

The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere

A review of the past decade & a vision
towards a sustainable future for our area



2014 - 2024



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Forewords

UNESCO biosphere reserves are tangible proof that humanity can live in balance with nature. Since 1971, this community-led programme has successfully found a model for **development where people live well, and biodiversity is respected.**

We celebrate the potential of biosphere reserves to tackle the great challenge of our times: making peace with the natural world.

Biosphere reserves are not conventional protected areas but are **places where over 275 million people live and work.**

These sites exist wherever humans interact with nature and range in size from a single, small island community to vast, ecological corridors stretching across continents.

In biosphere reserves, people reset and reinvent their relationship with the environment in tangible ways – by considering biodiversity conservation and sustainable development as compatible, mutually dependent goals.

Furthermore, their potential is driven by young people, many of whom participate in UNESCO efforts to promote harmony with the natural world.

You are sure **to experience places that are truly remarkable**, not only because they are home **to natural wonders – but also because they are home to extraordinary people.**



Audrey Azoulay

Director General of UNESCO - United Nations
Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
November 2023

Forewords

Forewords

Acknowledgments

This report comes at a time of need. The challenges for biodiversity, food and energy security, and climate have never been greater locally or globally. As required by UNESCO, we are finalising our 10-year review as a designated Biosphere. **This report aims to highlight the key milestones we have achieved with our Partnership and within our geography.**

Compiling the data and content on which the submission and this shorter report is based would not have been possible without the passion, dedication and expertise of many people. **My deepest gratitude goes to all the people who contributed** including our partner organisations and board members, the Sustainability Team members at Brighton & Hove City Council, and the consultancy team at WSP. Our Co-ordinating Officers, Sarah Dobson and Melanie David-Durand, have worked tirelessly to ensure that a balanced, complete and inclusive review of our work is delivered with the professionalism and heart demanded of our times.

The positive engagement and encouragement received from local councillors, the community and many other key stakeholders who got involved in our review process has been as inspiring as it has been valuable. As we evolve our strategy for the coming years, building on the solid foundations laid down during our first ten years, all of these contributions, carrying positivity, determination and hope, have given us a deep and valuable well from which we will continue to draw.



Martin Harris

Volunteer Chair of The Living
Coast Partnership Delivery Board

What is a UNESCO Biosphere?

A Biosphere is a special designation awarded by UNESCO, **the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation**, under the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB). Created in 1971, MAB originally focused on conservation and research of unique ecosystems around the globe. It was almost 25 years later, in 1995, that MAB's purpose was broadened out to include the pursuit of sustainable development, to answer the question - **how can we best balance biodiversity and our growth to create a positive future for people and nature?** And this purpose remains at the core of the programme to this day.

UNESCO Biospheres aim to become places of international best practice, living and working examples of sustainable development in three main areas:

Conservation

1

Protecting wildlife, habitats and the environment;

Development

2

Encouraging sustainable economies and communities;

Logistic support

3

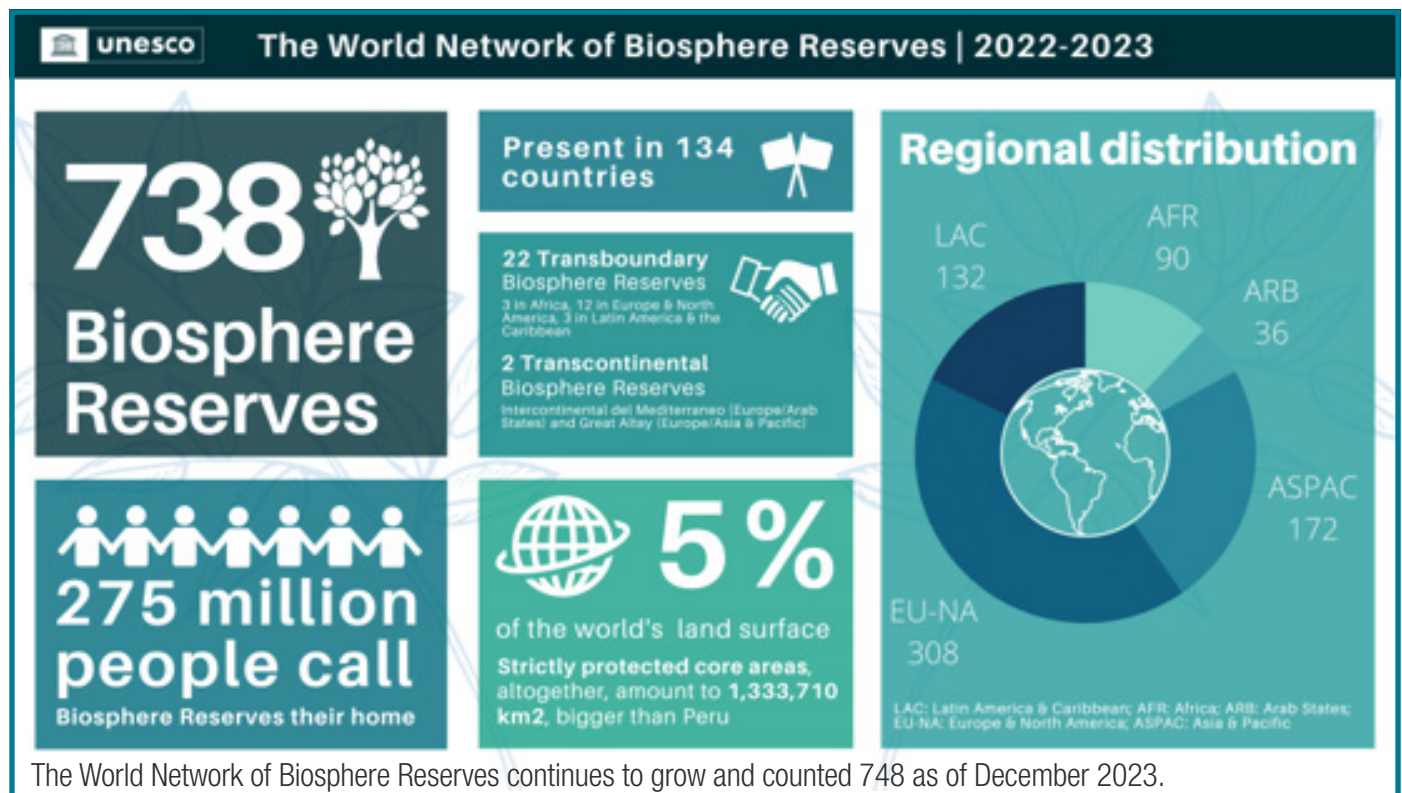
Promoting environmental and sustainable development education, training, research and monitoring.

