

This Civic
Charter
reflects on the
last sixty years
and writes a
promise for
the next sixty.

UEA CIVIC CHARTER
60TH ANNIVERSARY

UEA
CIVIC CHARTER

A black and white photograph of a topographical model. The model features a winding river or path on the left, a series of terraced hills in the center, and a complex, multi-level building structure on the right. The terrain is represented by various shades of gray and textures, suggesting different elevations and materials. The building has a series of steps or terraces leading up to it. The overall composition is a high-angle view of the model.

UEA CIVIC CHARTER

4 OCTOBER 2023
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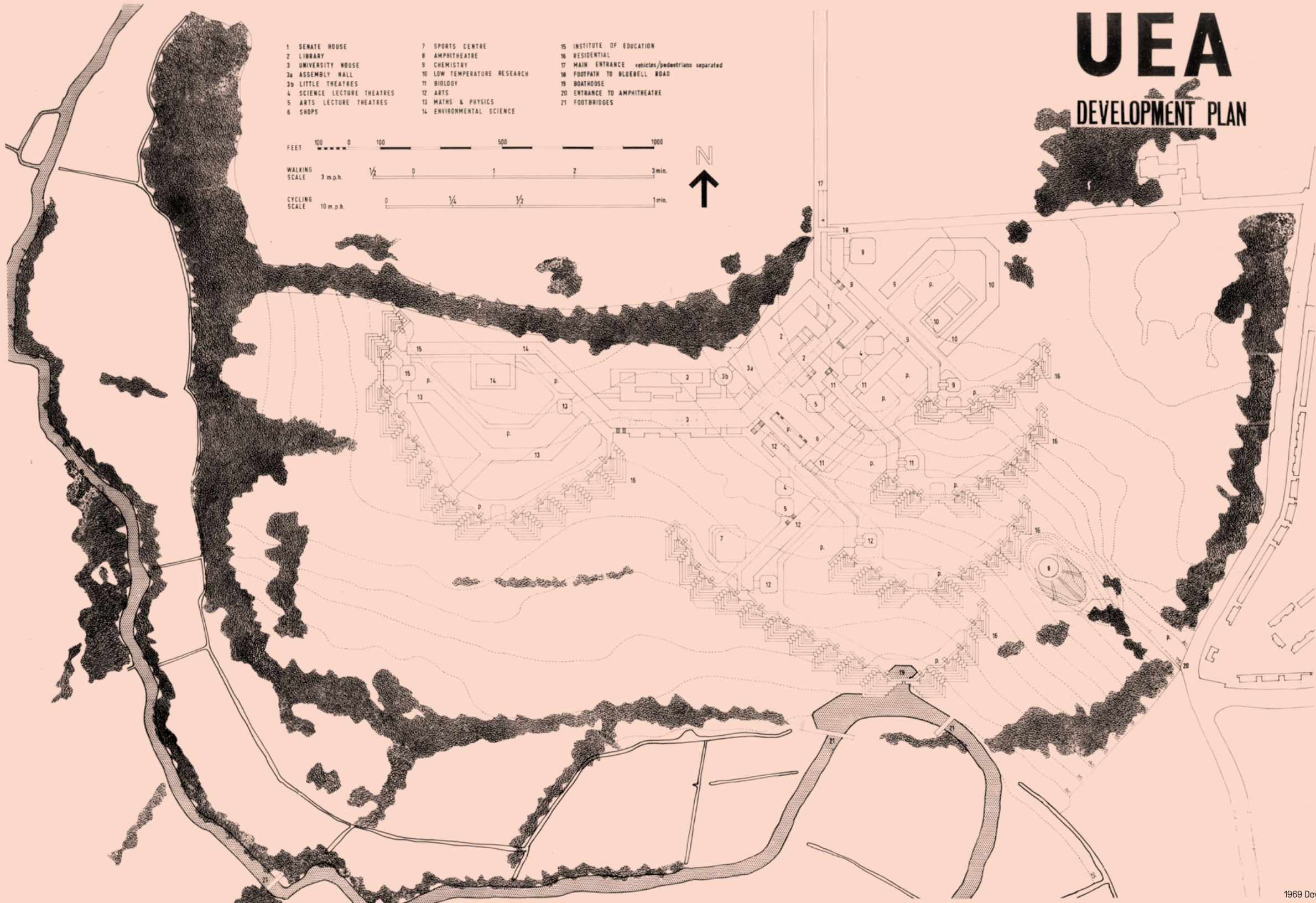
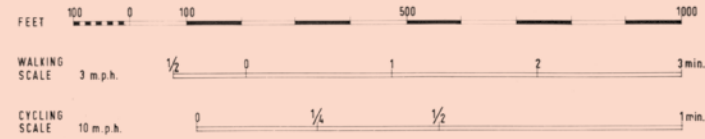
CIVIC UEA



UEA

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 SENATE HOUSE | 7 SPORTS CENTRE | 15 INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION |
| 2 LIBRARY | 8 AMPHITHEATRE | 16 RESIDENTIAL |
| 3 UNIVERSITY HOUSE | 9 CHEMISTRY | 17 MAIN ENTRANCE vehicles/pedestrians separated |
| 3a ASSEMBLY HALL | 10 LOW TEMPERATURE RESEARCH | 18 FOOTPATH TO BLUEBELL ROAD |
| 3b LITTLE THEATRES | 11 BIOLOGY | 19 BOATHOUSE |
| 4 SCIENCE LECTURE THEATRES | 12 ARTS | 20 ENTRANCE TO AMPHITHEATRE |
| 5 ARTS LECTURE THEATRES | 13 MATHS & PHYSICS | 21 FOOTBRIDGES |
| 6 SHOPS | 14 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE | |



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The Armorial Bearings and Supporters of
the
UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

By Professor David Maguire,
Vice Chancellor and President
of the University of East Anglia

FOREWORD

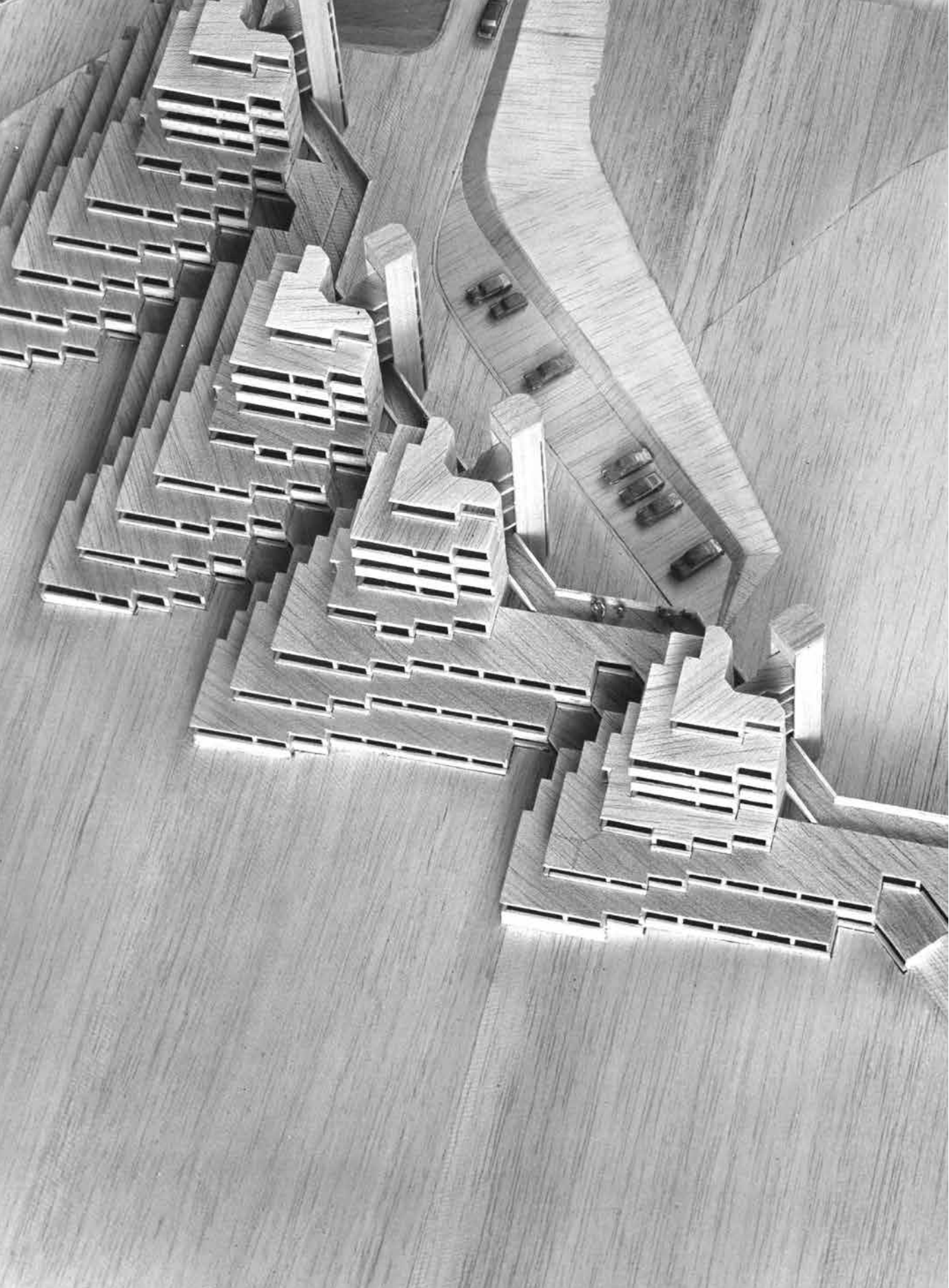
In 1963 the University of East Anglia was founded by the region, for the region, to be of the region. We have taken our regional and civic responsibilities very seriously throughout the last sixty years. This beautifully presented book commemorates our beginnings and reaffirms our civic purpose for the next sixty years to come. Like a guiding compass, UEA's civic purpose has always driven the University's endeavours, and now as we enter into the new Carolean era, our civic principles maintain their prominence and enjoy a renewed contemporary value.

As a recent newcomer to UEA, I have been impressed by the impact of its many flagship civic ventures. The Enterprise Centre, Sportspark, Sainsbury Centre, Law Clinic, Institute for Volunteering Research, and the Citizens Academy in the Faculty of Medicine and Health – these are just some of the remarkable examples of our longstanding commitment to the people of East Anglia.

I would like to thank all our partner organisations – some of which feature in this book – for reciprocating commitment to our civic mission. I am grateful to them for helping to direct our journey along the converging ley lines of community, inclusive prosperity and social justice. Together, we can reach deeper and further than the sum of our parts. The UEA Civic Charter has been authentically co-designed by the people in our region and will be front and centre of our renewed vision and strategy.

As we stretch our reach across the world through teaching, and through our extensive international research collaborations, UEA's Civic Charter will ground us and unite us. Ultimately, our civic roots and activities are all about the people who cultivate them and the people who benefit from them. I look forward to hearing the stories from both sets of people over the years ahead.

