

CIVIC ✦ UEA

The Climate Book

OPEN SPACE EVENT

March 2023 | Kings Centre | Norwich

The Climate Book is a summary of the conversations that took place during the event in Norwich, where participants discussed the role of a civic university in the context of the climate emergency.



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PREFACE

If you are reading this document, you have some investment in the idea of universities as institutions that help to nourish and nurture life in their local area. You may have a keen sense of what civic activity should look like and be an active member of the community in which you live. You could also have a Norwich, Norfolk or East Anglian focus: a keen attachment to the geographical area in question. Most likely, it will be all the above.



On March 8th 2023, CivicUEA and ClimateUEA united to host a collaborative event at The Kings Centre in Norwich, with the aim of exploring UEA's responsibilities to our region, as a civic university with expertise in climate and environmental research. A diverse group of over 40 attendees, including students, academics, artists, activists and businesspeople, were asked to set the agenda for the day, using the Open Space format, a democratic and collaborative meeting method, giving everyone equal opportunity to raise issues for discussion and make their voices heard.

After gathering in a circle and listening to introductory speeches, the participants were asked to take a moment to consider the question 'What is the role of a civic university in the context of the climate emergency?', before being invited to raise topics for discussion, leading to a full agenda of thirty different ideas provoked by this question. The participants were asked to take notes during these discussions, either handwritten or submitted via a digital form, and at the end of the session, everyone reconvened in a plenary circle to reflect on the afternoon's proceedings.

This book is the product of the discussion notes, edited and summarised, but distilling the essential points made in each of these dynamic conversations. It is the work of many hands, but any errors are that of the CivicUEA team, so please direct any queries to us, at civic.university@uea.ac.uk

This book will join five other books from similar events, which will all be used to form a short statement that will be a Civic University Charter for East Anglia. All participants will be invited to first comment on and then later sign this statement.

RETHINKING PROCESSES

Living well, consuming less energy

Sustainable models for food production

Ethical investing and banking

**Policy recommendations in times
of environmental crisis**

Create a vision for the best potential future

Explore alternative economic systems

Addressing inequality



How can we find and create ways of living that consume less energy and don't reduce wellbeing?

Transport is very important – making life as localised as possible (20-minute towns) with affordable and fully integrated public transport, including better designed buses that don't send the subliminal message that bus-users are second class citizens.

Bus travel can also encourage socialisation, which is invaluable for our wellbeing. Reduction in energy consumption is both a technological issue and requires a cultural shift of mindset, which are two different matters; plus, making things by hand and doing tasks without powered equipment can also be good for one's well-being.

In Romania, frequent power cuts meant that people tried to make sure that work was done while there was electricity; people adapt to new conditions, willingly or not.

There could be the introduction of local energy systems owned by the community, where you can only consume as much as you produce, which would make people more thoughtful and economical with their energy use. Using less energy often means needing more time, which could lead to a slower pace of life which would again benefit wellbeing.

Could incentives for lower energy use be introduced? What non-financial incentives could there be, that would be intrinsically rewarding and not encourage more consumption as financial incentives might?



Models for sustainable, local, community agro-ecological farming

This discussion was around ideas for viable models for more sustainable, local community food production.

It was suggested that in terms of climate resilience, small scale local farming has huge untapped possibilities that just needs a bit more institutional and financial support to really fulfil its potential, and a social contract between 'society' and the people who own land is needed so that it can be used for growing food, environmental balance and social goods. This could be through land re-possession, or just heavy encouragement, to ensure land is being used for the good of society and future generations (local food, carbon sequestration and social resilience), with higher taxation potentially contributing to funding. Consumers should be educated in the true cost of a globalised and incredibly wasteful food system so that everyone is informed on how to make better choices. Looking at viable models for sustainable, local, community agro-ecological farming in

our region, more connection could be made with UEA – a research project into the impact of agro-ecological farming compared with mass production/monoculture farms could be developed – Norwich Farmshare would provide a good local example. Students at UEA could have direct experience at Farmshare and/or host a podcast to raise awareness. Policy issues – Farmshare has issues around landownership. Can UEA intervene – educate landowners, etc, in the value of using land for sustainable food systems? How can UEA help to educate and frame conversations within the local communities, outside of academia, to drive positive change in food systems? Connections between community food growth and wellbeing – both physical and mental health could be further researched.



Should UEA be setting an example and divesting pensions / cutting links with Barclays?

This discussion group considered UEA as a political space, that should therefore be leading the way and setting an example by ensuring that they follow their own climate science – i.e. through cutting links with Barclays due to their investment in fossil fuels.

For new international students, Barclays was the only bank with whom they could open an account, and UEA should work with ethical banks to make it easier for international students to open an account. The group felt that UEA's work with Barclays is an example of a disconnect between the leadership of the university and its students. This point was also compounded in the observation that there could have been more of the UEA executive team in attendance, which caused some doubts as to how much impact the event will actually have on future policy.

