independent on Sunday*

5 per cent read the *Sun/News of the World*

20 per cent read *The Times/Sunday Times*

25 per cent read none of these

Analysis

This part of the survey was even more strongly biased towards females, perhaps no surprise given the voluntary nature of the process and the comments made earlier about the gender response to these issues. As with Part One, tabloid readers were under-represented and quality paper readers over-represented.

Section 8 **Main project inputs: The views, ideas and vision of key thinkers**

Key thinkers from all areas of the green movement were approached for their own views, ideas and vision of how green behaviours could be better presented and more universally adopted. The key thinkers included current and former political leaders with an environmental remit, people in statutory bodies, academics, authors, communications consultants, figures in environmental campaigning organisations, environmental consultants, representatives of green commerce and media figures.

The following people provided formal contributions specifically for the Green-Engage project

Political leaders

Peter Ainsworth MP, Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; former Chair, House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee

Norman Baker MP, former Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Tom Brake MP, former Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, Chair, Conservative Policy Review and Research Department; former Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP, former Labour Minister of State for Environment

Lord Larry Whitty, House of Lords; former Labour Minister in Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions; former General Secretary, Labour Party; Vice-President, Transport 2000; Chair, National Consumer Council

Figures from statutory/formal bodies

Joanna Collins, Convener, Sustainable Consumption Roundtable

Harriet Festing, Head of Communications, Sustainable Development Commission

Paul Steedman, Senior Researcher, National Consumer Council

Alex Veitch, Strategy Manager for Transport, Energy Saving Trust

Rebecca Willis, Vice-Chair, Sustainable Development Commission; Associate, Green Alliance

Academics

Dr Tracey Bedford, researcher in ethical consumerism and sustainable lifestyles

Dr Patrick Devine-Wright, Senior Research Fellow in Environmental Psychology, Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development, De Montfort University, Leicester

Tara Garnett, Research Fellow, Food Climate Research Network, University of Surrey

Dr Mayer Hillman, Senior Fellow Emeritus, Policy Studies Institute

Rachel Muckle, Research Fellow, Environmental Psychology Research Group, University of Surrey

Dr Steve Stradling, Professor of Transport Psychology, Transport Research Institute, Napier University

Communications and behaviour specialists

Jayne Cox, David Fell, Alex Ledson, Richard Buckingham, Kate Philips and Phil Downing, Brook Lyndhurst (*the views expressed are a moderated response and not necessarily a consensus nor an agreed corporate position*)

Jon Cracknell, environmental grant-maker; Co-ordinator, Environmental Funders' Network; author of *Where the Green Grants Went*

Dr Adrian Davis, Director, Adrian Davis Associates

Deborah Mattinson, Chief Executive, Opinion Leader Research

Caroline Midmore, Independent Market Research Consultant, Caroline Midmore Associates

Martin Parkinson, researcher in environmental psychology

Chris Rose, Director, Campaign Strategy

Solitaire Townsend, Managing Director, Futerra Sustainability Communications

Non-governmental environmental campaigners, consultants and commentators

Dr Mark Avery, Director of Conservation, RSPB

Nicola Baird, co-author of *Earth Matters* and Co-author of *Save Cash and Save the Planet*, Friends of the Earth

Sian Berry, Campaigns Co-ordinator, Green Party of England and Wales; joint founder, Alliance Against Urban 4x4s

Emma Chapman, writer/researcher, Green Choices

Winnie De'Ath, Director of Communications, WWF-UK

Richard Evans, UK Co-ordinator, In Town Without My Car! and European Mobility Week

Malcolm Fergusson, Senior Fellow, Institute for European Environmental Policy

Monica Frisch, writer/researcher, Green Choices

Elaine Gilligan, Head of Activism, Friends of the Earth

Eugenie Harvey, Managing Director, We Are What We Do

Andrew Lee, Director, Sustainable Development Commission; former Director of Campaigns, WWF-UK

Jeanette Longfield, Co-ordinator, Sustain

George Marshall, Co-Executive Director, Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN); founder, Rising Tide

Lorraine Mirham, Project Manager, grownupgreen

Carey Newson, Associate, Transport for Quality of Life; adviser on sustainable travel strategies to Transport 2000

Helena Norberg-Hodge, Director, International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC)

Sara Parkin OBE, founder/Director, Forum for the Future; Board member of Environment Agency (England and Wales), National Environment Research Council and Leadership Foundation for Higher Education; adviser to Real World Coalition; Co-Secretary, European Green Parties; former Chair, Green Party Executive

Trewin Restorick, Director, Global Action Plan

Dr Lynn Sloman, Partner, Transport for Quality of Life; Member, Commission for Integrated Transport; Special Adviser, Board, Transport for London; Board member, Cycling England

John Stewart, Chair, Transport 2000; Chair, HACAN ClearSkies; Chair, UK Noise Association

Perry Walker, Head of Democracy and Participation, New Economics Foundation

Figures from green business

Bill Dunster, Principle, Bill Dunster Architects and ZEDfactory

Jo North, Director of UK Sales and Chief of Staff, UK Bus, FirstGroup

Graham Randles, Director, By Nature

Margreet Westerhuis, Commercial Director, organic supermarket chain

Media figures and authors

Chantal Cooke, Managing Director, Passion for the Planet

Leo Hickman, journalist, *Guardian*; author of *A Good Life: The Guide to Ethical Living* and *A Life Stripped Bare: Tiptoeing through the Ethical Minefield*

Tim Hirsch, former Environment Correspondent, BBC News

Penney Poyzer, presenter of BBC2's *No Waste Like Home*, author of accompanying book and co-owner of Nottingham eco-home

Anna Semlyen, author of *Cutting Your Car Use*; columnist for *Car Busters*, magazine of the World Car Free Network

Lucy Siegle, ethical living and eco-writer, *Observer*; author of *Green Living in the Urban Jungle*; contributing author, *A Good Life: The Guide to Ethical Living*

Polly Toynbee, columnist, *Guardian*

Martin Wright, Editor-in-Chief, *Green Futures*; Associate Director, Forum for the Future; Senior Associate, Futerra; Associate, Demos

Contributions were given in answer to a structured series of questions. Some contributors preferred to make their comments anonymously. Some of the most interesting comments are reproduced here; necessarily this is a selection and the omission of any contribution or point of view by any contributor should not be taken to imply lack of relevance or worth, just lack of space.

1. Do people care about the environment?

“Yes, I believe people care a great deal about the environment. Often, however, they see it not as a grand, global issue but as the state of their street and the beauty, or not, of the area in which they live.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“Of course they do, provided its expression does not exact too high a penalty on their preferred course of action.” Dr Mayer Hillman

“Yes, in an abstract way, but for most people, not enough to change their behaviour.” Tom Brake MP

“Yes, if you ask them, as MORI polls etc regularly show. But it’s a bit like asking if people care about children or animals. It’s very hard to say ‘No, I don’t care about the environment’ but another thing entirely to align your behaviour to reflect your beliefs.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“Yes, but I think many people feel genuinely overwhelmed. They don’t know where to start or what to do for best effect. People need to be inspired and there is no-one at the top doing this. We need a visionary.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“Most people would say they do but they mean different things and it does not have as high a salience with the majority as social and economic issues. For example, there are a lot of people concerned about the immediate ambient environment – pollution, noise, light pollution, congestion, graffiti, etc – as part of social concerns. There is another group concerned about flora and fauna and landscapes and their conservation, another group concerned with animal welfare and agricultural patterns or food contamination, and another with the big global issues. Outside of activists, these groups do not overlap significantly.” Lord Whitty

*“At a deep level people do care about the environment but it is not a front of mind concern and it can be quickly subsumed by matters which are seen as more pressing such as money, education, crime, etc.”
Trewin Restorick for Painting the Town Green*

“We care about the environment... but we also care about football scores, keeping up with the Joneses and losing weight. Most of us aren’t eco-warriors or even eco-worriers. The term ‘environment’ itself is confusing. Is it verdant forests with fascinating fluffy critters, sparkly seas and clear blue skies over rolling green hills? Or breathable air, drinkable water and stable weather? Pandas or climate change? Fuel tax or recycling? Is ‘the environment’ something separate to the concerns and hopes that come out top in survey after survey. We don’t even

really need to ask if people care about health, family, crime, money, etc. Embedding the environment into things we know people care about might be more successful than striving to make it a category all of its own.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“Yes. The overwhelming majority of people in society express environmental concerns. Most people enjoy and benefit from environment and nature.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“Absolutely. More so those who have the luxury in terms of time, money and lifestyle to be able to focus on and enjoy the environment around them. People in the depth of poverty have different priorities.” Margreet Westerhuis

“Yes. Even 61 per cent of ‘die hard drivers’ say ‘Being environmentally responsible is important to me.’” Dr Steve Stradling (see also Section 6)

“Increasingly, yes they do. I measure this by the amount of mail I receive, reactions to my weekly comments and by the increasingly young and fresh faced audiences at talks. These are not just the old school environmentalists and worthy livers.” Lucy Siegle

“People certainly care about their personal home and office environments. Most people, most of the time, see ‘the environment’ as being a long way away but at the same time, many people care passionately about one or more element of the whole – garden wildlife, for example, or familiar landscapes.” Emma Chapman

“Sporadically, inconsistently, and when it suits/doesn’t inconvenience them.” Tara Garnett

“Yes, in a general way; and very much when they have a local problem, eg floods, incinerator plans, graffiti, litter, over-development.” Key thinker

“Yes, of course they do if we unpack the word ‘environment’ into what means something to people.” George Marshall

“Yes, at least in an abstract sort of way, perhaps in the same way that they care for their elderly relatives. What I mean by this is that if you ask people the question ‘Do you care about the environment?’ most will say ‘Yes’ because it’s the right thing to say. What really matters and what gives us the real answer to the question is what people are doing about it.” Graham Randles

“I think environmental reasons are mostly ‘post hoc’ rationalisation for choosing certain behaviours, rather than the initial motivation for change.” Dr Lynn Sloman for Painting the Town Green

“Yes, but... Environment is still not seen as important as crime, health and education, and at election time it’s not seen as something you vote for.” Elaine Gilligan

“It depends how you define ‘environment’. Many people think in terms of their local environment and they get animated when part of that local environment that they care about comes under threat. On a global level, in a way we’re all environmentalists now: the concept has broad

acceptance but this latent concern doesn’t translate into action or behaviour change.” Jon Cracknell

“I suspect most people would say yes to this question. However, if you measured it by their actions and purchases, most actually don’t care enough to change their habits.” Richard Evans

“They care very much but there is a difference in the way they care about their immediate local environment and the wider global environment. There is a level of dis-empowerment associated with global issues, which leave people to feel concerned but without a feeling of control.” Rachel Muckle

“Maybe, but I think environmental reasons are mostly ‘post hoc’ rationalisation for choosing certain behaviours, rather than the initial motivation for change. Surveys of the reasons people choose to walk or cycle (rather than drive) for short journeys suggest that the prime motivations are related to exercise or health and fitness, and that concern about the environment comes a poor second, third or fourth. The reason the environment is not a strong motivator is because people do not feel that their individual action will make a difference. That is, issues such as climate change lie within our ‘sphere of concern’ (ie we worry about them), but outside what we perceive to be our ‘sphere of influence’.” Dr Lynn Sloman

“Everyone cares about their local environment, with its links to pride and self-esteem. A sizeable minority (organic shoppers and NGO members) define their identities around broader environmental concern. Ironically these are often from more affluent groups with relatively high environmental impact from homes, travel and vehicles. Most have a latent guilt or unease about the prospect of climate chaos and species extinctions.” Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

“There is increasing evidence that people ‘get’ the fact that the earth’s natural resources are under pressure and that it’s something to do with how we all live. There is also evidence that although most people don’t spontaneously use language like ‘environment’, ‘sustainability’ or even ‘well-being’, these issues are reflected in what they think and feel about their homes, how they get about, the food they eat, etc. WWF’s own research suggests that there are rather more than 9 million UK citizens who are ‘environmentally persuadable’ (show environmental leanings or support an NGO).” Andrew Lee

“Yes, whether knowingly or not, most people appreciate clean air, no pollution and pleasant surroundings.” Winnie De’Ath

“Yes – RSPB has over 1 million members who care about birds, wildlife and the environment in general.” Dr Mark Avery

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“Yes in theory, but often not enough to make significant changes to personal behaviour, especially if they are perceived to involve inconvenience, cost or departure from ‘cool’ consumption.” Key thinker

“Yes, of course they do – but you have to ask what ‘care’ and ‘environment’ mean. I think everyone is amenable to the basic arithmetic that lies behind the arguments for sustainability, it’s just that plenty of stuff gets in the way of acting on that understanding, and one’s immediate environment will always be of more concern than an abstraction like the climate.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“Yes, in principle, people do care. They realise there is a problem, they accept that climate change is happening and they would prefer to be kind to the planet. The difficulty is in practice.” Carey Newson

“I fear there’s a big class gap here. However we slice up the ‘consumer’ through segmentation, I think it often boils down to better educated middle/upper class people knowing and caring about the environment, with working class people less likely to be interested.” Alex Veitch

“Some do, particularly those who are not in desperate financial or emotional or health conditions.” Anna Semlyen (see also Section 4)

“Climate change seems to worry most people almost everywhere. However, people seem confused by what it will mean and which actions will make the most difference. Local environmental issues seem able to fire people up most if an area they value is under threat, but I am amazed at the number of people who are willing to put up with living in a severely degraded environment just because they are used to it. Getting people to want to *improve* their environment, rather than just conserve it, seems to be a problem.” Sian Berry

“The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable recently held a consumer forum in Manchester. We gathered 100 ‘ordinary’ consumers together to discuss their aspirations for their lifestyles in the future and then to pose a series of dilemmas or policy choices, to test their reactions. We were very struck by the fact that numerous environmental concerns – especially climate change and food issues – emerged spontaneously in early discussion, before participants even knew that this was to be a forum about sustainability, or who was running it. When we did introduce environmental problems to the discussion, people were engaged and articulate in discussing the problems and possible solutions.” Paul Steedman (see also Section 6)

“At a deep level people do care about the environment but it is not a front of mind concern and it can be quickly subsumed by matters which are seen as more pressing such as money, education, crime, etc.” Trewin Restorick

“Yes, most people do. Most people are concerned about their local environment. It is often, though, not the specifically ‘green’ environment. What people feel impact most on their daily lives are things like litter, dog mess, with the two top concerns tending to be crime and noise.” John Stewart

“Some clearly do, others clearly don’t. Some are still undecided about what ‘the environment’ actually means to them.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Yes... but much less than they care about other issues: health, education, crime, the economy.” Deborah Mattinson

“Yes, but I doubt it would make the top ten of things that most people care about.” Key thinker

“Yes, in abstract, and about a range of issues, but more usually not enough either to forego what is perceived as a better option, or to make an extra effort, or suffer even modest inconvenience.” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“People range from deep green to not green at all, through shades of green awareness and activity. Deep greens are probably members of some kind of environmental campaigning organisation, have an awareness of the issues behind the headlines and can debate the pros and cons of different strategies to tackle environmental problems. They are extremely cynical about the motives of big business and national government. They are evangelists but most of their friends already believe and they can have a tendency to come across as puritanical and unrealistic to others. Mid-greens already take some green actions (mainly the easy ones like recycling bottles, buying some eco-friendly products), firmly believe that the environment is an issue that needs to be addressed and that they should play their part but they don’t really understand all the arguments behind the actions they’re being asked to take, and therefore only take the easier ones. They are fairly willing to believe that business and government should be doing more to bring about change, both within their own areas of influence and in terms of public opinion. Less greens agree that the environment is quite an important issue but it’s one that ‘someone else’ needs to do something about. They’d say there’s no point them spending extra on recycled/organic products because their little bit won’t make enough difference and they can’t really afford it. It’s the government’s job to do something really, it’s too big an issue for

them to take on. And non-greens just don't see the problem. It's all a lot of scare-mongering and/or they have bigger things to worry about in their own lives, often but not always to do with making ends meet and/or living in social deprivation. Environmental campaigners are often characterised as loony lefties with no idea of how things are in the real world. It is useless to try to solve any part of the problem across the whole spectrum; each group needs different answers to be convinced of the arguments, and is at a different stage of adoption of green behaviours. Usefully, they tend to consume media in line with these groupings: *Guardian, Independent, The Times, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Sun* – broadly in order of decreasing green-ness." Caroline Midmore

2. Why aren't green behaviours achieving greater take-up?

"We have to ask the question why when there is a lot of good practice about, it's not catching on like wildfire. The reason is, people are being asked to go against the tide and are being given mixed signals. People want it to be cheaper and easier to go green and they want to be part of the mainstream; they don't want to be an exception. Also, there are no messages coming to people to reinforce good behaviour. No-one says 'Well done!'" Sara Parkin

"Over the past two decades, the average citizen of the industrial world has greater job insecurity, less time and more debt. I think another factor is that people have been told that they will solve environmental problems through individual, ethical choices and there is a sense that this will not really change things in a significant way." Helena Norberg-Hodge

"The environment still suffers from being seen as an add-on issue that people consider when the rest of their life allows, rather than as a central factor affecting their lives now and in the future. Floods from Bangladesh to Boscastle to Baton Rouge demonstrate the potential impact of global warming, even if the jury is still out on a direct connection between it and hurricanes." Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP

"I think there are two principal problems that affect most of us, including me. First, it is one thing to know there is a problem and quite another to change one's habits to help deal with it; second, it is much more difficult than it ought to be for busy people to find out about, and to take, many of the cost effective measures that make practical and economic sense and that are, at the same time, sympathetic to our environment." Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

"People are not sure what to do but above all they don't see anyone else changing their lives." Polly Toynbee (see also Foreword)

"There are a lot of different sorts of green behaviour, and many people do actually pursue all or some of them, for example eating organic food, cleaning up their neighbourhood. But if we mean by green behaviour concentration on conservation of resources and in particular not emitting large quantities of carbon, or not creating huge amounts of household waste, then a relatively high proportion of people are aware that they should be doing something about it, but in practice do not do so. This is partly because of actual or perceived cost; partly inconvenience, it's always easier and often less time consuming to take the car; and partly that it is not seen as trendy." Lord Whitty

“We have to ask the question why when there is a lot of good practice about, it's not catching on like wildfire. The reason is, people are being asked to go against the tide and are being given mixed signals. People want it to be cheaper and easier to go green and they want to be part of the mainstream; they don't want to be an exception. Also, there are no messages coming to people to reinforce good behaviour. No-one says 'Well done!'”
Sara Parkin for *Painting the Town Green*

"Green behaviour is viewed by the majority as going against the grain of consumerism into which they are immersed. Green implies having less, irrespective of arguments that less may be better than more. Capitalism requires a consumerist ethic which ignores the finite nature of resources. At the individual level, green is perceived as going against the grain." Dr Adrian Davis

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“People are pressed for time. Most of us prioritise the ‘urgent’ over the ‘important’. This is particularly true when being green is hard work. Most approaches that try to help people become greener are not ‘customer focused’. Where can a hard-pressed houseperson go to say: ‘I’d like to be greener, but I’ve only got a few hours and not much money. What should I do?’” Perry Walker

“It requires effort. People are too busy getting on with their own lives.” Tom Brake MP

“The key factors are perceived lack of time and convenience, fear of expense, and perhaps most importantly, the lack of belief that individual actions can really ever make a difference.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“Bearing in mind the structural and financial barriers, uptake is actually quite remarkable. Think of organics, the Body Shop, recycling... Think too of the strong forces pushing for unsustainable behaviour and it’s quite uplifting to think how resilient people are.” Key thinker

“Because they’re associated with sacrifice; with stuff that takes time/money; with being uncool/not fun. Because environmentalists are seen, with some justification, as a bunch of scare-mongering killjoys. Because the language of sustainable development is off-puttingly opaque. Experts talk unto experts and leave the rest of us bored. And because people look out of the window and see a pleasant, balmy autumn day, and so really don’t engage with all the Stop Climate Chaos! rhetoric...” Martin Wright

“A combination of many factors. In part the costs are still skewed towards less environmentally responsible choices: for example it is often still cheaper to take the car, even with single occupancy, than to travel by rail. Exhortations to recycle, cycle, avoid air travel and consume less are often seen as coming from preachy killjoys, entirely at odds with the aspirations which are so expertly tapped by those marketing unsustainable lifestyles.” Key thinker

“Because most people don’t see why they should act unilaterally. There is a sense that if this were really important, society would make changes so that green behaviours were supported and rewarded and ungreen behaviours discouraged and penalised with higher costs.” Carey Newson

“The environment still suffers from being seen as an add-on issue that people consider when the rest of their life allows, rather than as a central factor affecting their lives now and in the future. Floods from Bangladesh to Boscastle to Baton Rouge demonstrate the potential impact of global warming.” Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP for Painting the Town Green

“A whole raft of reasons... People are unsure what actions to take and what will make a difference. They don’t believe it is their responsibility and believe that action should be taken by government and industry. They are unsure their actions will make a significant difference. They still question the validity of the science. They don’t feel there is a moral imperative to act and no-one is providing them with this leadership. The systems of provision are hindering any steps that they might consider taking.” Trewin Restorick

“Where we’ve made a mistake is in not unpacking the word ‘environment’ into what has relevance to people. ‘Environmentalism’ has become associated with people from a certain class and political outlook. We need to get a greater diversity of people who speak about these issues.” George Marshall

“Many green behaviours are perceived as worthy, too time consuming and for anoraks. We can turn this around. It’s possible to pass a tipping point in a local action so a behaviour, like recycling, becomes a matter of civic pride, part of belonging to the community.” Jon Cracknell

“People like the benefits that consumption brings. Flying abroad on holiday is fun. Mobility is fun. Nice food is nice. Driving is easier than walking. And everyone else is doing the same thing. Greener personal behaviour requires self sacrifice for the public good and that sense of society and a desire for promoting the general collective good is lacking in our culture. And crucially the fiscal and regulatory incentives/disincentives aren’t there to get people to change.” Tara Garnett

“The biggest *technical* problem with green behaviour is our ‘agency’ to act. Agency is a catch-all term encompassing access, money, facilities, knowledge, ability, etc. If your local area has no recycling then it damages your agency, if organic food is too expensive for you then your agency is low, if you don’t know how to change to a green investment plan then your agency is depressed. Huge effort needs to be made in terms of fiscal incentives and improving access to green choices. But despite this great hurdle of infrastructure and cost, agency *is* possible to overcome, with the will power and commitment from those who control these things.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“Because our society has evolved in a way that allows people to ignore the adverse effects of their behaviour on others and on the environment.” Dr Mayer Hillman

“Because of the complexity of the issues, a sense of powerlessness in the face of global climate change, inertia, lack of education, the inaccessible language of ‘sustainable development’.” Key thinker

