



ISLE OF WIGHT

# UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

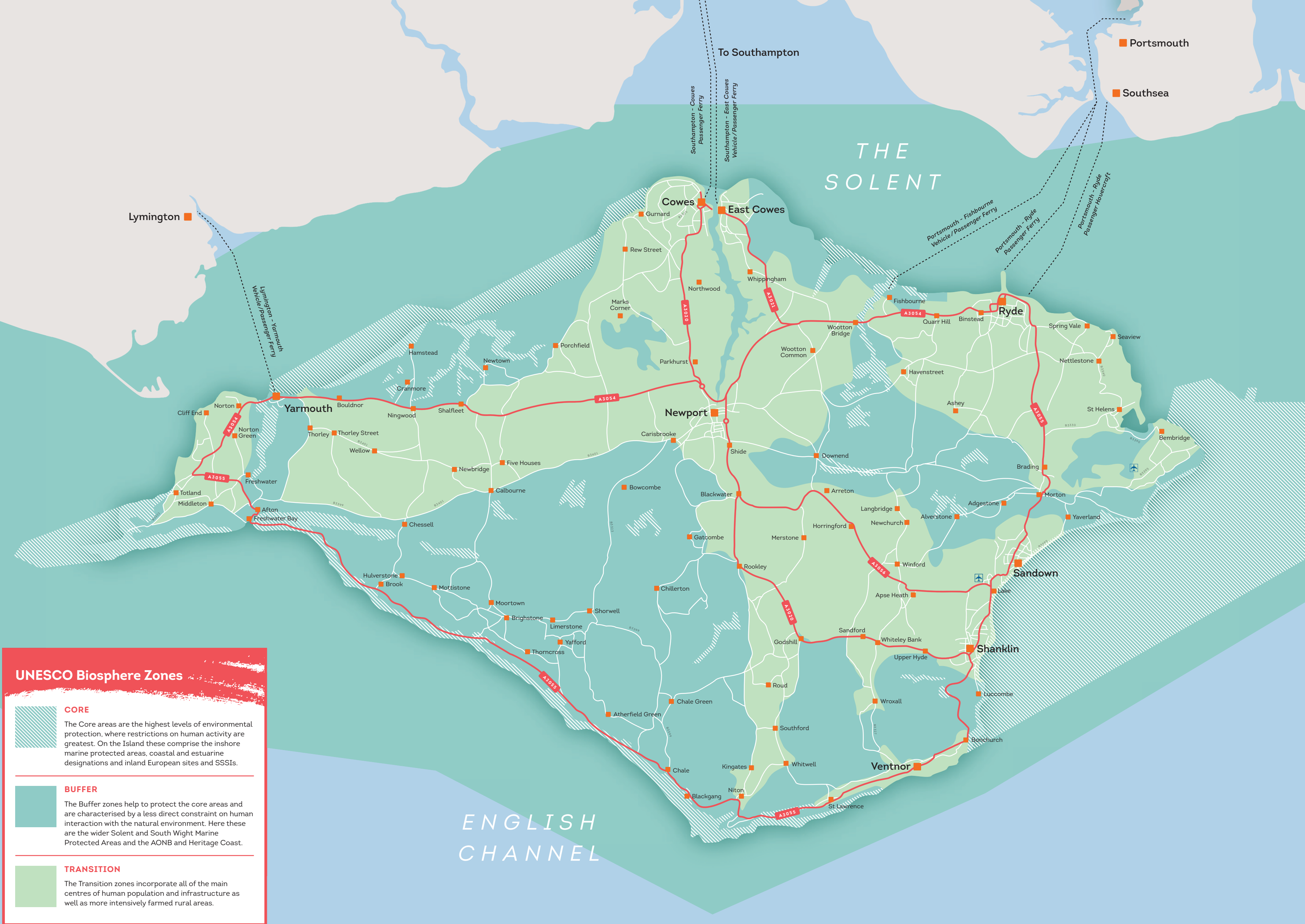
**Interreg**   
France ( Channel ) England  
Manche



UNESCO Sites across the Channel

European Regional Development Fund

   
United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization  
Isle of Wight  
Biosphere Reserve since 2019  
Man and the Biosphere Programme



### UNESCO Biosphere Zones

**CORE**  
 The Core areas are the highest levels of environmental protection, where restrictions on human activity are greatest. On the Island these comprise the inshore marine protected areas, coastal and estuarine designations and inland European sites and SSSIs.

**BUFFER**  
 The Buffer zones help to protect the core areas and are characterised by a less direct constraint on human interaction with the natural environment. Here these are the wider Solent and South Wight Marine Protected Areas and the AONB and Heritage Coast.