UEA Biodiversity and Climate Action Network are currently pressuring UEA to break up with Barclays; UEA could provide more information during welcome week to facilitate students opening

ethical accounts – because UEA has an account at Barclays, many students may consider it as an endorsement and also choose to bank with Barclays. The University also needs to consider where pensions are invested more carefully. UEA is leading the way in its climate research, so should be doing everything they can to reduce their emissions – and some think divestment could be

an impactful way to do this. However, there was also debate as to whether divestment makes a difference, as selling shares may be unlikely to impact fossil fuel companies' finances. But it's still an important message to send, and moving money out of banks that are supporting fossil fuel companies in favour of more ethical options is one way to build a more sustainable institution.

UEA could provide more information during welcome week to facilitate students opening ethical accounts.





What policies should we advocate for?

At the beginning of the discussion, this group were debating different policy proposals and comparing them.

Policies such as subsidised public transport, and investing in different renewable energy sources were discussed. This developed into considering the more complex issues around academic political impartiality, and how individual researchers might have political biases but the institution as a whole, in the name of political plurality, should

not take specific policy stances. However, it was noted that UEA does take stances in some other social issues. This brought up questions of what mechanisms (if any) are used to decide what the university policy recommendations in times of environmental crisis are. As well as in any other case of urgent action needed for the benefit of

society in the short and long term. Or should academia always stay outside of the policy debate, even in the middle of a climate emergency? To do this UEA could produce more evidence reports related to important environmental policies, all at the local, regional, and national level – with that comparative policy evidence readily available to the general public.

How do we create a vision for the best potential future and how do we communicate it?

This group discussed the idea of the best potential future, exploring many aspects of the future that need to be included, because climate change is so multifaceted.

From infrastructure to agriculture to economic systems; everything must change. There are visions of this best potential future already happening around us, such as the Norfolk greenhouse heated with water used to cool a nearby plant and using bees to pollinate their greenhouse-grown tomatoes,

or further afield, Swedish new housing developments separating outgoing water pipes into grey/brown/black; they believe that technology and changing values are what's going to make the most difference. One way to share this is through artists and writers who could create and share better futures,

such as solarpunk, instead of dystopias. These could be used to communicate climate change in a way that might motivate instead of influencing further climate anxiety. This group also suggests that more research is needed on whether this way of communication is useful and will trigger change.

From infrastructure to agriculture to economic systems; everything must change.



Can UEA lead on changing the food/agricultural system?

This group discussed several ways that UEA could help change the food and agricultural system in the area and beyond.

One example raised was dairy alternatives – what research has been done around these, and do people know about any potential health or environmental impacts? Could UEA endorse research on issues such as this? People may get caught following habits perhaps because there is a lack of knowledge around issues such as animal agriculture – we need to reframe meat as a luxury like it used to be. Packaging is also a problem to be addressed.

Government regulations are always needed to drive change and they can use price to nudge consumers in the right direction. There is an impact of the agricultural industry that needs to be addressed as currently there is no clear link between food/health/environment. Is it possible to tackle the issue without changing land ownership?

What research has been done around dairy alternatives, and do people know about any potential health or environmental impacts?





What role does UEA have in helping to explore and promote alternative economic systems?

How could UEA shift from measuring its benefit to the community in terms of economic growth, to measurements more aligned with the wellbeing of people and planet?

This could start with internal change and an acknowledgment of goals other than financial. The group discussed how UEA could use its political influence to push for the decommodification

of the education system and suggested a consideration of more diverse economic viewpoints in the syllabus and a promotion of measures other than economic growth through

business controls because there is a massive benefit to the local community in ways other than financial.

Addressing inequality

There was an acknowledgment within this group that inequality is a difficult conversation but an extremely important one to have.

The conversation often brings up questions of guilt, hypocrisy, blame, etc. There is a huge moral issue at the heart of the climate question; and often those with super wealth invest to protect themselves. Does reducing consumption have to be seen as giving something up? Instead, perhaps having/doing less needs reframing to be fully embraced. Is there a way for UEA to speak truth to power or does the message become watered down to become palatable? It was suggested that Norfolk/ Norwich Councils are still largely unschooled on real climate issues and suffer from short-termism. Could there be a role for UEA in brokering

conversations between councils, scientists, business and community? The tax system and re-distribution, for example a potential wealth tax, was also discussed – should UEA Economics and Social Sciences departments be teaching and promoting successful alternative economic models? And could UEA present itself as an economic model? Issues around flying, moral decision-making and sustainable consumption were also raised, with the group believing that UEA should be an exemplar to the community in these respects. Intergenerational inequality is also a key issue when discussing the quality of life of people in 50 years' time.

UEA could have someone on its council who represents a person living 50 years from now, to embed sustainability into decision-making. Immigration is one key cause of inequality, UEA is a member of the University of Sanctuary scheme but is this well-known and could more be done? Does DEV play enough of a role in educating local communities on the causes and solutions to climate change induced migration?

CLIMATE ACTION

Getting people onboard on climate action

**Creating a more sustainable
physical environment**

**How expertise could benefit
community backed projects**

Engaging with local MPs



What can we do as a community to help people take climate action in their own lives?

