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# Tools, Tips and Tricks for Community Engagement in Marine Conservation

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**Environment  
Agency**



Isle of Wight



CHICHESTER  
HARBOUR  
PROTECTION & RECOVERY  
OF NATURE



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Why Is Community Engagement Essential?





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# Memory



Communities are the  
memory of restoration  
projects.



They witness change,  
carry knowledge, and pass  
it on.



Projects come and go—  
communities stay and  
hold the legacy.



Their lived experience  
helps shape future efforts  
and avoid past mistakes.



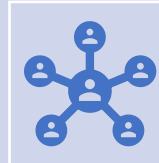
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# Relationships



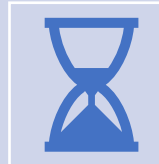
Conservation is rooted in relationships—with people and place.



Communities deepen the connection to the seascape through lived experience.



They are the first to notice harm and the first to act.



Relationships require trust, time, and shared purpose



When people speak with  
love about a place,  
others listen.



That love inspires action,  
advocacy, and  
protection.



It's passed on—through  
families, friends, and  
generations.



Love sustains restoration  
across the decades it  
takes to heal seascapes..

# Where Can Communities Help with Conservation?



BEHAVIOUR  
CHANGE



VOLUNTEERING



BUILD  
RELATIONSHIPS



POLITICS

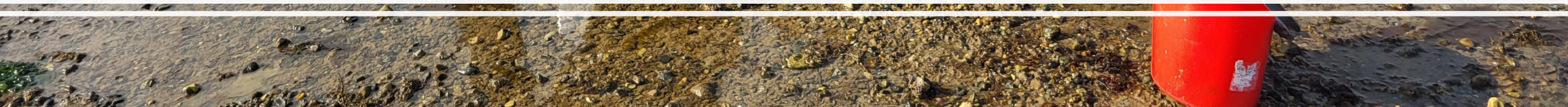


DATA /  
SUPPORT





What Can Be Challenging About Community Engagement?



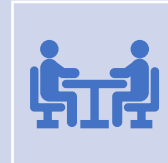




# Relationships



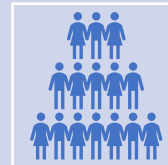
Community engagement is the foundation of conservation success.



Relationships require patience, listening, safe spaces, and shared purpose..



Trust is built over time—projects must invest in consistency.



When staff change, relationships can erode unless actively maintained.





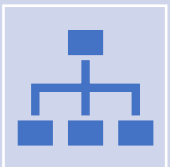
# Time & Money



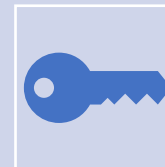
Short-term projects limit deep engagement.



Long-term funding is essential to build and sustain trust.



Continuity between projects and staff helps preserve relationships.



Investment in people and time is key to lasting impact.



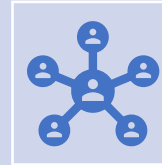
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# Leadership & Vision



People trust people—not just organisations.



Leaders must be sincere, community-driven, and lead by example.



A clear, relatable vision answers the “why”: why care, why act.



Messaging must be simple, emotional, and easy to share..





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# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)



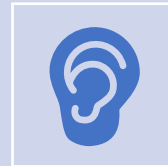
Representation is vital but  
challenging.



Start by finding and  
connecting with  
underrepresented groups.



Build trust through long-  
term, intentional strategies.



Ensure many different voices  
are heard and passions  
included in project design.



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Making our  
seas wilder



Community Engagement Foundations







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## Empower & Support

- Community Empowerment
- Identify Influencers
- Identify Volunteer Needs
- Adequate Training
- Excellent Experience





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# Engage & Educate

- Engaging Opportunities
- Continuous Education
- Celebration Events
- Art as Engagement Tool







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## Build Trust & Relationships