“I think that governments need to recognise that not everyone has a conscience which will drive them to be more environmentally friendly. There need to be carrot and stick policies which will reward those who make the effort to, for example, recycle and financially punish others for seeking convenience, for example by using plastic bags or not recycling. Expecting people to *want* to be more responsible is just being naïve.” Margreet Westerhuis

“The primary reasons are that alternatives are either not available or too expensive, that ‘habit and lock in’ prevent easy behaviour change, that people believe that the changes they can make as individuals won’t have a significant effect, that even if they do it others won’t, and that both government and business are hypocritical in asking people to take action as citizens and as consumers yet failing to provide the incentives and the evidence that they are prepared to meet individuals halfway.” Andrew Lee

““People are pressed for time. Most of us prioritise the ‘urgent’ over the ‘important’. This is particularly true when being green is hard work. Most approaches that try to help people become greener are not ‘customer focused’. Where can a hard-pressed houseperson go to say: ‘I’d like to be greener, but I’ve only got a few hours and not much money. What should I do?’” Perry Walker for Painting the Town Green

“Everyone is so busy. There are so many pressures. Consumer comfort is so seductive. ‘Everyone knows’ that green behaviour means self-sacrifice and less fun, in much the same way that ‘everyone knows’ that unhealthy food is the only food that tastes delicious and tempting. ‘Green’ is uncool and not for successful people – it’s the preserve of specific subcultures.” Emma Chapman

“Some green behaviours don’t seem like much fun to most people. Some are definitely seen as too aspirational and impractical for busy people. People now are much busier than they used to be and convenience is a much higher priority for most. Some green behaviours are seen as very cool but too expensive (buying a Prius, installing a garden heat pump). Some take up too much time and effort compared with the non-green version.” Sian Berry

“There are conflicts between what people would like to do and what they feel able to do.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“Because we rarely engage in proper, serious, nationwide debate. Too many schemes and education projects persist in treating the general public as idiots, feeding them small bits of piecemeal information, as in the case of recycling. There is a distinct lack of joined-up policy and commitment from local authorities for example. People need to be informed and encouraged and given real options including access to green space and fresh, local food. We shouldn’t be afraid of engaging people in the bigger debates – packaging waste, eco-design and technology. There’s too much emphasis on boiling just enough water and turning lights off, although small personal behaviours can be important. What many people want to see are some really strong campaigns taking on unsustainable behaviours, industries and corporations. Think Jamie Oliver and the school dinner campaign.” Lucy Siegle

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“There is a perceived lack of alternatives. Taking transport, there may be genuine alternatives available but the perception is that they’re *not* available.” Alex Veitch

“Many people don’t really understand just what a threat climate change is and don’t see it as an immediate or even medium-term threat. The pull of the consumer lifestyle is too strong and it can be quite difficult to live a green lifestyle.” John Stewart

“It seems to me there is a groundswell of opinion that something is up and that we ought to do our bit to address it. That said, it appears to be difficult for some of us to adopt some, if any, of the solutions. I think this might be for a range of reasons that could include financial viability/attractiveness, perceived risk, hassle outweighing obvious benefits, a feeling that bigger fish ought to be setting an example.” Lorraine Mirham

“A key barrier is the idea that the individual cannot do anything. Either it is somebody else’s responsibility, or the individual contribution is too tiny to make any difference.” Malcolm Fergusson

“There is a general perception that the UK lacks cohesion when it comes to being organised about the environment. The government and local authorities offer somewhat piecemeal advice: for example it is down to where you live as to how easy it is to recycle, to access grants for, say, solar thermal panels. There has also been a lack of example. This is why the show on BBC2, *No Waste Like Home*, was so useful: it was a ‘how to’ guide. It showed solutions to a number of household sustainability issues, in a variety of household settings around the UK. Viewers valued the clarity and were able to identify with some of the behaviours and therefore they did not feel so isolated. I think the general population would also do more if they felt incentivised. It is actually made quite difficult to adopt green behaviours; there are barriers in the way that mean people really have to make an effort to be green.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“There are no real role models for cool, green behaviour. Celebrities would help convert a certain section of the population. Many Hollywood stars are in fact green (ish) but we don’t tend to have the same sort of calibre of celebrity in the UK and if we do, they aren’t making much of a noise about it.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Environmental threats don’t appear to be imminent; these days, for example, pretty much every woman of my age has a friend or relation or knows of someone reasonably directly who has suffered from breast cancer. I also think there is a perception that green behaviours are boring and impinge on your ability to have a full life.” Eugenie Harvey (see also Section 4)

“There is still a sense from some overly busy people that caring for the environment is for people who are losers, or who have too much time on their hands. They fail to recognise the significant work-life balance advantages.” Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

“They are seen to be too difficult – and often are difficult. There is a lack of government action to make ‘good’ behaviour easy. We fail to value the truly important currencies of human well being – energy, water, food. Instead we value money and consumer goods.” Dr Mark Avery

“Experimental psychology paints a very humbling picture of human motivation. A picture which is quite contrary to the rhetoric of heroic individuality that pervades public discourse (promises of ‘choice’ alternating with moral exhortation from politicians). When you try to look at it as a social scientist, it looks very much as if we mostly just bumble about, semi-consciously pushed this way and that by our habits, the desire to fit in, the need for status, and miscellaneous urges for sex, comfort, novelty, thrills. To a large extent, we just do what the people around us do – it’s a pretty safe default option for most purposes. Why did it take me so long to put up some decently insulating curtains or to get it together to recycle systematically? I don’t think I failed because I was a morally bad person or exceptionally lazy: it was more like not wanting to feel like a crank, trivial inconvenience, intentions constantly being trumped by more immediate concerns.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“If you assume people care about the environment, they then need, first, to understand how their behaviour contributes to the problem, or the solution. Once they understand this, they need to take action, which is in itself difficult. At each stage in this chain, things can break down. For example, someone could be very concerned about climate change, but not realise that they are contributing to it by their use of energy in the home. Once they understand this, there are barriers to action: habit, routine, cost, social norms, not knowing where to seek advice and so on. So it’s a long journey from someone seeing an item on the news about climate change, and worrying about it; to installing some loft insulation and leaving their car at home. There’s no guarantee that people will follow the whole journey – and if they do, it is likely to take years rather than days. There is also an issue highlighted in research that people are most engaged, understandably, with issues relevant to them and their family. The green movement has

not done much to connect environmental issues with the everyday. Being asked to make a personal commitment to something abstract called ‘the environment’ is not particularly attractive. There’s much more that could be done to link up with everyday concerns.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“There are many reasons but I think the following are important: (a) a feeling in people that their efforts do not make any difference and that they cannot see/measure their efforts making any difference; (b) a sense that there is little point when the environmental messages from government are inconsistent or ignored; (c) a reluctance to make the effort to change their routines (making changes often requires effort and positive decisions); (d) confusion (when one gets beyond the ‘turn off a light’ level it is hard to find useful information).” Monica Frisch

“Most people think that they contribute to ‘the environment’ or are ‘environmentally friendly’ by recycling. It appears that the general public do not associate green behaviour with other everyday life issues such as walking instead of taking the car. For as long as the outcomes of anti-green behaviour remain indirect, distant and on a global scale, it is difficult for the everyday person to see the need to readdress their behaviour. They might be concerned about the issues but not really acknowledge the extent to which they are contributing to the problem.” Rachel Muckle

“Environmental threats don’t appear to be imminent; these days, for example, pretty much every woman of my age has a friend or relation or knows of someone reasonably directly who has suffered from breast cancer.” Eugenie Harvey for Painting the Town Green

“They are seen as taken us backwards not forwards. We aren’t selling the ideas well enough.” Winnie De’Ath

“Where there is no guarantee of collective action, individual action can seem futile. However, all being equal, individuals might act alone on greener behaviours if they were convenient and had cost-parity.” Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

“We have to make taking the green option as easy as possible. The bus is 21 times greener than a car – but this is not enough in itself. We have to break down every barrier we can to make it as simple and straightforward as possible.” Jo North

“If you want the majority of people to do something, it has to be affordable, widely available and very attractive. Currently, being green is usually more expensive, more difficult to do and associated with being weird, dull and plenty of other negative stereotypes. Some progressive businesses are capitalising on the opportunity to make green products affordable, available and attractive, and there is plenty of government rhetoric to support their efforts. However, there is very little government money and legislation to match the rhetoric – either incentives for green businesses or consumers, or penalties for those that damage the environment. People conclude that government is not serious about the environment, so why should they be?” Jeanette Longfield

“I think the take-up of ‘green behaviours’ is increasing but too slowly. For the past 30-50 years we have seen the steady rise of consumerism at the expense of the environment. Now people are starting to realise that this is a problem. However, for greener lifestyles to become more widespread, I think, requires people to go through a number of stages. First, there has to be recognition that there are problems with our current lifestyle; the more removed we are from the sources of the resources we consume, the less the environmental problems are apparent. For example, who will worry about the depletion of fish stocks as long as there always appear to be fish at the supermarket counter? Second, environmental issues have to touch people in some way personally. For example, the growth of the organic food business over recent years has a lot to do with the BSE and Foot and Mouth crises. These issues really struck a chord. Third, people have to think that there is something they can do about the issues. However, too often people feel powerless.” Graham Randles

“Habit is very important here. The bottom line is that people are reluctant to break out, or more typically don’t ever think of breaking out, of habitual behaviour patterns unless the alternative presented seems no worse – at a minimum – or holds the promise of some extra benefit. Green behaviours/products are seen either as less good, more expensive, or requiring some sort of self-sacrifice. In addition, the people who are perceived as making these kinds of choices voluntarily are often seen as ‘not quite normal’, and therefore not enviable role models. More generally, there seems to be a natural assumption that all green products and services cannot be economically efficient or competitive and will result in job losses or economic decline. At least some of this perception can be attributed to natural risk aversion and the costs of getting it wrong, so that people stick with the products and processes they know well.” Brook Lyndhurst

“At the level of social and cultural norms, we live in a consumer society where a ‘good life’, social status, desirable identities and pleasure are all tied up with material possessions and consumer experiences. To decide to deny yourself something is therefore outside of normality and has perceived negative consequences for the self. ‘Green’ is seen to be ‘overly-emotional’, irrational and infused with negative identity issues. It also seems to be backwards focused, looking at how to consume less, rather than how innovation can allow us to consume more smartly. At an ethical level, environmentalism is harder to understand than say vegetarianism and fair-trade. There is no clear relationship to an impact (campaigns around animals or health have better responses as there is a clarity between action and outcome). This leads to a lack of a sense of efficacy when undertaking environmental actions or making environmentally friendly choices. There can be disagreement about the most appropriate way forward for some aspects of environmental amelioration, leaving the individual feeling that there is no point in doing something they don’t want to. Moreover, when others are not reducing their impacts, it would simply be irrational for an individual to reduce theirs. There needs to be some feeling of collectivism to stimulate a sense of behaving more sustainably. There have been too many messages sent out to the consumer. They have been asked to do too many things, told too many scare stories and it seems overwhelming. There has been an expectation that if individuals are told the results of their actions they will change their behaviours accordingly. This is not true. There has been an expectation that the consumer should have to know a lot of information about the environment. Individuals cannot process enough consumer information to make informed choices. We are trying to place a burden of knowledge on the consumer which they are unlikely to be able to deal with. Pleasure is a major motivator of consumption and behaviour. We have been trying to persuade people not to do things they find pleasurable like flying or driving simply by telling them they shouldn’t. It might motivate some extremely committed individuals, but it will not motivate the majority. In fact it will make the majority think that green behaviours are not for them.” Key thinker

3. Do you see any barriers, real or perceived, to greener personal behaviour?

“The perceived barriers are that it is hard to do, that it is expensive, that it is the preserve of the middle class, that it takes loads of time and so on. People in general are resistant to change. We have a long-term education process to put into place and it won’t come cheap. But if we don’t invest in persuading the public to get on board, then the consequences for us all are exponentially more expensive. It is not a beauty contest, it is about growing balls and getting things done.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“People have a feeling of helplessness. The iceberg is coming towards us... The big issues seem to be beyond them, even beyond the country. The economic signals are wrong in so many cases. For many people, they perceive they cannot afford to be green.” Norman Baker MP

“It’s perhaps hard to break away from the idea that luxury comes at one end of the spectrum and green virtuosity is at the other. However, this does not mean that green living should revolve around sacrifice. Many perceive green lives to be not just sacrificial, but also the preserve of those who can afford it. One important way to address the perception is for campaigners to make the most of the fact that technological improvements bring a basket of benefits. Product development means jobs from research and development to manufacturing and retail.” Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP

“The perceived barriers are that green behaviour is hard to do, that it is expensive, that it is the preserve of the middle class, that it takes loads of time and so on. People in general are resistant to change. We have a long-term education process to put into place and it won’t come cheap. But if we don’t invest in persuading the public to get on board, then the consequences for us all are exponentially more expensive. It is not a beauty contest, it is about growing balls and getting things done.” Penney Poyzer for Painting the Town Green

“The great barrier is the lack of government action to provide better information, to make it easier for people to change habits, and to give the right incentives for the market to supply the right technologies.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“I see tremendous barriers. One of the biggest is that virtually every product that is more ecologically and ethically produced costs significantly more in our distorted marketplace. An organic potato from a mile away almost costs more than a sack of potatoes from the other side of the world.” Helena Norberg-Hodge

“People think it’s a hassle, expensive and boringly worthy.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“There seems little current social reward for taking communal interest seriously.” Bill Dunster

“The green movement (and media) tends to use too many negative, and slightly overwhelming, visual images of landscape destruction, rather than positive images to promote the solutions. It’s like advertising shampoo with images of horrible greasy hair full of dandruff. At the Sustainable Development Commission we’ve been careful to use positive imagery and we’re trying to be increasingly specific about the solutions.” Key thinker

“Greener personal behaviour is hindered by a lack of information and the perception it will require a lot of effort. Financial barriers also exist. Everything must be made as simple as possible.” Tom Brake MP

“It is not always clear what is the most environmentally desirable choice, particularly with consumer products. For example, white goods have over ten years majored on energy efficiency and that is now probably the key component in product choice and marketing but not so in brown goods, IT or car choice. And it’s certainly not clear on food or washing powders where the information and counterclaims are confusing.” Lord Whitty

“The sandal-wearing-good-life-hippy-tree-hugger image does us no favours. I often get irritated by the ‘I’m greener than you’ attitude of greenies – we need to relax a little bit and give people a break sometimes.” Alex Veitch

“Effort, time, image. Not to mention money. The image of an environmentally friendly person is at best mixed. There are associations with hippy-ish living, overly do-gooding and being perfect. Whilst people can see the point of green behaviour, they do not necessarily identify, or wish to identify, with this personal image. Equally for as long as people have to put in time and effort to be pro-environmental, they will make excuses. Having to seek out organic vegetables and free-range meat in the supermarket means it is easier to go for the everyday option. The price differential is also too much.” Rachel Muckle

“There is not enough kudos attached to being green. Buying organic food and serving it when friends come to dinner gives a warm glow but we’re talking about a small sector of the population. We don’t generally have in place structures culturally that give people enough recognition for acting in a green way.” Jon Cracknell

“Barriers are a sense that it’s all blown up out of proportion and there’s no need to do anything drastic; a feeling that it’s someone else’s responsibility, especially government, big business, the council; a feeling that it would cost more; a feeling that it would involve sacrifice.” Caroline Midmore

“Behaviour change is facilitated when (1) the person wants to change, (2) they are helped to change, (3) continuing with the unwanted behaviour(s) is difficult, unsatisfying or attracts punitive consequences and (4) adopting and maintaining the desired behaviour(s) is easy. In general, government should be saying not ‘Do this!’ but ‘How can we help?’ It is currently not easy to manage one’s daily life without packaging, carrier bags, cars, electrical appliances permanently on stand-by, overheated offices with open windows, cheap holiday flights, etc.” Dr Steve Stradling (see also Section 6)

“There are a range of technical and economic barriers. In terms of personal barriers, it is difficult for people to see the wider environmental impact of everyday behaviour. It is difficult to see the outcomes. Environmental impact is also social rather than personal. People might say, what’s the point, I’m not going to make any difference and I don’t trust others to act. It’s seen as a sacrifice of self-interest.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“People have a feeling of helplessness. The iceberg is coming towards us... The big issues seem to be beyond them, even beyond the country. The economic signals are also wrong in so many cases and for many people, they perceive they cannot afford to be green.” Norman Baker MP for Painting the Town Green

Painting the Town Green

“To be a green consumer, you need to scrutinise every label, seek out weird shops and have a pretty encyclopaedic knowledge of a whole range of issues. In other words you have to be dedicated. There is a need for government to intervene to weed out the ‘worst’ choices. Government has a role as ‘choice editor’: preventing people from making disastrous choices, through regulation, setting standards and tax incentives, for example.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“The barrier can – though not always – be pricing, such as in the cost of organic food. But, overall, a green lifestyle need not be costlier as, for example, the higher price of organic food could be off-set by cutting down on foreign holidays. Another barrier, certainly for many younger people, is peer-pressure (and advertising pressure) to be part of the consumer society.” John Stewart

“In many cases, taking the ‘environmental option’ means going out on a limb, possibly paying more and putting yourself to some inconvenience. For large numbers of people to adopt more environmental behaviours they would have to feel that these behaviours were normal and unremarkable ways of doing things, would not leave them poorer and would not put them to great inconvenience, and could be fitted into the constraints of everyday life. Our cultural attitudes to car use are a major barrier: the fact that we are inclined to ‘think car’ when we think about travel (as shown by the design of our streets and the directions we give people to reach us); the status attached to cars and driving; and the implicit belief that there is a ‘right to drive’, all make it difficult to tackle car dependency.” Carey Newson

“One of the main problems is that the taxation and fiscal systems are actively encouraging non-green behaviour, for example the cheapness of air travel and the increasing cost of public transport compared with car use.” Trewin Restorick

“Price mechanism is above all what will work: the greenest option should be the cheapest. The barrier effectively is that polluting and despoiling this planet is still far too cheap.” Richard Evans

“In areas where being green is something people want to do but find it a bit of an effort, ‘nay-sayers’ and sceptics are very effective at putting off action in others. The sceptics are often deeply unscientific and present people with seemingly convincing anecdotal evidence. Arguments along the lines of ‘My gran smoked for 60 years and never had a day’s illness’, which suggest the consequences of non-green action are a long way in the future, are quite convincing in putting off action, in a similar way to the excuses smokers seize upon for not giving up.” Sian Berry

“There is reluctance to make any lifestyle change which will be seen as a step backwards in personal development, ie perception of a green lifestyle as being a move back to primitive living.” Key thinker

“Habits and routines are hard to break. Social norms and economic signals make action by individuals something heroic.” Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

“There are clearly barriers: green living appearing to be ‘different’ as opposed to mainstream, not really understanding, feeling overwhelmed about what’s really important, getting mixed messages, getting one-sided messages, getting no messages at all, not having access to jargon decoders.” Lorraine Mirham

“Cost is a barrier. Green choices are perceived or really are more expensive. Price creates the wrong signals. Connections are a barrier. People need to be able to believe they *are* making a difference and to see *how* they are making a difference. We need to make green things easier to do. We must start from where people are and to have entry points. We have to take people on a journey in terms of what they can do, or risk massive disengagement.” Elaine Gilligan

“In terms of personal barriers, it is difficult for people to see the wider environmental impact of everyday behaviour. It is difficult to see the outcomes. Environmental impact is also social rather than personal. People might say, what’s the point, I’m not going to make any difference and I don’t trust others to act. It’s seen as a sacrifice of self-interest.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright for Painting the Town Green

“A real barrier is that of understanding: people do not always know what they should do. Or if they do, they see it in black and white terms, eg I would need to give up my car, and that is impossible. They do not focus on what could be done through incremental change at the margin, eg use the car a bit less.” Malcolm Fergusson

“From my experience people complain about the following: it’s too much effort, they don’t understand why or have heard that it’s not worth it, it’s expensive, it’s not their responsibility, why bother because other people aren’t doing it, it’s dirty or mucky and makes a mess in the kitchen.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“A car is not just a means of transport, it’s a status symbol, a cocoon, a safety blanket and for some people a lover, best friend and refuge.” Solitaire Townsend for Painting the Town Green

“There are many barriers, but the biggest problems are breaking some of the vicious circles that exist and changing underlying mindsets and attitudes. For example, consumers say they are concerned about the environment and governments could do more to encourage greener behaviour but green policies do not always turn out to

be popular. Another big barrier is the behaviour of many corporations. Through marketing they are able to create demand for products that are inherently bad for the environment but economically profitable.” Graham Randles

“A bewildering array of information exists for the public to choose from which only helps to confuse, not clarify, what is the best sustainable choice. This applies in three important respects. First, it remains the case that the public continuously receive mixed messages about *why* green issues are important and *how seriously* they should be taken, for example the blatant contradiction between most Western governments’ policies on personal travel versus policies on climate change. Second, there remain contested versions of what is the best green choice, as the recent public spat over re-usable nappies demonstrates. In this situation, it is no wonder that the public sticks with safe habits that don’t apparently (to them) cause harm. Third, most information that consumers and households receive comes via commercial advertising, the aim of which is to reinforce habitual purchasing patterns and brand loyalty. In this arena it is difficult for information on green products to get attention in the first place.” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“It takes an effort to find the relevant information and to weigh it up. Where it is easy, people do not object to environmental action.” Monica Frisch

“Barriers? Lack of understanding of the need; a feeling of hopelessness that personal behaviour will make enough difference; lack of good role models; the underlying selfishness of society.” Dr Mark Avery

“Barriers include the perceived costs and inconvenience, plus force of habit.” Key thinker

“There are very real barriers, for example personal empowerment, income and education, but the biggest barriers are self-imposed. By and large people are saying that’s not my kind of thing. The biggest barriers for people who *want* to do something are market barriers, the difficulty of sourcing products and services. For example, we go around asking people to install solar panels. If they can find a company to do it, it’s £3000, but there’s no market information, no magazines or websites on it. Information is not necessarily the answer in motivating people but it is essential for people who are trying to do something.” George Marshall

“Everyone’s life is so busy/complicated that the fire goes out of their passion. I can’t tell you how many people I’ve watched throwing disposable cups into their office bin at the same time as they sound off about how terrible it is that people don’t care about recycling. They just don’t link their own actions with causing harm.” Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