This group discussed the importance of educating and onboarding people who aren't yet engaged with climate issues.

These included issues which the group believe need to be focused on local impacts and not be overwhelming, because we are constantly bombarded with emotive images and stories from every part of the world, which can be desensitising. Art is a good route to producing an emotional response but for young people, we could use technology that they are engaged with already. It's important that thoughts of environmental impact permeate every decision people make.

The discussion then moved onto how we can empower individuals and the recommendation was that this was best done through communities. There is a need for focal points that people

can come to for help, whether it is to find knowledgeable/skilled people who can help fix something, give info on grants, activities, options for sustainable changes in the home, and act as a central point for exchanging information and ideas and sharing activities/events that are happening. Communication across different demographics is vital. Centralising this within communities and facilitating opportunities to share best practice, ideas and events is also important – this would increase scope for collaboration between likeminded folks and avoid doubling up on similar events. These community hubs could take a format similar to the “Men's Shed” concepts.

Another idea was newsletters that share and promote events across communities would be helpful for people looking to act. See Norwich EcoHub as an example. The role of UEA could be to help bring together community leaders/representatives across communities, supporting them through underpinning knowledge, information on schemes, legal advice, training around science, communication, setting up volunteer groups, access to student volunteers, sharing best practice, providing a central point for networking, identifying funding sources, helping to develop “recommended sustainable trader” lists. The possibilities are endless.

How can UEA create a more sustainable physical environment?

The physicality of the university's buildings and the need to engage with the existing spaces was discussed.

The group talked about creating more greenery inside and out, like integrating 'green walls' into buildings and sowing wildflower patches around campus. Planned renovations should aim to include more sustainable initiatives that will positively impact all users. Introducing garden spaces that

are open to students would make a more accessible and interactive environment and food system on campus. UEA broad and the surrounding pathways are also used a lot by the general public, so it's an important space to connect to nature and wildlife for the wider community. Green spaces are vital for improving

mental health, so this area is important as a break from the otherwise brutalist campus and a big incentive for making other spaces on campus greener, not only for wellbeing but because UEA's campus can nurture connection between community and the environment.

How can UEA support absorbing carbon from the atmosphere through community backed projects?

This group suggested that UEA could take a lead on 2021 Environment Act and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to help communities at different scales build maps for nature restoration projects which absorb carbon (incorporating nature recovery corridors). It was also suggested that UEA should find ways to communicate the importance

of carbon sequestration to restore the global climate and communicate the science principles to different audiences. This should involve prioritising UEA research input into global nature-based solutions for carbon capture. UK based examples include the restoration of peatlands and wetlands, while international examples could involve reversing desertification

and ocean regeneration. This should be always engaging with wider communities. Understanding the risks of technological methods for capturing carbon, to better inform communities affected by nature projects and technological carbon capture methods (including, e.g., genetic manipulation of crops) is also of great importance.

Should UEA publicly come out against the western link road?

This group discussed whether UEA should publicly oppose the western link road, beginning by questioning if UEA ever makes decisions like this?

Does the constitution mean they can't take a stance on it? Some felt that if the University came out against the link road that it could encourage a more diverse range of students, although it may be better for UEA to provide evidence in a non-partisan way (as there are experts within the University that could do this).

It was also suggested that UEA should be actively promoting their climate research to decision makers as it allows individual experts to give their opinion. However, some felt that the problem is that a lot of the research at UEA is done at a national level – as a

civic university, there should be more done to encourage local research that would directly affect the community, but currently there is little incentive for local studies to happen because of a lack of funding. This needs to change, the nature recovery network and climate change research at UEA should be focused on a local level so this could be used by local councils to help planning. Norfolk Wildlife Trust wants to commission UEA to do a literature review into the evidence of mitigation effectiveness for barbastelle bats – should UEA be offering reduced rates for work like this?

It was felt within the group that high profile academics should be more vocal in opposing the road. Furthermore, current Norfolk County Council modelling doesn't consider embodied carbon. Planning procedures and UEA's role in influencing developments were also discussed – would coming out against the road have a cost to UEA – in political, cultural or financial terms? UEA needs to work with NGOs to use their research – could UEA help with modelling, etc, at a reduced cost? A civic charter should be clear about UEA's partiality in these matters.