I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I have. We appreciate each and every signature marking support for this aspect of our work and invite you to join us in signing the charter.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We want to thank all participants of the Open Space events and Polis polls, Caucus meetings and other civic events. We would specifically like to acknowledge people who have contributed directly to internal processes, organisation of the events, writing of supporting statements and production of the books, including this one. In alphabetical order by surname:

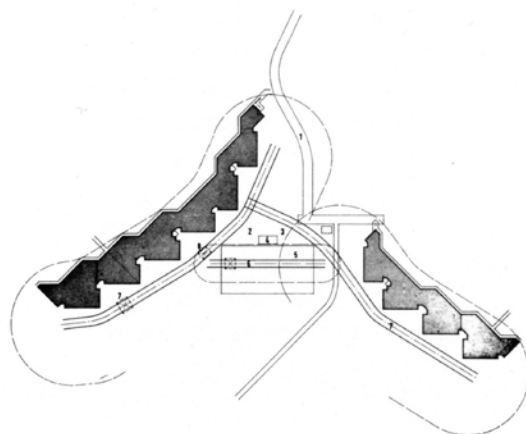
Larra Anderson, Sarah Barrow, James Bemment, Emily Benton, Roz Bird, Chris Blincoe, Andrew Braddock, Alexander Bratt, Laura Bowater, Greg Bowker, Konstantinos Chalvatzis, Paul Cracknell, Claire Cullens, Ciaran Cummings, Polly Curtis, Trevor Davies, Julie Fitzgerald, Bridget Gillies, Elma Glasgow, John Gordon, Jonathan Grant, India Green, Chris Gribble, Jurgen Grotz, Nicola Hancock, Tracey Hearn, Saskia Hervey, Sally Howes, Peggy Hughes, Sean Irving, Gennardy Ivanov, Gups Jagpal, Ellen Judson, Alfie Kirk, Helen Lewis, Hayley Mace, Polly Mackenzie, Jo Mackintosh, Caroline Mayers, Laura McGillivray, Louis Nixon, Tim Osborne, Maresa Padmore, Lisa Perkins, Emily Philips, John Pinnegar, Natalie Porter, Anne Reekie, Brian Reid, David Richardson, Ed Saperia, Julie Schofield, Eva Gordon Sharpe, Abby Simpson, Josh Smith, Sarah Steed, Will Stevens, Andrew Stronach, Katja Tait, Martin Taylor, Sean Thompson, Jess Turner, Skye Vincent, Emma Wakeling, Alan Waters, Chloe Webb, Charlotte Wheatland, Matty Woodcock and Nadine Zubair.

1969 Development Plan - Residences and Biological Sciences under construction.
UEA Archive.

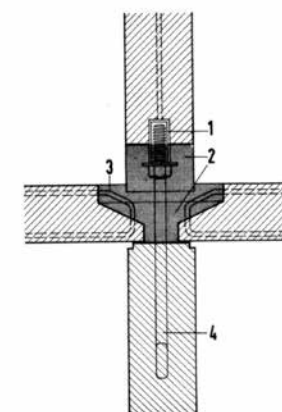


Residences and Biological Sciences under construction

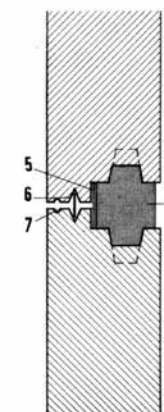
- 1 Access road
- 2 Steel compound
- 3 Aggregate compound
- 4 Concrete mixer
- 5 Factory area
- 6 Weitz G60 crane
- 7 Pingon P200A crane
- 3 Remote controlled trolley



- 1 Mild steel cup
- 2 In situ stitch
- 3 Liquid grout
- 4 Hooked end to levelling bolt
- 5 Felt DPC
- 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ neoprene baffle
- 7 Drip



Section through wall and floor connection



Plan of external vertical joint

Precasting and erection arrangements

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

[DRAFT]

Charter and Statutes

Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING!

WHEREAS an humble Petition has been presented to Us by Our right trusty and well beloved Cousin Harold Vincent Viscount Mackintosh of Halifax, Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding of the County of York, Doctor of Laws, Justice of the Peace and others the Members of the Executive Committee of the Promotion Committee of the University of East Anglia praying that We should constitute and found a University within Our City and County of Norwich for the advancement of knowledge, the diffusion and extension of arts, sciences and learning, the provision of liberal, professional and technological education and to grant a Charter with such provisions in that behalf as shall seem to Us right and suitable

AND WHEREAS We have taken the said Petition into Our Royal Consideration and are minded to accede thereto:

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE that We by virtue of Our Royal Prerogative and of Our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion have willed and ordained and by these Presents do for Us, Our Heirs and Successors will and ordain as follows:

1. The members for the time being of the Court the Council, the Senate, the Academic Advisory Committee (subject to the provisions of Article 14) the members of the academic staff, the Graduates of the University, the Graduate and Undergraduate students of the University, the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Treasurer (if appointed) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University for the time being, and all others who shall pursuant to this Our Charter and the Statutes of the University for the time being be Members of the University are hereby constituted and from henceforth for ever shall be one Body Politic and Corporate with perpetual succession and a Common Seal by the name and style of "The University of East Anglia" (in this Our Charter called "the University").

2. The object of the University shall be to advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research and to enable students to obtain the advantages of university education.

1

INTRODUCTION: THE CIVIC UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

This book is a celebration of UEA's founding and first sixty years, but it also marks the launch of our Civic Charter. It presents a view of the whole University from one thematic perspective – its civic role. It tells a story, but it is not the only one to tell. Universities are complex institutions: we are places of learning and education, of the production of new ideas and techniques, and the preservation of knowledge, art and culture – in the minds of scholars and in physical form in libraries, archives and galleries. We form a community in service to those goals. As a campus university, we are effectively a small, self-governing town with over 20,000 people coming in and out to study, work and, for around 4000 students, to live. Some are local, some national, and many come from all corners of the globe. They have been doing so for sixty years now.

We are inordinately proud of what we have achieved over that time, and some of what you read in these pages will pay tribute to those accomplishments. But this book is about something particular in the context of our wider institutional purpose: the extremely important role we play in East Anglia. We have taken time in the lead up to our 60th anniversary to reflect on the relationship we have with our geography and how to better serve it in the future.

At the heart of this book is the new Civic Charter. This is not a marketing document to be easily understood and forgotten leaving its readers with a positive feeling about the institution. Our Civic Charter is written to sit alongside our statutes – a democratic document that affirms the University's commitment to acting in partnership with the region, with key stakeholders and with willing citizens.

And those organisations and people are additionally invited to sign it and in doing so promise to support us, as we commit to supporting them. It is about reciprocity. This book gives context to what that means, how we got here, and how, we hope, our regional



UEA's size and scale in the region's economy mean it already wields considerable power...

Quotation from Civic UEA
Norwich Open Space event*



role will develop over the next sixty years.

'Civic' is a flexible word, narrowly defined as referring to 'the life of the city', but in policy terms it circulates with various meanings – sometimes 'social purpose', sometimes 'community engagement', sometimes 'regional economic development', and more recently 'levelling up' or 'pride in place'. As we write this, the civic agenda is gaining traction in higher education policy. It is intensifying as a priority, and that is likely to continue under this government or the next.

Universities have always been civic institutions. Early precursors existed to train both the clergy and the ruling classes in the ecclesiastical and moral education needed to guide the congregations they watched over and the people they governed. Clergy-in-training and later feudal lords, lawyers and medics would travel to these places to study under recognised masters. The first ever university charter was not a document about the management of learning in an institutional form, but a decree that protected the right of travelling scholars to Bologna, Italy, to study law, theology and the liberal arts. Thus, universities have always been both local, civic actors *and* orientated to international debate and exchange. For nearly 1000 years in Europe, they have been producing new ideas, training students and distributing knowledge both materially in the publication of books and papers and in human shape through the safe harbour offered to people who come to study and engage in critical debate.

As economies expanded over time, the number of groups who needed access to higher knowledge for the successful administration of society did too. This was the principle behind the founding of the Red Brick universities – training a new professional class for an industrialised world. The necessity for a more broadly educated population was also justification for the expansion of universities in the early 1960s, into regions such as Sussex, York and – of course – East Anglia. A modern economy demanded humanities and sciences, law and medicine, business and engineering, the arts and accountancy. Indeed, increasingly complex economies need an increasingly diverse set of skills and expertise to draw from in their labour pools.

Importantly, universities don't just have an economic function, they have also always played a profoundly important role in giving space and shape to addressing social and cultural needs and to the germination of new possibilities, technology and norms. They are democratic, empowering institutions with long traditions of self-governance and a vital role in bolstering national democracies through the cultivation of a better-informed citizenry with subsequently more understanding and agency for participation in public life. They are intrinsically international collective entities. As people



People's values have realigned post pandemic, with a greater importance placed on work/ life balance, so organisations need ... an altered value structure

Ipswich event



move to learn from each other and study together, universities bind people together through a shared passion for advancing knowledge beyond national loyalties or geographical rivalries making collective human understanding deeper and our world more collaborative. Universities are socially, culturally and economically important: they are special kinds of institution, and they change to meet the needs and challenges of their times.



In 2019, the Civic University Commission, established by Lord Kerslake, former Head of the Civil Service, produced its report arguing that the civic role of universities should be the 'third pillar' of higher education: that universities should give their social purpose equal weight to research and teaching. This report led to the establishment of the Civic University Network hosted by Sheffield Hallam University. UEA joined this network in 2020. It requires members to produce a Civic University Agreement, setting out a strategy for their locale and co-authored with other significant institutions in their region – often other universities, large businesses, and local authorities.

This responsibility to produce a document committing to the civic agenda is something that universities have embraced with appropriate differences depending on the local context. For some, it has meant a set of targets agreed between local authorities and universities around things like the participation of minority groups in education or action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Often procurement is a big focus, with large organisations coming together to make a positive impact in their locality by leveraging purchasing power with the companies that provide them with goods and services. It might otherwise mean integration with the devolved authority of a mayoral office on skills training, or coordination between two or more large universities in a city so they can collaborate more effectively.

At UEA our situation is distinct. We are a founding partner of the Norwich Research Park, together with four co-located research institutes and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital; collectively making scientific and clinical breakthroughs, and addressing local and global climate, food and health challenges. We have a strong, and strengthening, relationship with our sister institution in the city, Norwich University of the Arts, with whom we collaborate on creative and cultural projects. We have strong working

relationships with the city and county councils and have a long history of partnering closely with other regional stakeholders, such as BT, Norwich City Football Club, Adnams, Centre of Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Norfolk Community Foundation. Before our campus opened its doors, UEA first opened an office in the city itself, in the grounds of Norwich Cathedral. Indeed, these ten key organisations are represented in this book as founding signatories and as such are bound together, literally and figuratively, through a deep commitment to the region in a shared testament to the richness of East Anglian life and cultures.

But the statements of these ten partners are the tip of an iceberg: there is a groundswell of civic activity across the University represented in many different sorts of partnerships and ways of working with organisations and citizens. Sometimes this is reflected explicitly in our strategy or celebrated through our Innovation & Impact, and Engagement Awards, but often it is work that flies under the radar, implicit – simply assumed to be part of what we do.

To reflect this strength and diversity of activity, we wanted to produce a Civic University Agreement that reflected our circumstances; one born of local demand in a geography where we make a unique contribution to learning, culture and the economy. We wanted our partners, big and small, the people of the region whose ancestors campaigned for our creation, to be able to have a voice in its formation and to be able to sign it. We wanted our Civic University Agreement to be a kind of living document, one that might evolve and change as our regional relationships change, develop and grow, and one that could be signed by anyone who wanted to do so at any time. Now or in decades to come.

So this book explains what we did, why we did it, and how our Civic Charter marks a new strategic focus on civic activity in all its forms. The next chapter gives a brief overview of our history to this point, chapters thereafter explain the values that informed the writing of the Charter and the process of its creation. Following that is the Charter itself alongside ten partner statements from key regional organisations and we are deeply appreciative of this demonstration of shared commitment. We then offer some suggestions for what this civic orientation means for the future. We give the final words of the book proper to an alumnus, Cai Draper, whose poem commissioned for the opening ceremony of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival in 2023 is reproduced here in full. We are sure you will be able to sense the resonances.