UNESCO Biospheres are designed to trial innovative approaches and inspire communities to work together in creating a future we can all be proud of. Through projects and partnerships, they demonstrate some of the best ways of connecting people to nature and cultural heritage. They also contribute to global advancements through sharing and cooperation with MAB's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.



UNESCO Field Visit July 2023

A wide and diverse global network of UNESCO Biospheres



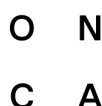
7 of which are located in the UK, among +50 UNESCO local sites attracting millions of visitors

“This new UNESCO in the map will inspire people to visit. It shows at a glance the breadth of amazing natural, cultural and built heritage designated by UNESCO as intentionally significant in the UK. This great map highlights places to explore, on your doorstep and further afield, both the famous and those to discover for the first time.”

James Bridge, Chief Executive and Secretary-General, UK National Commission for UNESCO

Who are we?

Our partnership is a unique interdisciplinary network with diverse conservation, education, charity, community, and private sector organisations, with Brighton & Hove City Council as lead partner. **Together**, we cooperate to achieve the Biosphere's purpose and aims.



How do we deliver?

The core team

- > 1 full time programme manager
- > 1 part time programme support officer
- > 1 day a week communications officer
- > 1 day a week education ranger

The Delivery Board Members

- > 20 Board members who meet 4 times/year and steer the direction of the Biosphere, led by a Chair and a Vice-Chair

The partnership

- > Partners' financial contributions, with Brighton & Hove City Council as a lead partner
- > Partners' time and communication channels, including local universities and the local authorities' Sustainability, Communications and Tourism teams.

Community groups & Volunteers

- > The Wildflower Guardians and many other local groups

Funders for project delivery

- > National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust, UNESCO/Abrdn Foundation, local authorities, etc.

Collaborations with other partnerships

- > The Sussex Marine And Coastal Forum and Sussex Seascape group
- > The Changing Chalk Partnership
- > The Aquifer Partnership
- > The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
- > South Coast Sustainability research initiative
- > The Adur & Ouse Catchment Partnership
- > Sussex Local Nature Partnership and Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- > Wild Ouse Network and Love Our Ouse
- > The Greater Brighton Economic Board etc.



The inauguration of the Liz Williams Butterfly Haven at Dorothy Stringer

What do we deliver?

Our current strategic priorities

Our 2020-2025 Management Strategy has five clear priorities and a dedicated action plan through key projects:

Urban Greening

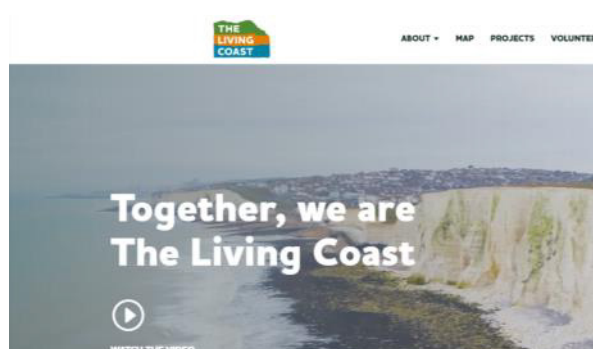
**Thriving Communities – Health
Wellbeing & Economy**

**Awareness, Understanding and Engage-
ment**

**Strengthening Our
Natural Capital / Water**

**Climate Change Adaptation & Carbon
Neutrality By 2030**

Changing Chalk
connecting nature, people and heritage



Where are we? Our geography

The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere was designated in 2014, in recognition of the unique combination of diverse natural environments with thriving urban and rural life. The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere has covered 390km² of the Sussex Coast.

The area consists of three main environments:

The countryside (which forms part of the South Downs National Park),

The cities and towns (including Brighton and Hove, Lewes, Newhaven and Shoreham) and

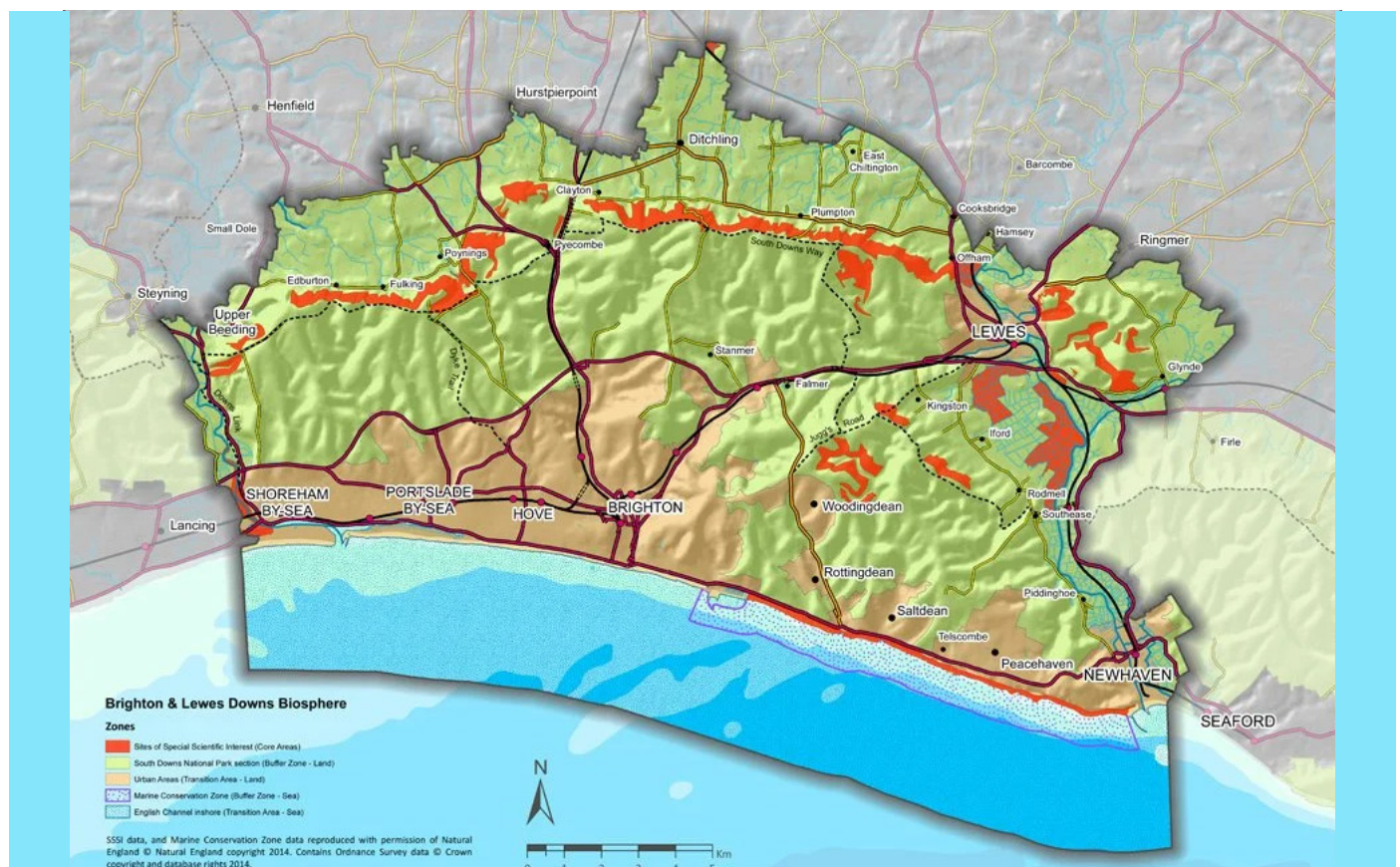
The coast (extending two miles offshore).