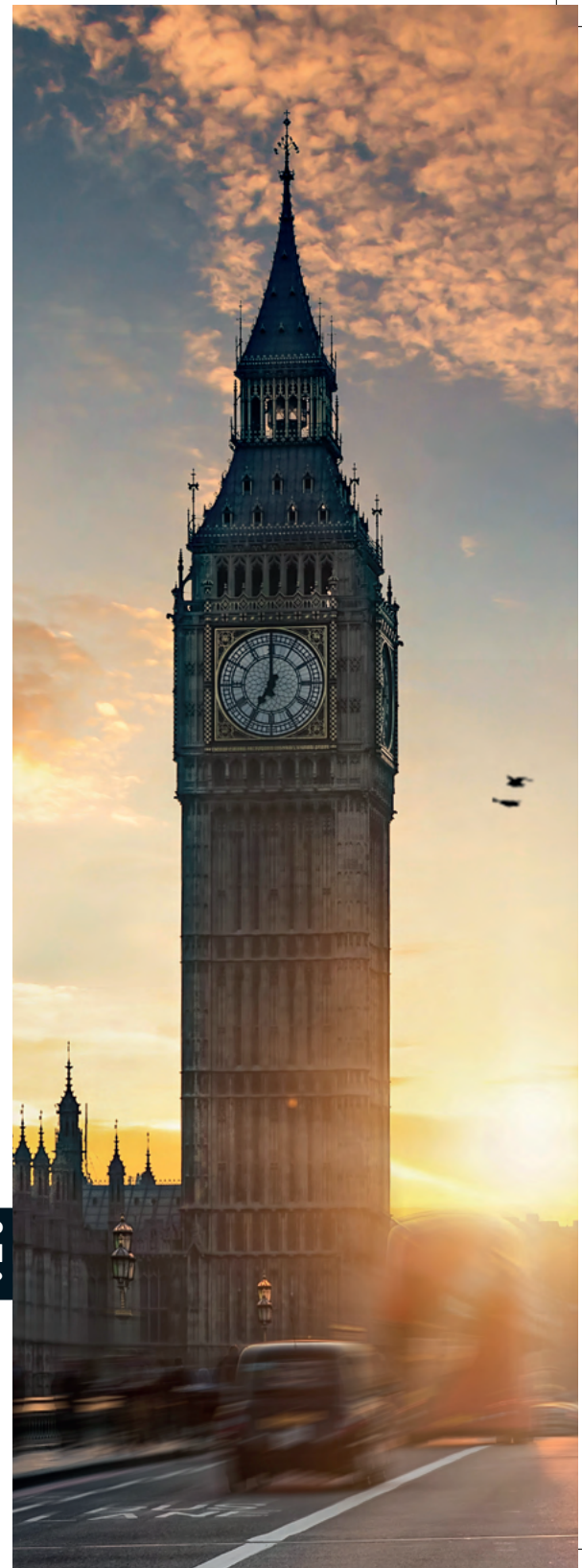
How can CivicUEA help MPs to sign the Warm This Winter pledge or other climate related action?

This group discussed how CivicUEA could get involved with canvassing local MPs on local climate related issues.

This could be done by demonstrating local examples of climate issues such as the fires at Wild Ken Hill and Brancaster which have impacted people in North-West Norfolk, alongside rising tides in Wells Next the Sea. In Kings Lynn there are also issues around EV charging points. Could CivicUEA help to incite the personal interests of MPs?

The group also discussed how students might be able to collaborate on public opinion research for warmer homes in Norwich – especially within Chloe Smith's constituency – helping to build an awareness of the cost of energy, which could facilitate decisions that will implement change. To do this, a long term, not a short-term, approach is what is most needed for impact.

Could CivicUEA help to incite the personal interests of MPs?



ENGAGEMENT

Small and independent businesses

Students – at university and beyond

People from marginalised communities

School children

Biodiversity Stripes for Norfolk

**Facilitating communal schemes
such as litter picking**

How to engage with, learn from and build the capacity of small and independent businesses?

Norwich and Norfolk have vibrant and dynamic small and independent business communities, such as the ones found in Norwich Lanes and St Augustine's, with many of these businesses facing numerous climate related challenges, such as the rising cost of energy and transport.

These businesses are often operated by only one or two people, so there are also issues of capacity and time. This is a community that UEA hasn't traditionally targeted as research, as stakeholders tend to be the larger organisations. But there is lots of good practice and ideas within this community that UEA could support and champion, with many focusing on sustainability, upcycling, etc.

How can CivicUEA help to empower, learn from and support this community from a climate change perspective? Knowledge, networking, funding and implementation. UEA should celebrate and shout about local pioneers in sustainable products and business practices.

Norwich Lanes – home to many small and independent businesses.



How can we consistently engage students and get them to take the climate agenda with them into whatever they do after they leave UEA?

To engage students in the climate agenda and encourage them to retain this engagement beyond university, there should be increased and ongoing messaging.

The student population is constantly changing, so it can be easy for permanent residents to forget that many students come and go from UEA and the region relatively quickly. Some participants thought that UEA could also increase course content, incorporating climate discussion into all modules, rather than having climate as an optional pathway to specialise

in. They also thought that there should be an effort to include students who are not already interested in climate, as those who are already involved in the discussion are usually already well informed. Another suggestion that came out of this session was that UEA could get students to sign up to a climate mailing list during fresher's week. They also thought that to

consolidate UEA's messaging on the climate crisis, Career Central should stop advertising roles with fossil fuel companies and other corporations with a track record of environmentally damaging operations. This could help to ensure that students continue to fight the climate crisis after university.



How can we make all people, especially those from marginalised communities, feel valid in climate conversations?

Discussing inclusion, this group thought that UEA should be engaging with marginalised communities within Norfolk by normalising conversations around the climate crisis, exploring ways to provoke motivation for change within these communities without creating fear. This should encourage ideas around

the agency that we have as individuals and as a community, while listening to the issues that these communities face and what barriers prevent individuals from making more sustainable choices.