“What would make a difference would be hearing a consistent message from government. The Are You Doing Your Bit? campaign was frankly extraordinary. It seemed to deliver a message quite disconnected from anything else emerging from government sources. No wonder it was a failure.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“Let’s be clear about behaviours. It can help to think of above the line and below the line behaviours. Above the line behaviours offer something beyond their practical purpose. They give you a rush of excitement, or indicate a high status to your friends and neighbours, remind you of something you love or help you forget something you hate. They help you fit in or show what clan/class/community you’re in. A car is not just a means of transport, it’s a status

symbol, a cocoon, a safety blanket and for some people a lover, best friend and refuge. Below the line behaviours are the ones we don't even notice, even though they take up most of our time. Buying butter, taking a shower, having a cup of tea. These behaviours don't give us anything extra emotionally or in terms of social status and we 'sleepwalk' through them, often having learnt them as children or unconsciously picked up and never questioned since. There are two major barriers to green behaviours. For the 'below the line' behaviours the biggest challenge is to wake us up that we're doing them and cut through the haze of habit, distraction and simply 'having something more important to think about'. Sadly even if we do wake up and decide to change, it is all too easy to forget that when you can't find your keys, the kids are screaming and you've run out of butter. Asking someone to change their car, their clothes, their food or other 'above the line' behaviours can't be based on rational argument because they're not rational behaviours. At best we're taking away behaviours that offer a buzz, status or an emotional pay-back. At worst we're trying to encourage new behaviours that reduce status or make people look (in their own eyes) a bit silly. Most of us don't want to be pioneers. We like to fit in. Hence the barrier is getting a critical mass of people thinking and doing differently so it's not seen as 'freakish' any more. Normal is nice." Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

"Consumers don't shop around very much and much behaviour is routine. Until something comes along to 'unfreeze' such behaviours, people continue along the same lines that they 'always have'. Consumers like convenience and sometimes greener activities require greater effort. We are heavily dependent on social norms and peer pressure is powerful. Many greener behaviours are not especially visible and so do not create the critical mass required to build new social norms. People often feel unrewarded for their 'good deeds', which may impose significant costs on them personally, while the benefits accrue collectively to future generations. People's concerns as 'citizens' do not necessarily translate into their behaviour as 'consumers', although on occasion they can do. In 'consumer' mode, people have other priorities: quality, price, taste/colour, etc. People do not receive consistent messages that behaviour change for sustainability is a priority. Without government publicly 'walking the talk', both through its own procurement and management practices and also through its policies, the message is received that it cannot be all that urgent. Similarly, if people walk into a supermarket and find that manufacturers are still making large numbers of cod products and the retailers are still selling them, why should they believe that there is a crisis in fish stocks? There is also a danger that green behaviours are marketed as a 'lifestyle choice' relegating them to a niche marker of identity, rather than mainstreaming them as everyday practice." Paul Steedman (see also Section 6)

4. Which areas of green behaviour are achieving greater take-up and are there lessons here for other areas?

"The suspicion must be that, by opportunity and with some exceptions, environmental activity of individuals is largely confined to recycling. This happens to a variety of degrees, often according to the extent of the recycling programmes of local councils, but largely driven by the mandatory requirements on local authorities. Backing for action on global warming is relatively strong, but at the same time, it is an area where direct influence is minimal. There is, however, a list of actions which individuals in households can take which cumulatively could add up to a great deal. This is an area where the Government should give a much stronger lead." Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP

"One of the most interesting patterns for me is recycling. I have found that typically either streets recycle or they do not. If a few people in a street start to recycle their rubbish, others follow suit. I think that with many green initiatives there will be a tipping point of take-up which is best understood at a local, rather than at a national, level." Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

"Recycling here in Sutton is the only area I can think of and it is achieving greater take-up because it is made so simple for people. They cannot really avoid doing it." Tom Brake MP

“One of the most interesting patterns for me is recycling. I have found that typically either streets recycle or they do not. If a few people in a street start to recycle their rubbish, others follow suit. I think that with many green initiatives there will be a tipping point of take-up which is best understood at a local, rather than at a national, level.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP for Painting the Town Green

“Organic food consumption is growing but it is interesting that the reason for its growth is because of its perceived health benefit. If there’s ‘something in it for them’, people will do it. The lesson might be to tie every form of green behaviour change to a ‘and this is what’s in it for you’ incentive but this will not always be possible and this may be a bit of a sticking plaster job. Do you get people to change their behaviours without changing their mindsets or do you dig deeper and challenge the mindset itself? And is the latter actually possible?” Tara Garnett

“Climate change is the real issue. Transport is out of control; aviation is out of control in particular.” Norman Baker MP

“Recycling is the (rather blunt) cutting edge of green lifestyle take-up. Even there, there’s a lot of confusion because the systems involved are so complex. But recycling wins because the basic idea is very simple...” Emma Chapman

“It would seem to me that organic food is getting pretty good take up. I think a lot of people with children are investing in organic food for their kids. Perhaps we should learn from this that people would change their behaviour for the sake of their children.” Eugenie Harvey (see also Section 4)

“Food, because we eat the stuff and we’re nervous about it due to the various scares that have taken place. But we have to face it that there’s very little altruism involved in our actions here, it’s self-interest. People rejected GM food not because of concern over pesticides being applied on fields but because they didn’t want to feed something untested to their kids.” Jon Cracknell

“Recycling is the only area achieving greater take-up that I can think of and that is because it is made so simple for people. They cannot really avoid doing it.” Tom Brake MP for Painting the Town Green

“Organic food is achieving greater take-up but this is driven far more by perceived health benefits/fear about genetically modified food than it is about the environment. Energy efficient appliances also, and that is driven mainly by product regulation, not by consumer pressure.” Andrew Lee

“Positive choices such as green electricity provide the same service but you are helping the environment. Sustainable timber is the same to look at but a positive choice and therefore achieving take-up. Plus aspirational buildings that help the environment but are also great to live in.” Winnie De’Ath

“In the energy efficiency area, clear uni-dimensional labelling has led to market transformation. The only danger now is that greater affluence is leading to a move for greater capacity, but on a unit basis there has been an absolute decoupling of energy use from market growth with full consumer engagement. To a lesser extent – this time through the high price of fuel and the signals on VED – there was until recently a serious consumer shift to lower engine size cars and to a very limited extent low carbon vehicles. Again increased affluence is beginning to wipe this out.” Lord Whitty

“Recycling is doing better, I think, because councils have made doorstep recycling a reality. If we make it easy for people to choose green, they will.” Anna Semlyen (see also Section 4)

“The greener behaviours which seem to have the greater take-up are those which allow people to maintain their standard of living (eg organic food and drink).” John Stewart

“Five areas we’ve noticed going mainstream are recycling, fairtrade and organic foodstuffs, socially responsible investment, energy efficiency in the home and responsible/eco-tourism. Doing these behaviours doesn’t come with the associated danger of having an ‘alternative’ lifestyle. Each had their own ‘tipping point’ but in general they became ‘big’ when they stopped belonging to environmentalists and started belonging to most of us.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“From my work in several countries, it is very clear that the local food movement has been gaining ground over the past decade. This is one of the most hopeful trends as localised food systems are perhaps the single most systemic solution multipliers. Shortening the distance between farmers and consumers reduces packaging, transport, carbon dioxide emissions, the need for chemical inputs, manipulative advertising, processing, etc. It helps to restore diversity on the farm while increasing productivity and space for wildlife. It also reduces the price of healthy food to the consumer while dramatically increasing the price to the farmer.” Helena Norberg-Hodge

“Organic food sells despite a premium price because of perceptions of quality and concerns about pesticides, hormones, etc in ordinary foods. This shows people are more likely to change their behaviour when their own health (particularly their children’s health) is affected, despite the main benefits of organic farming being to the land and wildlife. It is clear that benefits other than mere altruistic good feelings have helped here, but I think more important is the fact that organic foods are now part of a simple, split-second choice, sitting side by side with ordinary foods in many shops, so no special effort is required to obtain them. Cycling in London has increased largely because of practical measures taken to improve conditions for cyclists. I think the main lesson is that simply making things easier for early, keen adopters of a green behaviour has its own knock-on cultural effects, which can be very powerful in changing perceptions. If you can get the early adopters to start telling their friends, ‘You know [green behaviour] is so much easier these days since they changed the [enabling measure], you should try it!’ it could be decisive, both in pushing more people to take action and in combating the sceptics.” Sian Berry

“I think that door-step recycling has made a huge difference and most people are quite engaged in the process. It is a shame that it is so piecemeal. Surely it makes sense that every town and city has the same methodology? I think there is also a small increase in awareness of the toxicity of cleaning products. You only have to look at brand names now producing eco-friendly cleaning products such as Marks and Spencer to realise there is a growing market. Once you have big brand names producing ‘green’ products, you know that the market is being taken seriously. Farmers’ markets have also seen a vast increase in market share. The shop local theme and the expansion of good quality, locally produced goods is very encouraging. However, it seems that the ‘switch off’ mentality still has a long way to go; people are still using far too much energy. The Powergen campaign has helped, but it is not enough. This kind of basic behavioural change needs education and just sloganeering won’t go far enough.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“Organic food consumption is growing but it is interesting that the reason for its growth is because of its perceived health benefit. If there’s ‘something in it for them’ people will do it. The lesson might be to tie every form of green behaviour change to a ‘and this is what’s in it for you’ incentive.” Tara Garnett for Painting the Town Green

“The congestion charge in London has resulted in increases in public transport use. It shows the importance of linking a tax incentive with good information and provision of alternatives (ie better buses). The problem with the congestion charge though is that people are not seeing it as a ‘green’ issue – it’s a straightforward financial decision. So it is unlikely to filter through into other lifestyle areas.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“Domestic recycling has caught on. It’s not seen as green behaviour, just something you do, something normal. And it’s become easier to do. We need to conventionalise actions and make them as easy as possible, and not ‘green’.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“Green behaviours seeing greater take-up include some home improvements because they are seen as saving money/‘an investment’, and plug into our obsession with property upgrade. Once some of the sexier microgeneration gizmos come on stream, we can expect more of this.” Martin Wright

“Areas that feed into existing hobbies and passions are doing well. For example, greening food supplies seems to have become a major preoccupation. This is a topic with wide ramifications. It tackles supermarket sprawl, fresh food poverty, pesticide consumption, etc. It is the perfect mix of environmental and personal risk and there are plenty of appealing alternatives, for example box schemes, farmers markets, etc.” Lucy Siegle

“For actions where it is difficult to see the payoff and easy to see the personal inconvenience or loss, the problem is obvious: how can the distant be translated into the immediate?” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“A good example is the introduction of a small charge in the Republic of Ireland for plastic bags in 2004. The result has been a dramatic reduction in their use and a more habitual approach to reusable bags.” Dr Adrian Davis

“Recycling was made easy, so lots of people do it. Now those that aren’t are feeling like the odd ones out.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Two areas stand out. Recycling is finally at a point where it is becoming more mainstream; it’s coming out of the image problem. The genetically modified food issue has had a strong consumer element alongside a political campaign. People didn’t realise the collective clout they had. We need to go back to tell people ‘You did it!’ but environmentalists don’t do this.” Elaine Gilligan

“They’re the ones with least barriers (financial and structural), with maximum visual benefit, and that have a ‘community’ aspect to them, for example door-to-door recycling, farmers’ markets, etc.” Key thinker

“Judging from the latest figures on recycling, significant progress appears to have been made over the last year. This is attributable, in our view, both to significant investment in services aimed at making it less effort to recycle, combined with a shift in the attitudes of those delivering the service towards a ‘behaviour change’ approach. Other areas of apparent ‘success’ include green energy tariffs, organic food and the Toyota Prius. The key lessons are: sell the *performance* aspects of products/behaviours first (ie personal benefits); back up with environmental messages for ‘feel good’; tap into what people are already doing; and take the public in small steps so that new behaviours aren’t rejected out of hand for being too alien.” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“Consumer pressure has helped get the supermarkets taking GM off the shelves, stocking a limited amount of locally grown food and increasing the organic range.” Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

“Cycling and bus use in London have received greater take-up and we can learn from the congestion charge, which is pricing people out of cars and an example of making the polluter pay. This principle should be applied across the board.” Richard Evans

“BedZED has massive demand for its zero carbon homes and refurbishment products but no funders willing to bankroll projects.” Bill Dunster

“Where organic products are widely available, attractively promoted, and the price difference between organic and non-organic products is not too dramatic, then people seem happy to buy them. The biggest market is in organic baby food, so concern for their children is – unsurprisingly – also a potentially powerful motivator.” Jeanette Longfield

“There are lots of examples where travel behaviour changes in response to external conditions: reallocating road capacity can lead to ‘disappearing traffic’, on average around a quarter; congestion charging cuts car use; pedestrianisation with good public transport can increase footfall by around 100 per cent; cycling is up 30-50 per cent at some National Cycle Network sites. This points to the importance of infrastructure and pricing in influencing what people do. Generally then, if we want to encourage greener behaviour, we have to ensure it is designed-in to the built environment and reflected in pricing. We have to get the external framework right, rather than expect people to act against the grain of the built environment.” Carey Newson

“The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable has been investigating the lessons to be learned from the success (or otherwise) of a number of more sustainable products. Some general lessons are emerging, not least of which is that, in most cases, it has taken interventions from government, business or NGOs to kickstart mainstream take-up. Expecting ‘green consumer power’ to drive these products into a mass market is a mistake. A related idea is that consumers can only pick from the available choices, and that those choices are determined by the products that manufacturers choose to make and the ones that retailers choose to stock. The role of ‘choice-editors’ in the shape of business and government is therefore crucial.” Paul Steedman (see also Section 6)

“Recycling is the only green behaviour which seems to have entered the public mindset as an everyday green behaviour. The major lesson here seems to be making it as simple as possible with councils providing kerbside collections, for example. This, supported with advertising and also the length of time that bottle banks and the concept of recycling has been in the public domain, is making it very effective. Recycling is also something over which people feel they have control. It is a behaviour that they can manage and which they can feel good about.” Rachel Muckle

5. Do you think green behaviours have an image problem?

“Yes. It is seen as a bit do-goody and not smart. Awareness is high of the need to change and morally most think they individually ought to change. There is even fairly widespread recognition that some greener behaviour is in your own self interest, for example it costs you less and makes you fitter. But even so – as with widespread recognition of what constitutes good nutrition – neither morality nor self interest is enough if it is not cool. The challenge for opinion leaders, marketing experts and designers is to make green behaviour, green products and green services fashionable.” Lord Whitty

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“Yes – can you imagine David Beckham promoting green behaviour?” Dr Mark Avery

“Yes. Greens don’t have fun, allegedly. If you’re going to be green you have to eat up your greens. Waste not want not. Puritan, Calvinist legacy. But as poor, dear Oscar Wilde said, we must beware of taking moderation to excess!” Dr Steve Stradling (see also Section 6)

“Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth are seen as slightly Swampy. The image is that greens want to take something away from you.” Norman Baker MP

“Yes, it’s all too much lentils, sandals and non-mainstream behaviour. People know changing behaviour matters but the messages sent out by the green movement tend to appeal to only a small number of people, not to the majority.” Sara Parkin

“Much less than they did. I think most people now do see climate change and the destruction of beauty as real challenges – and do accept that we ought to be more environmentally conscious.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“People no longer quite laugh at environmental campaigners the way they used to when it was seen mostly as a subject for TV comedy such as *The Good Life*. Nonetheless, a green lifestyle is still alien to large sections of the population. The benefits of cheap, non-organic food, promoted under ‘no frills’ brands are as self-evident to consumers as similarly marketed cheap air travel. One would need an army of Jamie Oliver-style campaigners to make the benefits of some green initiatives clear. Yet his success in addressing the poor nutritional quality of school meals shows the opportunity exists for such innovative and passionate campaigns to be successful.” Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP

“Green lifestyles are still seen as a ‘hair shirt’ activity for people with beards and sandals – and that’s just the women. It’s important to address this by, for example, getting the idea across that cycling can be fun and is good for you, that rail is actually less stressful than being stuck in traffic, etc.” Malcolm Fergusson

“Green lifestyles are still seen as a ‘hair shirt’ activity for people with beards and sandals – and that’s just the women.” Malcolm Fergusson for Painting the Town Green

“Green is seen as a bit do-goody and not smart. Awareness is high of the need to change and morally most think they individually ought to change. There is even fairly widespread recognition that some greener behaviour is in your own self interest. But even so, neither morality nor self interest is enough if it is not cool. The challenge for opinion leaders, marketing experts and designers is to make green behaviour, green products and green services fashionable.” Lord Whitty for Painting the Town Green

“Image is not helped by the activities of some high profile media personalities, eg Jeremy Clarkson.” Tom Brake MP

“Amongst most people green behaviours are seen as a bit quirky, if well-meaning, and somewhat joyless.” John Stewart

“Less than they used to. Most people would prefer to think that they were not helping to destroy the planet.” Key thinker

“To some extent yes, in that they can seem worthy and ‘nut rissole’, ‘lesbian shoes’,

etc, ie quirky, pretending things are nice when they’re not because you believe they should be – self-deceivingly self-sacrificing, I suppose.” Caroline Midmore

“Environment is seen generally as remote and about rainforests and nothing to do with local environments. There is a fundamental disconnection with ‘environment’. It’s seen as someone else’s problem.” Elaine Gilligan

“Jeremy Clarkson eulogises cars, not bicycles. It is not so much that there is an image problem, more that other lifestyles and behaviours get more attention in the crowded media marketplace. This is exacerbated by the fact that there isn’t much money to be made out of reducing sales.” Perry Walker

“People label themselves in different ways. Some people don’t react well to the ‘green person’ idea. Pressure groups are seen as telling people how to live their lives and some people don’t react to that at all well. The language of environmentalism is largely white, middle class: I’d be very surprised if it had the same degree of currency in other communities.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“Yes – too many associations with deprivation, hardship, rationing, *The Good Life* and heading backwards.” Trewin Restorick

“Yes – to some degree and with some people. But I think ‘image’ is a result of many other factors. If more people took up visible green behaviour, the image problem would start to clear up all on its own.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“Yes, it’s not cool. It’s stuff greenies, left wing campaigners, smug *Guardian* readers and switched on politicians want you to do. You need a really cool PR campaign. Look at everything that’s hip at the moment and think how you can infiltrate it. Subtly and gently. You need to find a brilliant consumer branding agency to give the green movement an image overhaul.” Eugenie Harvey (see also Section 4)

“I think there is sometimes an issue that people may not be comfortable adopting something that is outwardly unusual and conspicuously ‘eco’ as part of their own lives.” Carey Newson

“Broadly speaking, I don’t think green behaviours have an image problem for the people who perceive themselves to be green. But these people can’t alone drive sustainable living. Far more profound shifts need to happen, and these will need to be driven by business and Government in the context of the need to deal with the problems associated with unsustainable living: climate change, resource depletion, etc.” Key thinker

“Greens don’t have fun, allegedly. If you’re going to be green you have to eat up your greens. Waste not want not. Puritan. But as poor, dear Oscar Wilde said, we must beware of taking moderation to excess!” Dr Steve Stradling for Painting the Town Green

“People who communicate green behaviours have an image problem. They are flashing beacons of all that is their class and political background.” George Marshall

“The whole arena is still seen as dull, uncool and not a significant enough problem in hearts and minds to be taken on across the board. Germany has long had a culture where to use too much energy, or not to recycle, is seen as a real no-no, that such behaviour is ignorant and unacceptable.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“Not as much as they used to. Ireland’s bag tax was introduced very quickly and with excellent success. Don’t give people the choice, and suddenly it becomes the norm! Organic food has seen tremendous growth and I believe much of that has to do with vastly improved flavours thereby attracting recurring sales.” Margreet Westerhuis

“Key image problems are poorer performance, higher cost, inconvenience, few convincing role models, self-sacrifice. This last one is perhaps the most intangible barrier, and one of the hardest to tackle – that being green involves ‘going without’ or ‘giving up’ vital pleasures and rewards which we all ‘deserve’ for working hard. For business and economic policy makers, key image problems relate to competitiveness, efficiency and performance.” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“They can be presented as having one, for example, by programmes poking fun at those who try to be green, or by the suggestion that being green means long hair, sandals and yoghurt. But it depends on the behaviour: I don’t think people who recycle are seen as odd, for example, though not having a car is seen as unusual.” Monica Frisch

“Yes. The Green Party is bearded and ear-ringed; the more radical eco-bunny set-ups are still thought of as hippy (for example Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace); the respectable maturer groups (for example WWF) are seen as selling out to business. None of these views is correct.” Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

“Some do, for instance taking the bus is seen as low class.” Anna Semlyen (see also Section 4)

“I live in an ex-council area and our residents’ association bans clothes lines because they look common. It doesn’t matter how cheap, clean, healthy and environmentally friendly line drying is, everyone in my area would prefer a tumble dryer if it helps us shake off the ‘council housing’ image.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“Yes, but I am positive that this is now changing. I really do feel we are at the tipping point.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“We’re never going to sell it as sexy. It’s got to become an unsexy norm: the default mode because everyone’s doing it. How do we get there? Clear incentives for everyone to do it and penalties for not doing it. There is a surprising amount of support out there for such an approach on energy efficiency and recycling.” Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

“The use of the term ‘anti-car’ is perplexing. What does ‘anti-car’ mean? And why do many people involved in reducing car dependence feel they have to preface their position with an apologist statement that they are not anti-car? What this shows is the extent to which those trying to restrain and reduce car use are placed on the back foot. I can’t think of a parallel to this. Campaigners against obesity don’t start by saying they are not anti-food; people speaking for women’s rights don’t start by saying that they are not anti-male.” Carey Newson for Painting the Town Green

“The use of the term ‘anti-car’ is perplexing. What does ‘anti-car’ mean? Can you be anti-traffic, anti-pollution and congestion, anti-road deaths and injuries but unconditionally pro-car? And why do many people involved in reducing car dependence feel they have to preface their position with an apologist statement that they are not anti-car? What this shows is the extent to which those trying to restrain and reduce car use are placed on the back foot. I can’t think of a parallel to this. Campaigners against obesity don’t start by saying they are not anti-food; people speaking for women’s rights don’t start by saying that they are not anti-male; and those objecting to alcohol abuse don’t start by saying they are not anti-drink.” Carey Newson

“Yes the whole concept of ‘green’ behaviour will only ever appeal to a minority of ‘inner-directed’ people. Green consumers have been the pioneers and champions but cannot of themselves drive transformation of markets. What is needed is for public policy to ‘shift the frame of choice’ for mainstream consumers so that what is available to them excludes the dirtier products and services and extends the range of more sustainable ones.” Andrew Lee