The end of the book contains two appendices, presenting the

grass-roots evidence base from which we drafted the Charter text. The first is the outputs of a series of discursive events we conducted; the second a summary of online platform responses run by our partner, Demos, the leading civic participation think tank in the UK. It is our intention that you should be able to read the contributory voices of the region in largely unmediated form and see the enthusiasm for this programme as well as gain a sense of the challenges we face. We are hugely grateful to everyone who participated.

Aerial view of Campus. UEA Digital Asset Library REF 16616.



Most importantly, we hope you enjoy this book and that you find it interesting, enlightening, and provocative. It is beautifully produced by the UEA Publishing Project, and we thank them for their energy and inspiration in creating a commemorative artefact of our journey to create this Civic Charter and, in doing so, provide an important point of reference for years to come.

We also hope that you read the Charter itself carefully, think about how it reflects the region we all care deeply about, and, if you feel so inclined, sign up to it too, helping us carry on this journey with a commitment to support and nurture UEA's civic role.



Left – Vice-Chancellor Frank Thistlethwaite topping off the Library, 13 Feb 1968. ©EDP. UEA Image Archive.

Right – Sainsbury Centre under construction, 1970s. UEA Image Archive.





2

UEA'S CIVIC ORIGINS

17



A truly civic university ensures that it is representing what's right, not only for its immediate community, but at regional, national and global levels'

Ipswich event



Norwich is an ancient city, nestled in a rural and agricultural region, which grew to become very prosperous in the Middle Ages and into the largest and wealthiest city outside of London. Its wealth was built on a thriving textile trade enabled via river and sea networks and established it as a major regional metropolitan centre. Although universities had been established at Oxford and Cambridge, there was little appetite then to establish more such institutions in England. The rich and distinctive civic and cultural traditions of East Anglia, and Norwich's centrality within that, were, from the 16th century onwards, fed instead by waves of protestant immigrants welcomed from the Low Countries, the so-called "strangers". Thus, Norwich became an intellectual home for religious dissent and radical politics as well as an economic hub with strong links to the continent; one that created great wealth to support a vibrant culture. It is said that Norwich has a pub for every day of the week and a church for every Sunday; perhaps fitting testament to the city's openness to diverse beliefs and attendant ability to sustain ample venues for public debate of civic matters.

By the Victorian age things had changed. Norwich was on the wrong side of the country to participate in the economic boom caused by the transatlantic slave trade. The city missed out on the Red Brick expansion of universities in the late 1880s, as it was by then considered too small in comparison to the rising populations of the mainly Northern cities and their need to develop more technical workforces to feed rapid industrialisation. Instead, the city's higher skills needs were served by the Norfolk School of Design, which continues today as Norwich University of the Arts, one of the Great British Art Schools. While Norwich had established strengths in leather and shoe making, brewing, and finance, and while Colman's mustard and A.J. Caley's chocolate factories were also thriving, there had also been a significant decline in the traditional wool and textile industries that had once made the city so prosperous.



Norwich also lacked proximity to the coal and minerals that were by then fuelling greater industrial development elsewhere.

Then, in the late 1940s – after a false start in the 1920s – a movement for a university in Norwich began to take hold. Too far from the nearest civic universities, Leicester and Nottingham, and with the possibility of being served by a national university like Cambridge infeasible, the region was ready to campaign instead for a “University of Norwich”. This finally gained sufficient traction during the 1960s expansion of higher education as part of a group of new institutions later known collectively as the Plate Glass universities. Prominent civic and business organisations and their leaders, together with the citizens of Norwich and Norfolk, came together to fundraise the required £1.5 million (equivalent to approximately £35 million today). Instrumental among those early benefactors was Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk, Sir Edmund Bacon, Bt. Sir Edmund, who would become first Pro Chancellor (and thereby Chairman of the Council), was a fierce advocate for an academic institution based in Norwich and his successor as Lord-Lieutenant, Sir Timothy Colman, headed up the original fundraising initiative. Support from the Lieutenancy continues today through the present Lord-Lieutenant, Lady Dannatt, whose father was also one of the original benefactors. The financial target was a stretch, however, and as a result campaigning reached into Suffolk, shifting the emphasis from a University of Norwich to what we now know as the University of East Anglia. Offices opened in 1961 in Cathedral Close, and the University’s Royal Charter was approved



Strategic priorities should include financial sustainability, academic excellence and local empowerment

Great Yarmouth event



in 1963, then sealed in March 1964, with the overarching purpose “to advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research.” The University had a coat of arms devised, which incorporated the motto “Do Different”, chosen by UEA’s first Vice Chancellor, Professor Frank Thistlethwaite.

Court was established as a regional sounding board and was formed as a large body of notable figures in East Anglia who wished the University well and in recognition of their tremendous support in creating a university of the region and for the region. It of course still meets annually to receive the Vice Chancellor’s report and it is therefore the fitting place to be formally launching this Civic Charter, sixty years on.

The research of UEA and our partner institutes on the Norwich Research Park has flourished over those decades and has achieved global impact. UEA is ranked in the Top 50 universities in the world for research citations and is a Top 20 university in the UK for research quality and impact. Our research drives change around the world. Our teaching also shapes that world, and our students go on to become engineers, social workers, scientists, doctors, nurses, editors, writers, publishers, lawyers and teachers.

Beyond our research and teaching, we also make a real economic, social, and cultural difference to our communities. With a turnover of over £300 million, our value to the regional economy is around £600 million a year, and we have supported a range of new businesses through our Enterprise and Low Carbon Innovation Funds. We work to raise the aspirations of school children in the most deprived parts of Norfolk and Suffolk. We also enrich the cultural and sporting lives of our communities: UEA helped to establish Norwich as England’s first UNESCO City of Literature and the home of the National Centre for Writing. We harbour the cultural treasure that is the Sainsbury Centre, which opened its doors in 1978 after Sir Norman Foster was commissioned by Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury to create an iconic building to house one of the most sought after, yet non-conformist, art collections in the world. Their collection aims to inspire and influence the next generation of thinkers and leaders, fusing well with UEA’s ethos to make universities more accessible, blur the boundaries between disciplines, and challenge the status quo.

UEA is also highly regarded for its live performances having hosted nearly 3000 gigs, as well as concerts from our own choirs and symphony orchestra. We hold a world-famous Literary Festival attracting internationally renowned writers of all genres. Furthermore, funded by the National Lottery and Sport England, UEA’s Sportspark opened in 2000. Recognised as one of the best

Monogram of the Norfolk Lieutenancy.

Frank Thistlethwaite, Queen Elizabeth II, and Denys Lasdun. Royal Visit – 1968. UEA Archive.

1974 Triennial Festival, Retirement of Sir Edmund Bacon, Bt. as Chairman. From left to right: Mr Gordan G. Tilsley, Sir Timothy Colman and Sir Edmund Bacon, Bt. UEA Archive.

sporting facilities of its kind in the UK, it boasts an Olympic-sized swimming pool, climbing wall and many other world-class facilities. With a wide-ranging programme of activities, attracting over 1.3 million visits per year, the Sportspark underpins UEA's Active Campus Campaign, encouraging activities with an emphasis on participation, fun, and sports for all.

UEA was quick to respond to regional needs, and share its national and international expertise, as the COVID-19 pandemic first swept the UK, bringing our skills and knowledge to bear on practical projects like making face visors and sanitiser for local health and social care organisations. Our staff also helped to develop COVID-19 testing techniques and processes, and our researchers focused on how to understand the impacts of the pandemic on the elderly and the effects of lockdown on general behaviour, health and carbon dioxide emissions.

This experience strengthened our resolve to invest in projects and activities that bring the University ever closer to our regional partners and citizens. We pledged to develop a Civic Charter in 2020, to listen to the needs of different communities, organisations and people across East Anglia; to continue to forge ever closer business links building on the success of specific initiatives like Gateway to Growth and Productivity East; and to continue to invest in our three strategic interdisciplinary research themes – ClimateUEA, CreativeUEA and HealthUEA – bringing together a wide range of expertise and perspectives to address key local, national and global challenges. We also recognise that, in an increasingly globalised world, our role is to ensure that we fly the flag for the region with our international collaborators and ensure they understand how special Norwich and East Anglia are; how much together we can offer the world.



3

A CHARTER OF/FOR MANY VOICES

UEA's greatest strengths as a university have tended to be bottom-up, from the passion and creativity within our academic, professional services and partner communities. Drawing on a tradition of interdisciplinarity, of openness to new ideas and innovative thinking, of high ambitions and an ability to outperform longer-established universities, we were keen to embrace these values and this spirit in the co-creation of UEA's Civic Charter. As we approached the University's 60th anniversary, we were further keen to open a broad discussion on what being 'civic' could mean for the next sixty years, as the needs and aspirations of our region and its people change, and we anticipate new challenges and opportunities ahead.

In co-creating our Civic Charter we also wanted to draw on the independent spirit of our region. We wanted to follow UEA's motto to *do different*; to not simply follow other universities' approaches. We wanted to capture the spirit of East Anglia and Norwich as a city proud of its independent thought. We wanted to forge our own path.

To reimagine our purpose and realise our potential as a leading civic university in East Anglia, we needed first to understand what this place *thinks of us* and what its people think *we should be*. For this, and as a further nod to Norwich's own political history and our institution's inclinations, we drew inspiration from grassroots processes and principles – notably community organising and the participatory democracy movement.

Community organising is a form of community mobilisation that emerged during the Great Depression in the USA. Its most famous practitioner is US President Barack Obama, whose introduction to politics came through years working as a community organiser in deprived areas of Chicago. It has three main principles relevant to how we defined our approach: 1. *Go to people where they are*, literally and metaphorically; 2. *Listening*, is the foundation of community organising; 3. *Trust*, is the currency for successful community action.



We need better
two-way interfaces
between community
groups and the
University

Ipswich event



We also looked to examples of how participatory methods have been used to write significant documents. We were especially inspired by the way the Icelandic people attempted to rewrite their constitution in 2011. Roughly following their model, we developed a process that would be open, engaged and legitimate. Iceland has a smaller but comparable population to East Anglia, albeit with a territory closer in size to England overall than our own geographic remit. There they held deliberative meetings to set priorities for the country to then enshrine in law. This would be carried through by a smaller group who would take the outcomes of those discussions and turn them into a document that would become the new constitution. A referendum was held on the constitution produced which passed with a strong majority. Although it was ultimately rejected by the government at the time and never made it into law, the process itself is nevertheless a wonderful template for democratic participation in producing foundational civic texts.

The Square. UEA Digital Asset Library REF 22023.



UEA Civic Charter

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

Climate event

As a university, we are not the same as a state, but with these examples there was much to draw on. Participation was key, and so was the principle that participants should be empowered as much as possible to set the agenda for any discussion. They should decide what this nebulous term ‘civic’ could mean, and that would then determine what we reflected in the Civic Charter.

To that end we deployed a creative technique for public meetings, originating in an alternative management practice, called Open Space. Also with an impressive history, this methodology has been used widely all over the world. It was used to bridge community divides between Palestinians and Israelis around the Oslo Peace Process. It was used by Boeing to redesign the doors to their aircraft. It is structured to surface the authentic voices of communities.

The ethos of this method is a simple yet important one – to conduct a meeting that allows every voice to speak, giving them all equal weight. It then legitimates the proceedings by producing an authentically co-created book documenting the ideas, interests and concerns of all participants. Our use of Open Space fits community organising principles within a wider structure inspired by the Icelandic example. It goes to people where they are, it listens to them without first asking them to fit to our agenda, and it demonstrates our trust in them by producing a close analogue to what was said and publishing that publicly as a book.

This is our foundation for a genuinely community-led Civic University process. This matters to us because as a genuinely democratic exercise it speaks to our regional traditions. Through this process, our team have tapped into cutting-edge discourse and practice in community-university interactions – it is a research innovation conducted as a community engagement project in keeping with what the spirit of a university should be; it creates new skills, new methods, new knowledge. It empowers its participants.