Perhaps more could be done to highlight local stories about coastal erosion and fuel poverty, issues that disproportionately

affect marginalised communities. UEA should collaborate with the Student Union in these conversations for greater student engagement, working within other spaces in the local communities and promoting events like today's outside of the University, through local newspapers, independent companies, etc.

Who is UEA? And what has it done in the civic space before?

This group believes that UEA needs to work with its own communities efficiently. A civic university would need to be substantive first, not an exercise in reputation management, which acknowledges and supports bottom-up approaches and highlights what is already happening in the civic space and find ways to incentivise

that work better. UEA could do this by linking research, student groups and local campaigns potentially through modules on advocacy, action research, etc. It was also felt that the University should organise a module, available to students of all disciplines, that involves engaging in some civic activity outside the University.

It was suggested that UEA should do more to acknowledge that everything is political and that a civic university should act, not just think. One way in which they could do this is to fund a PHD project on the long history of UEA's civic engagement in research.

Engaging Schools

The participants in this group thought there may be some difficulty engaging with schools.

They thought this could be due to variations in approach and the attitudes/capacities of headteachers, or possibly because they are restricted by curriculum – although there is some flexibility. It is useful to have a broad approach to incorporating climate education, which can be part of any subject. It was felt that there is a lack of nature education in schools – how can climate issues be effectively taught in primary schools?

UEA's distinctive contribution may lie in developing sense of place and "Placemaking". From 2025, schools are required to have a sustainability lead – this presents opportunities, as these individuals are likely to be hard-pressed.

UEA could offer opportunities for them to convene to exchange ideas and approaches. This would supplement existing children's lectures at UEA. Ways in which UEA's own landscape can be used as a resource to educate should be explored. New walk-in 'Into' UEA education centres in west Earlham and Yarmouth could include climate change resources for interested members of the public.



Biodiversity Stripes for Norfolk

A Senior Research Associate in UEA's Climatic Research Unit is working on developing 'biodiversity stripes'

These are a series of graphs which show biodiversity losses/ gains in Norfolk, adapted from 'Warming stripes', an easily accessible data visualisation graphic that portray long-term temperate trends, and are used worldwide in the annual 'Show Your Stripes' campaign which spreads climate awareness. It is hoped that an agreement could be made with Norwich City Football Club to show the biodiversity stripes on their kit, as well as using key community speakers within the football world to reach new audiences. A series of global/ local biodiversity stripes are also in development, with first of these created for Norfolk.

The group discussed the potential of this biodiversity stripes project as a piece of public engagement/ climate communication, agreeing that there were real public engagement opportunities here, working with schools, councils and other organisations to help them 'create their own biodiversity stripes'. The simplicity of the image is key – it seeks to make the unseen loss seen. They also talked about the potential to connect this up with the government's local nature recovery plans. The idea of recreating nature may appeal to local communities and could act as a catalyst to get local people involved in recovery. The stripes could be used to show other areas of concern – as an air quality indicator for example.

Is litter picking worth it?

The discussion around whether the impact of a solo litter picker can make a difference led to thinking more broadly about how much power individuals have. However, it was recognised that small individual actions can spark conversation and human interaction, which is the starting ground for transformation – spreading the message that people can make change, no matter how big or small.

Climate action doesn't necessarily have to mean gluing ourselves to the motorway – whilst this may be one way of participating in activism, smaller impacts matter and can help to feel a sense of agency in easing climate anxiety. UEA could help facilitate litter picking schemes, or encourage individuals to do this in their spare time by providing pickers and bags available for students, staff or local residents to borrow for free.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Supporting local awareness of climate change

Reducing climate anxiety

Biodiversity in local communities

Ensuring accurate understanding of climate change

**Making research accessible and
useful to local communities**

**Communicating UEA's climate
research to the local community**

How can UEA support local awareness of climate change?

This group believe that UEA has a responsibility to attract people that don't engage with environmental issues and support people in taking climate action, by going into communities and reaching those not usually involved and consulted.

To do this UEA could go to village halls for instance, or The Forum. This discussion group suggested that UEA could design a template for local discussion. Trying to keep it positive, for example 'what you can do'. UEA could also engage with local agro-ecological farmers, because there's a need to talk about where community self-interest meets climate benefit.

This group also discussed how collectivism /community building could be encouraged in rural areas. UEA can help this by listening to the needs of local communities to identify needs and concerns, bridging gaps and finding ways to engage. UEA could provide resources to help do this, for example by producing a template for facilitation for local participation.



How can the university help reduce climate anxiety and help those who feel anxious to take action?

UEA is a climate leading university, however many students are not aware of the other universities in the field – and are also unaware of how to take action.

This could be addressed by introducing cross course education on climate change and climate action by bringing discussion into the communities via care homes, education, art therapy groups, even host climate cafés outside the university, open to everyone. This may help people feel less anxious, as discussing

environmental issues in groups could strike a balance between sharing information about the consequences of climate change while instilling hope of a better future. UEA should also try to build a relationship with the council in order to facilitate this.

