

Read the text below. For questions (1-5) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

Green living

When Jimmy Wellbeck sold his car in favour of commuting by train and cycling two years ago, all his friends promised to support him – not financially, but by taking similar environmentally friendly actions. He also cut down on eating meat, as a personal contribution to reducing the carbon footprint produced by intensive farming, as well as saving energy by doing things like washing clothes at lower temperatures, taking shorter showers and growing more of his own vegetables. In that first year, he calculates, he and his friends have saved over 700 kg of carbon dioxide, not to mention several thousand pounds in a fun and relatively painless way.

The first few months of being car-free were the hardest, Jimmy explains, especially as they were during the arrival of an extremely cold winter. Waiting for trains in the snow was when he most missed his warm car, but slowly his new habits became routine as he adjusted to his new existence. He also greatly appreciated not having to pay for car insurance and petrol. Jimmy and his friends have now taken their ideas a step further and set up a not-for-profit company, ECO friends. com, which uses social media to help people to help each other in making their lives greener through sharing ideas and suggestions. There are now 2,500 eco friends who have, between them, cut more than 300 tons of CO₂ through their activities.

Of course, there are many people who would say that this kind of activity doesn't make enough of a difference to be worthwhile, but such attitudes never make the world a better place either, claims Jimmy. Some years ago, he went on a trip to Germany where, he says, ideas about green living are already gaining in popularity. On the visit, he learned that the kind of sustainable life he was interested in was perfectly possible, without having to give up all the comforts of life that many people are used to, and that it does make a difference.

A number of organisations with similar objectives to Jimmy's are all involved in the Make a Start scheme. The aim of Make a Start is to demonstrate just how simple and enjoyable green living, energy saving and self-sufficiency can be. They intend, in the longer term, to put people living in the same streets, apartment blocks and local areas in touch with each other so that they can give each other a helping hand, organise or get involved in community events, as well as get to know their neighbours.

One member, Claire, who lives on a houseboat, is typical of members, saying that the organisation has really helped people like her who, in normal circumstances, would never meet, to get together, creating a strong community feeling. 'People who live on boats are always keen on finding environmentally friendly solutions to problems, so if one of the members discovers a greener cleaning product, for example, they can just email it to the Make a Start bulletin board,' she says.

Make a Start showed Claire how to put together a solar-powered electricity system for her boat. It provides enough energy to run her fridge and so saves her money. 'I had no idea that it was so simple,' she says. Even her children were able to help out – and so the next generation has already started to get involved.

1 What do we understand about Jimmy in the first paragraph?

- A He wanted to save some money.
- B He was interested in changing lifestyles.
- C He had decided on a change of career.
- D He tried to set an example to his friends.

2 Jimmy founded ECOfriends.com to

- A create a support network for like-minded people.
- B allow him to spread his environmental message.
- C educate people in living eco-friendly lifestyles.
- D help him meet other people with similar interests.

3 Jimmy believes that attitudes to green living are

- A likely to change in future.
- B different from country to country.
- C often based on incorrect information.
- D determined by people's self-interest.

4 What is the aim of the Make a Start scheme?

- A to create local green projects
- B to make green living more fun
- C to build political support for green ideas
- D to make it easier for people to become green together

5 In what way is Claire a typical member of Make a Start?

- A She lives a typical lifestyle of members.
- B She is a frequent participant in online activities.
- C She has been able to meet new friends through it.
- D She is active in the environmental movement.