We held six of these public Open Space meetings during 2021–2022: three in Norwich city centre, and one each on the UEA campus, in Ipswich and in Great Yarmouth. While three had a place-based focus (Norwich, Great Yarmouth and UEA campus), three had a sectoral focus: business and industry in Ipswich, culture and creative in partnership with the National Centre for Writing in Norwich, and the final event in Norwich on climate and environmental issues. The thematic events aligned with the University’s research and innovation strategy and the launch of the first two interdisciplinary research themes, drawing on their broad academic communities and rich networks of regional partners and citizens.

The question that framed each Open Space meeting was broadly ‘*what could a civic university in this region mean for you?*’. We used

A Charter Of/For Many Voices

“
Can we imagine a collaborative effort, a sharing of ideas and information between different sectors with the university at the centre?
”

Norwich event

the term ‘civic’ but it was presented as a *tabula rasa* – a clean slate, absent of preconceived ideas or goals. In essence, its initial nebulousness was a virtue; whoever came to these meetings would set their own agenda and, importantly, would do so within their own definition of ‘civic’. Across the six events, 350 people attended, including colleagues and students from UEA, community groups, local politicians, curious residents and some of our biggest regional businesses.

An experienced facilitator from our CivicUEA team led these half-day meetings. Participants were asked to sit in a circle, and the facilitator walked around the centre of that circle explaining the premise of Open Space and what they were being asked to do. In the circle, we are all equals. Participants are encouraged only to use their name, so as not to infer hierarchy with the use of professional titles. Every person has the same right to speak about their ideas and feelings, relating to the guiding question. Participants are welcomed to step into the centre of the circle and share their reflections, ideas or critiques. These then formulate the agenda for the remainder of the meeting, as each idea or comment becomes a focal point for smaller group discussions. All the information is captured in the books (these can be found in the appendices).

We understood that the Open Space method may be challenging for some people to attend. It is time-intensive for participants, which can create barriers for participation. To address this, we conducted the first three events on the weekend to avoid work clashes and provided childcare, entertainment, and refreshments. We also introduced an online survey tool, called Polis. This new platform turns traditional polling on its head, because, like Open Space’s participant-led agenda setting, Polis offers a blank slate and asks participants to offer up statements that they believe address the theme of the discussion, allowing others to vote on them. Using this method enabled us to reach more people, to identify clusters of shared opinion and to generate consensus. Polis ran in parallel to our Great Yarmouth and Campus events and was run separately as part of our activities at the 2022 Royal Norfolk Show. Over three week-long digital discussions we had 15,000 interactions (detailed in the appendices).

This is our evidence base. The six Open Space meetings plus the Polis polling comprise the material that underpins the UEA Civic Charter. Distilling this body of information was a challenge, but we are confident that the emergent document, the Charter produced to launch at our 60th Anniversary celebrations, is robust and inclusive, and can be read as specifically and distinctively UEA’s. It applies to us as an institution and allows us to clearly understand

our place here in the region of East Anglia: a civic university with global reach.

The Civic Charter is the result of two year’s work, and critically our answer to UEA’s commitment to produce a Civic University Agreement. At the heart of the Charter are a set of promises and commitments. Commitments from UEA. Promises from external stakeholders. This is a public statement of our civic ethos and values, renewed for our 60th year, to be a living document that can be signed at any time, now or in the future, by individuals or organisations. When an organisation signs, they are invited to co-author a public statement of collaboration, describing how *our* shared values, civic missions and priorities align. We are humbled to present the first ten co-authored statements, chosen to represent a range of our regional partnerships and to provide a guideline for others to follow and create their own statements when they sign up to be part of UEA’s and the region’s ongoing civic renewal.

1969 Development Plan, Residences. UEA Archive.



South View of a single block of Residences



4

THE UEA CIVIC CHARTER

Of the Region, for the World;
of the World, for the Region

It is sixty years since the Queen's Seal was affixed to UEA's Royal Charter by Her Majesty Elizabeth II, giving us permission to act as a university in all its functions. Since that time, UEA has become an essential part of East Anglia's fabric: a flourishing institution through which the region has led the world. This Civic Charter reflects both on that last sixty years and writes a promise for the next sixty, and as the original Charter incorporated the ambition of people in the region to have a higher education institution in the City of Norwich, so this Civic Charter is the result of the sensibilities and aspirations of their descendants, literal and figurative, offered in open and honest fashion, for the future role of UEA as a civic institution with fundamental responsibility to its communities.



- 1 In 1963 a university was founded by the region, for the region, to be of the region. Sixty years on, The University of East Anglia has become a global destination for diverse and talented people to join and contribute to a community generating transformative knowledge that resonates to every corner of the Earth. Where we excel, we lead. Where we live, we nurture talent and possibility. And where we see need for a university to act, we rise to meet those challenges. We bring the world to East Anglia and East Anglia to the world, never losing sight of our responsibility to the people and to the place we call home.
- 2 East Anglia sits proudly on England's furthest edge – a land of both tradition and possibility. Its peripherality means it is often overlooked but East Anglia's geography is also a great strength, fortifying an independence of spirit that draws inspiration from its expansive landscapes. Agricultural heartlands hug ancient cities and towns, breath-taking coasts host an offshore industry capable of sustainably providing much of England's power in ports that were once home to the richest of our fisheries. It is a place of particularity and distinction, with a storied history of innovation and migration. Yet it is also a place acutely threatened by an ongoing Earth crisis; rising sea levels, threatened biodiversity and degrading soils. East Anglia is home to areas of desperate inequality and increasing calls for social justice. Its challenges straddle a town and country divide, combining cultural differences, transport links and differing social and economic demands. It is a place where people choose to live, to raise families and retire to. Young people flock to our cities and towns providing energy, vibrancy and ambition, while an ageing rural population offers a deep connection to the land and its use. Since the Middle Ages, a tradition of artisanal businesses and experimental entrepreneurialism has flourished. In modern times, digital technologies mean there is untapped potential to produce national companies and international brands. It is a milieu that inspires creativity: home of England's first UNESCO City of Literature, of great art and artists, outstanding festivals and culture.
- 3 UEA reflects, strengthens and serves the needs of our geography in all its complexity. It is no accident that in a region threatened by a changing climate, we are a global centre for its research. Surrounded by productive farmland, the University and the Norwich Research Park lead the world in food technology and soil science. Medical and health researchers transform the quality of life in our communities, providing an expert workforce at the cutting edge

of human knowledge. We inspire global leaders in partnership with local companies. And in Norwich, the City of Stories, our methods in training creative writers have become the gold standard in teaching everywhere.

- 4 Our excellence in these fields is not from a vain quest for glory, but is rooted in our care for the region, its people, and our profound connection to its needs and ambitions. Physically the University is part of its landscape, nestled in parkland, in the only UK city situated in a National Park: our campus is typical of Norfolk's pastoral beauty. We host the county's most significant collection of art and artefacts in the Sainsbury Centre which sprawls across campus through the sculpture trail, while annually welcoming thousands of school children, presenting the world's artistic wonders to inspire young minds. Leading the field in our understanding of landscape and place, our historians and archaeologists draw on the wealth of a region scattered with archaeological and heritage sites from the dawn of humanity to the modern era.
- 5 East Anglia is a place of unique combinations, and at the centre of our scholarly practice is the breaking down of silos, both social and intellectual, within the University and beyond. We represent all major disciplines, but the interdisciplinarity at the heart of UEA's culture is exactly what is needed to meet the complexity of challenges that span global to local. Whether the challenge requires climate scientists working together with poets, archaeologists with coastal engineers, or pan-University teams coming together for a good economy: UEA is a space for convening the right partnerships to solve complex problems. Our intrinsic curiosity sometimes necessitates difficult conversations – we agitate to make positive change.
- 6 Over the last sixty years, the University has changed the face of the city and the region in which it sits. UEA brings a great diversity of ideas to its home, but also a diversity of people from all backgrounds, nationalities, religions, and ethnicities. We welcome international students as our own, bringing new voices and new experiences to our seminars and to our city streets. We are proud to be a University of Sanctuary, demonstrating our openness and commitment to welcoming others into our family. Many of our alumni choose to stay here afterwards contributing to the skills and knowledge the region can draw on, but many also choose to live elsewhere and create global networks with East Anglia at their heart.

7 COMMITMENTS

a. UNIVERSITY: we will...

- i. Listen to the voices of the people of East Anglia so that we can fully understand our evolving purpose in this region;
- ii. Nurture our whole community: students, staff, alumni and regional citizens;
- iii. Build bridges that connect the life of the University with wider society: opening our campus to all;
- iv. Orientate ourselves to regional strengths and needs, including the need for a broad-based university excelling at both teaching and research;
- v. Convene world-leading teams to meet complex challenges, offering our expertise to address common problems in the region and beyond;
- vi. Work in partnership by preference, recognising that there is important knowledge, trained and tacit, across the region that can contribute to shared ambitions;
- vii. Unlock the potential for global impact and innovation through our research and our partnership work with industry, state and community: we are a broker of new ideas, and put East Anglia on the map;
- viii. Always support, sustain and celebrate the achievements of our partners, our students, and our staff.

b. SIGNATORIES: we will...

- i. Maintain an honest dialogue with UEA, formally and informally, about the type of institution and activities we want from a civic university;
- ii. Appreciate the variety and diversity of the institution: a complex of different ideas, practices, peoples and priorities;
- iii. Look to UEA to collaborate: meet us with trust and openness, as we do the same;
- iv. Support UEA's right to open inquiry: the search for truth is a process not an outcome, we can never exhaust the possibility of enquiry and we must always be open to new evidence and the emergence of new perspectives;
- v. Meet our ambition for the region, to celebrate East Anglian lives and cultures and UEA's role in that.

5

FOUNDING
ORGANISATIONAL
SIGNATORIES

ADNAMS

34

Adnams is proud to be a signatory to the UEA's Civic Charter and a proponent of its future ambitions for the institution and for East Anglia.

We have been established in the region for 150 years and, like the University, our own long-term vision is one of people, planet and shared prosperity. We both bring people together, help start conversations, thrive on collaboration and encourage access for all. We want everybody who encounters us to be enriched by that experience.

Adnams also wants to be known for doing the right thing, for fair dealing, and for being an exemplar in its field, with our achievements acknowledged beyond our own industry. Our independence has allowed us to be innovative and do things our own way, but we remain committed to a sustainable future; one in which progress is balanced with care, thought and consideration for our environment and our communities.

We have supported the University at events, exhibitions at the Sainsbury Centre, and guest lectures. We have also worked on important projects together such as creating hand sanitiser for hospitals and key workers during the pandemic. Our social and environmental guiding principles align and continuing to forge strong links with our local communities will help us reach our goals together.



BT

35

BT's purpose is to connect for good, using the power of communications to make a better world. We see that these values align strongly with those of the University. Our R&D HQ, Adastral Park, is located in East Anglia and is an internationally significant site for the development of communications technology. Like the University, we are committed to driving sustainable growth in the East of England.

We have a history of collaboration with the University, which we will continue to grow.

Research partnerships – delivering excellent and transformative research, creating and transferring new knowledge, opportunities, innovations and impact.

People and talent – enhancing the talent pipeline for our regional and national economy, ensuring our regional workforce is continuously fit for the future.

Regional growth ambition – building thriving ecosystems contributing to regional growth, co-developing new business models that support agile innovation, to offer new opportunities for the development of knowledge, products and services.

Influencing policy – working with national and local government to influence policy makers in support of responsible innovation, new legislation and the development of regional supply chains.

BT is proud to be a signatory to the UEA's Civic Charter and a proponent of its future ambitions for the institution and for East Anglia.



CEFAS

36

The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) are proud to endorse UEA's Civic Charter and its aspiration to "Meet our ambition for the region, to celebrate East Anglian lives and cultures".