- Invest Time
- Provide Safety
- Clear Communication



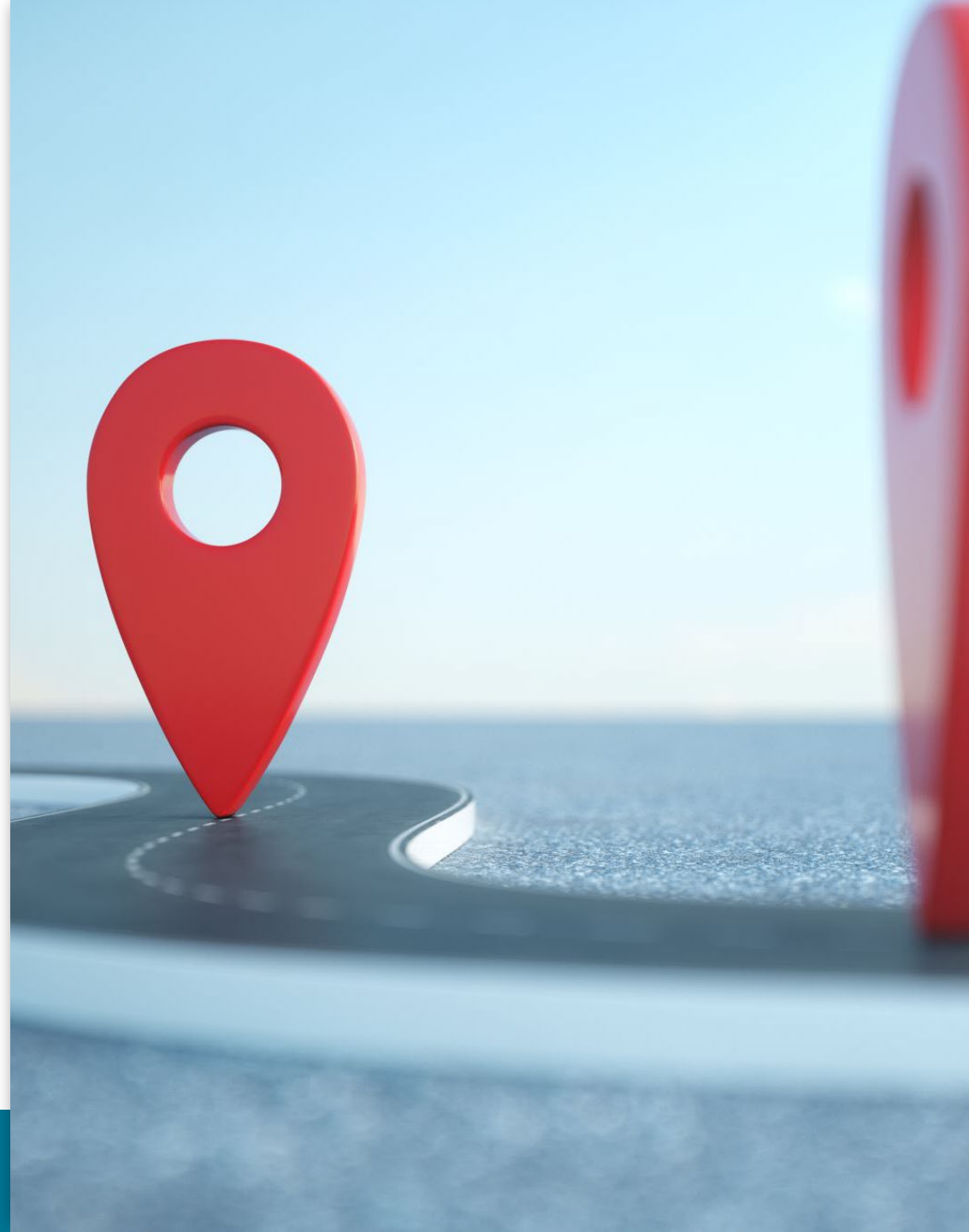


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## Deliver Effectively

- Location & Logistics
- Adequate Funding
- Ongoing Evaluation







Volunteering Is Essential







# Volunteer Engagement: What Works



## Leadership & Voice

- Volunteer steering group
- Roles in decision-making



## Growth & Support

- Bespoke training & skill-building
- Conservation & personal development



## Active Participation

- Citizen science
- Variety of roles tailored to individuals
- Branding



## Community & Connection

- Celebration events & socials
- Lift sharing & online community
- Regular check-ins & interviews



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## The Stats So Far...



455 Marine Champions (MC) recruited in 1.5 years



40 - 50% of events are run by MCs



Over 170 events/workshops delivered



Citizen science surveys now run by our MCs



3954.70 volunteering hours so far = £45,479.05 (presuming minimum wage is £11.50/hr)



10,833 direct interactions with people





# Empowerment For The Future

Turning difficult conversations into connected ones



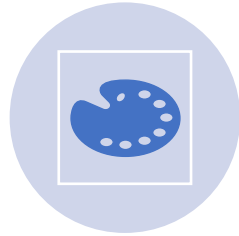
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# How Have We Been Engaging With Wider Community Audiences?



