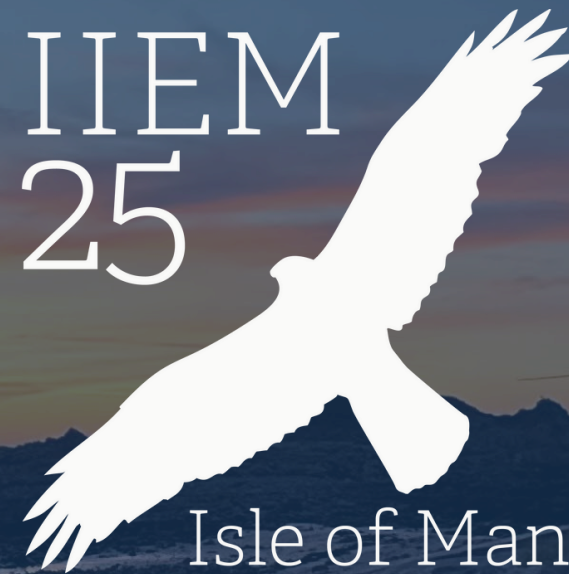


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Isle of Man

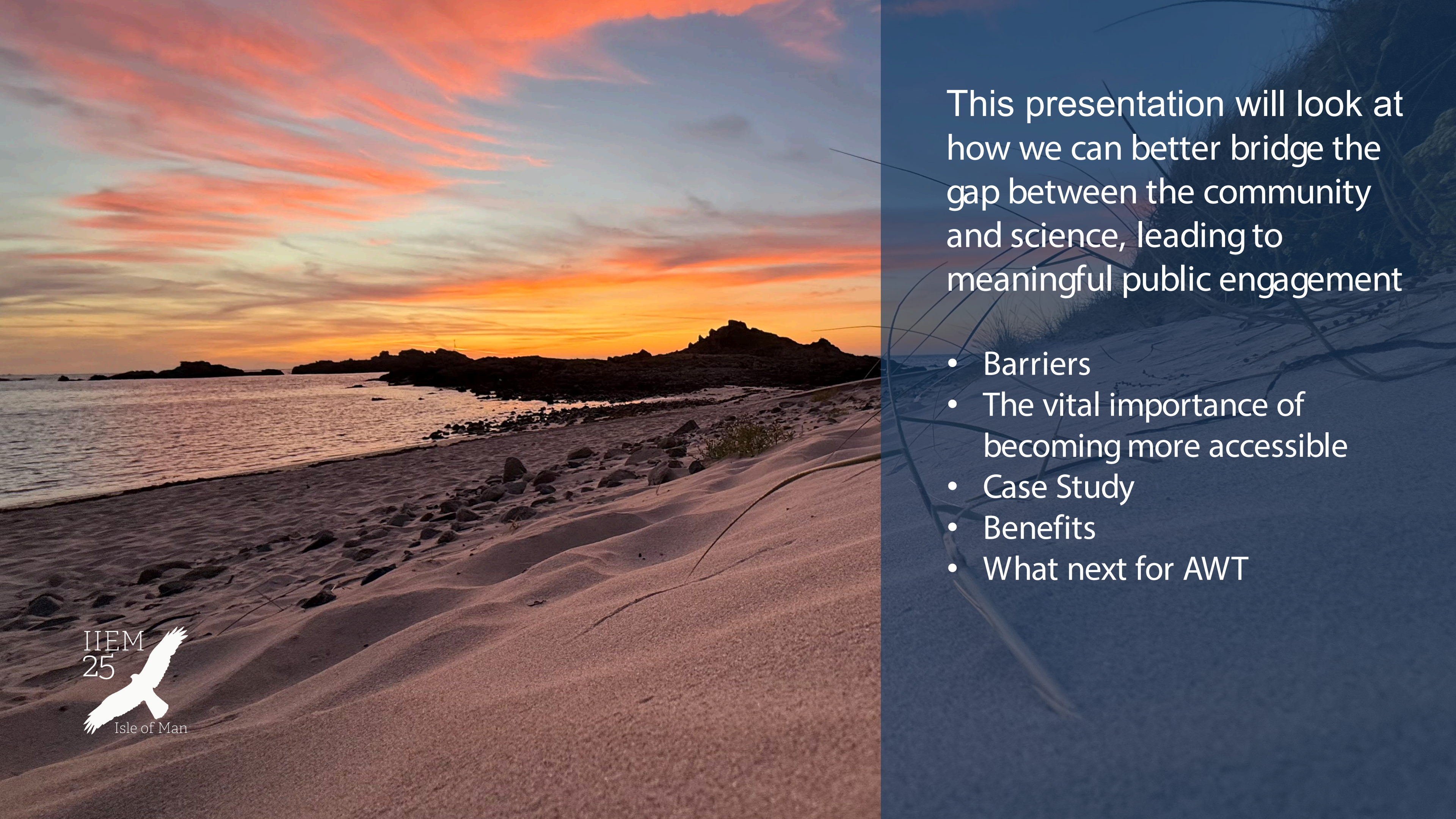
Bridging the gap between the community and science

Abigail de Castella, Alderney Wildlife Trust

Forest School Alderney Community Woodland 2025



For me to be standing here, representing a Wildlife Trust, at an environmentally focussed meeting of scientists, the irony is not lost on me that I am not a scientist myself. One of my skills, however, is communicating with the community, the people who very often, do not identify with science, and who are the very people we need to increase access for.