The Living Coast sits on a chalk block, making it a remarkably biodiverse region: chalk grasslands, dry chalk valleys, floodplain meadows, vegetated shingle beaches, river estuaries and chalk reefs are home to thousands of species, including rare plants and wildlife.

The area boasts 14 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the South Downs National Park, two National Nature Reserves and a Marine Conservation Zone.

The Living Coast is one of a handful of UNESCO Biospheres worldwide to include a large urban area, with over 330,000 residents and 12 million annual visitors.

This puts us in a unique position to be a hub of innovation for conservation practices, cross-sector networking and international collaboration, whilst focusing on how nature can contribute to wellbeing in urban and rural landscapes.



A Decade of Projects Across Sustainability:

Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere

FOLLOW YOUR BETTER NATURE

HERE

UNESCO officially designates Brighton & Lewes Downs as a World Biosphere reserve.

Chris Todd appointed as the first chair with Brighton & Hove City Council as lead partner.

Release of our first Biosphere Management Strategy for 2014-2019.

2014

2015



The Sussex Flow Initiative* (now Wilder Ouse) (2012-present) continues its work to restore nature and create a robust Nature Recovery Network working with landowners, farmers, communities, Parish Councils, etc.

* The logos displayed represent the funding partners of the project.

Our Water Matters (2016-2019)

The innovative environmental education initiative delivered in 25 local primary schools to enhance awareness of the importance of our chalk aquifer and the water cycle.

This was part of the wider BHee, Brighton & Hove environmental education programme.



O N
C A



Ten Brighton and Hove primary schools participated in the first phase of the **Our Water Matters** programme.

2016



Protecting our precious groundwater

The Brighton **ChaMP*** partnership launches. It became **The Aquifer Partnership** in 2020.



The Aquifer Partnership* (Formerly CHaMP, 2016-present)

The Aquifer Partnership aims to protect the chalk aquifer under the South Downs that supplies thousands of people in the local area with fresh water. Research, education, and the implementation of nature-based solutions are core to The Aquifer Partnership's work. Initiatives include regenerative farming techniques to reduce agricultural runoff, preventing water pollution from roads and developments, and installing rain gardens SuDs.



Rebranded as
The Living Coast

Brighton & Hove, Lewes and Worthing & Adur Councils declared a Climate & Biodiversity emergency (2018-2019)

The Living Coast Undersea Virtual Reality Experience, using innovation to engage children and the public on the wonders of the sea launched by KP projects (2018 - present)

2017

The Stanmer Park Restoration Project begins (until 2021)

2018

An updated **Food Strategy Action Plan for Brighton & Hove** was adopted by Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, with The Living Coast as a main strategic partner



Stanmer Park Restoration Project (2017-2021)

Brighton & Hove's biggest park, located in the South Downs National Park, benefited from a massive restoration project, with £3.8 million awarded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery funds. It improved access for residents and visitors to connect with nature. 250 new native trees were planted, the historic Stanmer House's walled garden was restored and became 'One Garden Brighton', celebrating local produce managed by Plumpton College.



The BioCultural Heritage Tourism Project (2018-2021)

This EU Interreg Channel region programme-funded project fostered sustainable eco-tourism across four Biosphere Reserves in the UK and France. For The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere, this involved developing a Toolkit for Tourism businesses operating in The Living Coast, working with the South Downs National Park for a local Visitor Giving scheme and holding a two-day virtual conference to share the results.

£3M funding awarded to lead on a cross Channel eco-tourism **BioCultural Heritage Tourism Project**



The Cockshut Stream Restoration Project in Kingston launched

2019


University of Brighton

Experimental networks for sustainability (ENESUS) - Research project delivered with the University of Brighton and several international universities

The Sussex Local Nature Partnership published a 'Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Sussex', which incorporates the whole of The Living Coast Biosphere area

Brighton & Hove buses' zero emissions buses launch, with the first buses in the UK that can be set to run in zero emissions mode when they travel through a city centre



BRIGHTON & HOVE
buses.co.uk

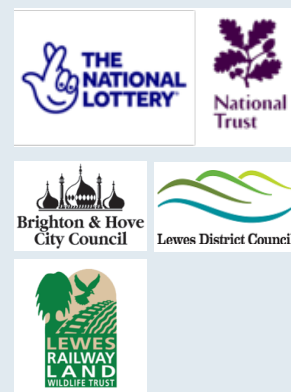
The Changing Chalk partnership (2022-2026)

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and coordinated by National Trust, Changing Chalk gathers 18 partners. It aims to restore lost habitats in urban and rural areas, and provides engaging activities for people to enjoy, enhancing health and wellbeing. The Living Coast is one of these 18 delivery partners, bringing wildflowers of the South Downs into the cities with chalk grassland areas called Butterfly and Bee Banks. Wilding Waterhall is another one of the 18, and was awarded national recognition for pioneering nature recovery in a former golf course.