6. How can we win both hearts and minds for changing lifestyles?

“Stop trying to earnestly explain the rational reasons for change – just motivate change. Plug into our values, excite us, offer us something and reward us. Stop condemning and patronising, and let’s all stop referring to ‘the public’, ‘them’, ‘real people’ or the ‘man on the Clapham omnibus’. It would also be fun to see our country’s heroes adopting greener lifestyles. Charles and Camilla, Sting and Trudy, Chris and Gwyneth are great, but we don’t really aspire to be like them. We need Jude and Sienna, Posh ‘n Becks, Wayne and Colleen, Richard and Judy, Jade and Jeff, Kate and Pete, Jordan and Peter, Ant and Dec, etc...” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“I am unsure that the goal should be changing lifestyles. There is a danger that if people are asked to abandon their cars, never take a plane and adopt an environmentally monastic lifestyle, they will reject the whole notion of being green altogether. I believe a far more realistic approach is showing people that they can maintain their lifestyles while being kinder to the environment. Measures such as home insulation, turning the lights off when they aren’t needed, investing in Micro CHP boilers, installing Solar PV or micro wind generators in their homes and buying cars that have

hybrid engines or the emerging range of hi-mix bio-ethanol vehicles, are all sensible ways people can maintain their lifestyles while minimising their impact on the environment. This is before we even consider government and locally sponsored schemes and the role that distributed energy networks, financial incentives and targeted regulations can play.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“We need to take a two track route. (1) Provide a more spiritually and psychologically based vision that attracts people to the joys of community and connection to nature, and one that also makes it clear that we have much to gain in terms of happiness, meaning and beauty by choosing a green path. (2) Equally important, we urgently need to explain, in a holistic manner, the systemic relationships between international trade treaties and social as well as ecological breakdown. The continued globalisation of the economy is responsible for massive increases in poverty and pollution in both North and South. Halting this juggernaut is within our reach but we need to see education about this issue as activism.” Helena Norberg-Hodge

“By using language which is positive, aspirational and appealing to mainstream, ‘outer-directed’ people for whom peer recognition and status is a major driver. This can be partly about funky but sustainable products like the Toyota Prius but can also be about ‘consuming’ more broadly through conscious decisions to put more emphasis on quality of life and well being – time with friends, children, sport, culture, etc.” Andrew Lee

“We have largely won the awareness and morality battle. Although there is confusion for example about what global warming/greenhouse gases/climate change actually means, almost everyone in the UK and Western Europe recognises the threat and in theory recognises change is needed. They look to leaders not so much to spell out the threat or to emphasise the morality but to make change easier. Or perhaps to make failure to change more difficult.” Lord Whitty

“To get people to care, we need to start from what they already care about: the sense of caring – practical, urgent, must-do-something caring – for most people starts with self, for many stretches to immediate family, then maybe

on to birds and animals but rarely gets to the more abstract and general, which is where it’s so desperately needed. To want to make lifestyle changes, people need to see the issues as being personal to them. People need to believe that what they do matters. Often people express concern that the material things they do are overwhelmingly trivial in the face of the material things happening all around them. People also need the support of others around them. It’s very difficult to make radical lifestyle changes if it separates people from their peers and from the day-to-day flow of fitting in with the people around them.” Emma Chapman

“It would be fun to see our country’s heroes adopting greener lifestyles. Charles and Camilla, Sting and Trudy, Chris and Gwyneth are great, but we don’t really aspire to be like them. We need Jude and Sienna, Posh ‘n Becks, Wayne and Colleen, Richard and Judy, Jade and Jeff, Kate and Pete, Jordan and Peter, Ant and Dec...” Solitaire Townsend for Painting the Town Green

“(1) Show greens having fun. (2) Produce a ‘ready reckoner’ that allows people to calculate their personal eco-footprint. How many days of your normal lifestyle before you’ve used up a ‘tree’s-worth’ of non-replaceable resource. Have

some benchmarks on the reckoner: you have now used as much of the earth’s resource as a subsistence economy peasant does in a year; as much as the average Third Worlder; as much as the average European; as much as a fat Texan. (3) Plenty of ‘How to’ information. Values motivate but detailed, practical information provides a script to follow. How to catch a bus. Where to get a half-brick to put in your cistern to save on flush volume. Where to find local produce being sold locally. How to get a grant for LPG conversion for your car or solar panels on your roof.” Dr Steve Stradling (see also Section 6)

“By tangibly showing that it makes a difference to people’s lives. There has been much talk this year about the science of ‘happiness’ and how, in general, we’re not a happy society. If it can be shown that being green can give you so much more real happiness and well being – without being condescending – than, say, shopping malls, nights in front of the TV and sitting in traffic jams, then an increased take-up could easily be achieved.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

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“We should lay off the scary stuff: there’s enough of that in the media. We should impress on people that doing the right thing by the environment makes you healthier/feel better/look better, can save you money, can put you more in control of your own life, and can insulate us from the shocks of oil prices and reduce the chance of us fighting dirty, messy wars to secure our energy supplies. We can play (cautiously) to local pride and the patriotic agenda in this respect. We can play the ‘beautiful world’ card up to a point. People are touched by natural beauty and where would WWF be without tigers? But people don’t do much about saving it unless it’s in their backyard. And there are no rainforests in Croydon.” Martin Wright

“To paraphrase Jean-Jacques Rousseau, we need to take people as they are, rather than as we would like them to be.” Alex Veitch

“By creating a better product and appealing to enlightened self interest.” Bill Dunster

“There’s no simple recipe. Give people the chance to do things which are (1) ‘doable’, (2) immediate and (3) are seen to ‘make a difference’.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“Consumers need to be rewarded for choosing more environmentally friendly products, services, methods of transport, etc. You cannot rely on people’s good nature to be more sustainable: it has to be a financial advantage which can only come about through political intervention and support.” Margreet Westerhuis

“Endlessly repeat the science about climate change and provide concrete examples of how it will affect local communities; offer people simple and clear advice on what they can do to help; use fiscal incentives to encourage good behaviour and take-up of clean technologies, and to discourage unsustainable practices.” Key thinker

“I believe we need to make it more personal. A start would be to describe it as our or your environment. But when we can be more specific and more personal than I think we should be. For example, rather than saying air pollution from cars contributes to asthma, we should say your health is being threatened. We need to let people know it’s not all or

nothing! In other words, if we encourage people to give up the car and cycle to work, we could start by suggesting that they try cycling one or two days a week, but on the days when it’s difficult to cycle, then they can use the car. We have to remember that we live in a real world not an ideal world (but at the same time we shouldn’t use the fact we live in the real world as an excuse to do nothing). We need to give people a positive message. I believe constantly saying how bad everything is, actually de-motivates and discourages people rather

“We have to find things that communicate with hearts. Perhaps we should not talk about polar bears but about snowballs. We should tell people that their children will never have a snowball fight. In any issue, we have to find the things that communicate with people’s most emotional experiences.” George Marshall for *Painting the Town Green*

then the other way around. We should tell them the issue/problem and then tell them what they can do and how, and show them how successful other people have been at it. Also more positive stories about some of the great environmental work that is being done could be very motivating.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Start placing emphasis on different cultural values. Rather than consumption as an answer to everything, society will have to move towards views of the ‘good life’ or social status being based on, say, care for others or having a close community. If the current cultural imperative of ‘you are what you consume’ remains as a positive force, then getting people to consume less will be difficult. Until this change has been achieved, hearts and minds will have to be won by asking people to consume exciting alternatives, rather than consuming less.” Key thinker

“Markets need to be segmented in order to help those already interested but who are currently chronic contemplators. In road transport, for example, research shows that 20-30 per cent of car users want to reduce their car use. I think sustainability has to be targeted at segments of the population who are most willing/interested but cannot make the behavioural change themselves. This appears the best opportunity in delivering change.” Dr Adrian Davis

“We need to change to values mode. Research shows you can segment the UK population into 12 groups based on their psychological needs. If we’re interested in behaviour change, we need to look at it like this. But this kind of rigorous research is not done by the NGOs, with one or two exceptions. One problem here is that research findings are often counter-intuitive.” Jon Cracknell

“There have to be more ways into what we do. We need to do work on where people are at and what the barriers are. Yes, we must tackle the big lifestyle issues such as consumption but we need to bring people on board in terms of the small actions.” Elaine Gilligan

“Winning hearts and minds is important, but will not be enough unless we ensure that environmental priorities are reflected in price structures. Take the example of cheap air fares. Even the environmentally committed will end

up taking flights abroad in preference to travelling overland or staying at home. They know it’s bad for the planet, but this is so much at odds with the price signal that at a practical level they ignore the problem.” Carey Newson

“There needs to be less of a focus on ‘ideal’ behaviours and more focus on pragmatic steps. For example, there is a waste reduction website which urges people to wrap their family’s Christmas gifts in newspaper. This kind of message, though eminently practical from a green point of view, is dangerous because it actively loses otherwise willing hearts and minds. Most people just aren’t ready to make social transgressions on this scale – it may be a small step practically, but it’s a huge leap psychologically.” Brook Lyndhurst for Painting the Town Green

“People have lost sight of the big picture. Messages are not joining up. There needs to be a big repositioning of the green brand.” Deborah Mattinson

“We need interventions that touch everyday lives – like micro-generation and sustainable school meals. More link-up is needed between work-life balance and sustainable consumption.” Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

“I think the green movement would do far better to start people off with very simple achievable actions, present them attractively and simply,

communicate the benefit, allude to the threat... and be patient. People will cotton on and once they do and become engaged they will be much more likely to do the more challenging things we all need to do, like re-consider our holidays...” Eugenie Harvey (see also Section 4)

“By showing people how the green alternative is aspirational, good for them as well as the environment – a positive choice (rather than don’t do this, don’t do that).” Winnie De’Ath

“I think people respond negatively if someone attacks something that is dear to them. If you love your 4x4 car or flying to America on holiday then an environmentalist telling you it’s bad is probably going to have little impact or maybe a negative effect.” Graham Randles

“As far as transport is concerned, personalised, targeted interventions are highly effective in changing behaviour towards greener options. Workplace travel plans on average lead to 18 per cent reductions in car commuting (but with figures going as high as 30-40 per cent in some workplaces). Personalised travel planning (eg TravelSmart) appears to deliver reductions in car trips of 7-10 per cent. These types of intervention offer practical help to make it easy and/or attractive for people to change their behaviour. They focus on ‘what’s in it for me’ – eg offering health benefits, cash benefits, fun, etc – with the message that behaviour change will be good for the environment still there, but very much secondary, or even implicit rather than explicitly stated. In a way, it comes down to basic marketing principles: work out what somebody really wants (to be happy, healthy, attractive, popular, etc) and then market your product to them as offering exactly these things. This is a lot easier than trying to persuade somebody to ‘buy’ a ‘product’ that has been portrayed as worthy, altruistic, but possibly also by implication boring and tedious.” Dr Lynn Sloman

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“We need a number of strategies. We need to argue that people have a personal incentive, or penalise them for not changing. We need to say it’s easier than people thought to change. We need to emphasise the consequences for their children. Most people are tied into family groups and there is a strong human instinct to look after yourself and your kin.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“On the one hand, there’s lots of discussion of things like viral networking: getting the influential social/community/style leaders to adopt different lifestyles. On the other hand, don’t try. There is plenty of research that shows that awareness doesn’t lead to action. Making things easier leads to action, for example people recycle if there’s a box outside their door and they don’t have to walk anywhere. Awareness of the benefits of recycling doesn’t actually need to change. Also, maybe don’t underestimate the power of people to forget. If we removed out of season strawberries from the shelves overnight people might notice and complain for a bit but then they would most likely soon forget. If nice things are available, people will buy them. Hence the growth in popularity of foreign food post 1950s. However, this is not to say that people were more miserable/enjoyed their food less prior to the import of these exotic foods. You could argue that there’s a quantity theory of happiness and that the general balance of happiness/unhappiness and satisfaction/dissatisfaction doesn’t change much. It’s the focus of these emotions that change. So maybe changing hearts and minds is about subtly changing the context in which people live their lives so that they don’t much notice.” Tara Garnett

“‘Seeing is believing’ can be a powerful force for change. Here we mean running demonstration projects/activities which show how green behaviours can be embedded in ‘normal’ everyday life. Building a consistent ‘storyline’ about what a green lifestyle would look like, backed up with clear ‘how to’ instruction could also help. There needs to be less of a focus on ‘ideal’ behaviours and more focus on pragmatic steps. For example, there is a waste reduction website which urges people to wrap their family’s Christmas gifts in newspaper. This kind of message, though eminently practical from a green point of view, is dangerous because it actively loses otherwise willing hearts and minds. Most people just aren’t ready to make social transgressions on this scale – it may be a small step practically, but it’s a huge leap psychologically. Both matter when the target is changing behaviour. Questions we have for green campaigners in terms of how they present the challenge to the public are: How green does a green lifestyle have to be to count? Are we (the public) allowed to be ‘bad’ as well as ‘good’ as long as overall we’re going in the right direction? How should we choose where we’re going to be ‘good’ or ‘bad’ because we can’t be good all of the time?” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“I don’t believe most people will change their habits until they get the price signal. It’s very sad, but most of us are very selfish and only consider the costs to our pockets, not to the planet.” Richard Evans for Painting the Town Green

“No one approach will do it. People respond to different approaches for different topics at different times. Some things they will do if it is made easy, for example recycling. Others, such as giving up the car, they may find as difficult as giving up smoking. There are areas where incentives will work: I would imagine that a large proportion of those given a free energy-saving light bulb would use it. People need to see the difference that changes in behaviour make and that it helps if it can be demonstrated that making the changes is not difficult and does not involve great sacrifice.” Monica Frisch

“It has to be as easy as possible with demonstrable benefits for the customer.” Jo North

“We win people over by personal example and personal communication. Winning hearts is very difficult. For example, there is a very high level of denial on climate change. We have to find things that communicate with hearts. Perhaps we should not talk about polar bears but about snowballs. We should tell people their children will never have a snowball fight. In any issue, we have to find the things that communicate with people’s most emotional experiences.” George Marshall

“Make being green easy, affordable and highly desirable and attractive.” Jeanette Longfield

“By getting the right stories out there. I firmly believe there is a real appetite for green issues but they need to be presented properly. They need to be informative and entertaining, and when ‘experts’ are called upon, they need to be aspirational people. Fiscal investment is extremely important. Green issues should not be pigeon holed entirely as charity issues, innovations need to be well funded and directed.” Lucy Siegle

“I truly feel that the Government and the Secretary of State for the Environment have been largely invisible. I had so hoped that Mrs Beckett would have been out there encouraging us to recycle, visiting small scale green businesses and urging the public to join her in greening Britain. I think there needs to be a whole lot more incentivising and central and local government have a huge role to play in this, to make it worth while to be green, not just morally but financially. I would want to see a 5 per cent VAT rating for all green goods, including bio-diesel, low energy light bulbs, insulation, solar panels, etc. Education of the coming generations is vital. I believe that children are so much more engaged – and many watched and really enjoyed *No Waste like Home*. Work is certainly happening in schools and many teachers are committed to engaging kids in the environment, but much more needs to be done. The media has a massive role to play. There has certainly been an improvement in reporting on climate change and on publicising positive environmental action, but all too often it is still seen as alternative, quirky and not quite mainstream.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“Price price price! I don’t believe most people will change their habits until they get the price signal. It’s very sad, but most of us are very selfish and only consider the costs to our pockets, not to the planet.” Richard Evans

“On the most mundane level we need to change our language and style, making it more aspirational and lifestyle related. We need to be far more imaginative in our communication techniques, promoting more social learning and using a variety of avenues for learning, such as visual arts, performance, music, etc. Crucially we need to illustrate that there is a ‘social contract’ and that the actions of people are being reciprocated by Government and industry.” Trewin Restorick

“Avoid guilt. Too often people feel they are being personally castigated by green groups for taking up cheap air deals, buying a new mobile phone, etc. Ways must be found to align sustainable living with mainstream aspirations. In part this can only happen once the true costs of consumption are reflected in material and energy prices: green and cool may then start to converge as advertisers start to market the affordable options. In the meantime, current corporate claims to accept the need for sustainability must be exploited to the full, harnessing the power of private salesmanship to promote greener products and services, and exposing their hypocrisy if they fail to live up to their rhetoric.” Key thinker

“An article on climate change in the *New Statesman* by George Marshall and Mark Lynas, headed *Why We Don’t Give a Damn*, said that ‘we appear to be experiencing a disastrous form of collective denial’. It gave several reasons: (1) We have learned to respond only to clear and immediate dangers, particularly from rival social groups. In this case, we ourselves are the danger and the links between what we do and climate change are unclear. (2) We are each in conflict because we are each simultaneously a perpetrator, a bystander and a victim. (3) When we have a problem we seek a precedent for a solution, but this is an unprecedented problem. (4) We cannot imagine a globally warmed future. The article had to work hard to suggest how this denial might be overcome. We have to ‘recognise and confront the psychological barriers to major behavioural change’ and do so in large enough numbers to reach a tipping point, when the ‘passive bystander effect’ will stop operating. I think the answer lies in the story of the small boy on a beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up. One by one he was returning them to the sea. A man passed. He asked: ‘Why bother? What you do will make no difference. You can’t possibly put them all back.’ The boy picked up another starfish and said: ‘Well, it’ll make a difference to this one.’ We should each concentrate on doing what we can in our daily lives. Some people will do this because they believe it to be right. Others will only be prepared to act if they see others doing so. That means mobilising the first group and making what they are doing visible.” Perry Walker

“Don’t attack cars per se or even sound like you are, because then you attack everyone who owns one (and you will lose). Similarly avoid challenging the ‘right’ to drive or own a car. Begin to position the car as a necessary evil and characterise some travel as frivolous, luxury, etc. Start introducing tests of need, then campaigns can focus on promoting measures which provide solutions that avoid the need for unnecessary journeys. It’s unanswerable that there must be some limit to the numbers of vehicles and the amount of roadspace, so initiate a debate on what this should be – leading it with research. Don’t attack Jeremy Clarkson. That drives liberal individualists and iconoclasts to support him (even though most would not hold his views). Ridicule him indirectly, perhaps engineer the use of the term ‘Clarksonism’ as a handle for any completely potty transport/car stuff and thereby attach him to things even sillier than himself – extensions of his views taken to extremes. Use it in passing and thus get it into general circulation.” Chris Rose (see also Section 6)

7. Can we reposition sustainable lifestyles as socially desirable? How should this be done?

“To start with, we need to get rid of the word ‘green’. We must be future-focused, cutting edge and desirable-design orientated. We must focus on choice and alternatives – never on denial – and play on positive images of community and how sustainable lifestyles can be facilitated within meaningful communities.” Key thinker

“Sustainable lifestyles can be a sexy consumer option, if it’s a windmill in the garden or solar panels – easy to use and money-saving eventually.” Polly Toynbee (see also Foreword)

“We can only position it as desirable when being green is clearly becoming part of the mainstream.” Sara Parkin

“We need to make unsustainable lifestyles unacceptable, naff.” Norman Baker MP

“In our fickle, celebrity-led culture, I think we need to play to the fact that people, for right or wrong, hang on the words (and images) of celebrities. A Jamie Oliver of the green movement clearly would be dynamite for the cause. We should all be speaking to as many celebrities and leaders as possible to ask them to help.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“If we can make green choices smart and green products cool we can probably do it. But it will also need drastic governmental intervention to make ‘goods’ more convenient and cheaper and ‘bads’ more expensive and less convenient.” Lord Whitty

“The challenge is to make sustainability economically desirable for the household so that it actually becomes the norm, rather than being seen as an unattainable ideal.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“One strategy, with very high potential but equally high risk of failure, would be to concentrate on ways of measuring happiness and well-being. If you could show that living a more sustainable life made you happier, think what coverage that would get in the lifestyle magazines. There would be reality television programmes where some people guzzled champagne and lived the high life, while others lived the simple life, and their happiness, or change in happiness, was measured at the end of the period. Some of the work needed is in place. New Economics Foundation has done a lot to develop a practical way of measuring well-being. There is evidence that hospital patients or schoolchildren with views of nature do better than those without. But there is a high risk of failure, either because happiness is ultimately unmeasurable or because happiness proves to be like profit, in that it is something that results indirectly from achieving other aims, not something to be aimed for directly.” Perry Walker

“The politics of envy can be very effective... the negative connotation surrounding four-wheel drive cars is slowly making a difference to the desire for these vehicles.” Rachel Muckle

“Socially desirable is only relevant to dark greens. For others, it’s better to reposition green lifestyles as personally desirable – it’s much more motivating. Show me the benefit!” Caroline Midmore

“We can but we have to think about it in a completely different way. Around 45 per cent of UK people are esteem-driven. What would it look like if we created brands that rewarded them in the way that matters to them but also performed in terms of the environmental/sustainability point of view? For example, we need to position low carbon vehicles as something to aspire to. How do we do that? What sort of messages are needed? Similarly 20-25 per cent of people are Settlers. They are nervous of change, trust their friends and don’t like being challenged to think in a global way. How do we appeal to them? The language used by green groups turns both these sets of people away instantly.” Jon Cracknell

“If we are down to earth and offer genuine alternatives that are actually available, then we can get somewhere.” Alex Veitch

“This should be done from the ground up, showing how a community can empower itself to make a difference, and from the top down, showing where I can buy a great green lifestyle, and through a well developed marketing strategy which makes green relevant to a wider range of people.” Winnie De’Ath

“You can’t eat ‘sustainability’ but you can eat ‘delicious, organic food from a local farmer’. Most people don’t aspire to sustainability per se: if you market ‘sustainability’ you appeal to the niche; if you market products and behaviours which are desirable with a strong emotional appeal (and which are sustainable) you can appeal to the mainstream. It is important to avoid finger-wagging though.” Paul Stedman (see also Section 6)

“Well, yes we can. It is very interesting to look at the work that Sainsbury’s has been doing lately to position British food as fresher and more wholesome. Marks and Spencer has also been sticking Union Jacks on food. Look also at the phenomenal impact of Jamie Oliver in getting a reappraisal of school dinner standards. Or at the repositioning of Fairtrade products as being high quality as well as ethical. I’d like to see more positive advertising and branding for public transport, bicycles, the National Cycle Network and the health benefits of active travel.” Carey Newson

“We can to a certain extent by, for example, finding famous role models who ride bikes and look cool. We must also reposition sustainable lifestyles as economically desirable! Both for our own pockets and the long term economic interests of UK plc.” Richard Evans

“I think we lack role models. The behavioural changes we covet should be displayed by our reality television and dramas. Why can’t our heroes and heroines, on *Corrie* and *Eastenders*, be separating their rubbish and discussing traffic congestion, safe routes to school, organic veg, conserving water, etc?” Lorraine Mirham

“We should strive to normalise sustainable behaviours. This can be done through ‘peripheral processing’, where we pick up clues about behaviours without having them rammed down our throats. This could mean showing sustainable behaviours in the *background* of soap operas and in lifestyle magazines. We need to know how to take on these behaviours without making a prat of ourselves (remember that it’s a lot easier to keep doing what you know how to rather than making an embarrassing mistake doing something new). Over and over again and everywhere sustainable behaviours have to be shown as part of normal behaviour.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“Yes but only with very careful marketing. Wasteful behaviour can with good campaigning be portrayed as old-fashioned. For selected social groups, the issue of environmental legacy can also be effective, but this will have little impact on many younger groups whose overriding concerns are immediate gratification and keeping up with peer groups.” Key thinker