Cefas is a government science agency, focused on achieving a sustainable future for our rivers, seas and the ocean. We have been located in Lowestoft, Suffolk since 1902 and have enjoyed a strong association with the University of East Anglia for 60 years, becoming an 'affiliated institute' in 1965. Successive generations of Cefas staff have studied at UEA and over twenty Cefas staff are currently co-affiliated as Honorary Lecturers, regularly providing training and instruction to UEA students. In 2008 Cefas and UEA formalised their relationship through a new Strategic Alliance Agreement and founded a joint lectureship in the School of Environmental Sciences. In 2016 we jointly launched the Collaborative Centre for Sustainable Use of the Seas (CCSUS).

Cefas remains one of the largest employers of graduate scientists in East Anglia and is committed to our long-standing partnership with UEA. In 2022 Cefas refreshed its approach to external engagement, with key pillars focussed around national and community engagement, as well as supporting local education establishments. Commitments include communicating our science impact and its social value to improve 'ocean literacy'; building cohesive multi-sector partnerships; and inspiring a new generation of aquatic scientists. Our ambitions for the East Anglian region closely align with those in the 60th Anniversary Civic Charter.



NORFOLK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

37

The parallel history between the Norfolk Community Foundation and University of East Anglia is an inspiring testament to the power of local action and community engagement. The mission to found the University 60 years ago was driven by local people with energy and ambition – an ethos that has remained ever since. Norfolk Community Foundation, too, was born from the aspirations of local people determined to invest in local communities to improve the lives of individuals. Grounded in Norfolk, we act locally but think globally.

We are building powerful engines for good that radiate beyond our county and inspire positive change in the world. It is rare for organisations so purposefully local to be radically transformational and innovative, but by incubating ideas and building pride in place, we nurture talent and raise aspirations to 'do different'. Adopting interdisciplinary approaches means we unpick the pressing questions of today and create our own rulebook to address them. Global Development MA students have enhanced our organisation through research, with UEA alumni forming a core part of our team.

By embracing the unique strengths and perspectives of our community, not only does Norfolk shine brighter, but so does the world.



NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

38

Norfolk County Council is committed to working with the University of East Anglia through its Civic Charter and towards our county's common goals and ambitions – promoting sustainable economic growth, protecting the environment, and supporting strong, engaged communities.

In recognition of our precious natural assets and coastline, the distinctive character of our communities, the culture and history of our city and towns, we are determined to build on our strengths; seizing the opportunities of tomorrow, equipping our people with the skills they need for the jobs of the future, and helping to solve the problems of today. We are also uniquely placed to contribute solutions to the key issues of food and energy security.

Building on our Health & Social Partnership and our longstanding collaborations through the Norfolk Museum Service, we are excited to work even more closely with UEA: together we can build on Norfolk's strong track record of research and innovation, particularly in agri-biotech, heritage, healthy ageing, alternative sources of energy and climate change. We want Norfolk to become a place where value is created, recognised and held within the county.

We are confident that together we can unlock the potential of all who live in Norfolk.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL

39

Norwich Cathedral is delighted to partner with the UEA in being a signatory to its Civic Charter. We are proud that the founding stages of the University's life began in offices in the Cathedral Close in 1961. Today Cathedral and University continue to hold many aspirations in common, not least as we seek to be a force for good in the life of the city, county and region.

From its foundation in 1096, Norwich Cathedral has been a place where the pursuit of truth and faith has been sustained by a community of learning, service and hospitality. As a home for scholarship and study, including one of the oldest libraries in Norfolk, it has been a cradle of education for over 900 years.

These objectives remain at the heart of the Cathedral's life today. They are embodied in the work we do with the thousands of school children who visit each year; in introducing our many visitors to the history, art and culture associated with the Cathedral; by hosting bold and thought-provoking exhibitions and events of national standing; by being a civic space that gathers people together to address contemporary concerns; and in the continuing role of the Cathedral as an inspiring setting for worship, learning and hospitality. With the University, we seek to play our part in enabling the mutual flourishing of people and planet.

We look forward to the partnership between Cathedral and University growing and deepening in the years ahead.

NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

40

Norwich City Council is deeply committed to fairness and opportunity for all its residents. And we are unashamedly ambitious for Norwich.

We will continue to play our part in ensuring the city has a thriving economy and good quality housing for all, while also tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies and society's inequalities.

But realising these aspirations is not something Norwich City Council can do alone. It requires a whole-city effort – with key city partners acting as linchpins to help galvanise the city's people, businesses and institutions.

The UEA and Norwich City Council collaborate regularly as partners, with our shared goals and values helping to shape the 2040 City Vision and launch the Norwich Good Economy Commission.

More recently, the installation of a climate mural in City Hall's council chamber, based on the UEA's leading climate science, showcased the best of Norwich's academic and arts traditions to highlight the urgency of the climate challenge.

As proud signatories to the UEA's Civic Charter, we reaffirm our joint commitment to delivering opportunity and prosperity for the people and communities of Norwich.



NORWICH CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

41

Norwich City Football Club has an infinite purpose to make our football club and community better today than it was yesterday. Much like the University of East Anglia, the Club is deeply rooted into the cultural heart of East Anglia, but has a reputation which exceeds far beyond its borders. We share the common purpose of promoting opportunity for our people, and have established life-long bonds with our communities.

This unique affinity shared by the Club and University is instrumental in upholding the city's reputation of being a place that cares, with the Club's 'Home for Everyone' ethos being mirrored by the University, as it attracts a global community to Norwich. This mutual goal, to enrich the lives of those encountered, holds a particular focus on inspiring and supporting the mental health and inclusion of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, with sport often the universal means used to engage.

Such is the diversity of operations of both institutions, the number of joint projects is extensive. On a sporting front, the appointment of a dual-role Women's Head Coach, the first in our collective history, is a seminal moment in our flourishing partnership. It is this partnership which will help shape the future of our city, as we work together to uphold our values, create opportunities and lead our future. Norwich City Football Club is proud to be a signatory to the UEA's Civic Charter, sharing a commitment to the future ambitions and prosperity for the people and communities of Norwich.



NORWICH RESEARCH PARK

42

UEA was a founding member of the Norwich Research Park in 1992, bringing together UEA, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and a unique cluster of internationally renowned institutes: John Innes Centre, Quadram Institute, Earlham Institute and The Sainsbury Laboratory; funded by the John Innes Foundation, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Today, with over 40 businesses co-located on the Norwich Research Park, we are home to one of Europe's largest single-site concentrations of research and innovation in microbiology, genomics, food and health.

Our researchers are contributing solutions to pressing global challenges including: ensuring there is enough food for our growing population, preventing and treating diseases, and mitigating and adapting to climate change. Our shared training of postgraduate students, joint academic appointments, collaborative research programmes, knowledge exchange and commercialisation all make the sum of the Norwich Research Park greater than its individual parts. Our unique range of expertise, skills and facilities, combined with our collective civic and global partnerships, are enabling transformative changes to a safer, more sustainable and healthier world.



NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

43

Norwich University of the Arts is proud to sign UEA's Civic Charter and shares in its civic ambitions for Norwich and the region.

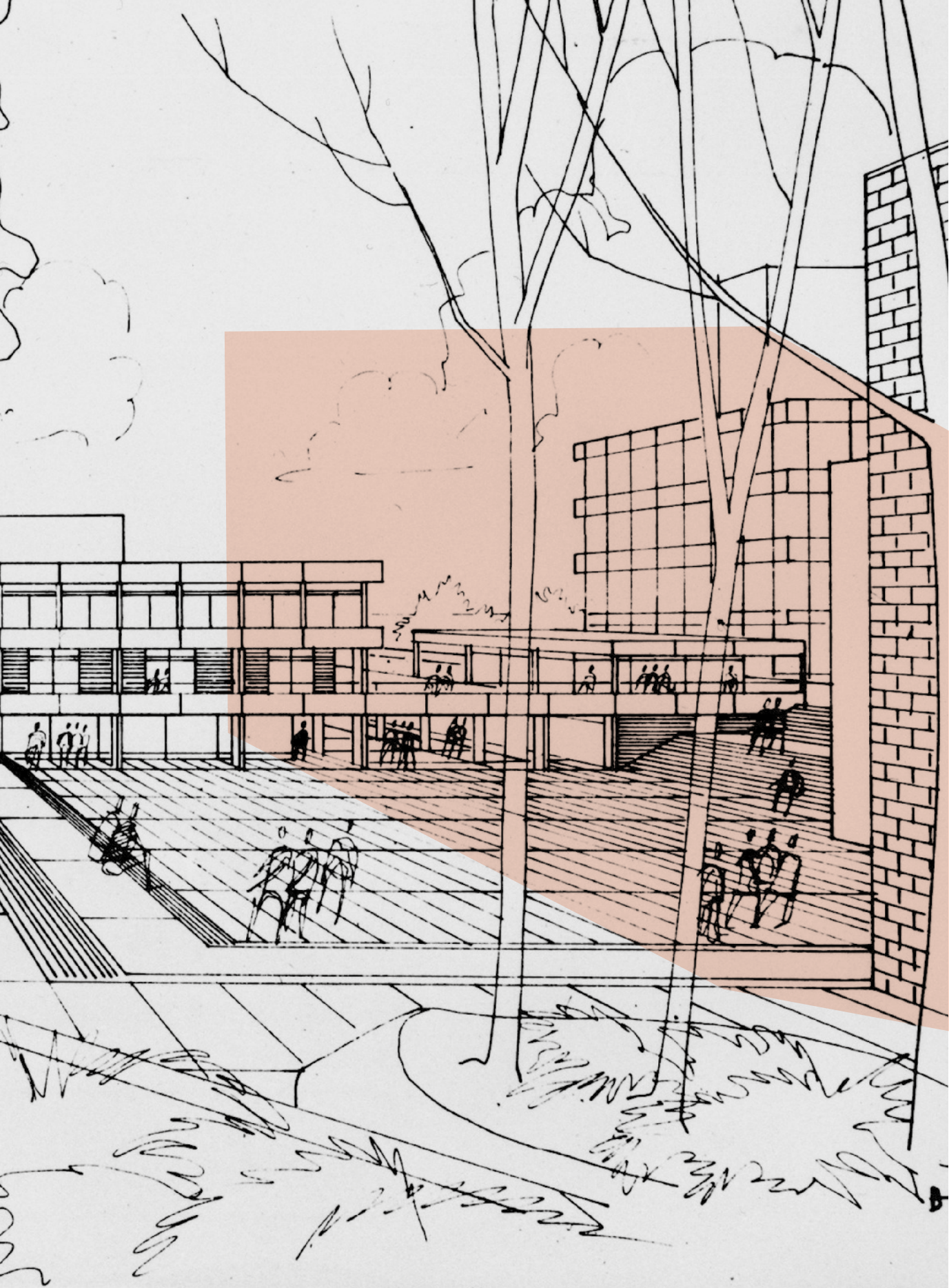
Established in 1845 to collaborate with the innovators of the Industrial Revolution, Norwich University of the Arts is committed to the growth, diversification and the cultural enrichment of the city.

We work alongside UEA in the Norwich Creative Compact, Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board, and regional Innovation and Technology Boards. We are co-developing plans in research to for example create accessibility and usability for the city's archives, and in knowledge exchange we work alongside UEA researchers from Bio-Sciences and the School of Pharmacy, bringing cutting edge science developed in Norwich to consumers through effective communication design.

As we establish our new Research and Knowledge Exchange Institutes in Creative Technology and Sustainable Worlds, we see further opportunities for the two universities to collaborate effectively for the benefit of Norwich and its diverse communities.

Norwich University of the Arts strives to be the place where creative debate is most passionately engaged, believing in the power of creativity to positively shape our world.