Release of our **second Biosphere Management Strategy** for 2020-2025

The Changing Chalk partnership secures £2.23m funding



2020



O N
C A



The Marine Conservation Zone Undercliff Path Sculptures

are set up and used for engaging with multiple audiences, including children with 'Schools without walls', ONCA and SoSussex

2021

Several cultural events with **The Living Coast Artist Residency** with Fabrica and ONCA galleries & **The Homeward Bound Festival** to celebrate maritime industries and heritage

SO SUSSEX
ENJOY • APPRECIATE • LEARN

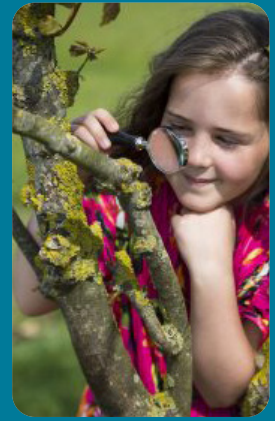


Home' – MCZ Conservation Zone Undercliff Path Sculptures (2021)

Schools without Walls and ONCA collaborated on 'Home' – an environmental education and art project that celebrates the local Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and raises awareness about the marine environment. Local artist David Watson made two 'Home' sculptures in 2021, with accompanying signage. The sculptures are made from waste, including amongst other things, salvaged aeroplane wheels.

The City Nature Challenge (2021-Present)

This global citizen science challenge was launched locally for the first time in 2021 and has run every year in April and May ever since. It encourages people around the world to observe and document wildlife on their doorstep, using the iNaturalist application, and then releases a global ranking of the cities who have contributed the most. The 2022 challenge placed The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere as **4th on the leader board of the 14 UK cities taking part**, with over 7,000 species identified.



The Living Coast joins the global citizen science initiative named the **City Nature Challenge**



Urban rewilding projects launch with **Wilder Verges** with Brighton & Hove's Wildlife Forum (2021-2022), and **The Adur and Worthing Wildflower Trail (2021-present)**

Installation of The Living Coast and Brighton and Hove City Council cobranded **water fountains** to 'drink smart, drink local'

2022

Sussex IFCA's Sussex Nearshore Trawling Byelaw



The Ouse Valley Climate Action is initiated thanks to national lottery funding, via a partnership of Lewes District Council, SDNPA and other local organisations



The Nearshore Trawling Byelaw (2021)

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority's Nearshore Trawling Byelaw has been approved by the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. This Byelaw enables to better protect Sussex seas for generations to come thanks to this progressive management of trawling. Trawling is now banned throughout the year in large areas along the Sussex coast to allow habitats to regenerate. This initiative was nationally supported by David Attenborough and many local organisations including The Living Coast. It laid the foundations for the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project, a pioneering marine rewilding project that aims to restore almost 200km² of kelp forest.

The City Downland Estate Plan (2020-2023)

The City Downland Estate is the Brighton & Hove City Council 12,800-acre rural estate in the South Downs National Park. Over 3 years and 2 rounds of public and stakeholder consultation, a plan was developed that sets out the aims for the future over the next 100 years. Its vision is to protect and enhance the land for future generations. It will work to reduce carbon emissions, enhance wildlife, improve wellbeing and provide sustainable local food.



The Living Coast is awarded UNESCO and ABRDN funding

to conduct research on the efficiency of SuDs together with The Aquifer Partnership and the University of Brighton

The 100-year **City Downland Estate Plan** is approved to manage the 12,800 acres owned by BHCC



'Our City Our World', Brighton & Hove City Council's environmental education programme

(formerly BHee), is featured in the **DfE Climate in Education** Snapshot for its best practices working with 50 local schools



2023



Weald to Waves

Launches to establish a 100-mile nature recovery corridor across Sussex



A new national trail launches from Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne, featuring The Living Coast

A new trail from Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne (2022)

This new national trail - now named King Charles III England Coast Path - aims to improve access to the coast all around England. Coordinated by Natural England together with the South Downs National Park, Brighton & Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council, this local segment of the trail passes through The Living Coast and is open to be enjoyed by locals and tourists alike.



The Cockshut Stream Restoration Project (2019-2024)

This project looks to restore the natural course of the Cockshut, a 3km long chalk stream that flows from springs at the foot of the South Downs to The River Ouse before flowing out to sea. The works will enable to realign the stream into a new channel flowing through a 6.8 hectare wetland habitat, enhancing biodiversity, and helping with flood management and carbon storage.

The Cockshut Stream Restoration Project's works commence in Lewes, after 4 years of preparation



The South Coast Sustainability Research Initiative launches with University of Sussex, aiming to facilitate a just transition to a liveable South Coast landscape



The 10-year periodic review report is endorsed by strategic stakeholders and submitted to UNESCO for the renewal of the Biosphere designation. The Partnership starts to implement the new strategic recommendations

The Sussex Bay project launches, the first ever Blue Natural Capital lab in the UK, joining forces on marine conservation on the Sussex coast



UNESCO provides an official answer to The Living Coast for the renewal of its UNESCO Biosphere status until 2034

2024

2025



Shoreham Port's EcoPort certification is renewed, making a decade of EcoPort status

Celebratory events are organised across the geography of The Living Coast for residents and visitors, promoting the area as a world-class destination supporting sustainable living for everyone

Our 10-year review

UNESCO's Periodic Review process

Every 10 years, UNESCO Biospheres are expected to carry out a Periodic Review and report back to UNESCO. Through research and stakeholder engagement, they assess how their area has changed over the last 10 years, take stock of progress, explain what challenges they have faced and highlight achievements. This process has allowed The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere to reflect on its achievements, and provided a great opportunity to capture stakeholder views on the priorities for the next 10 years – so that we, together, shape the future of our Biosphere.



