

Foreword

Being an island is not without challenges but also comes with great opportunities.

The Isle of Wight is a special place. It deserves to be cherished, maintained, encouraged to grow and protected for the future so that it can provide the loving, safe environment that all residents need.

The Island has long been a haven for technological innovation, a place where some of the greatest engineering triumphs of Great Britain have emerged. Our fields produce crops and our waters fish that are known the world over for their quality. Our beaches and views, rambles and rides are the stuff memories are made of. Our history reaches from dinosaurs to space. This scenic isle has been home to inventors, artists, sailors, farmers, traders, famous military figures and even the odd royal. The future of this great place is in our hands and it is up to us to add another compelling chapter to the story.

It is this future the Vectis Party was set up to help guide. We believe in Localism and Decentralisation. We believe that things can and should be better and that given the right tools and the right direction it will be. Most importantly we believe in the Isle of Wight.

We are local, not national. We do not need to curry favour with a London based party leadership nor are we immediately ideologically opposed to whoever happens to be in power. We can and will work with anyone to deliver for the Island.

We are unified in our aims. We have a manifesto with policies that we aim to deliver over the short, medium and long terms. We are an independent Party, not a party of bickering Independents.

This manifesto shows how we would start the changes necessary for the future of the Island. I commend it to you. If you are able in these elections then I urge you: Vote local, vote Vectis.

Daryll Pitcher - Leader of the Vectis Party



Council Tax

The Vectis Party know that Covid-19 associated lockdowns and disruption to the economy have hit the Isle of Wight hard.

We believe that in order for the recovery to start we need to give people confidence to invest in their future and empower them to spend money in their local communities.

The Vectis Party is in favour of low taxation and will propose to freeze general Council Tax increases at the next Council Budget.



Covid-19

The Vectis Party recognises that lockdowns and restrictions to freedoms should be temporary and that normality should return as soon as possible. The party also notes that the Isle of Wight was let down badly by government during early December when restrictions on cross Solent travel should have been implemented, but were not.

This tragic case of affairs persists with the Conservatives still refusing to ask for the power to restrict access during emergencies.

The Vectis Party believes that the Island would have suffered fewer cases and been able to lift local restrictions sooner if cross Solent travel had been controlled. This scenario could easily transpire again and so the Vectis Party will lobby government to allow the Island to be safe and free by localising health powers to County Hall.



Economic Regeneration

The Isle of Wight has three pillars to its economy; manufacturing, agriculture and tourism each of which have different needs in order to flourish.

By protecting our environment we will aid agriculture and tourism. By investing in our seaside towns and by supporting high profile events we can regenerate tourism further. By increasing skills and providing the correct infrastructure and support we can attract and expand our manufacturing base.

The Vectis Party is committed to maintaining a balance between all three economic pillars and will start the process of economic regeneration by switching the Council's investment efforts to focus on local needs. By doing this we can start to provide the infrastructure that will grow our economy and provide the high quality jobs the Island needs to thrive.



Retail Regeneration

It was already clear that retail was changing prior to the onset of the economic disruption caused by Covid-19 and the resulting shift to online sales.

The Vectis Party believe that the future of retail and by extension our town centres is small scale artisanal shops. The days of the 'big box' store are gone, the High Street can no longer compete on price alone. Instead customer service, variety, innovation and specialist knowledge will be the key for its future survival.

The Vectis Party will encourage small shops via Business Rate reliefs and grant funding. We will also work with landlords to provide smaller and more affordable retail spaces to allow local specialist shops to flourish.



Financial Regeneration

For an economy to flourish it needs access to finance. The Isle of Wight has not always been well supported by international finance and the big banks. Business managers are sometimes hundreds of miles distant from the businesses they are supposed to support. Every mortgage application has to pass an algorithm test before the computer will say “yes”.

The Vectis Party believe in local banking and local support. We think that locally based institutions can better understand their customers and provide proper support.

The Vectis Party will investigate the setting up of an Isle of Wight Building Society to support our community by providing finance suited to Islanders.



Education and Training

A high skilled workforce is an important part of improving outcomes on the Isle of Wight. Our economy needs the skills base to be able to compete with other areas and to provide new thinking and innovation in our workplaces.

The Vectis Party fully supports the concept of apprenticeships although we note that the system can be manipulated by unscrupulous employers. The party would crack down on this and promote Adult Apprenticeships as a way of enabling people to retrain and reskill.

The Vectis Party would also aim to ensure excellence in our schools. Educational underachievement has been a blight on the future of too many young Islanders. In order to incentivise continuing education the establishment of a University on the Island is an urgent requirement.



Town Centre Decay

There are too many empty and decaying buildings on the Isle of Wight. Places that for various reasons have been left to rot and that now blight our town centres and seafronts. This does nothing to improve the Islands prospects.