**TRANSITION**  
 The Transition zones incorporate all of the main centres of human population and infrastructure as well as more intensively farmed rural areas.

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

THE ISLAND HAS OVER 500 MILES OF WELL-MAINTAINED AND SIGNPOSTED FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS.

Walking, cycling and horse riding all have a strong history on the Isle of Wight. Yet, there are many other ways to enjoy and explore, whether by fishing a quiet stretch of water, gallivanting about in crashing surf or gliding on sea thermals.



## DARK SKIES

IN PLACES WITH LOW LIGHT POLLUTION MILLIONS OF STARS ARE REVEALED AT NIGHT IN WHAT ARE TERMED 'DARK SKIES'.

These areas are becoming harder to find due to urbanisation and increased light sources lighting up our skies at night. Dark Skies are important for peace, tranquillity and for nature conservation. The Isle of Wight has some of the best Dark Skies in England.



## HIDDEN TREASURES

THE ISLE OF WIGHT IS FULL OF INTERESTING AND LITTLE KNOWN TREASURES. IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL LIFETIMES TO DISCOVER THEM ALL.

From ships scored into the chalk on the sides of houses and barns, hidden waterfalls in the most unlikely places, standing stones and entire medieval villages long abandoned. Time spent exploring the Isle of Wight will reward you with fascinating tales of times gone by and breathtaking displays from the natural world.



## WILDLIFE

THE ISLE OF WIGHT IS WIDELY RECOGNISED AS AN IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HAVEN. IT IS A STRONGHOLD FOR THE RED SQUIRREL THANKS TO THE SOLENT PREVENTING GREY SQUIRRELS INVADING.

The Island is of national importance for its *Water Vole* populations and the *Glanville Fritillary Butterfly* as well as international importance for its birds and marine habitats.



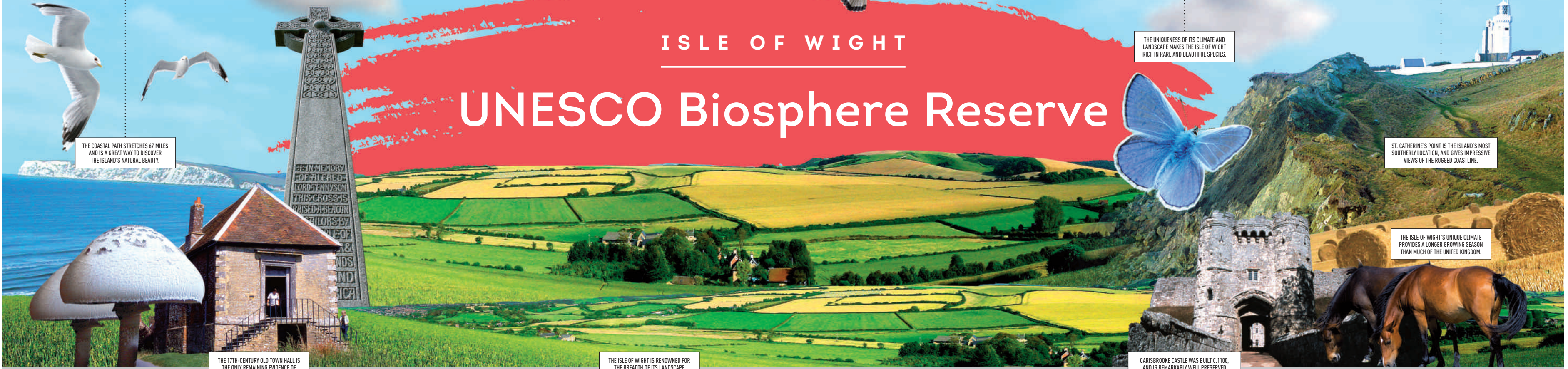
## COAST

SURROUNDED BY WATER, THE COAST AND SEA HAVE HUGELY INFLUENCED THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

The cliffs are windows into lost eras, through which you can view the world of dinosaurs, ancient seas and ice-age landscapes. Due to coastal erosion, the Wealdon clays of the south west are continually giving up their secrets and fossil hunters can find plenty of loose material in which to search, without the need to dig or further damage the cliffs. Parts of the Isle of Wight coast are defined as *Heritage Coast*. These areas are good places for visitors to enjoy and include some of the most beautiful coastline in England.



# ISLE OF WIGHT UNESCO Biosphere Reserve



THE COASTAL PATH STRETCHES 67 MILES AND IS A GREAT WAY TO DISCOVER THE ISLAND'S NATURAL BEAUTY.

THE UNIQUENESS OF ITS CLIMATE AND LANDSCAPE MAKES THE ISLE OF WIGHT RICH IN RARE AND BEAUTIFUL SPECIES.