The 2023 Stakeholder Consultation

An extensive stakeholder engagement programme was led, including Biosphere partners, local councils and government officials, educational institutions, NGOs, local conservation and community groups, businesses, students, and the wider public.

- > **3 Task & Finish groups:** Close collaboration between The Biosphere Partnership Board members and Task & Finish Groups: strategy, communications and engagement, research and data.
- > **4 Thematic workshops:** Four thematic workshops to target key partners: education & communities, conservation and biodiversity, business and tourism, and strategy.
- > **An online public consultation:** Reaching over 350 respondents from a wide variety of backgrounds including students, working professionals, retirees, and volunteers.

What have we done well?

Through the 10 Year Review process, we were able to gather the opinions of over 400 resident stakeholders representing various backgrounds, ages and occupations in The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere.

During the Public Consultation we were told that the success of the past decade has been due to the loyal and cross-sector partnership with representatives from key **local organisations making a difference**. Thanks to this, there is great support for the work that has been carried out by the partnership.

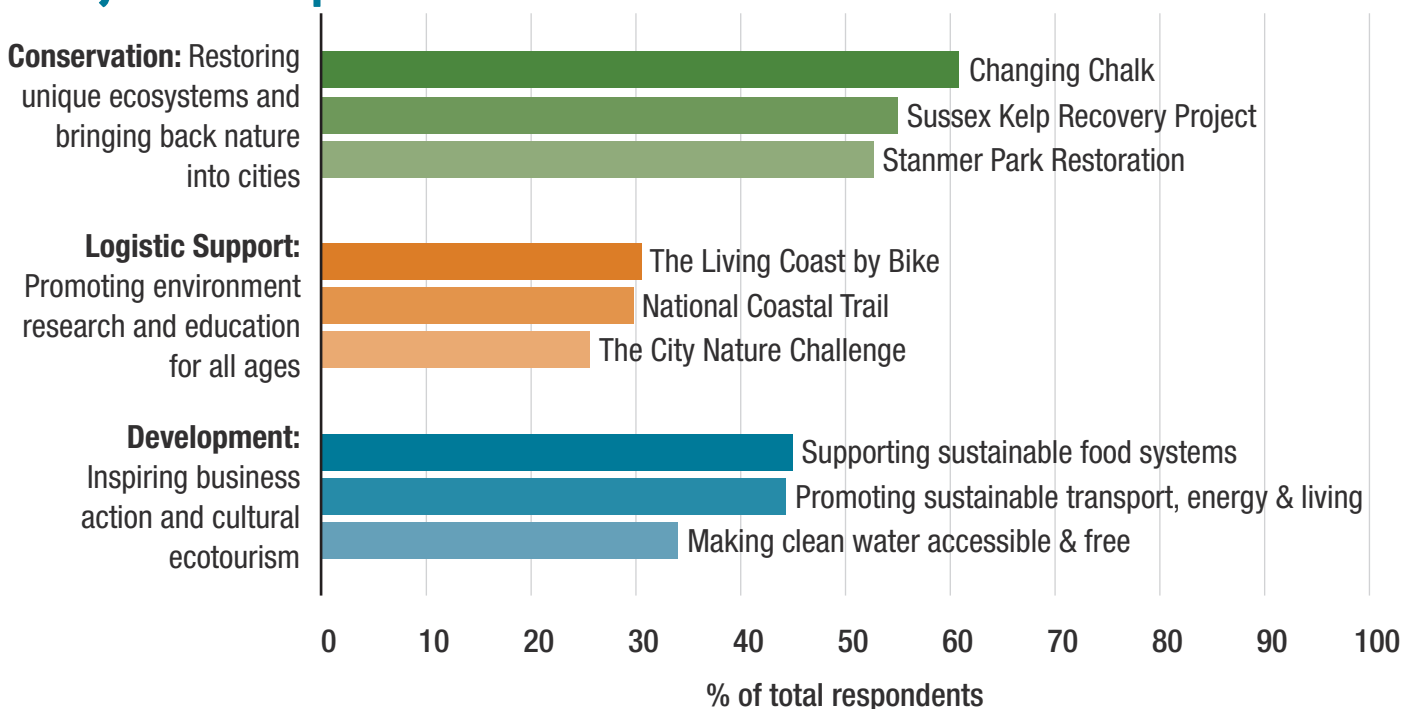
Despite external challenges such as **COVID-19, Brexit and the cost-of living crisis**, we were able to achieve impactful change in all three Biosphere objectives: flagship projects have contributed to **successfully restoring our unique ecosystems** and bringing nature back into our towns and our city; promoting environmental research and education for all ages; and inspiring **sustainable business action and cultural ecotourism** in the region.

Quote from the sustainable business workshop



“I simply would not have been able to create my business as it is without the BioCultural Heritage Tourism Project!”

Projects Respondents Were Most Aware of



In particular, stakeholders recognised the important role we played **in bringing diverse groups together under a single vision**. This has helped develop supportive networks, increased the impact of individual initiatives and revealed funding opportunities. Many also commended The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere's role **in using its projects not only to deliver their main aims, but also in raising awareness and promoting understanding of the natural world and climate crisis**.

In the workshops, stakeholders noted we successfully took advantage of the research, innovation and engagement opportunities that are available in larger urban areas allowing us to have maximum impact.



Response From the Public Consultation

“ The Biosphere has promoted an understanding of the important interaction between communities and the living world around them.”

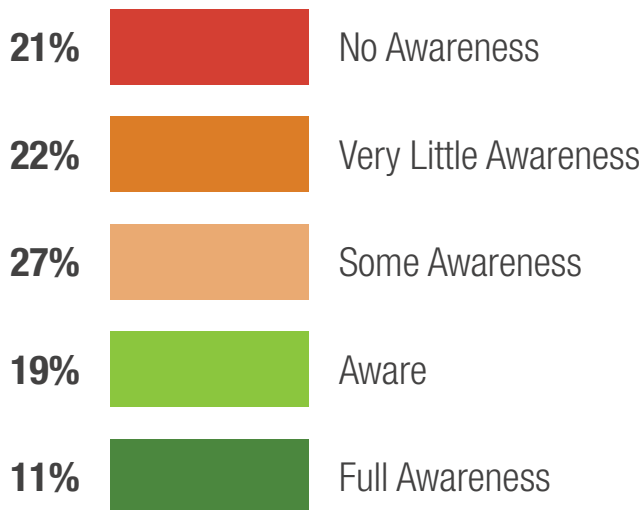


How can we Improve?