“Green products should be made cheaper. At the moment, if I want to be green I pay more, if I want to pollute I pay less. We should just turn this around so that green is less expensive and polluting is more expensive.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Yes, but it needs a lot of money over a long period of time. Any marketing person will confirm that changing people’s minds and purchasing (and other) behaviour is certainly possible. For example, people seem happy to pay heavily for bottled water when cheap tap water is readily available but they had to be persuaded to do this with a lot of money and imaginative marketing.” Jeanette Longfield

“Yes of course – get people who are desirable to live them, and then talk about them.” Eugenie Harvey (see also Section 4)

“It’s tricky because the main people held up as cool at the moment live very unsustainably, so simply saying ‘get cool people to say green things’ isn’t really going to work or be convincing. Instead we need it to be the other way round – for real green people to be perceived as cool.” Sian Berry

“Absolutely. There is already a backlash against over-consumption and excess (see the way Kate Moss was vilified by the press), championed by a significant core of 18-25 year olds, identified as the ‘New Puritans’ by the Future Foundation. A backlash always has the potential to grow into something more positive and progressive, and in this case New Puritan sensibilities sit nicely with a resurgence of interest in the environment and mirror the growth of ethical consumerism, which followed on from organic consumerism. The revolution is definitely happening, and it’s happening in the right age bracket.” Lucy Siegle

“The media and celebrities are two big drivers of socially desirable behaviour. Green products and services must be available that are as appealing as the less environmentally friendly alternatives. Most people will not buy a product

“In our fickle, celebrity-led culture, I think we need to play to the fact that people, for right or wrong, hang on the words (and images) of celebrities. A Jamie Oliver of the green movement clearly would be dynamite for the cause.” Leo Hickman

just because it is 'environmentally friendly'; those that do are in a minority and constitute a niche market. Green products and services need to be fashionable and stylish enough to compete on equal terms with the alternatives and they should be competitive on price." Graham Randles

"It is beginning to happen but I think the main challenge is to make people understand what is meant by a sustainable lifestyle, what it entails. At a deep green level, a sustainable lifestyle would require changes in all areas; at a practical, mid-green level, there are areas where change would make a significant difference, eg cutting energy consumption, recycling much more, buying less packaged products, using public transport, not flying, buying locally grown and/or organic produce, etc. And it is, I think, vitally important to stress that it is helpful, indeed essential, to do *something*, even if one cannot change all aspects of one's lifestyle." Monica Frisch

"The moment people blab about having gone green or having a good green glow, it seems the rest of society wants to take pot shots at them. Bianca Jagger (Achilles heel: flights), Goldsmiths (so rich they can do anything), Anita Roddick (excitable)... Almost anyone can be written off in a one liner. It's a shame." Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

"Green buildings, for example BedZED, are green, popular and aspirational. We need to champion aspirational technologies like micro-renewables (PV, micro-wind, etc) as a way of getting people more engaged. Microgeneration has an incredibly empowering effect on people. Even if they were not aware of green issues before, moving into a house with microgeneration makes them much more aware not just of energy but of other issues, such as waste and water consumption, and behaviour changes considerably." Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

"With great difficulty because there are real costs for the first to move in this direction in a society whose rules don't encourage it. For example, I have solar panel water heaters on my roof but I couldn't possibly suggest that this is a great idea to others – it isn't remotely cost effective. So for me it is a lifestyle change that I want to make and am lucky enough to be able to afford." Dr Mark Avery

8. Which is the main driving force for change on lifestyles: A groundswell of public participation or new frameworks for living prescribed by government?

"Frameworks for living prescribed by government – for sure." Dr Mayer Hillman

"Neither. The main driving force is market signals." Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

"Let's not get fooled by all that stuff about the environment movement being 5 million strong. Not everyone who's a member of the National Trust or RSPB is a card-carrying greenie..." Martin Wright

“Let's not get fooled by all that stuff about the environment movement being 5 million strong. Not everyone who's a member of the National Trust or RSPB is a card-carrying greenie...” Martin Wright for Painting the Town Green

"Hitherto progress has largely been through government intervention (or EU or global agreement) and that is likely to continue to be key. On climate change it is possible to take the awareness to a higher level through fear and realisation of how desperate the situation is, so as to create a groundswell. In some other areas – eg water shortage and conservation – similar groundswells might be possible. But at this moment there is no such groundswell, except in esoteric, albeit influential, subsets of the population – young, middle class, academic – and even there in a minority of those groups." Lord Whitty

"It is vitally important that the general public starts concerning itself with government policy. First we need the sort of economic literacy campaigns that are growing out of the anti-globalisation movement. In this way the public will be clearer about the urgent need for re-regulating global corporations. At the moment almost all the positive initiatives around the world are coming from the grassroots up. They are receiving virtually no support from government, academia or the media. However, there is a powerful people's movement that now includes alternative media (for

instance in the form of powerful documentaries). And there are individual academics who are doing excellent work. We need to strengthen this bottom-up people's movement and internationalise the dialogue and flow of information, particularly between North and South." Helena Norberg-Hodge

"Economics, technology and marketing are major forces. And along with that, other elements of culture: paradigms of belief, religions and habit. We have now reached a time when a lot of people are very touchy and defensive about the fact that they don't 'do more for the environment', which should be seen as a success on the part of everyone who has called for change." Emma Chapman

"It has to be government led, unfortunately." Margreet Westerhuis

"We should be looking at the evidence base for other major shifts in society, such as smoking bans, seat belts, reducing salt in food, etc. At what point does public groundswell provide the 'tipping point' which gives politicians the confidence to act? No environmental issue has yet done this, except perhaps GM food. Maybe climate change could?" Andrew Lee

“We should be looking at the evidence base for other major shifts in society, such as smoking bans, seat belts, reducing salt in food, etc. At what point does public groundswell provide the ‘tipping point’ which gives politicians the confidence to act? No environmental issue has yet done this, except perhaps GM food. Maybe climate change could?” Andrew Lee for Painting the Town Green

"This is currently a Catch 22: individuals feeling individual action is futile, and government saying that individuals obviously don't care because they don't act. Responsibility for overcoming the problem of personal agency lies primarily with government. Government can help to create a context of collective action through penalties, rewards, community-level initiatives and feedback." Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

"It is government's job to set the framework, to make green choices easier, but not to prescribe or proscribe. Government should provide information, regulate to ban the worst offenders and set a fiscal framework which rewards green behaviour." Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

"Ideally both but government needs to take the lead. This requires massive debate and tenacity. For example, some people might choose to minimise their contribution to climate change emissions by avoiding unnecessary flights, but they are unlikely to be rewarded while government is busy sanctioning Heathrow's Fifth Terminal. We need schemes which tie together personal decisions (positive ones) with the public agenda. Government needs to look at radical solutions, such as personal carbon allowances." Lucy Siegle

Government cannot target properly, is mistrusted and is seen as hypocritical. It should fund others who can deliver better-targeted messages and it needs champions who are trusted and can inspire confidence." Malcolm Fergusson

"I see the potential for a groundswell of public opinion and participation changing attitudes. For example, I have a circle of friends who are mostly aged 35-40, live in the suburbs of London and have a range of jobs from corporate financier to working for a museum to full-time mums and dads: there was a phase recently when barely a dinner party would go by without a discussion of home composting." Graham Randles

"This is chicken and egg. I think it is essential that national and local government take the lead with a concerted and strategic approach to encourage change. To give them the political courage to do this will take a groundswell of public participation, brought about by campaign groups acting together through strategic alliances." Carey Newson

"Public participation gives political space for Government to make decisions; it creates the energy, momentum and enthusiasm. Government frameworks create the structure for this change; business is also a driver." Key thinker

"My view is that governments, of whatever political persuasion, always tend to be conservative and will only take action at a detailed technical level, unless pushed by public opinion. They tend to follow rather than to lead. This is not to say that government action is irrelevant. It is very important and at some levels very effective." Monica Frisch

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“They both work. Energy efficiency measures set by Parliament would have a huge impact in helping to cut domestic emissions. Plus support from local authorities would work. Equally consumers can push for change – and they sort of do.” Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

“Massive public participation on its own doesn’t mean government sits up and takes notice.” Elaine Gilligan

“It has to be both because they interact – you won’t create a decent groundswell without some sort of signal from government that it might respond, that it takes you seriously, that it has a similar awareness. Government action is vital because it is a way out of the Prisoner’s Dilemma – we can only act in everyone’s best interest if we can be sure that everyone else will do the same.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

“Both, but peer power is far more likely to succeed than politician power.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“Lifestyle change is probably one of the most complex and difficult things that we could try to deliver. Government needs the public to want to participate to be able to prescribe new frameworks for living. Public participation on its own will not be able to deliver behaviour change in a variety of areas and will need government prescription. In short, both need to be mobilised, along with a range of other driving forces. Without business buy-in, this won’t happen.”
Key thinker

“There has to be a top down commitment. If politicians are waiting for the public to say ‘Please may we have green behaviour prescribed’ before they act, then nothing will ever happen.” Rachel Muckle

“Public participation, of course, since government is reactive usually, not proactive. But this can be nudged forward by government taxation policy, particularly polluter-pays taxation to pay for the externalities of dirty, excessive consumption.” Anna Semlyen (see also Section 4)

“The main driving force is a groundswell of public participation. The way of achieving this is through inter-personal communication, communication between people face-to-face. A failure is that people are provided with impersonal communications: written material. All advertisers know that the biggest thing in shifting cars is if a neighbour has one.” George Marshall

“Both, acting in tandem. Changing attitudes to drink-driving offer an interesting comparison. Over the period that drink-driving has been actively targeted through enforcement and campaigns, public attitudes about the acceptability of drinking before driving have dramatically changed. It is rare now to be offered ‘one for the road’... a once common sign of hospitality. The change in attitude to drink-driving over nearly 20 years has gone hand in hand with enforcement and publicity campaigns from government. We would not have seen this change in public acceptability if there had been no government action. But equally, the government would have pulled back from tough enforcement if public attitudes had not been receptive to change.” Dr Lynn Sloman

“I think public participation is on the increase but the sad thing is that government has failed to help engaged people really maximise their efforts. Government has failed to set frameworks for living. The only scheme that impressed me was the Clear Skies programme for renewables. The scheme was oversubscribed and has been closed. The replacement programme is under-resourced and frankly parsimonious. Green lifestyles happen in spite of, rather than through, incentivisation from government. The Palace of Westminster is a cathedral of waste: Parliament sets no good example for those it represents to follow.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

9. How radical can we expect our public decision makers to be?

“Public decision makers will only move at the speed they think the public moves, but they underestimate the public all the time.” Polly Toynbee (see also Foreword)

“On climate change it is depressing but true that the UK Government is one of the most radical in this field already, albeit that rhetoric is way ahead of achievement. But in the immediate political, economic and international – ie US-related – dimensions, the pressures are to ease up, not intensify. In the not-so-medium term, the pressures are the opposite: frightening signs of

*“Public decision makers will only move at the speed they think the public moves, but they underestimate the public all the time.” Polly Toynbee for *Painting the Town Green**

a palpably warming planet, oil price rises, increased emissions and pollution from China and India, change of the balance of argument in corporate America, and with some panic setting in with some sections of even the American population. At that point, the UK and EU are in a good position to be much more radical, and will need to be. But when is that likely? I would say three or five years off. And is that already too late?" Lord Whitty

"We need radical, bold leadership. This is the biggest barrier to a seismic shift towards a greener future. Most public decision makers are still just in the business of moving the deckchairs around on the Titanic, concerned only with staying in power, and like rabbits in headlights scared of what headline writers might write in the *Daily Mail* if they do anything remotely radical." Richard Evans

*“On climate change it is depressing but true that the UK Government is one of the most radical in this field already, albeit that rhetoric is way ahead of achievement.”
Lord Whitty for Painting the Town Green*

"Not at all – unless we are going to war." Trewin Restorick

"On the evidence to date, not at all."
Key thinker

"Quite radical in words – not at all radical in deeds." Dr Mark Avery

"Unless there is catastrophe, we probably won't see large public pronouncements. But in March 2005 the Chancellor defined a third criterion for a stable economy as environmental

care. This is a substantial policy change that is likely to lead to a cascade of change but much of it will be below the radar of public headlines." Sara Parkin

"We somehow need to convince legislators that they will not lose the next election if they put in strong environmental measures." Alex Veitch

"Not at all if there aren't votes in it; the next election will be close." Deborah Mattinson

"Public policy making, with rare exceptions, is incremental. You can't rely on public decision makers, ie politicians. Their focus is too short term." Dr Adrian Davis

"The question is, how can we create more political space in which politicians can act and make them feel that some of the tough policies which are needed are at least less controversial if not exactly popular as such." Andrew Lee

"So far there has not been a jot of radicalism. In the face of overwhelming evidence of climate change and the forces of nature already gathering, the ostrich mentality remains. In order for the population to accept radical policy, there has to be clear, inspirational leadership to guide the country through the inevitable changes in the coming years. No sign of it yet. Structural change will only occur as and when the environment impacts violently on the economy." Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

"Not very radical in a democracy or a global economy. There can be innovative solutions but, until the conditions visibly demand it, any large scale attempts to intervene in freedom of choice or the economy will lead to a party being voted out." Key thinker

"Decision makers will be radical only when there is a win/win situation or when they see public opinion changing." Winnie De'Ath

"I think the public are inspired by radicalism. As long as the radicalism is put in the context of the problem (which clearly requires radical solutions) and the solutions are visualised as something positive, I believe that people are looking for the problems to be solved and for firm leadership in this area." Key thinker

"Experience suggests 'not very'! But with encouragement they could be more radical. They seem to be able to be more innovative (radical even) within small, technical areas but very reluctant to grasp the nettle when it comes to more far-reaching actions. I see little evidence that they are prepared to consider seriously initiatives aimed at discouraging car use." Monica Frisch

"Not at all radical. Only repeated public humiliation and ridicule will do the trick, coupled to demonstration projects that work and prove that alternatives are viable." Bill Dunster

“Leaders in other European countries seem to have more success in carrying things out, in Scandinavia for example, and they are still in office. People respect politicians who take the long view sometimes. Politicians could be doing more. A lot of the radicalism needed is quite small: being seen cycling around rather than taking the limousine, for example. It would speak volumes for personal commitment.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“We need publicly to expect them to be radical but privately be prepared for very slow progress. But action on other issues (education, health, crime) shows they are willing to be radical if they think change needs to happen and if they think that there’s a mandate for that change. The biggest barriers to radical action on the environment are probably worries about accusations of ‘nanny statism’ and worries about accusations of burdens on industry/threats to competitiveness.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“Despite a certain amount of rhetoric, public decision makers are still mostly in denial about climate change and acting as if it is business as usual. Ultimately we need our decision makers to be radical enough to implement contentious policies – for example, to bring in demand management measures such as road charging and parking restraint. What can we expect? We can expect them to show a certain amount of political courage, but we can’t expect them to take action which they perceive will actually lose them power. Which is why we have to build the public support to give impetus to the more difficult measures.” Carey Newson

“How radical can we expect politicians to be? Not at all, with a few notable exceptions. Step forward Ken Livingstone, who introduced the congestion charge despite people saying it couldn’t be done. Michael Meacher valiantly attempted to do the right thing. I’m not sure we see an awful lot of radicalism elsewhere.” Jon Cracknell

10. What are the respective roles of government, NGOs, academics, local authorities, journalists and others in producing change?

“The media are still far too keen to treat climate change as a scientific issue, not a political one, in contrast to say health. Politicians aren’t being asked what they’re doing on climate change. NGOs need to help by encouraging the media to put the focus on politicians. Government is being given a free ride from NGOs. The green movement has got to shout more about climate change. When was the last time NGOs stood outside the Secretary of State’s surgery with placards saying: ‘You’re not delivering on climate change?’” Norman Baker MP

“They are complementary. Pressure from groups outside politics creates headroom for politicians to be more radical.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“They are not talking to each other. There is no strategic coming together.” Sara Parkin

“NGOs need to be doing a huge amount more to reach out. Government will not act unless it has a mandate, and the NGOs need to galvanise and catalyse to provide that mandate.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“They all have a role to play in spreading understanding of the near-total inadequacy of current practice – but again it is government that must take the lead.” Dr Mayer Hillman

“Pressure from groups outside politics creates headroom for politicians to be more radical.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP for Painting the Town Green

“Behavioural change is a long term process. All parties have their role to play. Government should ensure fiscal policy steers people towards green behaviours but social norms need to be inculcated through other actors.” Dr Adrian Davies

“Government and local authorities should heed advice from all sources, and take the lead in the right direction and be prepared to weather the storm. NGOs and academics are right now performing excellently in my view, producing solid research in all sorts of areas

to back up the campaigns, make people aware of the issues and make government aware of the course it should take. Society is far too impressed and obsessed with the media. The green movement should simply court the good journalists and ignore the others.” Richard Evans

“In my experience some green groups have done a lot of damage to the cause of encouraging people towards more green behaviours. For example, all the publicity about some local authorities not actually recycling all the paper they

collect, and that some may end up in landfill, does nothing to encourage people to be green. It just gives them a reason not to be green.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Across the board, education is key – showing how it can be done and wherever possible, showing that the ‘polluter pays’ philosophy is always correct. Punish the offenders – reward those who make the effort.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“Government, NGOs, academics, local authorities, journalists... they’re all important. As are writers, musicians, priests, film-makers, TV producers, radio presenters, bloggers, teenagers deciding what’s cool, people designing the next computer games...”
Emma Chapman for *Painting the Town Green*

“I’m interested in the role of ‘storytellers’ – the TV and movie scriptwriters and the bestselling novelists. Our opinions may be shaped by the public debates of policy makers/pressure groups and scientists but it’s through narrative and empathy that underlying values and passions are reached. Mainstream storytellers use fiction to tell us truths and they fill our hearts as well as minds. We also spend a

huge amount of time in stories: hours of TV a day, 90 minutes for every movie we watch and weeks with our favourite bedtime book. Stories matter.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“Government has to set the systems of provision so that it makes it easier for people to live a green lifestyle; NGOs need to pressure government and win the hearts and minds of people; academics have to ensure that best practice is learnt from and to force the pace of change; scientists have to communicate the evidence more effectively; local authorities have to provide the systems of provision; companies have to innovate; the Environment Agency needs to regulate.” Trewin Restorick

“I would caution against trying to separate out too much: the roles overlap, and each of these sectors can contribute across a huge range of areas.” Martin Wright

“They’re all important. As are writers, musicians, priests, film-makers, TV producers, radio presenters, bloggers, teenagers deciding what’s cool, people designing the next computer games...” Emma Chapman

“We think we’re dealing with informed decision makers but a lot of the time we’re educating them. Government has good frameworks on sustainability in place but there is a major issue of consistency within government. There are lots of initiatives for local authorities but no targets and they’re not statutory, and so they fail, like Agenda 21. The Winnash Wind Farm issue in the Lake District had Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace on one side and Council for National Parks and Campaign to Protect Rural England on the other. We need to present what we agree on. We must be united and play to our strengths.” Elaine Gilligan

“Environmental organisations are funding-driven organisations. Their remit is to keep going and expand but not necessarily to reach the broadest possible audience. Very large sections of society are not being addressed by any environmental organisations. We need to work with groups with a wider reach than the environment and we need to work with and empower individuals. There is a huge role that can be played by concerned and motivated individuals.” George Marshall

“Without a shared vision of what must be achieved, it is very difficult for these institutions and individuals to harmonise and produce change. Each has its own place in the mechanism of change and the process of communication. Antagonism to change exists in each of, and between, the players and few of these players take grassroots activists seriously. There is a lack of pragmatism at a strategic level and a lack of commitment to properly fund the human resources and physical means to achieve widespread, rapid change. The lack of cohesion between central and local government is worrisome. For example, there is a huge range in the methodology of refuse collection and a vast disparity in recycling rates across a single county – let alone the country as a whole. Yet ironically, a local authority can have a brilliant recycling collection rate, but the waste streams will be exported to places as far flung as India.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

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“It is striking that most NGOs commit most of their campaign efforts towards the legislative and regulatory arena, perhaps because there are many opportunities presented for engagement, responses to proposed legislation and so on. You could spend your life in consultation culture. In the other two spheres in which change could be pursued – the marketplace and public engagement – the green movement is relatively weak.” Jon Cracknell

“Government should be taking a strong strategic lead, developing and funding programmes in all sectors to achieve more sustainable lifestyles. It should be persuading business leaders of the need for this and inviting them to support an agenda for sustainability. It should be overhauling the tax system and regulatory frameworks to reflect environmental priorities and address the climate crisis. It should be stimulating and developing solutions and assisting local government in taking these up.” Carey Newson

“Government should move the goalposts back to where they should be. NGOs should keep badgering government and corporations, but seek a broader base of public support. Academics should communicate better. Local authorities should encourage community-based solutions which can scale up individual actions to impacts which are meaningful. This can be an important step towards getting over the perception that ‘I can’t make a difference.’ Journalists should learn to take environmental issues seriously and teach those covering business, energy, poverty, etc that green concerns are as much part of their remit as that of environment correspondents.” Key thinker

“I would put government and local government high on the list of people who can make changes happen and NGOs are important monitors and initiators of new policies. Journalists are a weak link as they are the ones responsible for keeping the stereotypes going, who almost always present greens as dizzy/jobless/idealist and who continue to wheel on sceptics and ‘nay-sayers’ whenever an environmental solution is presented. I’m not sure what can be done about this... maybe some kind of exchange scheme where the *Sun* news editor has to live with me for a month, or a series of ‘meet the greens’ events with real, modern environmentalists.” Sian Berry

“They all need to pull together. Groundswells are created by critical mass. The press will always be cynical but can be bypassed.” Polly Toynbee (see also Foreword)

“Journalists should stop reporting the calamitous consequences of climate change and instead talk about solutions. We must help them do this of course. Local authorities should be challenged to do much more on the climate change agenda – both in energy and transport policy.” Alex Veitch

“NGOs and academics have a key role in changing the climate of opinion on which governments and local authorities feel emboldened/compelled to act.” John Stewart

“Government needs to set a clear fiscal framework; NGOs need to engage locally; local authorities need to follow Woking’s example; academics need to tell it how it is; journalists need to fight with their editors for space.” Key thinker