How can UEA support local communities to take care of biodiversity?

The natural world isn't going to look the same in the future as the past or even the present. Promotion of biodiversity in local communities should include quality of life rather than only environmental aspects. Knowledge exchange by the university is essential and so is local ownership of land area and empowerment. This group felt that UEA should compile key points (non-action projects, untidy gardens, dead wood, extending green corridors through info sharing and collaboration with wildlife groups e.g. trusts) and create a resource of interpreted, relevant info on the University's website, providing accessible information for those that want to take local action.



How can we put UEA researchers at the service of local communities?

UEA is a vessel of information, so CivicUEA should work to give local communities access to this information and its researchers.

To do this, we need to learn from past and present examples of knowledge co-production, community engagement, etc, to learn what works and doesn't. There should also be an acknowledgment of good collaborative work already happening in this space. This group suggests that UEA should

use their incentive and financial structures to allow and support academics to work for free, for example with community groups – from consultancy model to secondments/placement/ service. An example of this is Science Shop; a place where folks can come with questions and commission research –

these could be partnered within Information Hubs. UEA should learn from 'design thinking', and needs to put resources such as money, time, expertise and funding knowledge at the disposal of grassroots community groups, because people know what they need to do and need empowering, not educating.

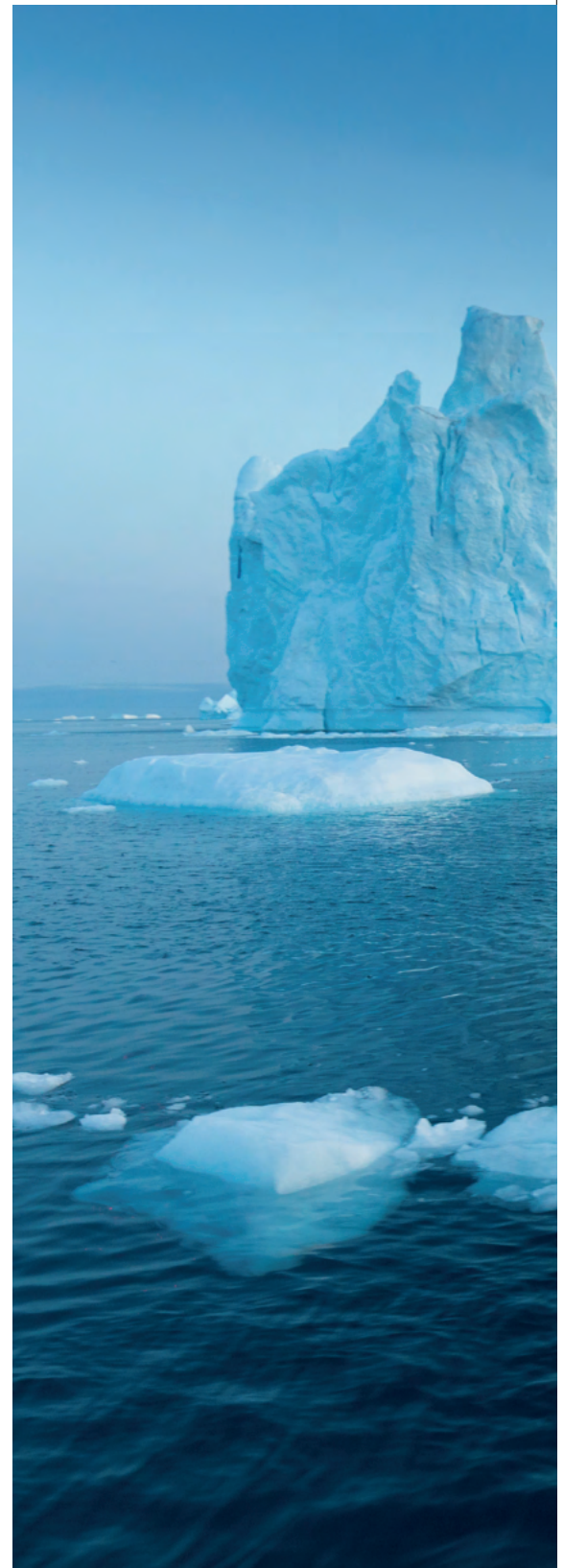
UEA's role in ensuring accurate understanding of climate change

This discussion was prompted by concerns that the consensus on climate change is fragile, prone to disinformation and fraught by political division.

Communicating climate change information is complex, owing to different views towards policy and politics. Fact checkers may allow for the communication of scientific information in the public domain, however, there has been a politicisation of 'facts' in a 'post truth' society.

Focusing on local needs and reflecting these in communications may provide a way forward. There's a need for an ongoing relationship between local groups (local councils, local NGOs e.g. wildlife trust),

around the supply of climate information. What would be the best practice? What information would be needed? Informing local climate action regarding guidance, professional advice. There's also potential for MSc students to be seconded or create joint projects with local partners to fight for accurate climate change reporting.



Could there be active collaboration between UEA researchers and artists?