The main challenge raised by stakeholders was the lack of visibility and awareness of The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere amongst the general public.

43% of respondents had little or no awareness of the Biosphere, some noting that although they were involved in multiple local initiatives, they had not heard of their links to The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere. Some also noted barriers to participating in the Biosphere's work due to its lack of presence in rural and under-represented communities.

Respondent's Awareness of the Biosphere



Response From the Public Consultation



“We’d like the biosphere to reach out to more deprived communities, involving a wider community approach and more public events.”



In addition to the need for better engagement, some stakeholders believed that **the Biosphere would benefit from having more tangible objectives.**

In the workshops, stakeholders also mentioned **how funding and resourcing challenges** have at times limited the scale of projects and the Biosphere's ability to work regularly and consistently with all members and partners.

Our geography, defined by natural boundaries rather than local authorities, has also limited greater collaboration across our region. These elements have meant that some smaller projects have had difficulty extending their reach, and some larger projects have struggled to come to fruition.

What are your expectations for the future?

Going forward, we noted that stakeholders would like to see The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere develop a clearer purpose.

This should be associated with **an ambitious communication strategy** through which we can promote visibility and awareness across the entire area. The increased publicity would help engage more members of the communities and broaden the scale of impact of the Biosphere's initiatives.

The redefined purpose should take advantage of the Biosphere's strengths and its **ability to act as an umbrella** that brings together projects, facilitates communication, enables cross-project awareness and collaboration, avoids duplication, and brings in funding.

Over the next 10 years, stakeholders hope that The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere will continue with its strong work. They want to see the Biosphere address its objectives by **nurturing innovative ideas and encouraging multi-disciplinary approaches**; with an emphasis on protecting nature and empowering the next generation through environmental education.

Feedback on the Biosphere's Top Priorities

During the public consultation responders were asked to rank The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere's current priorities according to importance and provide on our current purpose.

There was strong support from respondents on the current top priorities of The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere. **"To help conserve biodiversity and nature"** was considered the most important priority with 51% of respondents choosing it as number 1.

There was also support for the other priorities with 31% of respondents selected **"Environmental education for all"** as their first preference. "Develop sustainable living, access to nature and wellbeing" was the third most popular category and "Sustainable business and ecotourism" was the lowest ranked.

Feedback from respondents on The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere's current purpose suggest people would like to see even greater focus on protecting nature and **supporting local Communities**. Overall however there was a strong support for The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere's current purpose.



Strategic Recommendations for 2024/2025

Promoting actions and solutions supporting sustainable living for everyone, together

Actions & Solutions Improving Livelihoods, Health and Wellbeing

Our Natural Heritage

Providing us the resilient life supporting system we need to thrive.

Our South Downs National Park
Our Marine Conservation Zone
Our Rivers Adur and Ouse
Our Chalk Aquifer
Our Nature Reserves and SSSI's
Our iconic species and places
All local Nature, everywhere

Our Vibrant People

Taking local action to support a sustainable, healthy, positive future.

Our Cross Sector Partners
Our Residents
Our Schools, Students, Universities & Communities
Our Visitors Looking For Eco Tourism
Our Businesses



Our Strategic Goals



Being a member of the United Nations family UNESCO encourages us to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1

Protect our natural heritage to ensure sustainable living for all

Empowering Nature's Recovery by aligning to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Strengthened Biodiversity Duty and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gains, with a focus on water and flood management, conservation and enhancement of local habitats in urban, rural and marine environments and natural capital or nature-based-solutions.

Supporting strategic partners to deliver local impact with innovative nature-based-solutions -

- > Enable local sustainable land and food systems **The City Downland Estate Plan** and related projects such as **Land Use Plus**.
- > Protect water quality and quantity, and manage increased floodings and storms including: **The Aquifer Partnership, Southern Water, The Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, and local authorities**
- > Conserve and Enhance biodiversity: **Changing Chalk, Weald to Waves** and other local rewilding schemes.
- > **Sussex Bay, Sussex IFCA** and other players such as the SMACF members for marine conservation Projects.
- > The 3 local authorities encompassing the geography of the Biosphere to foster a joined up approach + potentially tap into best in class partners across a wider collaboration network, such as the Knepp, Wakehurst and the local Universities.

Sharing best practices and fostering networking opportunities across priority thematic workstreams aiming to support carbon net-zero targets:

- > Working with key local private, public and charity operators on Economic strategy, Transport, Energy, Food, Water to share best practices.
- > Leverage UNESCO networks for increased best practices sharing.



2

Sustainability education for all, to empower citizens at local level to be the change for their own health and wellbeing

Continuing to raise awareness on the benefits of connecting with nature for health and wellbeing, and on the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss to **empower citizens** to take action at a local level, especially for **audiences based in deprived areas, with an inclusive and equal approach.**

Capitalising on local strategic partners, events and community groups: strengthening our links with the **Our City, Our World Programme**, continuing to **embed environmental education in local schools' curriculum, working hand in hand with local universities** notably through **the South Coast Sustainability Research Initiative**. It is also a goal to **work more with local community hubs and youth groups, in partnership with existing networks**, with participatory workshops and citizen science initiatives such as **The global City Nature Challenge**. Finally, working with **local artists and cultural organisations like ONCA, Fabrica, the Brighton Festival and the many local museums and theatres**, is a powerful lever **to entice residents to care for their cultural and natural heritage.**



3

Use our UNESCO designation as a vehicle to promote a sense of local pride fostering Sustainable Economic Development & Tourism

Clarifying our positioning and storytelling, Conveying a clear and simple concept that is relatable with examples, **Anchoring ourselves in the UN SDGs + UNESCO brand + convey optimism and foster behaviour change + identify high profiles personalities to support our action.**