“The media can make sustainable living mainstream, sexy and normal – all at once! Unfortunately some journalists insist on still seeing green as very grey! Somehow moaning is far more fun than reporting on the positive side.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“In relation to the role of the green movement (if its diverse elements can be called a ‘movement’), we have two suggestions. First, the green movement unanimously gets behind one, or maybe two, high environmental impact issues and focuses campaigning energies on bringing about regulation or taxation to deliver a single big change. This makes a difference in two ways. It focuses public and policy attention on the top priority issue(s) as defined by environmental impact and thereby begins to erode the get-out clauses that the current public confusion about priorities allows, and focusing on a single issue fits the ‘attention problem’ diagnosis and would, hopefully, set new terms for public debate and cultural reflection, not least by giving the media a single target to hit at. Second, green NGOs at the campaigning end of the spectrum perform a critically important role, and should stay that way. While some NGOs will undoubtedly play an important role in delivering parts of government sustainable development, our society needs others to stay outside, to stay independent and innovative, and to continue to put pressure on the rest of us to change the way we think.” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“NGOs need to do far more to mobilise their supporters around these tough issues to create space for politicians. Academics need to stop pretending that nothing can be done until everything is known. The media in general needs to grow up and stop reporting what are complex and subtle issues and trade-offs as if they were black and white.” Andrew Lee

“Public and private partnerships can deliver radical ideas and thoughts. FirstGroup works closely with local authorities to realise radical ideas. We have worked with a vehicle manufacturer to produce a brand new vehicle to challenge perceptions of public transport and win over those who do always see it as a choice of the few.” Jo North

“Academics should provide ‘bullets’ of evidence, NGOs should ‘fire’ them, journalists should amplify the impact of the ‘shots’, the noise from the ‘shots’ and ‘ricochets’ should alert public interest and support for action, increased public support should, in turn, help stiffen the spines of policy makers in central and local government so that they provide not only the legal and financial incentives and penalties to encourage people and businesses to be green, but also sufficient money for a long-term marketing campaign to persuade people that being green is gorgeous.”
Jeanette Longfield

“I would like to see more academics working in this field, particularly on some of the crucial stumbling blocks, such as increasing public participation in eco-living, and sharing their research with the press. Journalists are also key. We need to carry on bringing broad sustainable arguments to readers and promoting these debates. To do this effectively, we need to be included as part of the sustainable community and we need green/sustainability professionals to share their work with us.” Lucy Siegle

“No one group has the answers; we are all on a journey to discover how people can live in harmony with the natural world. We need to experiment with new approaches and engage many stakeholders to innovate to find sustainable solutions. We need academics to find facts and figures, NGOs to demonstrate good practice and to challenge when appropriate, governments and local authorities to legislate and journalists to communicate.” Winnie De’Ath

“The mass market media, eg *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail*, etc, are so important, and their role in stirring up concern over GM food was crucial in getting that debate on the agenda. Getting a few key people at those papers on side could make a massive difference and it can be done but the environmental lobby is not known for its empathy with the tabloid press, which feel it looks down on them and doesn’t connect with them as journalists or with their readers.”
Caroline Midmore

“Local authorities need to enable and exemplify change. Strategic procurement of visible solutions – school meals, microgeneration, low-carbon vehicles – is a priority. Getting recycling, composting and public transport facilities in place is another. NGOs need to build evidence of the public mandate for collective, government-led solutions.”
Joanna Collins (see also Section 6)

“I see the appearance of an organised, anti-green, climate change denial lobby as a positive sign. This is because it indicates that the green agenda has started to be taken seriously. The green movement has always had what I call the ‘Robin Hood Advantage’ – people know that it is small and has taken on enemies much larger than itself on behalf of what most people think is a good cause. For this reason there is, I think, quite a lot of generalised goodwill towards it. It’s interesting that the anti-green lobby are now trying to paint the green movement as a powerful establishment and to position themselves as daring mavericks. It’s quite important to resist this but as green policies become more mainstream, it will become increasingly harder to do so. I was amused by a recent book which invited us to feel sorry for the poor little World Trade Organisation, in contrast to ‘large’ organisations like Greenpeace.”
Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

11. If the green movement could ‘start again’, how could it do things better?

“Look more normal.” Key thinker

“Be central to all things.” Jo North

“The green movement has gone off the boil since 1997. It must recognise that things have changed.” Norman Baker MP

“Sustainable development is about progressing environmental, social and economic goals at the same time. How do we get it together? We don’t have to trade off these things against each other. The green

““The green movement started from a nature conservation base and a class base. We created a green ghetto: something that white, middle class people do. We should have started with a wider concept of the environment, where people live and play, with environment fundamental to well being and health.” Elaine Gilligan for *Painting the Town Green*

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movement has to realise that everything is getting worse and that it needs to question its strategies. It's much easier to find out what the green movement is against, not what it is for. The green movement must be smarter at how it supports change. It must move from exhortation mode to positive solutions mode." Sara Parkin

"I think that until recently the green movement too often gave the impression of being backward looking, seeking to turn back the clock to a pre-industrial society. I am greatly relieved to see that there is now a strong current that believes, as I do, that the answer lies in new technology and the ingenuity of mankind." Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

"Stop the 'us' and 'them' mentality when relating to the public. Work out how to align the environment with issues the public already cares about. Live sustainable lifestyles ourselves not just because we must, or because it's right, but because it's more fun. Smile more." Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

"Try to get sustainability imbedded from the beginning instead of having it as a bolt-on." Tom Brake MP

"Appeal to people's human cultural and spiritual needs more directly and with greater understanding of the workings of the global economy." Helena Norberg-Hodge

"Be a movement of innovators and designers as much as politicians, scientists and pop stars." Lord Whitty

"The key is for the green movement to integrate themselves into the two main powerful parties and instigate change from within." Margreet Westerhuis

"Shed the hair shirt. Head off the criticism that the green movement is favouring animals over people by being much smarter in communicating the links between urban life and ecosystems. Attempt a stronger alliance with academia, especially in science: warnings are most effective when allied to solid research rather than straightforward lobbying." Key thinker

*“There has been a natural decline in radicalism in the bigger NGOs as they have matured and become more brand obsessed. There has been a tendency for them to lose the radical energy of the founders of the group.” Jon Cracknell for *Painting the Town Green**

"It can only start from where it is, embedded in the cultural and political norms of its day." Martin Wright

"The green movement started from a nature conservation base and a class base. We created a green ghetto: something that white, middle class people do. We should have started with a wider concept of the environment, where people live and play, with environment fundamental to well being and health." Elaine Gilligan

"Be massively more effective in its lobbying by targeting practical changes. Avoid the deliberate fudging of the language through terms such as sustainability which can be used as bland endorsements for virtually any activity and which hide the reality as to what has to be done. Communicate in a much more positive and honest manner. Not be so precious about raising money from supporters and promoting individual 'brands'." Trewin Restorick

"The green movement is made up of organisations who are in direct competition for funding from a decreasing range of pots. If it were starting again with the benefit of hindsight, it would perhaps be better if it formed as a green coalition, rather than as a number of splinter groups with similar aims but clashing egos. Green NGOs nowadays are better at co-operating on headline campaigns, but as long as the current funding mechanism remains, then suspicion and competition will continue. Achieving harmony amongst a group of committed, passionate and knowledgeable individuals is a very difficult task. Perhaps the movement is ready for a reformation but we need a visionary, acceptable to all factions in order for that to happen. The Green Party is an unlikely source: its policy remains to act co-operatively, without a figurehead. This makes it unelectable on a national platform though this is not to disparage the commitment and effectiveness of many local elected members of local authorities. A couple of decades ago, Jonathon Porritt was the closest thing to a figurehead for the green movement. He sought to push change from within and took the role of adviser and whisperer to the Prime Minister. Let's hope we get someone to harmonise the movement soon. Maybe someone like Tim Smit – an environmental entrepreneur and visionary who is able to create employment, raise awareness and stimulate the local economy. He is able to marry strategy with implementation – vital for change." Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

“Most green organisations have campaigning as their *raison d’être*. There are very few, such as the Global Action Plan, that are purely about helping people to change their lifestyles. Campaigning has its role, of course, but I believe that it risks disabling the organisations that do it from being able to support citizens in changing their behaviour. It sets up an either/or goodies/baddies way of thinking that is unhelpful and it tends to use guilt as a tool of the trade. Likewise with emphasising how bad things are. Both are disabling and paralysing.” Perry Walker

“It should have spoken from within society as opposed to shouting at it from the outside. People talk and listen to ‘their own’. The environmental movement has suffered greatly by being perceived as being at odds with mainstream society. It has only just started to make amends.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“It could avoid being so ‘worthy’ and turning perfectly rational people off. It could make stronger alliances with business and those engaged with scientific progress.” Lucy Siegle

“It could do things better by engaging and empowering individual action, seeking diversity and encouraging independent individual initiative. The green movement has been very monolithic and top down.” George Marshall

“Much of the criticism of the environmental movement centres on the fact that it has tried to terrify and guilt-trip people to change, and the effect of this is that people simply get resentful/defensive and switch off. The idea that a more sustainable future is everyone’s idea of fun and that it can be win-win the whole way is false. According to most people, consumption is fun, austerity isn’t. History more or less validates this view. It could also be argued that many in the environmental movement are in it because, maybe, they are a bit different – they quite like being a bit austere and uncomfortable and don’t quite understand that the vast majority of people don’t think or feel this way. I think it might be useful for the environmental movement to acknowledge this puritanical streak in themselves. The need to change is not quite so self evident for the vast majority of the population.” Tara Garnett

“There has been a natural decline in radicalism in the bigger NGOs as they have matured and become more brand obsessed. There has been a tendency for them to lose the radical energy of the founders of the group. This is an institutional problem, this silo-ing of the green movement. It has allowed itself to be put into the silo of ‘environmentalism’ and doesn’t have the capacity to connect with other social movements. It’s true for human rights groups too. This pigeon-holing or demarcation is detrimental to the health of movements.” Jon Cracknell

“We should understand that behaviour change for sustainable lifestyles is one of the hardest things that we as a society have to face. It will take a clear strategy, supported by all sectors, if we wish to take the public with us. It will take time whether we want it to or not – and if we think we don’t have that time then we need to not attempt to encourage behaviour change and will have to try something different instead. There should be a focus on facilitating greener lifestyles rather than educating the mass population to greener lifestyles. There should be a minimum of messages and these should only be targeted at the consumer if they are the most appropriate sector to undertake actions. We should aim to get the infrastructure right to facilitate green behaviours as a natural choice. This will need to be supported by understanding the limitations of different sectors to deliver certain sustainable behaviours. At a strategic level we will need to understand where the ability and agency to deliver sustainability lies, and target the most appropriate solutions at the most appropriate audience. This will be different for different lifestyle issues.” Key thinker

“NGOs tend to feel that the green movement can only change things by coming out with shocking statements that sometimes go beyond science. People think they exaggerate problems and it puts them off: they don’t want to identify with it. Similarly green groups think they can only have an effect if they get in the media. But people are quite jaundiced by what they read in papers and how true or false it is. Green groups should get out there talking to people and going for a bottom-up approach.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“The green movement could work more collaboratively to make change happen, it could have a greater understanding of society’s aspirations and motivations and it should be able to demonstrate and celebrate success.” Winnie De’Ath

“With hindsight, we should have been offering earlier positive lifestyle alternatives to addiction to the consumer society, but without the threat of global warming, I’m not sure that would have worked.” John Stewart

“It is not the fault of the green movement that we are where we are now. The green movement has done an astonishing job with minimal resources and powerful opponents ranged against it. Twenty years ago environmental issues were seen as being of very peripheral interest. Now they are front page news. This has to be partly attributed to the success of the green movement – although it is also because so many environmental problems are now coming home to roost.” Carey Newson

“There is not one ‘green movement’ but a whole diverse range of organisations which work at different levels, in different ways, on different topics. It is like an ecological community, with the various organisations interacting in complex ways. There are many different ways of doing things, and it is not easy to predict what will lead to change. Not many people foresaw the break-up of the Soviet Union, and abolishing slavery and getting rid of apartheid both seemed almost impossible at one time.” Monica Frisch

“We’ve let ourselves down worrying over pay scales; the truth of the question; the perils of definitions. We think political and forget to bring along the public. We sell green as a hair shirt experience rather than an enjoyable lifestyle choice. And as for our patronising approach to any communities who are not white and middle class – they always seem to belong to ‘disadvantaged’ sectors and are ‘ethnic’. We’ll try and work with them but, goodness, how hard we find it. Try asking someone from these hard-to-engage groups what they think of interfering do-gooding greens who push in with their own agenda rather than engage people with where they are in their life: young, with kids, dealing with sick kids/elderly parents or housing difficulties, etc.” Nicola Baird (see also Section 4)

“Be tough on peak oil, couple the Make Poverty History campaign to the longer term issues of climate change, connect the current war in Iraq to national energy policy, examine the real national costs of the fossil fuel economy, dump nuclear fast, agree on renewable microgeneration and a credible blueprint for a stable society towards the end of this century.” Bill Dunster

“If it started again now, it would be catching a tide. It needs a sense of ‘join in’ as well as ‘rational evaluation shows that this is sensible’. ‘Sustainable’ may need re-launching/re-branding. Less ‘give some things up’, more ‘an exciting new way to live life to the full’.” Dr Steve Stradling (see also Section 6)

“Pro-environmental decisions often require us to take account of the relatively distant consequences of our actions and to develop a sustainable yet decent world we would need to do this consistently. Yet we are products of evolution. Natural selection, if you think about it, cannot produce a species that is future-proof. So we are inevitably biased towards relatively short-term thinking. Having said that, you can never predict the future. You can never guess the full consequences of your actions and we have no real idea how things will turn out. It seems a bit odd to take comfort from uncertainty, but that is the position I find myself in.” Martin Parkinson (see also Section 6)

12. What is your vision for sustainable living in 2025? How could we get there? How confident are you that we *will* get there?

“My vision for 2005 is a multi-polar world where economic power has been decentralised so that diverse cultures and communities can adapt to the realities of biological diversity. This is a world in which business is regulated so that it cannot outstrip the power of institutions of governance. The way to get there is through a massive economic literacy campaign and simultaneously a focus on experiential knowledge and encouraging a rebuilding of community and connection to the natural world. I would say that it is definitely a possibility that we will get there, but by 2025 I would give it about a 30 per cent chance.” Helena Norberg-Hodge

*“My vision for 2025 is a multi-polar world where economic power has been decentralised so that diverse cultures and communities can adapt to the realities of biological diversity. This is a world in which business is regulated so that it cannot outstrip the power of institutions of governance.” Helena Norberg-Hodge for *Painting the Town Green**

“It would entail each person limiting the carbon emissions from their use of fossil fuels to no more than just over 1 tonne of carbon dioxide a year – that is from its present level in the UK of about 9.5 tonnes. We can only get there by government imposing carbon rationing. And it will happen because there is no other realistic way of preventing ecological catastrophe.” Dr Mayer Hillman

“There is a balance between freedom to do things and making people pay for it. We should look at personal carbon allowances, with a fixed allowance but the opportunity to buy more units or sell unused units. Of course, there are issues of social justice here.” Norman Baker MP

“I am deeply unconfident. By then we will in Europe have needed to cut carbon and greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent relative to 1990. To do that means heavily capped carbon trading systems, unpopular – at least short term – fiscal and regulatory measures (preferably at an EU then global level), absolute reductions in transport volume by pricing or rationing of road space until non-carbon vehicles and aircraft predominate, tightening of building standards and heavy research, and delivery of the results, on energy efficiency and non-carbon fuel sources – with a big divide in the green movement on nuclear power. Without a combination of more decisive leadership at EU level and signs of panic on the part of the population, this will not happen.” Lord Whitty

“My vision is that by 2025 we will be well on the way to being a low-carbon economy, with our houses, our cars and our businesses all much less carbon intensive, and with international air travel emissions stabilising rather than growing exponentially. I am not confident we will get there but, through a new form of politics based on cross-party consensus domestically, and through global agreements which are the successors for (but far more wider-reaching than) Kyoto internationally, I believe we *can* attain this goal. If we don’t, the prospects for our grand-children are pretty bleak.” Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP

“There needs to be collective agreement on what the future looks like. A shared vision is needed. It won’t happen in a clinical, planned way but be messy and organic.” Sara Parkin for Painting the Town Green

“There needs to be collective agreement on what the future looks like. A shared vision is needed. It won’t happen in a clinical, planned way but be messy and organic.” Sara Parkin

“BedZED in my constituency is already demonstrating some aspects of what sustainable living might be like in 2025. This needs to be combined with an attitude that accepts that our lives will be lived much more locally (for work and play) in 2025.” Tom Brake MP

“We need to remember what we have succeeded at and that we are not going to achieve things in a short length of time. I am a believer in tipping points. The science has to line up, the politics has to line up and the public have to line up but it’s starting to happen on climate change. We must also look at the modern environmental world: decisions affecting the environment will be increasingly taken by the World Trade Organisation and a single decision there could strip out years of environmental campaigning. There is a need for the environmental movement to update itself. Things are very different from 1990. The Friends of the Earth vision is living within our environmental limits and with fair shares.” Elaine Gilligan

“In my dream world, in 2025 we have far fewer car trips, but those that are done are made in very efficient cars, people fly once every five years at most, everyone has implemented energy efficiency measures in their homes and offices, we have 20 per cent renewable energy on the grid, and microgeneration is installed widely. I think we could get part of the way there, but it’s a daunting task.” Alex Veitch

“The vision in WWF is that the UK has stabilised its ecological footprint by making One-Planet Living the smart and popular lifestyle of choice, and motivating public policy makers to set up clear long term frameworks for driving business innovation and behaviour change.” Andrew Lee

“My vision is that things are going to start changing pretty fast. Climate change will ensure that. We will see more exciting personal green technologies, such as microgenerators on homes, and people with a heightened awareness of their own personal footprint. We’ll see a change in the countryside, with an increase in nature-friendly farming schemes. I’m confident these things will happen. What I’m not confident about, however, given that targets are still being missed, are some of the big problems: energy consumption, waste and water scarcity.” Lucy Siegle

“I’m actually getting increasingly confident that we might just do it and turn the tanker. A whole series of events – Live 8, Hurricane Katrina and the oil price crisis, even the Jamie Oliver programme – have made me think that a number of influences are now starting to build a momentum that could, forcibly or persuasively, start to change minds, and therefore behaviours. I do still believe though that it’s the politicians who are the ones dragging their feet.

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As usual it will be the people who show them the way forward.” Leo Hickman (see also Section 4)

“A much less consumerist society (but one where everybody has enough). I think we’ll get some of the way there.” John Stewart

“Green behaviours will be taken up; the tide is turning. Not fast enough, but it is turning. If someone like me is doing the kind of work I do, then it is turning! And there will be a tipping point – in fact, I can feel it coming!” Eugenie Harvey (see also Section 4)

“I think government can do a lot to incentivise business to behave in more green ways and to encourage consumers to do so too.” Caroline Midmore

“My vision is of people walking and cycling more, interacting more and generating more social and community capital, greater vitality and a better quality of life. It is of a slower pace of living, with people more in contact with nature and other people, and with more say in decision making if they want it. It’s all about changing society. Humanity has shown itself pretty clever. I’m confident we can harness that creativity and imagination.” Dr Patrick Devine-Wright

“My vision is cities where walking and cycling on traffic-free routes are the main forms of transport and where services and facilities are geared to car-free lifestyles. More local shops and facilities, reducing the need to travel and increasing local distinctiveness. Greater awareness and availability of seasonal, local produce. Taxation and pricing structures that provide a clear indication of environmental impact. Sustainability a driving force in every sector. How confident am I that we will get there? I don’t know, but I think it is incumbent on us to try! If we don’t make the changes that are needed, climatic events will eventually force an agenda for change, and then the question will be whether that agenda is shaped by concerns for social justice or by a siege mentality.” Carey Newson

“I’m not at all confident about progress, given governments’ craven weakness (in the UK and globally) in the face of rich and powerful corporate vested interests to continue ‘business as usual’. My fear is that it will take some awful environmental catastrophe before governments will act.” Jeanette Longfield for Painting the Town Green

“In 2025 I hope to not feel guilty anymore. I want to be focused on the potential of the future rather than the threat of it. I want to be happy, healthy and be wearing fabulous Italian shoes. We will get there by inviting as many people to join us as possible, and not making the entrance criteria to living a sustainable lifestyle to sacrifice things you enjoy (such as Italian shoes). The change needed to deliver sustainable development is of a scale most of us can’t think about directly without having a panic attack. Most of us might empathise with environmentalists more if they started re-assuring rather than scaring us. With a change this big, it would be nice to know that we’ll get more than we give up.” Solitaire Townsend (see also Section 6)

“I am sure there will be a big change in the next ten years or so. Green living is definitely creeping into the mainstream – and that is what needs to happen for these ideas to take root. I’m sure we’ll get there. The question of how much damage will be done in the meantime is far less certain and therefore, in many ways, far more worrying.” Chantal Cooke (see also Section 3)

“Society will have rid itself of dependence on oil and all our energy needs will be supplied from renewable sources (non-nuclear). If we could achieve just that I would be extremely happy. Food and other crops, including textiles, would be grown organically and everything we use would be made into something else at the end of its life.” Graham Randles

“Sustainable living would include local sourcing of food, bans on the worst polluting chemicals, flying as the most expensive form of transport, landfill as a last resort and a transformed energy system, so each building generates power as well as using it, and people feel connected to power. I think progress will be slow and we could go backwards. Progress may well come from big shocks and shifts, eg reaching peak oil or natural disasters, which ‘jolt’ us on to a new level.” Rebecca Willis (see also Section 6)

“If we were to say whether we were confident about achieving a sustainable economy and society in 2025, from a present perspective we might be tempted to say no. But, human societies have shown themselves to be supremely adaptable if something better comes along. And herein lies the key question: how and why will the sustainable choice (economically efficient, socially equitable and resource-responsible choice) come to be seen as ‘best choice, first choice’ not ‘worst choice, last choice’?” Brook Lyndhurst (see also Section 6)

“2025 is, I think, a bit too close in terms of timescale. Life in 2025 won’t, I suspect, be *wildly* different to what we have now (1985 wasn’t). 2050 is a better target. Will we get there? No, never completely. Pursuing sustainable development is always that: a pursuit; a journey towards.” Martin Wright

“By 2025 many people of today will have purchased new household appliances, cars, even homes. I would like to see all those purchases being, not the cheapest, but those with the lowest energy consumption, the lowest water consumption and the smallest possible emissions.” Rachel Muckle

“A low-energy economy for the UK and other parts of the developed world which has dramatically reduced carbon emissions. This would include very high standards of insulation and energy efficiency for all buildings (new and old, domestic and business), much higher use of public transport and of rail and water for freight, much less dependence on the private motor car, fewer food miles, more food grown organically and sold locally, more community initiatives. Combined with this would be changed attitudes: a more respectful approach to the world which supports us, a less consumerist approach, a willingness to live lightly, an awareness of the inequity of some people in some countries having a very affluent, resource-greedy lifestyle and others having to struggle to get the basic necessities. I believe that with the right encouragement, incentives and infrastructure, most people will make some of the changes necessary for environmental sustainability. I am optimistic that if everyone makes some changes, and if government encourages further changes through legislation, we can do enough collectively to reduce our impact on the environment. And some changes for the better may happen naturally, as society develops. I remember my father talking about growth and citing the example of the increase in horse manure in London streets: if nothing changed within a few years the streets would be feet-deep in manure. Of course, things did change: the motor car came along and the problem of the growing quantity of horse manure was replaced by other problems!” Monica Frisch

“I’m not at all confident about progress, given governments’ craven weakness (in the UK and globally) in the face of rich and powerful corporate vested interests to continue ‘business as usual’. My fear is that it will take some awful environmental catastrophe before governments will act.” Jeanette Longfield

“Bicycles everywhere, very limited car use, very limited air travel; less meat consumption, consuming lower down the food chain; household emphasis on a reduction in energy use and a switch to renewable electricity suppliers; personal carbon allowances; a thriving second hand, mending, repairs culture; less stuff.” Tara Garnett

“Because of the way our societies and economies are structured, the course is set for self-destruction. The complexity of deconstruction is such that I believe it will be necessary for chaos to ensue in order for a new, low impact order to gradually emerge. It will take a miracle – and I am an optimist – to harness and harmonise government, business, community, etc sufficiently to achieve the scale of change necessary to avoid climatically induced catastrophe. 2025 is only a couple of decades away. I shall be 65 and mother to a daughter of 40, a grandmother to a child of 21. I am currently pregnant so my next child will be 19, a young adult facing many more challenges than I did at their age. I have no vision for sustainable living that would be acceptable under our current framework. I am not an advocator of anarchy, I am a middle class, middle aged mum – hardly a green guerrilla. I shall make what efforts I can to encourage as many people as I can to use less and to reduce my own impact on the planet as far as possible. We will have to accept that our response to both climate and societal change will have to be reactive and decisive, and above all humane.” Penney Poyzer (see also Sections 3 and 4)

Section 9 **Analysis of the findings**

9.1 The hill we have to climb

Society in the UK is based on the, somewhat shaky, triumvirate of government, business and people. Trying to work out who is effectively in charge is not easy. Each grouping might suggest another. People themselves often feel helpless in the face of the power of big business and usually believe it is up to governments to deal with environment problems. But people elect governments and keep businesses afloat by buying their products. Ordinary people really do have the power, if only they would wield it...