Through discussion on collaboration between the arts and climate researchers at UEA, this group suggested there must be clear routes to collaboration because there are barriers to accessing research. Using the arts to empower allows others to engage and brings benefit both ways. These would need to be reciprocal relationships;

the arts can enable you to feel the issues. There are already established relationships with researchers and community artists, UEA could use these connections to create projects of local relevance. This work should be made about the people, the communities and climate become the issue in the background. Events could

be arranged to benefit the people and enable people to engage with climate issues. This could be done with the help of UEA outreach, to include arts in research projects from the beginning. UEA mapping out its offer and using the creative process to inform the research could also help scientists begin to think differently.

UEA's role in bringing together people/partners to tackle the climate emergency

UEA's role is as convenor – to provide knowledge, support, time (academic and student) to important causes, lend credence to schemes/activities, knowledge of funding and to provide access to networks for knowledge and not just through individual academics. UEA should also be helping to build confidence in community and civic action with ongoing support. This will provide councils, planners and

developers with the conviction to take more radical steps. UEA should incentivise and support staff to provide civic service/ take civic action for the community's benefit which could be developed through the volunteering policy, especially in the civic context. UEA could develop a civic secondment scheme to enable academics/ staff to dedicate time to civic causes which could be part

time (e.g. half a day per week) and/or full time for a term or year. This would build on activity that is already often happening behind closed doors by academics but would enable this work to be expanded and celebrated, improving UEA's reputation, delivering impact and consolidating UEA's role as an anchor institution in the region.

Participatory action research

How can UEA create knowledge of service to communities but also disseminate this rapidly and accessibly?

This group discussed how to make research more accessible and useful to local communities. Inclusivity – who is going to read what is published? One way to ensure more people will engage with research is to make sure communities are involved with its production, although questions were raised around inclusivity and what research actually gets published. This led to discussion around which published sources are considered trustworthy, along with the possible pitfalls of publishing work too quickly and it being proven ‘wrong’, for example COVID-19 research. This could be mitigated with better training in science communication and media, as well as considering publishing formats – for example, scientists could publish blog posts and be transparent about where they are in the research process, allowing researchers to maintain their own narrative. This could give a more “behind the scenes” view of research, opening possibilities for further inclusivity and demystifying.

The Climate Outreach Project was given as an example of an interesting idea, segmenting audiences for science communication. The economics observatory from the University of Bristol was also cited as an example of good practice, where public can ask questions in a public online space to be answered by researchers. The Nappy Science Gang were also given as an example of an existing community involved with developing research questions, regarding the best practice for washing nappies, and one research outcome was driving the NHS to change the information on their website.

It was also discussed how events like today’s could include a more diverse set of participants, as well as how to ensure that people outside of UEA are made aware of opportunities to participate in research. In person events are important for creating human connections to research (particularly for climate research), as a personal

connection provokes individual investment in the issue. This led to conversation around how people obtain information and the role of social media for accessible and up-to-date research communication. UEA could have more representation in community-owned spaces, such as by holding further Open Space events in them, and should also look at research project outputs in non-traditional formats, such as zines, film, social media posts and art. UEA does not offer many opportunities for PhD by practice where the full body of work is recognised beyond a published paper, so other forms of engagement can be siloed as outreach or creative methods – could the parameters of what constitutes research be extended to include other forms of communication beyond written thesis? Finally, it was suggested that CivicUEA should organise further Open Space events specifically aimed at students, within student-focused spaces.

How can ClimateUEA help communicate UEA's climate research to the local community?

This group kicked off the discussion by questioning whether ClimateUEA is simply a branding exercise, or do they really want people to engage? Can it do both authentically?

Some felt broadening the net by involving dissident voices on climate at events would be helpful to create a real debate. Is starting a conversation with communities who are unconverted on climate important? Some felt the BBC 'fair balance' argument is a mistake. There were suggestions of holding large scale public debates at places like the Forum to help connect with the community. Could UEA do more to help people to feel empowered and offer solutions? Making climate change research relevant to the individual seems key. Could it be part of UEA's remit to show potential futures – using art to reach people emotionally or through demonstrating possibly technical solutions to inform.

Could ClimateUEA open a greater channel of communication for people seeking climate information? A local artist mentioned requesting climate data to inform her environmental art but was unable to get the information requested. A suggestion was made to engage the mass public using weather forecasts to scale probability of changes in the weather owing to climate

change. British people love the weather, so this medium could reach a mass audience – but could face opposition from denial lobby groups working within/ influencing the media? Could UEA offer a service whereby we offer information on sustainable traders? Could we broker conversations between Norfolk County Council, policy makers and trade to better inform people when making decisions on sustainability.



A CLIMATE MURAL FOR OUR TIMES

Following the Open Space event, all participants were invited to join a reception at the beautiful setting of Dragon Hall, in which prints were displayed of *A Climate Mural for our Times*, an art-science collaboration between artist Gennadiy Ivanov, Norwich City Council, UEA's Climatic Research Unit, the Transitions Art-Science Project, and Global Water Futures. This 10-metre wide artwork depicting climate change in Norfolk over 66 million years can be seen within Norwich City Council's debating chamber, and serves as a reminder that policy decisions must be made with climate change in mind.