This presentation will look at how we can better bridge the gap between the community and science, leading to meaningful public engagement

- Barriers
- The vital importance of becoming more accessible
- Case Study
- Benefits
- What next for AWT

Science alone isn't enough



Bridging the gap is about ensuring scientific knowledge, conservation and community action are as accessible as possible for a more cohesive and hopeful future. **We need the active participation of the community to make lasting impact to the local environment.**

Despite its beauty, our island, like any other comes with **significant barriers** for us these include;



- A small, fluctuating and ageing population
- An absence of higher education options and a broader lack of available learning on island
- No government department for the environment, and little to no legislation or policy in this area
- A serious lack of charitable/environmental funding
- Poor travel connections
- The loss of regular extra-curricular groups such as scouts, girl guides, cadet forces, or other regular groups for young people to build a wide variety of social and wider skills, including outdoor learning



The environment is a key reason why people choose to live here. But for many, they see no reason to protect it, to understand nor act for it.

Children, however, can be great at taking action.

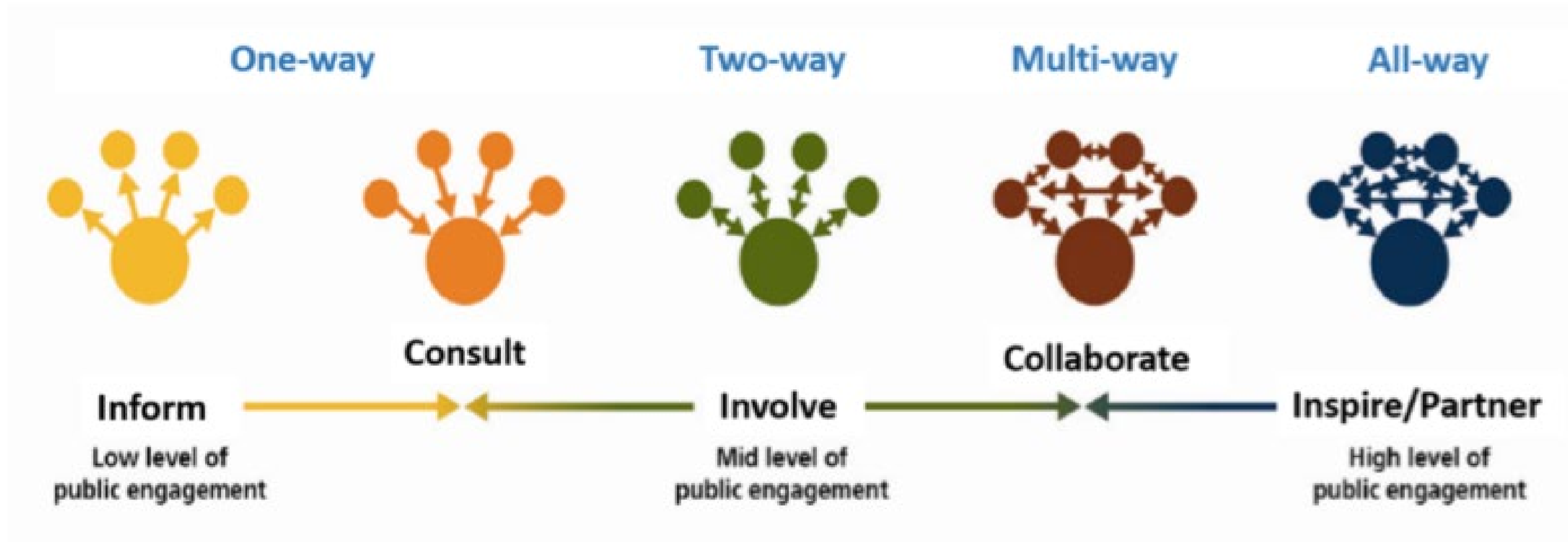


If we are to play our part in tackling the barriers that face our island, and our planet, whilst meeting our commitments to protecting biodiversity, we need to find new ways in which to engage our wider community and create opportunities to build a connection that is meaningful for them, especially families and young people.

What does meaningful public engagement look like for the AWT?



We reviewed all of our annual events, activities and outreach efforts, and rated them based on the below scale.