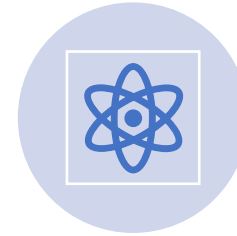
ONLINE & IN PERSON  
TALKS



COMMUNITY ART  
WORKSHOPS



TAILORED  
EDUCATIONAL  
WORKSHOPS



CITIZEN SCIENCE  
EVENTS



ATTENDING LARGE &  
SMALL PUBLIC EVENTS

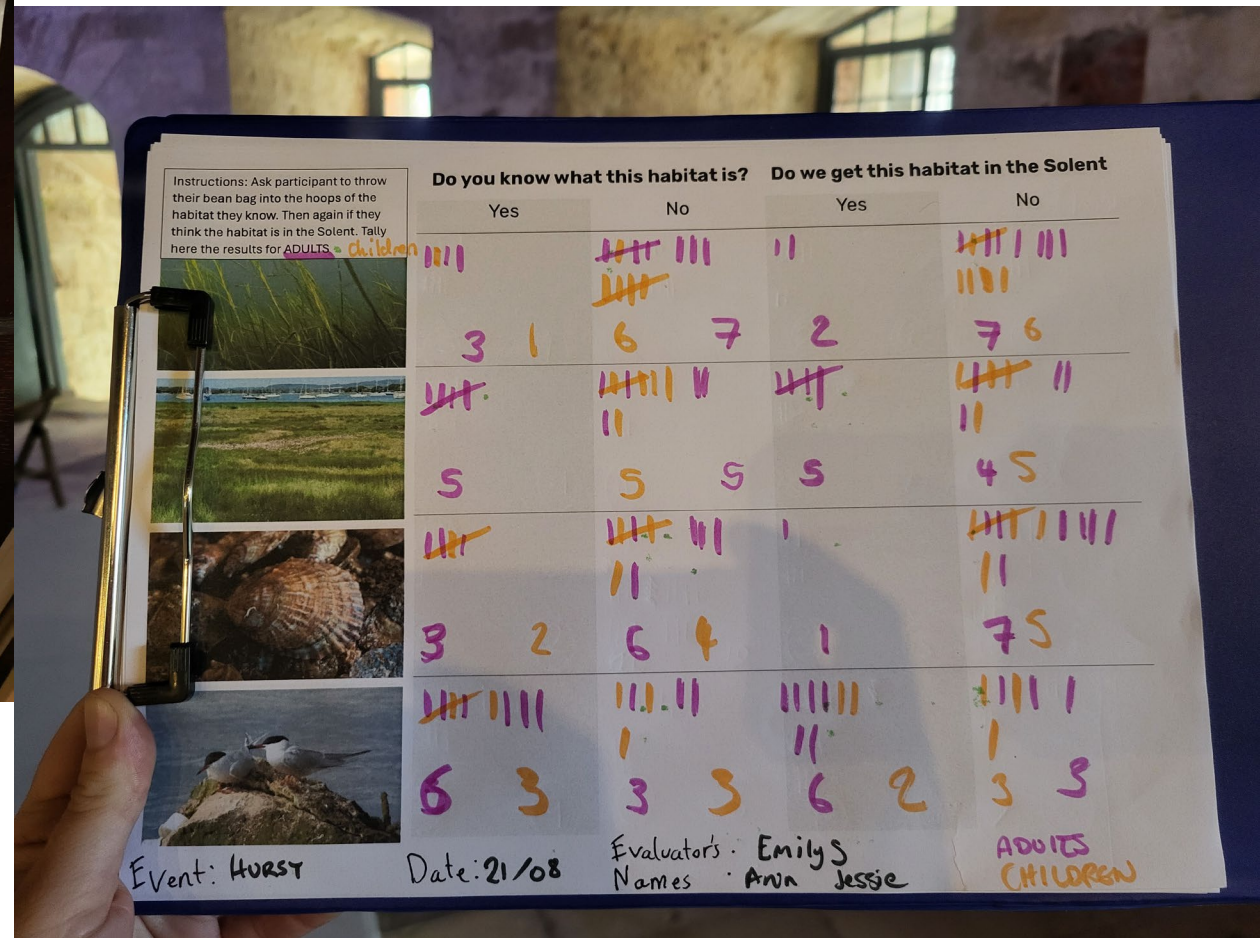
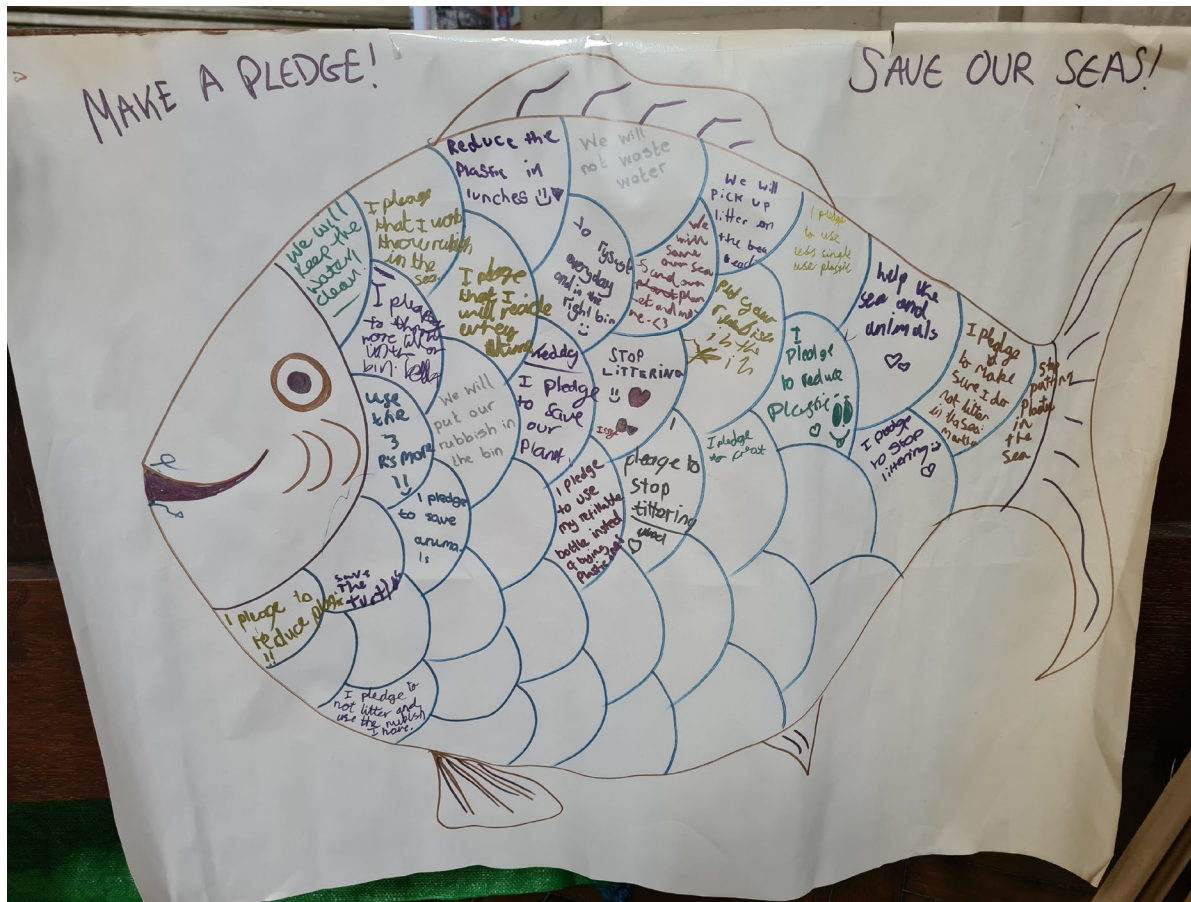
















## Inclusive Engagement: What It Takes





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## Empowerment through Information



## Financial Support



## Access & Comfort

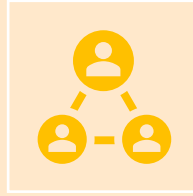


## Needs & Representation

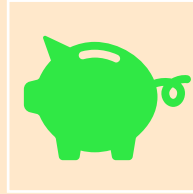


## Out-of-Box Thinking

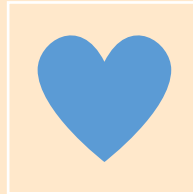
## 3 Tips Distilled



Empowerment – Purpose, autonomy, and upskilling.



Invest – Time & money & understanding in people



Love - Gratitude, Patience & Opportunity



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# Thank you - Any questions?

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