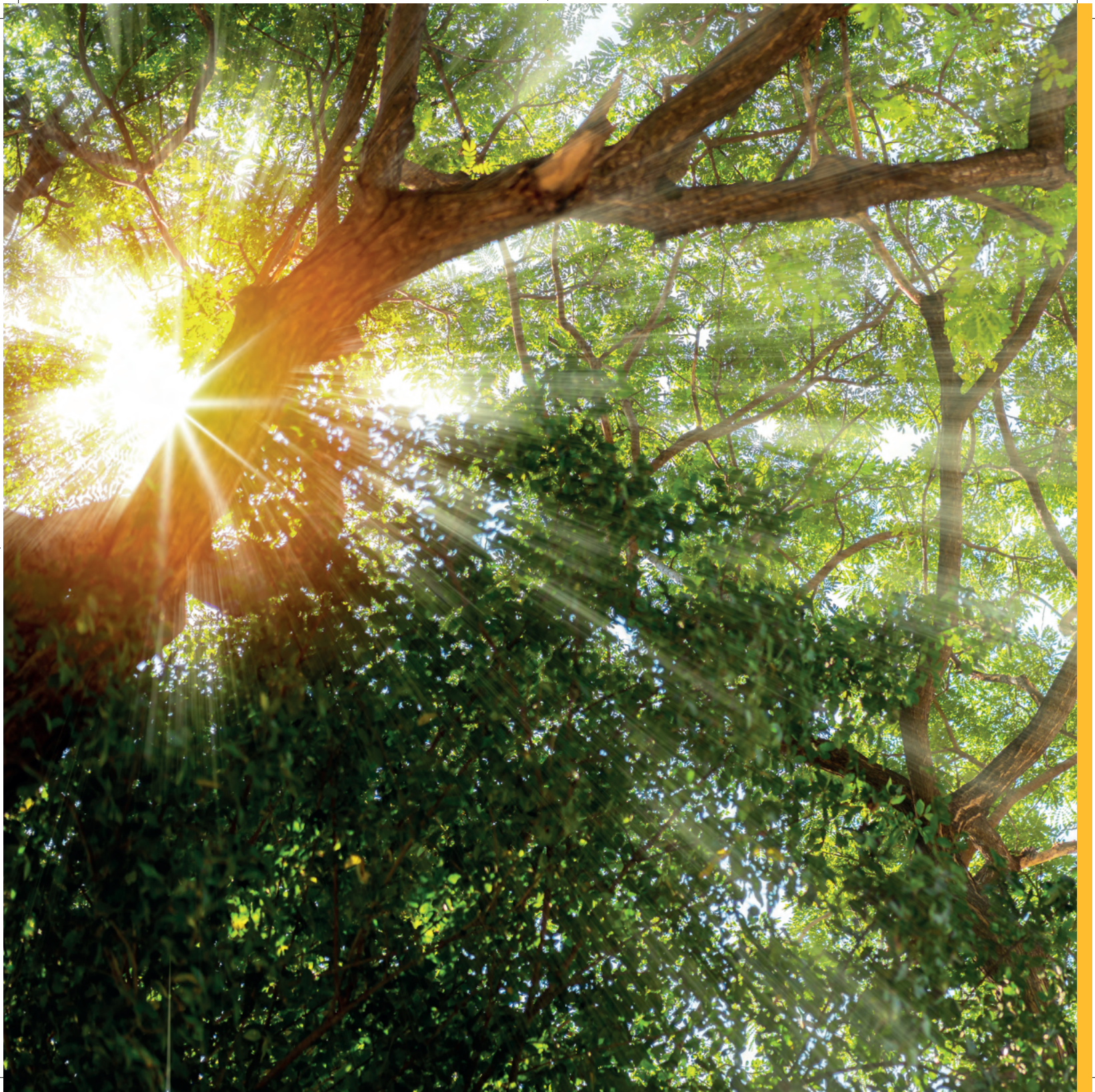




A panel discussion between Gennadiy Ivanov, the co-founder of Tyndall Centre, Trevor Davies, the Director of Climatic Research Unit, Tim Osborne, and Senior Researcher, Michael Taylor gave participants insight

into the reasons behind this collaboration, the fifty-year history of UEA's pioneering Climatic Research Unit, and the power of both art and science in helping us to understand climate change.

More of Gennadiy Ivanov's work can be found at Norwich Studio Art Gallery



A concluding thought to the day

The attendance and energy at the King's Centre was both exciting and encouraging in developing the pathway forward to embedding UEA's world renowned expertise in climate change within our local and regional community. The views and themes presented and discussed open up new ways for all of us to appreciate the breadth of interest in climate change and sustainability topics in the region. More importantly, the in-depth conversations built on past learning and highlight new opportunities for us to work together in partnership and with commitment to a more sustainable future.

Professor Konstantinos Chalvatzis
Academic Chair, ClimateUEA

**Find out more
about CivicUEA:**

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