Adapted from graphic as <http://www.bangthetable.com/what-is-community-engagement/>

It's all in a moment



The power of language

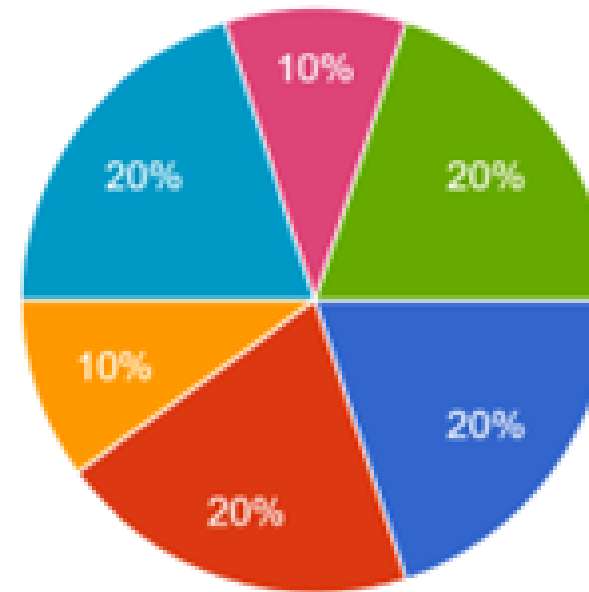


Often scientific language can be jargon heavy and inaccessible which creates a barrier between experts and the general public. Does the language we use make people feel confident that they are capable of taking part? By making science more understandable we can engage more people, connecting them to and involving them with the vital work being done.

This leads to more public engagement, support, and collaboration and action.

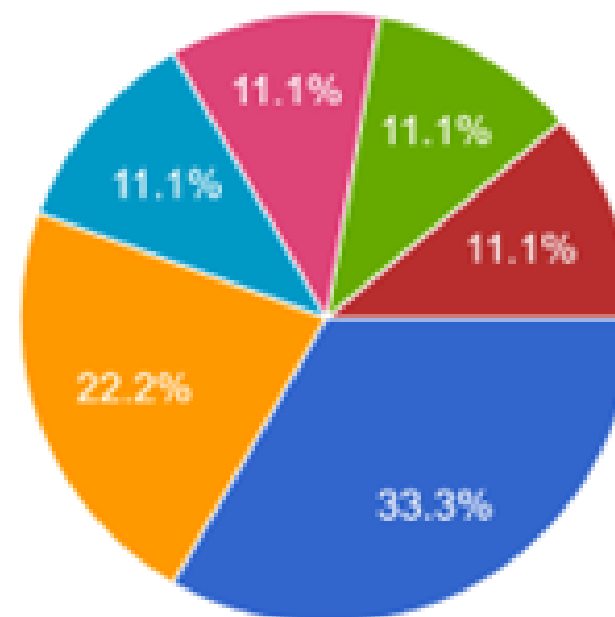
Trialling events with this in mind

Through our nature-based activity pilots in 2024, 100% of young people said they would be willing to volunteer for their environment and help carry out these activities:



- Tree Planting
- Litter Picks
- Looking after the Woodland
- Insects & Bugs
- Removing Sour Fig
- Beach Cleans
- Planting seeds & plants
- Rockpooling & species ID
- Eelgrass Exploration

Through our nature-based activity pilots in 2024, 100% of parents and carers said they would be willing to volunteer for their environment as a family



- Tree planting
- Insect surveys (we will teach you how)
- Litter picks
- Bird & Bat Box making
- Sour Fig & Invasive species removal
- Rockpooling & Species ID
- Seaweed & Eelgrass Exploration
- All of the above
- All of the above!

Benefits



- By building relationships with young people you are also building relationships with their parents, guardians, families and friends
- Nature literacy develops - children became more confident IDing species and navigating the rockpools with care
- Increase in understanding of the rockpooling code
- Children and young people are far more impressionable than adults. Children are still forming their values and opinions whilst navigating and exploring the world.
- Children are our future. By embedding learning in them now, they will one day have the ability to influence policy, business, planning and corporate worlds





Meet Charlie

Why is it so important to connect the community to science, in a way that works for them?



So what will the AWT do going forward?



- Invite more families and shift to more family focused events
- Trust in young people and their capabilities
- Increase accessibilitytargeting focus groups and demographics- teenagers, girls only, additional needs, adults

Nature Connection

A scale

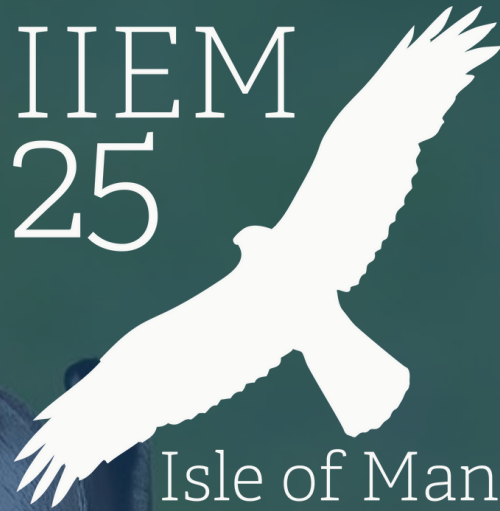


When we consider a scale of nature connection, that every human is included in falls within, we must remember there is opportunity to move along the scale, it may improve or it may dip. Most importantly we must remember where nature connection begins. With a moment. One awe inspiring moment of feeling connected to nature is enough to start us on our pathway to being connected to nature.



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Thank you!

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