6

FUTURE CIVIC

45

Launching the UEA Civic Charter marks a moment in our history. But it is just the start of the next chapter in our collective civic journey, the opening-up of a conversation. Here from our vantage point in 2023 we now look to the next sixty years. How will UEA have changed, and what do we hope it will become as an institution? Through the process of co-creating the Charter, we heard from so many regional voices, individual and collective, about how important this place is for the region and for the world.

The Civic Charter concludes with a set of commitments from UEA. As we describe in these pages, they were drawn from the people here in East Anglia, those who joined us at our meetings or through digital conversations. We can, therefore, feel both pride and confidence in the origins of these commitments – we know that they speak from a groundswell of ideas and values – from lived-experience, diverse communities, and with hope for our collective future aspirations.

How these commitments are embodied by the UEA, its staff and students, will depend on many things. But let us reiterate, this Civic Charter is for *everyone*: for all staff, and for all students – no matter your role or remit. As such, priorities and ways of working will inevitably differ. We hope that these commitments can be used in a positive way to move us into a future of strengthened collaboration and partnership.

While not prescribing how they are used, we can make some suggestions. As a set of founding principles and institutional values, they can be cherry-picked to suit the needs of each of us. Sufficiently specific to UEA, but also wide-ranging.

They can be drawn upon by colleagues writing funding bids to demonstrate the ethos of our place, or when giving presentations, or talks to local school children, or taking part in public events. They could also be used as a means to start conversations with



Communities and the University need to work together to provide more active learning opportunities to help boost the economy and encourage more pride in local community

Great Yarmouth event



Impressions of Square, artist unknown, 1970s. UEA Image Archive.

Future Civic

prospective organisations, when students start looking for work experience or placements, or if staff want to make new contacts. When thinking about our culture within the institution, they may help articulate the ways we want to develop particular modes of working, both internally and with external partners. And as an entirely public statement, democratically co-created, these commitments tell our stakeholders, in plain sight, who we are and what we aspire to be.

The UEA Civic Charter would not exist without those people and organisations who took a leap of faith with us when we asked them to join us in this endeavour. We want to thank you all, for the many different roles you have played in your interactions with us. We have valued your contributions to making this place we call home a vibrant and special place to work, study and live. The process of writing the UEA Civic Charter both re-established much of what we knew about ourselves as an institution, but also raised many more questions and potential future directions.

We hope many of you now reading this will go on to sign the Charter, matching our commitments with promises of your own. After all we have learned from our participants, being “civic” is about working together and identifying and seizing opportunities to address new and existing challenges, both local and global. We look forward to continuing this civic journey with you into the next sixty years and more.





7

WITH THE TIDE BY CAI DRAPER

PART 1

49

Once below a time
before dawn, before memory
before the low rummage of human work
and subtle glints of a people,
the lands now known as Norfolk had no name.
Could hear nothing but a wind, whipped
and screaming through grasses,
fastening their dunes to the murmuring
gurgle and belching of marshes.
Gloom and dank turned over, deepening;
the million quiet forms of lichen
smothering themselves about shade-sides
of old oaks; skeins of geese cutting runes
across an unspeaking sky and the pebble-dashing
moon-pulled push of spring tides.

The past is as imagined a place as any, as imagined a time.
In part, suspended. Fixed fast, held still
by the arrogance and dreamed-for utility of now.
And in endless alteration. The projections, the lenses
through which we look, now, conditioned by shifting whims.
So how we look, how we remember the past
must take account of itself, its own bigotry.

And out of the shroud, through mist and tide
names carry; times; memory...

When we talk of Boudicca, queen of the Iceni
wielder of courage and strength...

A car, having been driven
into the fountain. UEA Digital
Asset Library REF 21950.

Cai Draper – *With the Tide*

When we talk of Robert Kett,
 leader of rebels, fighting enforced enclosure...
 When we talk of the Strangers, weavers,
 refugees who found safety in this city,
 and brought their cloth, colour, culture, canaries...
 When we talk of the local contingent of Suffragettes
 who bombed the pier at Yarmouth,
 their leaflets and pamphlets dancing with ashes
 to ground, on breeze, all a-flutter,
 the blast shuddering through time...
 Whenever we claim Boudicca, Kett,
 the welcoming of Strangers, the Suffragettes
 as the pride of Norfolk, nursery to rebels and leaders,
 we remember their legends are a fiction:
 idolised, romanticised, utilised.

It's also enlivening to remember their names.
 It's energising; it galvanises.
 So how to remember them right?
 To remember that Boudicca razed London to the ground?
 That Kett's body was hung from the castle walls?
 That the Strangers were welcomed, yes, and embraced,
 and racism and hatred live on.

*

Before moving here, I imagined Norwich suspended
 in the distance, middling, in and for its own existence.
 I called it backwater; parochial; sleepy; full of sheep.
 So I, once, too was a kind of stranger; or imposter.
 I, once, too was welcomed and made a home.
 Within hours I knew my neighbours by name.
 Was spirited to the dunes on sad days. Tumbling
 through grasses, rain showers frisked me, then smatters
 of sun, sea-glinting, star-bright, bustled me forward
 embalmed. A hundred turbines whirled
 their hope, their fins reaping light; sea wind.
 I came for the poetry and stayed for more everything:
 another dance, another feast, another play.
 Magdalen Street; walking the old city walls;
 glimpsing castle through brickwork; brutalist
 visionary Anglia Square; the casual upcycling
 of churches; Tombland; thousands of years

of sheer living still moving. Mornings
 at Whittlingham, birds, the birds.
 Grey seal colony. Otters in the valley.
 This lost corner: home
 to wild things. The breathing is easier; elongated
 ways in the bones; taut muscles lax; tight chest
 relents; stiff neck opens; the eye gets stretched.

Yes I, once, too was a kind of stranger; or imposter.
 I, once, too was welcomed and made a home.
 Here at the end of the road. At the end
 of the sea. At the end of the sky.

PART 2

And inside the shroud, on mist and tide,
 names carry; time; memory...

Boudicca's spirit living on in the name
 of the academy trust whose teachers,
 undervalued, overworked and ignored
 so long forced to strike for what's theirs by right.
 Boudicca's spirit living on in the name
 of Wetherspoons at Riverside
 whose *Queen of the Iceni* sign speaks now
 less of revolt against the powerful
 and more of cheap booze and the owner's fortune
 well spent on Vote Leave,
 that bitter statuette to Englishness.
 Kett's legacy living on in fiction, in label and plaque.
 The deep heart's belief in common land for the common good lost
 to creeping centuries of the enclosure of all life.
 Riverbank and inner world fair game
 to those who think everything's to broker.
 The Strangers, refugees who cut their cloth
 into the fabric of Norwich, living on in emblem and museum.
 The powerful now spinning yarns from the stuff
 of post-truth, where people fleeing war, violence, destitution,
 who've travelled thousands of miles through trauma on trauma

just to get here are then insulted with the label ‘asylum shoppers’;
where small boats in trouble are wilfully ignored and left to sink;
where those who do make it have what remains of their liberty
forcefully removed, corralled into floating prisons or disused barracks.
The legacy of the Suffragettes living in an image
on plastic hoarding outside Yarmouth’s Winter Gardens.
Here, now, entire police forces are deemed sexist;
our own government undermining laws to protect
workers from harassment, less out of a sense of justice,
but more to avoid embarrassment.
A real circus.

*

All these legacies speak of the same systems and structures. An approach to the world that will take striking nurses to court is the same as that which allows water companies to poison rivers with impunity; the same as that which refuses to regulate algorithms that sell self-harm to children; the same as that which leaves gender equity to market forces; and the same as that which deports refugees to Rwanda. Our moment hears only whispers of the revolt, courage, militancy and strength of Boudicca, Kett and the Suffragettes, while sung from the rooftops are forces of apathy, acquisition, isolation, and compliance. Forces that harden hearts; that make an everyday experience of fear and loneliness.

To speak of a “we”, then, or to speak for it, feels impossible. When I myself am so tangled with inner conflict. When my closest relationships are infinitely complex. When my own small family’s a million abreast. Impossible to speak of a “we”. When I walk a tightrope of sanity and swing from the rafters. When my beliefs shift from minute to minute and hour to hour, from dismal resignation to burn it all down.

PART 3

Rather than speaking for an imagined “we”, maybe the lost word is solidarity. A word that goes largely unspoken.

I remember the strength and speed with which people responded to the racist police murder of George Floyd with chants of *Black Lives Matter* at The Forum, and the vigils held in his memory at Yarmouth market; I remember how XR took hold of the city to demand an end to the gaslighting, greenwashing of governments and energy companies, I remember their tactics of collaboration and creativity; I remember

trans rights protests outside City Hall, voices clarion across the marketplace; I remember my students planning their first Pride March outfits, pinning badges to rucksacks and their makeshift flags; I remember the demos for Kurdistan, bumping into an acquaintance in the rain and us looking at each other, baffled for a moment, then the warmth shared between faces.

What unifies these moments is not cause; not methods nor tactics; not message; not identity nor status. It is solidarity between people standing up to the powerful; the demand for and taking of a platform, of making space. This place doesn’t magically grant these things, but the people grant it to themselves.

*

And wow – to think of a future.
In fear, I shiver and cringe; in solidarity I imagine and hope;.
If there was ever a felt solidity, it was
a false god by the name of England.
Take Happisburgh: nothing stays the same.
Skies widen, new arrivals,
living souls are with the tide.
And as the marshes drain, the tides
rise and wash away the dunes.
The landscape’s changed, been changing, will change,
watch. Skeins of geese write the sky
a new language of runes from wind
farms of Yarmouth to wild places imagined
out west, far off. It’s in the synagogue,
temple, mosque, church. Each and every
place we search. Come all ye faithless,
faithful, witches, pagans, heathens;
human gods without names.

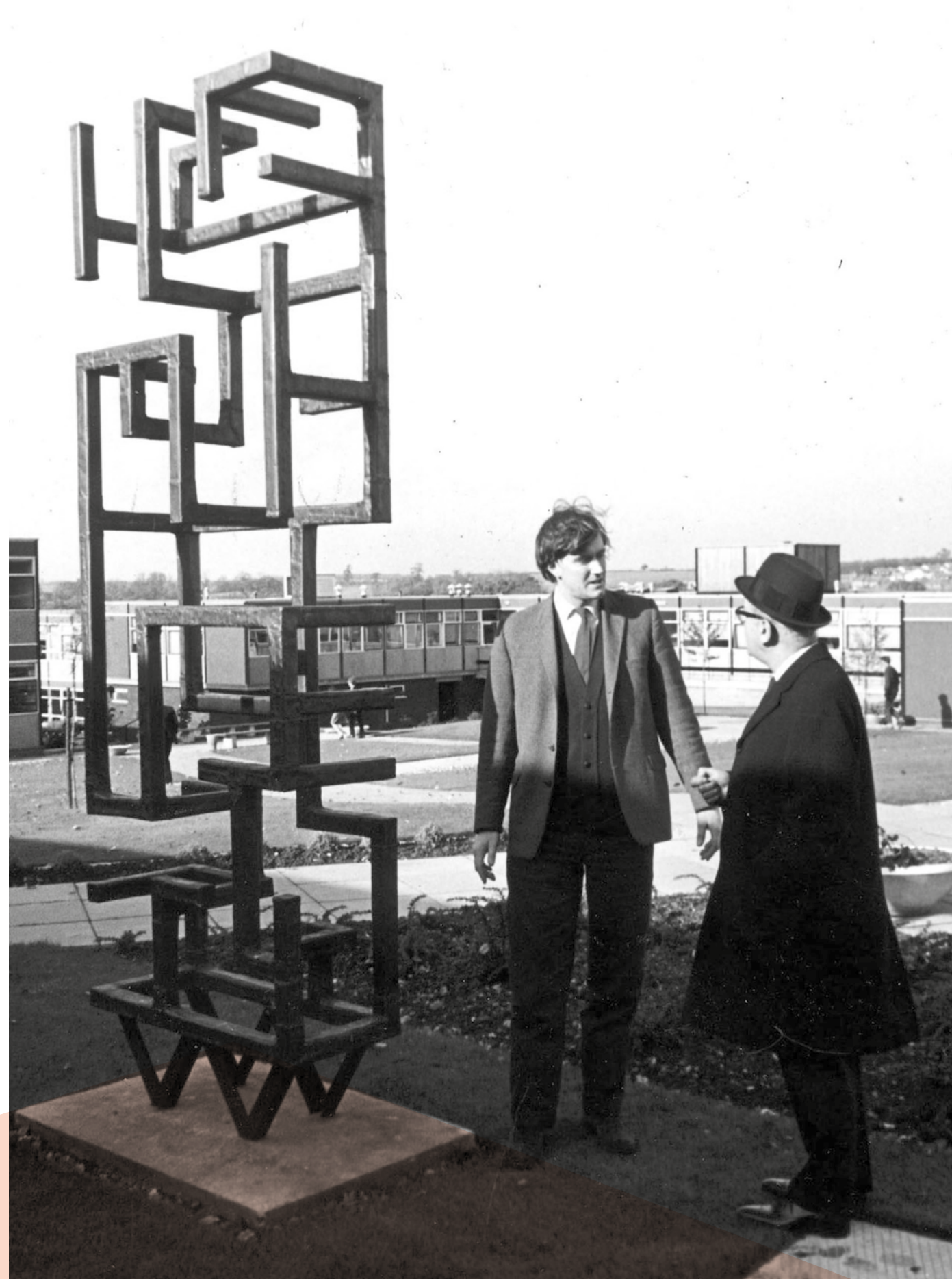
About the shroud, about mist and tide,
names carry; times; imaginings...