ST. CATHERINE'S POINT IS THE ISLAND'S MOST SOUTHERLY LOCATION, AND GIVES IMPRESSIVE VIEWS OF THE RUGGED COASTLINE.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT'S UNIQUE CLIMATE PROVIDES A LONGER GROWING SEASON THAN MUCH OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE 17TH-CENTURY OLD TOWN HALL IS THE ONLY REMAINING EVIDENCE OF NEWTOWN'S FORMER IMPORTANCE.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT IS RENOWNED FOR THE BREADTH OF ITS LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY IN SUCH A SMALL LAND AREA.

CARISBROOKE CASTLE WAS BUILT C.1100, AND IS REMARKABLY WELL PRESERVED DESPITE ITS LONG AND TURBULENT HISTORY.

## ESTUARIES

THERE ARE FIVE MAIN ESTUARIES ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT, THREE OF WHICH ARE FOUND IN THE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB).

The ancient harbour of *Yarmouth*, on the estuary of the western Yar, was twice sacked by the French before Henry VIII ordered the building of the castle. The unique timber pier, waterfront and narrow lanes make interesting walking. A cycleway to *Freshwater* passes marshes which attract many waterfowl, particularly in winter. *Newtown* was once the Island's principal port of Francheville, which never recovered from destruction by the French in 1337. The National Trust cares for this time warp medieval town, with its Old Town Hall, Quay, copses and salt marshes - a haven for birdlife.



## LANDSCAPE

THE PRESENT DAY BEAUTY OF THE ISLAND'S LANDSCAPES IS THE LEGACY OF A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE HUMAN ACTIVITY OF ITS INHABITANTS.

Wooded pastures in the north, the dramatic Undercliff, the cliff edged patchwork fields of the West Wight and the open spaces of the chalk downs come together to form the unique character of the Isle of Wight.



## LOCAL PRODUCE

THE ISLAND IS ONE OF THE SUNNIEST PLACES IN BRITAIN AND ITS VARIED LANDSCAPES, GEOLOGY AND SEA BREEZES MEAN THAT IT PRODUCES A RICH ABUNDANCE OF LOCAL FOOD AND DRINK.

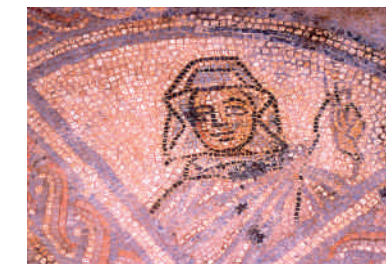
With over 80% of the AONB farmed land, the vibrancy of the farming sector plays an important role in the Isle of Wight's economy and landscape. Many of the Island's pubs, restaurants, hotels and guesthouses use local products whenever possible and, with regular Farmers Markets, several farm shops and numerous food and drink producers open to visitors, there are plenty of opportunities to see and taste Island Produce.



## HISTORY

HUMANS HAVE LIVED ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT FOR MANY THOUSANDS OF YEARS, SHAPING THE LANDSCAPE AND LEAVING MANY SIGNS OF THEIR ACTIVITIES.

The Island has played a part in many of the larger events of history, famous as the prison of King Charles I at *Carisbrooke*, it became particularly popular in Victorian times when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert set up home at *Osborne*, attracting many famous Victorians including Darwin, Dickens, Marx, Julia Margaret Cameron and perhaps best-known of all, the poet laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson.



## FARMING

THE ISLE OF WIGHT HAS LONG BEEN AN AGRICULTURAL ISLAND, GROWING FOOD AND PRODUCE FOR EXPORT.

The remains of Roman farms can still be seen on the Island. Food produced on Island farms, or landed from the sea, remain a very important part of local life. The working farms which contribute towards this industry are vital in maintaining the beautiful landscape. So by enjoying Island produce, such as cheese, milk, beer, bread, meat, wine and fish, you can help to support the countryside.



## ISLE OF WIGHT UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

DESIGNATED 19 JUNE 2019

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are very special places with world class high quality natural environments.

*"Each UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is an open sky laboratory for sustainable development, for concrete and lasting solutions, for innovation and good practices.*

*They seal a new alliance between the world of science and youth, between humans and the environment."*

**UNESCO Director General,  
Audrey Azoulay.**

## UNESCO SITES ACROSS THE CHANNEL PROJECT

This exciting project is funded by Interreg and aims to expand on the wonderful UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve status for the Isle of Wight.

### THE INTERREG

FRANCE (CHANNEL)  
ENGLAND (FCA) PROGRAM

The European Interreg France (Channel) England Program was set up to promote the economic development of the south of the United Kingdom and the north-west of France by funding innovative projects of sustainable and economic interest.

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Isle of Wight  
area of outstanding  
natural beauty