Worryingly, it's been suggested that those who are strongly motivated by money, fame and appearances are much less likely to be concerned about the environment. Unfortunately for the environment, these people are often the ones who run countries and big businesses.

The message is clear: it can't be left to government and business alone to deal with environmental problems. The public must participate too, perhaps even drive the whole process. And particularly on climate change, we will only begin to reduce the effects if individuals look critically at their own lifestyles and do what they can to be more environmentally friendly while putting pressure on government and business to play their part.

People do care about the environment, that's clear, and many of them are specifically worried about climate change. But, in general, they're not doing much about it... Perhaps the problems don't seem as urgent as environmental campaigners keep telling them they are. After all, people get up in the morning, run the hot water, pour powerful detergent into the washing machine, drive to work, sit in a well heated office while looking forward to their next long-haul holiday, drive home again, eat the wrong sort of fish for supper, put on the dishwasher, turn up the central heating, have another bath and go to bed. All

putting pressure on the environment. But when they wake up the next morning and open the curtains, everything is still the same and the trees in the park look just as nice as before, so how can the environment be in such a mess?

“Tell someone something he already knows and he will thank you for it. Tell him something he doesn't know and he will hate you for it.” George Monbiot

Even when awareness of issues is high, people feel helpless. Environment comes within their sphere of concern but they don't see it as within their sphere of influence. In other words, they generally care about it and it might worry them, but they think they themselves can't do anything about it.

And for every piece of information people receive about the need to do something to help the environment, there seem to be a hundred promoting the opposite sort of behaviour. There are completely mixed messages and effective promotion of unsustainable consumption through every facet of society, from adverts in the media, to social status quos, to high street retail messages, to government policy...

For example, while one part of government might exhort us to cut carbon emissions, another is providing more roads and airport runways to enable us to increase them; while a news-feature in a newspaper might highlight new research on climate change, an advert on the next page is pressing us to buy cars and take long-haul flights; while a David Attenborough wildlife programme on BBC1 promotes wonder and respect for the natural environment, a Jeremy Clarkson motoring programme on BBC2, perhaps even at the same time, in effect promotes a 'couldn't care less' attitude to the environment; and while the environmentally friendly washing powder now has a place on the supermarket shelf, it sits side by side with another brand packed full of phosphates and other chemical nasties that promises whiter clothes than ever before.

The popular national newspapers throw an especially large spanner into the environmental machine. They do not take green lifestyle messages seriously and some even actively oppose them; they reinforce the idea of niche and eccentricity.

There is a subconscious feeling in most of us that if something is advertised or written about favourably in the newspaper, it must be right, acceptable and normal. Our free-market and free speech system can legitimise bad messages. Similarly, when a consumer buys a product or service, they are likely to feel they are transferring responsibility to the manufacturer or provider. After all, isn't it up to them to make sure the farm workers are paid enough money and the countryside isn't damaged by the chemicals they use? And if something really is so bad, why does government allow it anyway?

With such an unregulated free-market free-for-all and a conflicting array of messages promoting sustainability and environmentally challenging consumption at the same time, it's no wonder that people are left in a daze. People are genuinely confused as to what is okay and what isn't, what's expected of them and what isn't, and what behaviour is normal and what is unacceptable.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.” Edmund Burke

Consumerism runs so deep in modern society it has effectively produced subconscious driving forces that help to steer our behaviour. For many people, a key driving force in life is to accumulate wealth and spend it, taking full advantage of all the goods and services available. There is often an ingrained presumption that faster is better, that greater consumption leads to greater happiness, and today success is most often judged by material possessions. Probably nearly all of us aspire to do better than we did yesterday in terms of our quality of life. People with children seek a better quality of life for their children than they had themselves and that generally means greater wealth and more consumer goods. Most people, even the well off, also have an in-built mechanism that tells them not to pay over the odds for anything (although pro-actively making savings might require effort and therefore be less of a driving force) .

Some of us aspire to explore and try new things, some to keep up with fashions and the lifestyles of others. Others have a preoccupation with achieving a secure, safe home life and are consequently uninterested in the global rather than the local, and might even reject information that suggests things are not safe and secure after all.

At the moment the social groups most open to environmental messages appear to be the more affluent, upwardly mobile, professional and young. Interestingly these people are likely to be among the heaviest consumers with perhaps the most to change in their lives. Women seem to be more receptive to the way environmental messages are presented than men, who can see being environmentally friendly or green as a softer, more feminine thing that many of them cannot aspire to. There are particular challenges with communicating environmental messages to low income groups who are often overwhelmed with everyday concerns and older people who might feel they have done their bit for society and should be allowed to live out their lives as they wish.

A glance out of any window reveals that the environmental movement has failed, so far, in securing widespread adoption of green lifestyles. Green, ethical living is clearly niche and the result of special effort among certain types of people only.

We shouldn't blame the others though. There are multiple barriers against 'normal' people going green.

- Being green is seen as going against the tide, against the grain of modern consumerism. It's normal to be unsustainable. 'Spirit of the moment' is an incredibly powerful force and at the moment, it is to consume. Messages to consume in ways that damage the environment tend to outweigh environmental messages. As a result perhaps, ordinary people are guzzlers of resources and energy.

- Green is seen as going backwards, not forwards. Adopting an environmentally friendly lifestyle is seen as giving things up and settling for less. It's perceived as personal sacrifice for the public good, and the benefits are at the rather intangible level of society (which isn't a strong motivator for many people), rather than at the personal or close-to-home level.
- A consumption-based lifestyle is seen as fun and naughty is seen as nice. Many deeply unsustainable behaviours are even seen as must-have life experiences that people aspire to. Buying a car or flying, for example.
- Putting the environment first is seen as refraining from using products and services that are readily and legally available, which is outside most people's definition of normal, or even sensible, behaviour.
- Being environmentally friendly is perceived as hard work and difficult.
- Green products and services are perceived to be expensive.
- Most people have a lack of time/intellect/knowledge to process the information necessary to make successful green choices.
- People's own preferences, fears and prejudices are powerful when it comes to determining behaviour.
- The "Yes, we are all individuals" line from Monty Python's *Life of Brian*, chanted in unison by a huge crowd of people, said it all. In many areas of behaviour, people don't tend to act individually. The Bystander Effect means that people subconsciously look to others for guidance on how to act, or whether to act at all, and they are reluctant to stand out from the crowd. Very often they won't adopt environmentally friendly behaviours unless they are convinced everyone else will pull their weight too. There is massive hidden peer pressure to conform.
- Consumers are often 'locked into' unsustainable behaviours due to constraints like time and money and they might not see a way out.
- There's a feeling that as an individual, no-one can make much difference. People are easily overwhelmed by the scale of the problems and the effort they think is needed from them and they default to the "I can't do everything, so I'll do nothing" response.
- People don't like being told what to do, especially when it comes to how they live their lives, and they react against being cajoled.
- People tend to block, deny or ignore things they find frightening or feel helpless about. The 'Daily Mail Effect' frequently comes into play in which people tend to dismiss out of hand things they have no knowledge or understanding of, or simply don't like the sound of.
- There is a remarkable but understandable 'head in the sand' feeling that everything is all right because there are few signs of panic or destruction around us. Environmental degradation is often gradual.
- The whole green movement is seen by some as 'do-gooders' or hippies and green is seen as for certain stereotypes only. It's not cool or trendy for many people.
- There is no real example set, nor consistency shown, by government, which breeds cynicism and leads to rejection of messages.
- There are no rewards for doing the right thing, no incentives, and no penalties for doing the wrong thing.
- There are few feedback mechanisms for people to see the effect of any efforts they have made.

“The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way. Some see nature all ridicule and deformity and some scarce see nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself.” William Blake

The length of this list speaks for itself but it goes on... Two personal barriers are perhaps higher than all the rest. One is the force of habit. If someone has been doing something in a particular way for a long time, it's very hard to get them to try things a different way. The second key, not unrelated, barrier is that people usually hate change. We all do, unless we are the ones driving it, of course.

These are generally 'internal' barriers, often down to perception and sometimes irrational, and they are frequently discounted in our search for rational, external explanations for non-takeup of environmental behaviours. Naturally there are real, external barriers too: poor information, lack of advice, lack of green

“Green does have an image problem. It’s all too much lentils, sandals and non-mainstream behaviour. People know changing behaviour matters but the messages sent out by the green movement tend to appeal to only a small number of people, not to the majority.”
Sara Parkin for *Painting the Town Green*

alternatives and facilities, etc but these are almost certainly easier to overcome, given funding and political will.

Let’s not forget too that a fundamental problem is that we are asking people to invest in a long term future they personally might not be part of. On climate change, people believe they are being asked to act for the benefit of possibly the next generation but one. This is meat and drink to some people but it falls flat with many.

When people are asked whether they care about the environment,

it’s a bit like asking whether people care about animals or children: it’s very hard for them to say no. They also might see different meanings in the word ‘environment’. Some might see it as the survival of the rainforests while others might see it as the amount of litter or dog mess in the park. The challenge that the green movement faces is converting these varying levels of concern, perceptions and priorities into co-ordinated action. Marketeers talk about the 30:3 rule. Around 30 per cent of people might say they are very concerned about something but only about 3 per cent will do anything about it.

This attitude-action gap acts as a block on people actually acting out their concerns and is a big challenge that the green movement faces. It also means that if you challenge someone’s actions, for example say their level of car use is not sensible, they will more likely change their attitude than their action, perhaps getting defensive and saying they don’t think car use is a bad thing after all rather than agreeing to drive less. This might seem incredible to campaigners but psychologists have known about it for years: it’s called cognitive dissonance.

The green movement is very often trying to persuade people to swim against the tide and defy both their in-built driving forces and their inertia. And such are the barriers, external and internal, to green behaviour that it’s usually far easier to do the wrong thing than the right thing. The wrong things are certainly better marketed and more readily available.

Depressingly the society ‘traffic lights’ on going green seem to be stuck on red for many people. That is not to say we can’t get them to change...

9.2 How we might be falling down

Earth’s resource systems are on overload. We do too much, we buy too much, we waste too much. Much of what is wrong in environmental terms stems from over-consumption. Quite simply, we in the UK demand far too much. The common response of environmentalists has therefore been to preach a more frugal lifestyle, but even a top salesman couldn’t really sell sacrifice, other than perhaps to people like ourselves for whom sacrifice provides some degree of satisfaction, comfort even. Less is hardly ever seen as more and directly or indirectly trying to sell a green lifestyle as giving up everything nice and living in a cave with the light switched off is ultimately doomed to fail.

Indeed, when faced with the ‘chocolate cake test’ most of us find it very hard not to put consumption before sustainability *automatically*: we subconsciously choose the best cake on the table and the slice with the most chocolate on. In a choice between chocolate cake and ship’s biscuit, chocolate cake will always win but we still try to serve up ship’s biscuit on the grounds that chocolate cake is bad for us and inherently ‘wrong’. And we expect people to leave the chocolate cake on the plate.

Our task must be not to position ourselves against consumption but against *over-consumption*. We can say that too much chocolate cake makes you fat, spotty and unhealthy but not try to take it away altogether. Our message must be against resource-bingeing not against putting the environment to our own use.

The green movement has a long way to go. We must face up to the fact that green living across a whole range of behaviours, rather than just single behaviours such as recycling, is still niche. But by definition, as Wendy Gordon points out, all new ideas are niche at first with the majority of people indifferent or even hostile to them, but once the majority embrace an idea, it becomes an unstoppable force. Look at mobile phones. Our mission must be to transform niche behaviour to mainstream. Now we just have to work out how to do it.

Unfortunately there is no magic bullet we can provide for turning people green overnight. Lifestyle decisions are often complicated, actions are not always straightforward and there may be conflicting priorities. We need to present broad-brush environmentalism, not pedantic attention to detail. Someone once asked which on earth they should buy when faced with a choice of locally produced apples from Kent, organic apples from New Zealand and Fairtrade apples from South Africa. The answer, we should say, is to buy all three and not get too hung up on things.

It is amazing the mistakes the green movement has made and is continuing to make.

First, let the age-old assumption that providing information on its own can save the world be laid to rest once and for all. For too long the green movement has pumped out information, assuming it leads to

awareness of threats and problems, concern and finally action. Unfortunately most if not all the lifestyle decisions that the green movement seeks to influence are not determined mainly by rational consideration of the facts, but by emotions, habits, personal preferences, fashions, social norms, personal morals and values, peer pressure and other intangibles. Many of the everyday decisions that we seek to influence, for example to take the car or to walk, to buy the eco-washing powder or the high-chemical one, or to turn the radiator up or reach for a jumper, are undertaken with little or no deliberate thought at all. In other words, to influence lifestyle choices we must connect with the heart, senses and emotions rather than just

“The world’s most effective leaders are not issue-identified but rather vision and value-identified. These leaders distinguish themselves by inspiring hope against fear, love against prejudice, and power against powerlessness. Martin Luther King’s ‘I have a dream speech’ is famous because it put forward an inspiring, positive vision that carried a critique of the current moment within it. Imagine how history would have turned out had King given a ‘I have a nightmare’ speech instead. In the absence of a bold vision, environmental leaders are effectively giving the ‘I have a nightmare’ speech.” Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus

*“We cannot simply knock on our neighbour’s door and say: ‘The world is standing on the brink of the final abyss – I thought you’d like to know.’”
Dr Nicholas Humphrey*

the head and its brain cells. There is no such thing as Rational Man. He gave up a long time ago, if he was ever around at all...

Much of the language the green movement uses is unpalatable to some of our audiences. They trip off the green tongue all too readily but words such as environmentally friendly, green, sustainable development, sustainable living, campaign group, pressure group, eco, planet, etc present problems for some people (but not all people) and can lead to them switching off from our message. We've therefore often lost them unnecessarily.

We've also misunderstood what consumer goods actually mean to people, ignoring their connections with personal identity, esteem and belonging. Nowhere have we got things more wrong than in understanding car use. Pleas for people to cut car use in favour of public transport are on their own more or less doomed to fail because they miss the fundamental point. Cars are much more than a means of getting from A to B. Indeed if that were all they were good for, these expensive items wouldn't be needed at all in many if not most people's lives. The car is less about transport and more about a sense of freedom, convenience and personal identity. It is, as Solitaire Townsend points out, a status symbol, a means of social bonding (particularly for men), a cocoon, a lover, a best friend and a refuge. People go by car because they largely *want* to, and they don't *want* to take one of the alternative options. Similarly car clubs might never become truly mainstream because a borrowed car cannot fulfil many of these personal identity requirements.

“We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge.” John Naisbitt

“The floggings will continue until morale improves.” Unknown

Cars also epitomise what's wrong with the green products and options currently available. Cars are offered in a myriad of variations, cleverly designed to appeal to the idiosyncracies of consumers on a very specific basis. Sustainable options usually come in a one-size-fits-all version. The bus, for example, is designed and positioned as the lowest common denominator for people

who might end up using it. Think how things might be if bus services could be shaped and marketed to appeal to particular types of passenger, perhaps an early morning fast executive service with newspapers, laptop points and rolling news headlines; a mid-morning shoppers' special with maps, information and reviews on shops and products; a young person's 'coolbus' at schools-out time, festooned with posters of teenage icons such as *Little Britain* characters; and a late-night clubbers' special with music and dimmed coloured lighting.

There is one serious error that nearly everyone in the green movement has made in their attempts to reach out to the public. We tend to assume everyone is like us, with the same thirst for scary details of environment threats, the same triggers for concern, and the same compelling urge to do something about it. Too many materials end up being written by green people, very often about green people and therefore inevitably for green people. It might be disappointing, but most individuals are not like people who work for environmental organisations and they don't necessarily respond to things in the same way.

Indeed, as Chris Rose explains, a common reason for campaigns or communications failing is that they are conceived by people with a strong environmental and ethical conscience and expressed in their terms. They are then aimed not just at other people on the same level but at the general public, many of whom think, act and are motivated in different ways to those who devised the campaign. The propositions do not 'make sense' to many people they are aimed at and they fail. It's a classic error but one that the green movement keeps making. Our campaigns/public education programmes usually assume one size fits all and they fail to recognise that people are different with different attitude and action triggers.

9.3 A vision for finding a better way

There are a number of psychological models that can be used to segment the public into distinct categories. This report draws on the principles developed by Riesman and Maslow, and championed by Chris Rose and Pat Dade, which define three basic types

of personality. Naturally many people might be a mix of all three or may adopt different roles in different company or circumstances, or at different times of life, but usually one of the types is recurrently dominant and is a strong determinant of response and behaviour. In a rather horribly impersonal marketing sort of way, we can therefore divide people very crudely, and with a necessary degree of fluidity, into three sets.

Inner-directed Pioneers are strongly motivated by ethical concerns and stimulated by new ideas and ways of doing things. When becoming aware of a problem, the action mode of inner-directeds is DIY: they are the activists and they most naturally accept campaigning messages. Inner-directeds start things, including social trends, and start change. Most of them have either already gone green or are contemplating it. Inner-directeds are likely to soak up 'green language' and eco-paraphernalia and be stimulated by it. Most people reading this report are probably Pioneers.

The dominant motivation of outer-directed Prospectors, on the other hand, is status and the esteem of others. They place a high value on success and wealth. Their action mode is to organise; they scale things up, build organisations, become managers and want to run successful things. They follow fashion, and big brands are natural message sources for them. It's no good expecting outer-directed people to be primarily motivated by ethical or environmental concerns. They are more likely to ask "What's in it for me?" or "How will that make me look good or be more successful?" There is a danger that outer-directeds will dismiss environmental or ethical campaigns as do-gooding and they are less likely to resonate with green language than inner-directeds.

“I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time respecting her seniority.” EB White

“The definition of wisdom is knowing when you don't know.” Socrates

Security-driven Settlers are more concerned with their home-base, tradition and belonging. Security-drivers don't really have an action mode and in response to environmental problems might say "Someone should do something about it", the 'someone' being those in authority. Hence they oppose most NGO campaigns by default but are more open to authority messages. When change does come, they follow on last and resist any departure from what they have been used to doing. They are likely to be disinterested in environmental problems at a global level and might block messages based on this; they are much more likely to resonate with issues that affect their home ground or way of

life. Green language might be unproductive here, unless it implies local rather than global significance. Settlers are also more likely to feel uncomfortable with language that implies challenging authority or traditional values, such as pressure group, campaign or demo, and find other green language that implies instability or threat unsettling. There is a high risk that messages using Pioneer-style approaches might be blocked or dismissed.

Behaviour specialists subdivide these basic three types further but even this first level of segmentation is incredibly significant and useful. Campaigns to encourage and persuade the public to adopt green behaviours must be framed in terms that make sense to them, according to their own values and motivations. What this might mean in practice is that one campaign, with one approach based on one set of values, might not be enough. We must consider framing any public campaign in (at least) three different ways.

So a campaign to encourage the inhabitants of our Acacia Avenue (see Section 2) to go green, might be framed as follows:

Inner-directeds

Focus on Ethical Living

Key message: Do the *right* thing and feel good about it.

What it can offer you: Satisfaction, fulfilment, enlightenment, a sense of calm, well being.

What you stand to lose if you don't take up Ethical Living: Personal peace of mind and self-respect because *you* know you haven't done what you should have done.

Messaging: A focus on global concerns, fundamental ethics and altruism using global green language in abundance.

Campaign images: Global problems and people in action.

Campaign target media: *Guardian, Independent, Observer.*

“We must be the change we want to see in the world.”
Mahatma Gandhi

Outer-directeds

Focus on Smart Living

Key message: Do the *clever* thing and feel good about it.

What it can offer you: Reputation, success, the respect of others, desirability, admiration, fashionability, influence.

What you stand to lose if you don't take up Smart Living: The esteem of others; you risk looking an idiot.

Messaging: A focus on 'what's in it for you', a ban on all green language as far as is possible, a play on the kudos gained by individuals talking part.

Campaign images: Successful, attractive, desirable people.

Campaign target media: *Daily Mail, The Times.*

Security-driven

Focus on Safe Living

Key message: Do the *sensible* thing and feel good about it.

What it can offer you: Security, stability, tradition, consistency, fitting in, acceptance, continuity, reliability.

Messaging: A focus on the home ground, the local environment

and everyday life activities, a ban on all 'global' green language but a focus on concern for the local and with a message that you could be left out if you don't join in.