Fostering sustainable tourism and a sense of pride: supporting our area as a place where people want to live, work and learn, including **a major Biosphere celebration in 2025** (when UNESCO officially comes back to us with an Ambassador to confirm the renewal of our designation), strengthening our link with UNESCO like we did in Summer 2023 **with the launch of the map of the UNESCO UK sites**, organising local campaigns to celebrate our iconic Sussex species and places including our National Park and Marine Conservation Zone designations, working **with local tourism and conservation organisations.** Continue to enhance local sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals working with local tourism organisations, continue to enhance **local sustainability and SDG champions.**

Identifying and sharing levers for companies to be more sustainable and transition to net-zero: meeting with local representatives of each of the organisations tackling this and sharing their work with local businesses: **local chambers of commerce, BIPC, B Corps, Clean Growth platform, Our South Downs business community, etc.**



A training session on wildflowers at Stanmer Park with volunteers from the University of Sussex

4

Ensuring stronger funding & governance to support the Biosphere's goal

Actively seek funding and diversify sources of revenues to increase impact and support key strategic projects in their delivery. Increased resourcing to sustain the Biosphere a) through more **effective marketing and engagement**, b) through more dedicated and focussed pursuit of funding opportunities, and c) through an **expanded network and geography**. New funding strategies to pursue more funding opportunities independently and in collaboration, and potentially through evolving the formal structure toward a charity status or other not for profit model, incorporating 5 below and other means for raising additional funds to support the work.

Membership structure clarifying partner/member status and associated fees/contributions, and enabling private individual/family membership.

Governance structure: review of board and board members responsibilities, board structure, and involvement of and engagement with other non board members. Role and status of working/task & finish groups reviewed and formalised.

Identify tools for effective best practice sharing beyond meetings: **One Planet?**



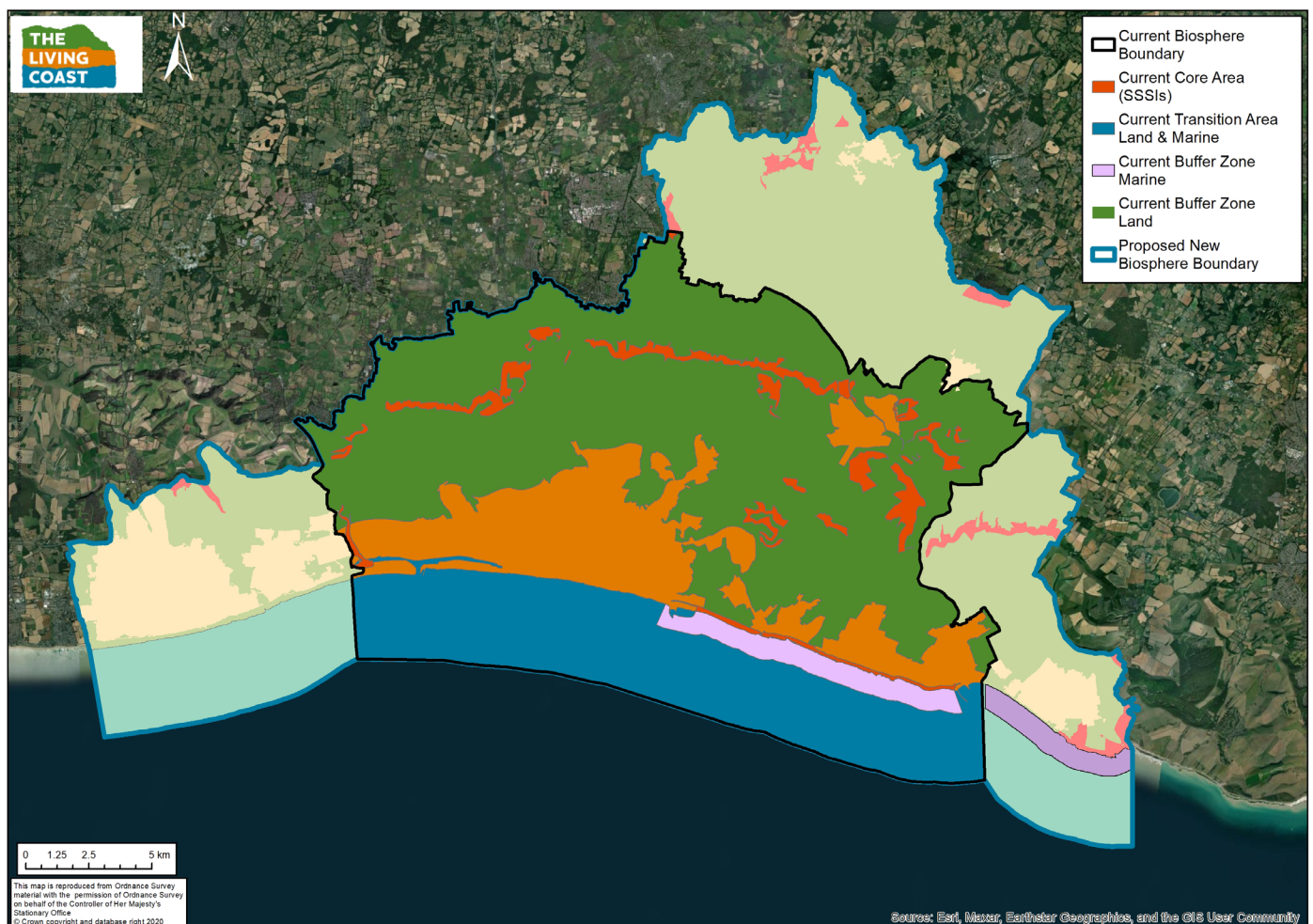
Geography: Update to the Biosphere Boundary

As part of the 10 Year Review process the Biosphere took the opportunity to review the Biosphere Geography and stakeholders views on whether it should be altered.

Originally, the boundary was set up taking the natural heritage of the chalk aquifer as a key criterion. However, today, UNESCO recommends working with Local Authority boundaries to facilitate collaboration and impact.

The survey revealed strong support for the expansion beyond the Adur and Ouse Rivers to encompass the whole of the Lewes District Council and Adur & Worthing Councils.

This new geography will require to adjust the organisation, capacity and governance to reflect this bigger ambition.



Subject to UNESCO approval on the boundary changes, the Biosphere Geography will be extended to bring in the whole of Adur, Lewes district and Worthing.

The UNESCO Living Coast Brand

In 2014, the original brand was the ‘Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere’.