In this lost corner of England
maybe a space occurs to find again
Boudicca’s refusal to capitulate.
To find again the commitment of Kett’s rebels

to common good and common land.
 To find again the steadfast hold to immutable justice
 of the Suffragette vision.
 To find again this city's history of welcoming Strangers;
 the collective rejection of xenophobia and racism.
 But it's a scary journey, turning inwards.
 To examine our falling away from these causes.
 To make known and to disclose
 the parts of us which are frightened and harsh,
 judgemental, hardened, and cruel.
 There's also pride in that endeavour
 as the new sky's language runs fluent.

Come all ye faithless, faithful, strangers, neighbours,
 salary men, vagrants, wasters, wage slavers,
 labourers, japesters, makers, mick takers,
 the raving, aliens, gamers, least favourites,
 claimants, sugar babies, failures, saints,
 saviours, the veiled, locked bin raiders.
 I want the heart to say this city makes space
 for the lost, for the finders of place,
 for all those in the mist seeking safety.
 Haven't you heard?
 The future's dim. The future's bright.
 The future's infinite waves of light.
 Let I, and we, want what we want:
 strong back, soft front, wild heart.

We are enormously grateful to be able to include this poem by Cai Draper, an alumnus of our creative writing programmes. This poem was written for UNITY, a Gorilla Circus show commissioned by Norfolk & Norwich Festival. With thanks to the National Centre for Writing.





APPENDICES

- 1 – THE CLIMATE BOOK – 63
- 2 – THE CREATIVE BOOK – 77
- 3 – THE IPSWICH BOOK – 87
- 4 – THE NORWICH BOOK – 99
- 5 – THE GREAT YARMOUTH BOOK – 113
- 6 – DEMOS REPORT SUMMARISED – 123

These appendices represent the underpinning evidence we have used to draft the UEA Civic Charter and inform the whole programme of activity outlined in this book. None of the words in these appendices are from the University programme team. Instead, these appendices present in a minimally edited way the content of discussions held as part of the engagement process for producing the Charter.

The first five appendices are the collected outputs from the Open Space events we held across the region through 2021–2023. Each event produced a ‘book’ and they are all reproduced here in full. We hope what is recorded here in these books communicate some of the intensity, energy and enthusiasm that those of us in attendance shared at these events and that you might be curious to read them as the blueprints, or discursive building blocks that helped construct our present Charter text.

By partnering with a variety of regional venues and their adjacent communities, we were able to gather

people together inside bright, vibrant spaces to address a question based on the formula: ‘What could a civic university mean for X and the surrounding area?’ There was no pre-set agenda. Each event opened with an introductory talk that explained this was an ‘Open Space’; that every voice that cared to speak could do so, and everybody who wanted to be heard, would be heard. In this way, we started with a blank slate and our attendees set the agenda, picking the topics for the three discussion sessions that followed. All topics were decided during the event, and we had around thirty topics of discussion at each event; these were buzzy

atmospheres of intense, productive debates; there was food; conviviality. There was also a determination to take the principles generated in the room further, out of the room and into the daily activities of the University in a genuine way.

We ended each event after three or four hours of discussion with a full-group plenary circle. This spirit of collaboration was always reflected in the concluding thoughts articulated by participants in the plenary circle: *open deliberation and communication is appreciated and vital in this area and civic action is only meaningful if it is about long-term partnerships and outlooks.*

Throughout the events, we kept a record of the conversations that took place in the discussion sessions as anonymous summaries: what is represented here in the books is the written record of those conversations. Helpful student attendees and alumni interns took notes and in doing so we discovered some overarching themes which we have used to group discussions together. They have been edited for neatness, accuracy, and grammar, but they have been left also to speak partially, simultaneously,

of their original conversational context. It is the work of many hands, many voices, but any errors are those of the Civic University Team.

The final appendix is an abridged version of the report produced by the leading civic think tank Demos on their partnership with UEA using the participatory discussion platform Polis to explore UEA's role in the region with the wider public.

Polis is a radical innovation in community deliberation. It starts, like Open Space, with a blank slate and invites online participants to add their own responses to an open statement. These statements are then voted on by the community over the course of a week – accessed through paid promotion in targeted areas through Facebook in our case. A machine learning algorithm then clusters opinion in real time, allowing participants to see how their views match others participating. This is groundbreaking technology allowing complex debates to be immediately summarised in easily accessible form. It enabled us to reach a much wider audience and made our approach more inclusive. We are grateful to Demos for their permission to reproduce that work here.



Knowledge exchange with the University is essential

Climate event





From Wonderglow at UEA for Welcome Week 2020.
UEA Image Archive REF 40023. Photo © Luke Jerram.

1 THE CLIMATE BOOK

RETHINKING PROCESSES – 63

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63

The Climate book is a summary of the conversations that took place at the King's Centre during the event in Norwich, where participants discussed the role of a civic university in the context of the climate emergency.

RETHINKING PROCESSES

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

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 well-being. 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 well-being.

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 well-being – 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.



a social contract between 'society' and the people who own land is needed

Climate event



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.

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?



UEA should incentivise and support staff to provide civic service and take civic action for the community's benefit

Climate event



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 well-being 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.

Address 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 the School of Global Development play enough of a role in educating local communities on the causes and solutions to climate change induced migration?

CLIMATE ACTION

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

This group discussed the importance of educating 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 well-being but because UEA's campus can nurture connection between community and the environment.



using the creative process to inform research could also help scientists begin to think differently

Climate event



Could the parameters of what constitutes research extend to include other forms of communication beyond written thesis?

Climate event



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.

ENGAGEMENT

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.

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.



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

Climate event



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.

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.

Biodiversity Stripes for Norfolk

A researcher 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.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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 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.

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.

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 with 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.

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 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 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 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. 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 Climate UEA 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 in 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 concluding thought to the day

"The attendance and energy at the King's Centre was both exciting and encouraging in developing a pathway towards embedding UEA's world-renowned expertise in climate change within our local and regional community. The views and themes presented and discussed here 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, these in-depth conversations build on past learning and highlight new opportunities for us to work together in partnership and with commitment to a more sustainable future."

Konstantinos Chalvatzis, Academic Chair, ClimateUEA





2 THE CREATIVE BOOK

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The Creative Book is a summary of the conversations that took place at the King's Centre in Norwich, where participants discussed ways in which higher education could work in partnership with the creative and cultural sectors, to ensure that creativity flourishes within East Anglia.

EQUALITY, INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Keeping artists and creatives in East Anglia – how can we create a sustainable creative ecology?

This group discussed ways to nurture creative careers within the region, whilst developing networking

opportunities at a national level.

How can we make connections between artistic producers, higher education and organisations accessible? There needs to be diversity in education/ courses. Showcasing local talent, and making it

accountable, is important. What attracts creatives to the region, and encourages them to stay? Transport, mobilisation, infrastructure, student visibility are all small constituent parts that contribute to the bigger picture. We need to reframe ‘success’ for emerging creatives – but also ensure there are financially sustainable pathways to that success – could spaces be opened/held for low-stakes/ experimental artmaking? University spaces could be opened up for professional creatives as well as students.

We want to see open conversations between universities and organisations (such as festival organisers) – could products be created that tangibly facilitate this? University placement schemes could result in more bands/artists/theatre companies etc, coming out of higher education and staying in Norfolk (but potentially tour nationally or internationally). Audiences also need to be mobilised to grassroots events/ exhibitions/performances across the country – existing companies and organisations could utilise their own platforms and audiences to promote these, collaboratively fostering a creative network.

HE and established cultural institutions could help by seeking to invigorate existing audiences, and people who live/work in the area, to take a greater ownership of culture in the region – dissuading them from leaving but also creating a legacy and transparent platform for it to flourish. Creating links for locals to establish relationships with creative mentors, and providing spaces for these developments to happen, would also be beneficial.

Buildings and more people – facilitating the habitation of underused spaces in the city

Affordable workspaces for freelance creatives can be difficult to find – could underused buildings be utilised for this purpose, and could higher education institutions offer assistance in facilitating this?

Where in Norwich can creatives go to meet, to build community and lower barriers to access? There are too many ‘silos of art’ currently, and a lack of galleries and opportunities for public engagement – who owns the city, and could higher education institutions play a role in breaking down bureaucracy to enable access to long term low cost venues for the creative community? Creatives can help academics to communicate their

messages/work effectively, so these relationships are mutually beneficial.

How do you use a city for learning? UEA buildings are full, and there are many more academics, staff and students working across the city/region in other spaces already, with many young people utilising Norwich’s café culture. Quality of space is also key for well-being – if there’s going to be a space it needs to be suitable for the purpose. Piloting ‘working hubs’ could provide vital spaces – and encourage more people into the city. Could a collective be brought together to raise funding to investigate ways of working with venues that could be utilised by creatives?

How to talk about race in East Anglia

This group discussed how higher education and cultural institutions can use their resources and influence to help instigate open conversations around race throughout the region.

How could higher education and cultural institutions and freelance artists create an umbrella framework to continue and expand conversations about race in the region? There is a need to think beyond important moments like Black History Month and to continue these conversations on a more permanent and consistent level. There’s a need to think about diverse histories and experiences in the region but also to think about and interrogate whiteness – particularly in more rural areas.

Perhaps there’s also different ways of training and working with students to think about anti-racist politics and engagement with cultural institutions. We need to signal and connect the good work that is going on and to keep people engaged and informed – can local institutions assist by facilitating a network, mailing list and/or bespoke sessions on race in the region?

“
could higher education institutions ... enable access to long-term, low-cost venues for the creative community

Creative event



How can higher education and creative sectors collaborate around heritage and history in East Anglia, including bringing in new audiences?

What is Norfolk’s ‘heritage’, and how can it be communicated?

This discussion raised a lot of questions about what engaging with history and heritage in the region might mean. What is our ‘story’ – what do we want to communicate about Norfolk? Lots of different stories – ‘micro-histories’ – but how do we combine these with making wider links and stories about the region?