What you stand to lose if you don't take up Safe Living: The way of life you have grown to love; you risk losing everything that's important.

Campaign images: Nice homes, stable family life, pets.

Campaign target media: *Daily Express, Daily Telegraph.*

“We save only what we love, we love only what we understand, we understand only what we are taught.” Baba Diome

This framework might yield more success than running a campaign that pretends everyone thinks and acts in the same way. It's naturally more work for us because it means segmenting out our audiences and addressing them separately but then changing behaviour is about the hardest thing to achieve and needs complex approaches.

The environment might still be seen as fringe but concern about something, anything, is not. It's refreshing to note that TV gameshows reveal that nearly everyone has a 'favourite charity' and is therefore open to *some* sort of ethical concern. The challenge must be to extend this sometimes very focused concern to other areas.

We should consider building bridges with other cause groupings to produce an overall ‘grand alliance’ of causes that could be presented on the same plate with a view to drawing in a much wider range of people, if not everybody. We could wrap ‘healthy environment’ up with less ‘contentious’ causes and in this way fuse environmental protection with social and economic issues, instead of these appearing by default as conflicting pressures in which environment will perhaps always lose out.

Frameworks for Ethical Living, Smart Living and Safe Living could therefore encompass five families of issues:

- Prosperous, comfortable lives
- Peaceful, safe communities
- Social justice
- Physical, mental and spiritual well being
- Healthy environment

The result might be a holistic framework for quality of life that would be hard to argue with, regardless of one’s outlook as an inner-directed Pioneer, an outer-directed Prospector or a security-driven Settler.

9.4 Principles we must carry with us

- We talk in terms of carrots and sticks as though the public literally *were* donkeys. Treating them as dumb animals that can be pushed and pulled into doing the right thing is probably not the right approach. People need to be taken on a shared journey, not exhorted to do things. It must be a journey based on dialogue between active partners about a shared problem. People hate change, unless they are the ones driving it. No-one likes being told what to do, especially when it comes down to living their private life. Similarly no-one enjoys being badgered. We are not the environment police, nor the nagging aunt.
- People don’t like being told *not* to do something but some might be more receptive to change if presented with ideas for doing new or even just different things, which they might ultimately grow to prefer, if allowed to in their own time.
- Environmental problems are more likely to generate reactions if they are communicated in a way that touches emotional triggers.
- We can only get people on side by expressing things in terms that work for them and by plugging into what they are already concerned about and the sort of things they aspire to. It might go against the grain but environmentalists could well learn from George W Bush. He won his second election because he identified that the values of a huge number of key voters were based on patriotism, a stable family environment and a strong moral and religious ‘backbone’, and he offered them a future based on those values. It didn’t seem to matter exactly what he said he was going to do in terms of policy; he had already won the hearts of the people he needed.
- The human mind can cope with only a certain amount of bad news before it disengages and goes into denial. Why should we expect people to be motivated by images of environmental calamity and notions of gloom, pessimism, hardship, sacrifice and hard work? Continually promoting a message that everything is getting worse takes its toll in terms of demoralising people and leaving them without motivation; scaring people is often counter-productive. Carbon ‘rationing’, for example, might at the moment be too scary; people are not ready for that because it’s not a wartime situation in most people’s eyes. Encouraging wonder, curiosity and respect for the environment could be more productive because people sign up to hope rather than fear. Environmentalists don’t therefore have to automatically adopt the role of doom-sayers. A better role for us would be people with something positive, exciting and new to promote.
- Similarly it is psychologically more productive for people to be part of, and feel ownership of, the *solution* rather than the *problem*. It is more attractive and more likely to achieve participation. People

“Humankind cannot bear much reality.” TS Elliot

need to feel solutions are within their grasp. A focus on human ingenuity and imagination is more likely to lead to optimism and enthusiastic participation. And after all, humanity has moved from the oatcake to the computer in a couple of hundred years, so we just might get through all this.

- We have to take people from where they are and not where we might want them to be. It's productive to feed into concerns that people already have and bolt on to them and similarly play on things people already find interesting, eg gadgets and technology, fashions and fads, and so on.
- An accurate basic assumption might be that most people are essentially selfish, which is a natural human reaction and indeed a natural evolutionary process for any animal. Quality of life for oneself and one's dependants is always a key driving force for anyone. Any benefits from environmental behaviour, and there should be benefits from every environmental behaviour, must be tangible, immediate and specific to the person carrying out the behaviour. Benefits at the society level are unlikely to be a significant driver of change; benefits should be as localised as possible. Long term benefits, even if personal, are unlikely to be an incentive. People discount the future.
- The moment we attack someone's deeply held values (for example their ambition to earn more money and be successful or give their children the very best they can) or things dear to them (for example the family pet or the second home they long to escape to one day), we have lost them.
- People don't respond to guilt tactics, especially, it seems, those who already have children.
- People think life is complicated enough without having to perform the rigorous mental exercises needed to devise methods of reducing their impact on the environment.
- Messages that green behaviour can save people money are generally unlikely to work because the amounts are usually small and often set in the future. The prospect of saving small amounts is for most people not a strong enough force to change deeply ingrained habits. In addition, the truth is that most people today do not *need* to save money, certainly not at the sort of levels on offer. In general, and there will always be exceptions, people are more affluent now than ever before. However, almost paradoxically, everyone hates paying over the odds for something at the point of purchase and most people have in-built mechanisms that lead them to seek out bargains and then feel good about them. Could tax and price mechanisms be shaped, and marketing adopted, to suggest that by adopting green lifestyles, people are somehow 'tricking' government out of money and getting a bargain?
- The green movement has to connect with the contemporary culture of its audiences, whoever they are, and nowhere is this more important than with the general public. The power of indirect messaging in popular culture has not been recognised. Celebrity culture, fashion, music... these all need to be broken into and used to promote ideas as part of the mood of the moment. Television is the most powerful medium today but it will not play its full part in promoting a sustainable future until green messages are incorporated into popular drama, comedy, chatshows, gameshows, makeover shows, reality TV and soaps.
- The language used in campaigns should be the language of the reader, not that of the writer. This definitely means less officialese – words such as briefing, campaign, sustainability, initiative, proposal – and more popular catchphrases, buzz words, street-talk, playground-talk, even yesteryear-talk, depending on who the target audience is.
- Role models – people to look up to, aspire to and copy, even subconsciously – are so important in achieving change. How could David and Victoria, Kylie, Robbie and all the others be brought on board the good ship Green?
- Less is rarely more and sacrifice can't be sold to anyone beyond a fixed group in society. But for certain groups, for example people who lived through the War and rationing, it is possible to plug into their values of thrift and frugality, playing on nostalgia.
- People tend to prefer incentives to do the right thing over disincentives to do the wrong thing.
- Lifestyles and consumer products can only be marketed as what people really, really want in terms of making them happy, healthy, attractive, popular, admired, successful, safe, secure, fulfilled and so on. You can't promote anything without making it available, affordable *and* attractive. Sustainable options need to be all these things.

“Advertising is an environmental striptease for a world of abundance.” Marshall McLuhan

- Similarly unsustainable choices could be presented in ways that put people off them. Esteem-driven people in the UK could perhaps be put off 4x4s by destroying the image of these vehicles in their eyes and making them no longer impressive or desirable. An association in the public consciousness between 4x4s and Mr Bean, for example, would counter the psychology behind their success; the Detroit Experiment in the US (see Section 6) showed there might be ways to present 4x4s to security-driven people so they too find them less attractive.
- If one were written, the bible of communications would start with the three M's and the four E's. In communicating with anyone, the first task is to define the specific audience (the market), the second is to clarify what we want to get across to them (the message), and the third is to decide how to do it (the medium). Successful communication usually follows this order. Doing it in reverse, for example deciding to produce a leaflet, writing it and then wondering who might read it, is pure self-indulgence. In trying to produce behaviour change in the public, the aim should be to strive for a partnership with them (engage), make it easy (enable), lead by example (exemplify) and give support and help (encourage).
- Easy-click actions, where people don't have to think too much, are going to achieve greater take-up.
- People don't actually have to do the right thing for the right reasons. Recycling has taken off because it's easy and has become more or less normal, rather than a means to help the environment.
- The buck-passing between government, business and the public could be short circuited by presenting sustainability as a collective issue with actions all sectors can perform at the level appropriate to them. People feel swamped by business and over-ruled by government but should feel empowered since they determine the future of businesses by buying or not buying their products and choose governments through the ballot box.
- The public feelgood factor is an electric socket waiting to be plugged into. This may be irrational, superficial and largely unrelated to reality, but it is a powerful determinant of how people end up feeling towards certain things. A sense of pride in Britain taking the lead on environmental issues or the development of new technology could create a wave of engagement.
- Just as there might be benefits from packaging green messages with other life issues, the green message for a business product doesn't have to be the main message. It could be a complementary one for responsible producers of goods or providers of services still focusing primarily on performance.
- Opportunities do open up for changing the way people think and act. 'Transition zones', for example moving home, leaving college, getting married, children leaving home, changing job, etc, find people thinking about things rather than acting purely out of habit and they are more open to changes to pre-existing routines.
- The positive reaction of more people to the large environmental groups such as WWF-UK, the National Trust and RSPB compared with the smaller ones such as Transport 2000, or the more radical ones such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, suggests an environmental agenda is best promoted from a broad base that for many people hints at respectability, normality and stability. Some people might be uncomfortable with the notion of the system being shaken by smaller, perhaps more fringe and unrepresentative, groups and some might react against the eco-paraphernalia of more on-the-streets or direct action groups. The terms 'campaign group' and even more so 'pressure group' are not popular beyond their core territory among the inner-directeds.
- Promoters of green behaviour are ambassadors. A whiff of hypocrisy amongst cheerleaders is enough for most people to stop trying themselves. Local authorities sending recycling to China look stupid; NGO staff going on regular long haul holidays don't help the cause; government policy diverging from its own sustainable development guidelines looks as though the people at the top can't even get it right.
- People are likely to find movement to a green lifestyle rather overwhelming. People need to be nurtured but allowed to go at their own pace. They need backup and advice, and even a helpful ear for when things go wrong. This 'intensive-care' approach has to be continued until new habits are cemented, which could take years. Any campaign or public programme to influence behaviour must therefore run for a long time and not stop after a high profile launch.

“Whenever man comes up with a better mousetrap, nature immediately comes up with a better mouse.” James Carswell

Section 10 **Recommendations for change**

1. Present environment as important not just for environment's sake but also for people's sake. We should market the environment not just as a home for nice animals and plants but as the life support system that we all rely on, directly or indirectly, for food, water, air and shelter. Like a life support system in a hospital, the whole system is complex but fragile and vulnerable. It could break down if we don't keep the machinery in good running order. In other words, if we don't start looking after the environment, it might stop providing what we need. American President JF Kennedy's famous words "Ask not what America can do for you but what you can do for America", now need to be turned around to give: "Ask not what you are doing for the environment but what the environment is already doing for you." It's an approach that's essentially selfish but human beings *are* essentially selfish.
2. Move away from exhortation and a pedestal 'I know best' attitude to create real dialogue. We should aim to take people on a shared journey on equal terms where both sides can learn.
3. Move away from presenting a right or wrong approach, which sounds over-moralistic and risks alienating people who can't meet the standard at first attempt, to a system of good, less good and better.
4. Move from a *modus operandi* of information provision and rational argument to methods aimed at touching emotions, stimulating resonance, inspiring and creating desire. In other words, we should move from a head-focused approach to one that's heart-focused. We need to recognise the potential of peripheral processing and hidden messages and focus on strong, visual images.
5. Aim to dispel the green image of negativity and doom and instead focus on positivity, optimism and human ingenuity. We have to stop using shock or guilt tactics and avoid the temptation to exaggerate or go beyond science. The presumption must be that we *will* get through all this, that there *is* light at the end of the tunnel and that it *is* daylight, rather than the train hurtling towards us... Our motto should be to reassure and offer a way through.
6. Make environmental information localised, so people see the effects on them rather than on others far away. This should be coupled with the need to move away from shock to tugging heart strings. In climate change, for example, we need to move away from messages of burning rainforests (remote) and houses under water (local but shocking) to perhaps the fact that children living in southern England might never have another snowball fight (local and emotional).
7. Agree a vision of the future within the movement and make sure it isn't hopelessly unobtainable. This has to be presented as an exciting new way of looking at things and marketed as something better. We should turn from defence to attack by moving away from 'defending' the environment through the reduction of damage and exploitation to 'attacking' on its behalf through promoting a positive vision of a better way of doing things. In this way

“Man masters nature not by force but by understanding.” Jacob Bronowski

we can be associated with solutions rather than problems. Our message must be: “Something better is on the way...”

8. Present being environmentally friendly as gaining, not giving up; as doing things differently, not refraining from doing things altogether.
9. Capitalise on things people seem to agree on, that green living is sensible, healthy and makes you feel good. This after all is a pretty good base. But work is desperately needed to counter damaging misconceptions that green is hippy, difficult, expensive, boring, time consuming and not trendy. We need to work hard too to remove green stereotypical images by example and association.
10. Look for tangible, personal, close-to-home benefits from environmental actions for individuals. Every environmental action should carry a personal incentive or reward and we should press for non-sustainable behaviours to carry price penalties or other disincentives.
11. Create agency, the ability for people to understand a problem in their own way, decide for themselves to do something about it, make a real difference that’s noticeable to them, and receive recognition for having done the right thing.
12. Create a sense of every little counts and deal convincingly with the “I can’t do everything, so I’ll do nothing” reaction by presenting a ‘green on balance’ framework for personal living. Similarly we shouldn’t chastise people for slipping into binges of ‘bad ways’ now and again. Nevertheless there needs to be some league tabling of behaviours to emphasise that some have much bigger effects than others. Creating a system in which people feel they ‘do their bit’ by putting their bottles out for recycling but then happily jet off to Australia would not be sensible.
13. Aim to develop brands – packages of environmentally friendly behaviours – that people will identify with, find attractive, see as a must-have, and above all *like*, just as they identify with a favourite brand in a supermarket.
14. Focus campaigns and calls for behaviour change on what works for the people to be targeted. This means recognising that different types of people have different values and motivations. We should therefore present environmentally friendly behaviours in ways that resonate with different personality groups. A campaign using the words ‘green living’ runs the risk of failing with some types of people. Thus, drawing on the model of human behaviour developed by Riesman and Maslow and championed by Chris Rose and Pat Dade, we could present green behaviours as part of an Ethical Living tag to inner-directed, seeker-type personalities; as Smart Living to outer-directed, esteem-driven personalities; and as Safe Living to security-driven, home values-based personalities. We would need to take people as they are and on their own terms. In particular this might need a ban on all green language when communicating the need for Smart Living to esteem-driven people and use of only that green language that can be brought down to a local level when persuading security-driven people to adopt Safe Living.
15. Stop pretending environment is the only issue that should matter to people. There are countless others too, many of them appearing to be more urgent and immediate to people.

“First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.” Mahatma Ghandi

We need to work towards legitimising and broadening the appeal of green behaviours by wrapping up environment with the other four main families of visionary causes: prosperous, comfortable lives; peaceful, safe communities; social justice; and physical, mental and spiritual well being. Calls for Ethical Living, Smart Living and Safe Living could, in this way, ring multiple bells in people's minds rather than just one and end up being inarguable.

16. Similarly argue for a government-led labelling scheme for products and services embracing the values of: prosperous, comfortable lives; peaceful, safe communities; social justice; physical, mental and spiritual well being; and healthy environment. This could be done by badging products and services as Ethical or Right Choice, Smart or Clever Choice and Safe or Sensible Choice, thus appealing to the three main consumer personalities identified earlier.

“Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries.” Jimmy Carter

17. Work towards providing ‘green living on a plate’, as easy as booking a holiday: the equivalent of just making a phone call, handing over a credit card number and turning up on the day. Every local authority should work towards providing a green demonstration house, in which green consumer choices are demonstrated in a practical, constructive and non-confrontational way with friendly staff on hand to offer commentary. A national one-stop telephone advisory service should be set up offering clear, easy-to-obtain practical advice on the best things to do for the environment and how to do them. Government should facilitate and encourage the establishment of ‘green make-over’ businesses and other private providers of, and crucially maintenance services for, green technology. There should be massive public investment in infrastructure and facilities for green living.

18. Similarly introduce ‘green starter kit’ advice by starting people off with easy actions with obvious paybacks or pleasant effects that fit into existing routines, before building up to the more difficult ones. For example, this could begin with wildlife gardens, action on litter and planting or tending trees in the neighbourhood, before attempting change in areas such as transport and holidays.

19. Aim to create ‘bandwagon environmentalism’ with a sense of joining in, or missing out if you don’t. This is essential if niche is to become mainstream and if we are to overcome the Bystander Effect where people don’t act because they don’t see others acting.

20. Court influential role models by building bridges with people who strike a chord with the public and working with them to demonstrate green values. Similarly put forward ‘green leaders’ that people can look up to, identify with and more than anything *like*. The research carried out through this project showed that 63 per cent of the people questioned couldn’t think of any good green role models or leaders of the green movement that they looked up to.

21. Make more effort to get environment into popular culture and probe opportunities for soft messaging. In particular, build bridges with television executives responsible for drama, soaps, gameshows, comedy, reality TV and so on.

22. Look for ways to promote bottom-up approaches to create grapevine buzz, information networks and peer-pressure chains, as well as top-down frameworks for living. We must get

the 'sneezers', the 'trendsetters', the 'protagonists' on board and interested in new ways of doing things so we can rely on them to help spread the word.

23. Recognise that the green movement is a very broad church, including politicians with an environmental remit, local authorities, academics and scientists, authors and journalists, business people, campaigners and activists, plus armchair worriers. Different arms of the movement must build links towards others, seek consensus and work together to devise overall 'brands' rather than a myriad of individual messages and even competitive brands moulded around specific organisations. It's human nature to be competitive amongst ourselves but it's counterproductive to follow the model expressed by Monty Python's *Life of Brian*, in which the Popular Front of Judea won't speak to the Judean Popular Front and so on.

24. Widen the green movement further to embrace sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists who understand why people act, and why they don't act. We should draw in too advertising creatives able to 'sell' green as brands that work for people. The green movement relies too much on campaigners and not enough on people with these skills and knowledge areas.

25. Build bridges with faiths, focusing on shared principles and values, and 'sign up' religious leaders as public campaigners. It is sobering for environmentalists used to communicating with limited audiences in limited ways with limited budgets to think that 1.7 million people participate in a Church of England service each month, that 1 million children are educated in Church of England schools and that the number of Church of England ministers is as high as 27,000. What could Friends of the Earth do with 27,000 dedicated campaigners?

“I think the answer lies in the story of the small boy on a beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up. One by one he was returning them to the sea. A man passed. He asked: ‘Why bother? What you do will make no difference. You can’t possibly put them all back.’ The boy picked up another starfish and said: ‘Well, it’ll make a difference to this one.’” Perry Walker for Painting the Town Green

26. Spend more time achieving change by working within and with established and realistic political processes, rather than outside and against. This could mean more inside-track lobbying of decision makers rather than outside-track campaigns to harass them. Taken one step further, some might argue that relying on a separate political party to promote primarily green values may not be as effective as politicians with a strong green conscience moving into the mainstream parties and changing them from within.

27. Spend less time fault-finding and more time suggesting solutions, particularly blockbuster ones. This sort of approach runs the risk of being ignored by the mainstream media but it could gain the respect and therefore buy-in of decision makers. For example, instead of quibbling over levels of fuel duty, we could lobby for a complete redesign of the entire tax system, public services, etc so green becomes the normal, default option and people pay more for, or find it more difficult to choose, unsustainable options.

28. Learn from areas of success, such as take-up in recycling (easy, becoming normal, connects with some people's leanings towards thriftiness and nostalgia), organic food (people think it's better for their health and that of their children), energy measures (help us to keep warm) and buying recycled paper goods (trendy). We should recognise that some areas are hard and will take more time to get movement: cars, flying, holidays, eating fish, water use.
29. Be pragmatic rather than fundamentalist. It is counter-productive to take things to the nth degree. Hence we should not suggest people wrap Christmas and birthday presents in newspaper, nor should we draw attention to pesticide residues on cats' paws. Triggering the "Oh, for heaven's sake" effect turns people away from our big picture messages.
30. Stop being sidelined by fights with detractors and marginal opposing interests who will probably never come on board and instead seek to engage us in fruitless argument. The aim must be to treat these people, organisations and businesses as roundabouts to negotiate without fuss and then continue on in the same direction.
31. Set an example. It's so much better to lead from the front on a bicycle than shout from the back from a car window. The moment we, as a green movement, do something perceived to be at odds with what we are suggesting someone else should do, is the moment we've lost them. Our opponents are just waiting for chinks in our armour to appear and inconsistency is a potentially fatal one; while the people we seek to influence are likely to turn away not just from us but from our message too. Environmental organisations, councils, governments... all must follow their own advice. It's also highly damaging for environmentalists to have one code of practice for their professional life and another for their personal life. Our message to the public may be that *they* don't have to do *everything* so long as they do *something*, but if we are to be convincing, people who represent and promote green values should aim to be generally a good example across a whole range of lifestyle behaviours, or consider looking for another job.

Section 11 **Conclusion**

The most positive sign from this project is that there seems to be remarkable consensus on how the wider environmental movement could move forward in more effectively persuading and helping the public to adopt greener lifestyles. Indeed a great deal of research and a lot of deep thinking has been done in this area, but little of it seems to have percolated down to the factory floor of the environmental movement, to the people who must actually engage with the public and promote change. There are signs that new thinking might be about to break through but there is a long way to go before we as a movement – campaigners and activists, central and local government, academics and think-tanks, authors and journalists – can be confident that we stand a real chance of painting the town green.

Afterthought

The environmental movement is often criticised for its obsession with green jargon that means little to others. Many people wonder, for example, what we mean by “sustainability” and are still blank-faced when we finish our explanation 20 minutes later. This is perplexing. How can they not ‘get it’ when we give the following clear definition direct from *The Environmentalist’s Dictionary of Classic English* (Greenman and Greenman 1928)?

“Sustainability, in particular the act of sustaining sustainable sustenance in our society, is sustainment, in a truly sustentative way, of our sustaining systems. It requires, and sustainedly so, the input of both society’s sustainers, and more significantly sustainable society’s so-called sustentaculum, to sustain these systems in a systematic, systemic way. In short, sustentacular sustention must be sustentive and sustinent if sustaining substantially sustainable sustainability is to be sustained sustainably.”

So, just where are we going wrong... ?

Further information

For further information on this project and the work of Green-Engage Communications, visit www.green-engage.co.uk Information can also be found on Transport 2000's website at www.transport2000.org.uk

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