In 2017, it was rebranded to ‘The Living Coast’, with the ‘Brighton & Lewes Downs UNESCO World Biosphere Region’ still used as a baseline. Since then, this new brand has been featured in a number of local places (English Coast Path signs all along the Coast from Shoreham by Sea to Eastbourne, local parks, Butterfly & Bee Banks, partners’ websites etc.).



However, our official UNESCO name has remained the “Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere” on all UNESCO channels, which poses a problem of consistency, especially in a context where stakeholders have clearly expressed the need to amplify our awareness and clarify what we do. There is a lack of consistency of understanding of The Living Coast’s purpose and value, creating a barrier to wider public and organisational engagement.

In 2024, we are seizing the opportunity of this Periodic Review to officially ask that our biosphere is renamed ‘The Living Coast’ on all UNESCO channels and official documents.

We will also use the UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve logo more systematically associated with The Living Coast logo, to capitalise on the UNESCO brand awareness and aura, while making sure we comply with UNESCO Brand guidelines, including not using the latter to support any form of commercial use. We will also be working on clarifying our purpose to wider audiences.



Change to our Governance

Ideas for our future organisation:

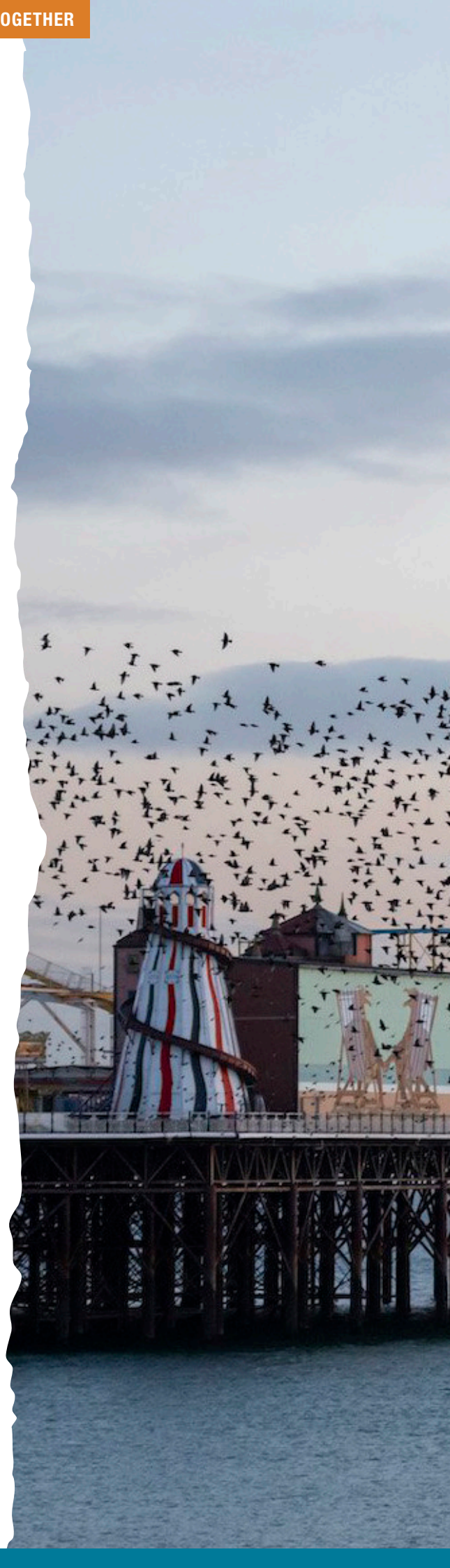
Create a smaller Biosphere Delivery Board, with the mission to make strategic and funding decisions, and renew the terms of reference.

Develop a wider Partnership group to increase audiences, knowledge sharing and impact. Update the terms of reference and dedicated membership scheme.

Continue the work of the Research and Data task group and key stakeholders notably the University of Brighton and Sussex University.

Strengthen the link with strategic delivery partners such as Our City Our World, The City Downland Estate, Sussex Bay and The Aquifer Partnership.

Consider creating a youth board and/or a network of ambassadors to embody and cross-pollinate our messaging.





Starling murmuration, 2022

How can I get involved?

For Partners

Our partners are what make The Living Coast tick. Thanks to them, we take part and support a diverse range of projects across our area.

Interested in becoming a partner? Join The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere partnership by [clicking here!](#)

If you'd like to develop an initiative but need some inspiration, check out some of the projects we have supported in the past by [clicking here](#) and have a read through our ambitions for the next 10 years on **Pages 29 - 33.**

Want to partner with us on an existing project or bring a local project to our attention? Contact us by [clicking here](#) or send an email to biosphere@brighton-hove.gov.uk

For Community

Check out how to volunteer with us by [clicking here!](#) For example, you could help 'rewild' your area, join a bumble bee citizen science project, or become a Biosphere Ambassador for your community.

Need ideas of free ways to get involved with nature?

- > Check out our up-to-date calendar by [clicking here!](#)
- > **Go outdoors and observe wildlife** – visit the beautiful parks, seaside and chalk cliffs that make up our Biosphere (check out our interactive map by [clicking here](#)) and if you feel like it, participate in our annual **City Nature Challenge!**
- > **Like to ride?** [Click here](#) for ideas of cycling routes across The Living Coast.

Are you a local business? Check out our resources for local businesses by [clicking here](#) or connect with other sustainable businesses in your area using our directory by [clicking here!](#)

Subscribe to our newsletter!

Visit our website's homepage to do so:
www.livingcoast.org.uk

Follow us on social media!



<https://www.instagram.com/livingcoastuk/>



<https://www.facebook.com/TheLivingCoastUNESCOBiosphere>



<https://twitter.com/thelivingcoast>



<https://uk.linkedin.com/company/the-living-coast>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6YFKq6Vv-YQpUiF5E6DM1QJ>

Acronyms

> UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
> MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
> BHCC	Brighton and Hove City Council
> SDNPA	South Downs National Park Authority
> IFCA	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
> TAP	The Aquifer Partnership
> MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
> SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage System

Photo Sources

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> Page 15	Our Water Matters, Minecraft video, Youtube Video (2016)
> Page 17	Brighton & Hove buses' launch - new zero emission buses (2019)
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