The Vectis Party will introduce specific local rules for maintaining the frontages of empty shops to make town centres more appealing and pleasant. We will also ensure that existing rules are fully enforced.

Too many of our hotels are in poor condition. They need to be open and to cater for modern tourists — weekend breakers and staycationists.

The Vectis Party will use all legal routes to bring these locations back into use.



Parking Charges

For many years the Isle of Wight Council has attempted to implement a “one-size-fits-all” style parking strategy. This has been a failure leading to ever increasing cost to motorists and great detriment to many parts of the Island.

The Vectis Party strategy would see each town treated individually with charges optimized to keep car parks full. This should increase revenue and increase footfall in town centres.

The Vectis Party also propose a reasonably priced evening / overnight island wide parking permit that would allow motorists to park in any council operated car park for as long as they wish between the hours of 5pm and 9am.



Safe Highways

A general presumption in favour of 20mph limits on residential roads is long overdue. Too many quiet local roads are overwhelmed during rush hour as people race to avoid queues elsewhere. This is putting local residents at risk and must end. It has been shown that widespread use of 20mph zones increases compliance and has a noticeable quietening effect for communities.

The PFI contract has not delivered on the promises made when it was introduced. By now most roads should have been brought up to standard but many are still un-resurfaced.

The Vectis Party will not shy away from hard action to ensure that the roads of the Island are brought up to the standard we were promised when the IW Council signed the biggest contract in their history.



Green Transport

The Isle of Wight must be ready to meet the challenges set by the governments ambitious targets for the switch to green transportation. Of primary concern is the lack of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles on the Island, particularly charging availability for visitors and tourists.

The Vectis Party will work with government and the private sector to deliver the charging points needed to keep tourists moving and experiencing our beautiful island.

The Vectis Party also recognises that hydrogen is another fuel that will play an important part in the green agenda. The Isle of Wight is ideally suited to the rollout of hydrogen infrastructure and will work to promote the Island as a test area for the future fuel.



Solent Travel

The cost, availability and reliability of cross Solent ferry travel is harming our community.

The Vectis Party supports the introduction of a Public Service Requirement on all cross Solent ferry operators.

The party also holds the position that the ferry services should receive government subsidy as they do in Scotland.

The Vectis Party will lobby government to uphold the principal of fairness. Currently Isle of Wight taxpayers are paying for the Scottish subsidy through the Barnett Formula which allocates U.K. tax revenue to the Scottish Government.



Floating Bridge / Cowes—East Cowes Link

The floating bridge is a fiasco that casts a stain on the current Administrations delusions of competence. Lessons must be learnt and errors corrected. The Vectis Party believe that only an Independent Public Enquiry will get to the bottom of the many layers of failure at the heart of this saga.

It is quite possible that the Floating Bridge No.6 is beyond redemption and will need to be replaced. Should this prove to be the case then the Vectis Party will support this, but only once the reasons for the failure have been addressed.

The Vectis Party also support investigation of a Medina bridge, either directly between the towns or higher upriver with a supplementary ramped motor launch for pedestrians and bicycles at the current crossing point.



Planning and Housing

The current government mandated housing target of 641 per year is far too high. The Vectis Party propose that a target of 350 would better reflect local demand and be both deliverable and sustainable. Social Housing should make up 50 of that total with a further 150 reserved for Islanders, people with family connections on the Island or people working here.

The Vectis Party proposes that all new housing should have adequate external wheelie bin storage (with a flat run to the kerb), external mobility scooter charging and external electric vehicle charging as standard.

Affordable housing is currently set at 80% of local market rate. With 3000 second homes pushing prices up Islanders are being priced out. The Vectis Party proposes that affordability be based upon average local wages as this would better reflect people's ability to pay.



Health

The Isle of Wight relies on St. Mary's Hospital for its major healthcare needs. There are many amazing people working there but there are also some serious problems. One of these is the lack of services and the lack of staff.

The Vectis Party will work to support St. Mary's and will lobby government on their behalf to increase their resources.

Currently too many people are being forced into off island medical travel. Building on the work of the ferry companies The Vectis Party will work with them to reduce the cost to patients of such travel.

The Vectis Party prioritises enabling people to stay in their own homes with adequate support rather than care home provision.



Adult Social Care

The Isle of Wight has an aging population. We have 28.3% of people over the age of 65 against 18.4% in England as a whole*. This places an unfair burden on the budget of the Isle of Wight Council compared to other local authorities the result of which is higher taxes and reduced services.

The Vectis Party will lobby government to fully recognise that the current situation is not equitable and that all Islanders, both young and old, are suffering poorer outcomes as a result.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of government to ensure that the Islands demographics do not result in lower quality services and they must take appropriate action to rectify this.

*Office for National Statistics 2019



Contact Us

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