We discussed the need to develop a sense of civic entitlement for all members of the community, to

instil a sense of belonging. How do we avoid reducing a place to one story or identity, while making links between past and present – new retellings from new perspectives? How do we form connections between higher education and creative/cultural organisations when they have complex infrastructures and operate according to different timetables (and funding needs)?

There’s also a need for interdisciplinary connections – creativity shouldn’t mean only one thing. Furthermore, some people feel heritage or culture is not for me’ or ‘for posh people’ – language can create a barrier, with words like ‘heritage’ or ‘history’ being off-putting for some young people – how do we prevent this?

COMMUNICATION, CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION

Creative mentorships

Mentorships can be an important influence on the personal development of early career professionals, as well as being a rewarding experience for the mentors themselves. Could institutions help bring together those wanting and offering mentorships by facilitating opportunities for connection?

This group reflected on their own experiences of mentoring and being mentored, its importance in career development but also personal and creative development – the way in which it can also create role models, set examples and build confidence.

Institutions could help by organising ‘speed mentoring’ events, in which mentors can volunteer themselves, in a ‘speed dating’ style, to people that would like to have their creative or academic work/ ideas/thoughts reviewed by an industry professional.

These relationships may or may not naturally grow further but could at the very least give people valuable insight into specific industries, ways of working and open up new opportunities. Long term this could create a huge network of organic collaboration and wonderful projects.

Bringing in business – how can we use commerce to bridge the gap? Creativity isn’t limited to the arts – all businesses benefit from thinking differently.

How can skills be shared and relationships fostered between institutions, businesses and third sector groups to benefit all?

Businesses always need creative thinking, it extends to all aspects of life – nothing is black and white – so creatives can help businesses find solutions, and in turn businesses can help creatives become more commercially aware.

Collaboration and ‘doing it together’ – whether it’s between businesses, institutions, charities or individuals – is the only way forward. Developing relationships between businesses and universities could be beneficial, as businesses offers things you can’t get from a classroom – extra skills, knowledge and expertise – and could offer mentorship and places for people to learn, while universities could provide space for businesses to trial ideas that might otherwise be risky and think outside of the box.

Charities need corporate partnerships that could assist with engagement and fundraising. While in the shortterm this could seem like ‘one more thing to worry about’ for businesses, engaging in socially responsible practises has long term benefits.

Mental health training and well-being initiatives and awareness are also important for businesses – UEA could share resources to assist with this. Creative partnerships could also be forged to improve well-being.

Export – how can we help creative people here find audiences, collaborators and markets outside of the region/country?

East Anglia has a wealth of creative producers, but how can they improve their outreach and find an audience beyond the region?

Some creative people and businesses get ‘stuck’ serving local markets and customers – missing opportunities to grow outside their home region.

This group discussed possible reasons why – a lack of a mission/vision to grow nationally or internationally; lacking experience or skills in finding and retaining customers outside the region; no NEDs or mentors to help plan and execute wider reach: defining the competition only as their small group of local rivals; a hand-to-mouth mindset preventing risk taking in seeking bigger briefs on the national stage. So how could more local creators get ‘unstuck’ in some of these areas? Some tangible ideas for exploration included:

- ~ Articulate a vision for their company/ project which has ambition for national/ international growth.
- ~ Develop their skills in sales and marketing and commit time to these activities. Convene or join communities that discuss how to find opportunities outside the region.
- ~ Tell stories about success and celebrate successes
- ~ even those of local competitors.
- ~ Look outside their own organisations for help, advice and experience.

Making more opportunities for conversations and connections

This group also talked about generating new methods of fostering relationships and networks – it's clear that communication was the key theme of this event.

There is huge potential for collaboration and connection to lead to new ideas and possibilities, but getting academics or students together with cultural organisations feels problematic due to issues of time, capacity and the problems around circumventing gatekeepers (and the difficulties of communication within larger organisations that evolve into many-headed beasts) and also sustaining relationships between academics and organisations over time.

Finding ways to build connections between the public and universities (like the UEA's public open day), students and cultural activities, as well as business and civic groups could lead to unexpected conversations and exciting collaborations. But how do we do it? Perhaps finding places for congregation – where hotdesks can sit alongside exhibition space with a bar, food outlet, retail area and space for exercise can begin to connect different groups. Also finding ways to explore common interests and understand each other's languages – possibly exploring what we don't know together. UEA could help resolve these issues by organising trips for academics to visit cultural organisations.

This will lead to a better understanding of how the organisation operates and where they might connect and then they'll be more able to connect their students with opportunities. It would also be helpful to develop a database of contacts in organisations, academics that are interested in connecting, gatekeepers to be negotiated, etc so that networks can be established.

What is the role of the public sector in helping us answer this question?

Local authorities also play a key role in supporting the creative and cultural industries.

How can the public sector help cultural industries? The University helps the local government to sell Norfolk and Suffolk to potential business relations, bringing more industry to the area. The main aim of the council is to build relations between different industries in the region to help highlight the benefits and added value of working in Norfolk and to continue to make it better for future generations.

Where should funding go for these partnerships, should the council even get involved with relations between the creative industries and higher education?

The government want to improve these industries to improve the image of the region to attract more international investors, so surely they have a duty to make sure they're thriving. The government has a focus on helping businesses that are sustainable and long-lasting.

Innovation and more classical creative industries (art curation, theatre production, etc...) are so different but fall under the same title of cultural industries – all must be given the space and funding to be able to work together to improve all areas of cultural industry. Universities could help by opening up more channels of communication between different sectors and organisations to ensure further improvement of the region.

Plaque in Cathedral Close, Norwich.
UEA Image Archive.



UTILISING RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE
TO BENEFIT CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

How do creatives and higher education connect?

We know from the previous conversations that people want more opportunities to connect – so what systems and tools can higher education institutions produce to enable these networks?

There are barriers with policies – having to go through a lot of processes before actually reaching students. Practical digital forums could be created to alleviate this, where opportunities/callouts can be made both ways between UEA and cultural organisations to get information to the right people, along with a creative network directory.

More arrangements could also be made for students to have creative work placements as part of their curriculum. UEA could support technology for the mapping of organisations, networks etc that would make accessing key contacts easier. More events could also be facilitated that give opportunities for creatives to link up and share projects.

Education and creativity

So far, there has been a lot of discussion about higher education's role in creativity, but creative development starts in childhood. What's the role of primary education in fostering creativity, and how can higher education institutions ease pressure on a system that is increasingly stretched?

Education is feeling the impact of multiple crises and underfunding, putting pressure on schools and on teachers, but to inspire creativity, education must stay creative. It's felt that there can be a 'STEM agenda', that can lead to a separation of young people being held to STEM subjects for their economic potential, which can discourage them from exploring creativity. Furthermore, some teachers may pigeonhole children to be one or the other – such as by saying "x is good at science, y is good at art" instead of taking an interdisciplinary approach.

There's a danger that education can turn into a predetermined pathway when it should be about expanding the mind and affirming childrens' sense of

self. Finland has an excellent education system, with children not going to school until they're seven years old – politicians here ought to look at methods used in other countries – it's felt that in the UK the curriculum is decided without consulting those delivering it, with too much focus on testing.

In higher education, students who take a year abroad or in industry etc, tend to achieve better qualifications as well as gaining a sense of where and who they want to be – getting outside of the classroom is important. Systemic reform is needed, but in the shorter term, smaller scale interventions could help. Could higher education institutions deliver sessions to primary schools, or coordinate professionals to support teacher inset days? Higher education buildings could be utilised for afterschool clubs, which could both inspire creative thinking and help to circumvent childcare barriers – as well as providing activity, warmth, food etc, to low-income families. These could also be open to the wider community, encouraging intergenerational communication.

More foodbanks and/or social supermarkets are needed, so could institutions help support the creation of these, or foodcentred initiatives with a creative element – such as 'creative breakfast clubs'? Helping to facilitate a directory of services like these available in the region would also help, allowing people to find appropriate resources.

How can higher education institutions better support digital and tech literacy and agency in creative communities?

This group discussed the development of tech infrastructure to benefit creative communities in more detail.

There are currently lots of disparate groups doing the same things, which leads to repetition and inefficiencies. There's a lack of transparency on how Norwich is networked, and a lack of agency over tech presence in creative and higher education communities – face to face, Twitter, and WhatsApp

own the current infrastructure. We want shared resources and community regardless of institutional affiliation, with transparent tech infrastructure that is maintained by, and for, communities. This would encourage pooling resources and knowledge between higher education and cultural institutions and community organisations. Tools that could contribute to this could include a job board/freelancer database and an online calendar for shared community events listings. Developing Community Technology Partnerships – similar to Manchester based 'Geeks For Social Change' could facilitate the development of these tools.

What does effective collaboration look like between higher education and the creative sector – how to find common ground?

What does effective, meaningful, sustainable collaboration look like?

It can mean different things depending on the people or organisations involved – developing mutual understanding is paramount to collaborative success. There is a real importance to taking the time to understand the priorities of each organisation, its values, its ways of working. Important also to ensure that there is a common understanding of key terms.

Working with UEA is often daunting because of the scale of the organisation. In short it is like working with a number of different partners who have different agendas. There is a real value in encouraging academics to join the boards of creative organisations to help communicate an understanding of the different ways of working.

How can higher education work in partnership with the cultural and creative sectors to support mental health?

This group discussed the intersections between well-being and creativity.

Creative clubs around a common interest – such as record clubs – could encourage discussion around mental health awareness in the community, as well as providing a distraction. Training could be provided for people running these clubs to provide better support. Happy memories can be triggered by things like music which can be beneficial.

Higher education can contribute to research into healing the root causes of poor mental health. Creative industries have the power to tell stories, and find creative solutions – collaborating with higher education could communicate this to students.

THE ARTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Engaging with creative ecological thinking. Creating a positive narrative for a climate changed world.

In the Earth crisis, what can higher education and the cultural sector do together to ensure the planet and its people flourish?

It's easy to feel helpless in the face of environmental issues but building communities and engaging with creative ecological thinking can instil hope and help to find innovative solutions.

Our big idea is the power of the imagination to involve people collectively in imagining it's thriving potential futures for this place. Distinct roles for both

sectors: Truth, science and data as the key role of higher education institutions. Community creativity, inclusive methods and multiple methods of storytelling as the key role of culture. What can they do together? Encouragement of critical narrative literacy, to counter polarisation, disinformation and apathy.

Practicing possitopian methods to imagine adaptive and regenerative futures, that include people actively prefiguring futures, people most affected, people most disengaged, and more than human lives. Making data more warm – so we explore hopes and fears together,

not just lines on a graph, but informed by them. Biophilic creative imaginations, as if more people know biodiversity the more imaginative ideas we have. Mapping the intersecting frontlines of impacts: climate, biodiversity, people affected, people with solutions.

There are local networks like Culture Declares East and Climate Museum UK, and ideas to establish a regional, climate engaged creative network similar to Leeds-based SAIL, but they need support and funding.

Is there a place for positive stories of a future in a climate changed world?

Arts and culture can provide the opportunities for the creative reimagining of our future world.

This group discussed examples of people/ organisations already working in this area, including the 'Green Stories' at the University of Southampton, a creative writing competition based on the theme of a positive future with environmental projects tackled. More locally, a film project about coastal erosion in Happisburgh engaged with local residents affected by losing their homes.

Participants highlighted organisations that engage with positive climate stories, such as Sustain, an organisation working on active hope that raises climate change awareness while allowing people to normalise feelings of grief and loss, as well as local groups such as Norwich Writer's Rebel and Culture Declares East. There are positives even in crisis. Modelling gratitude and being in nature are small things to help everyone.

However, these do not tackle the reality of global disparity, so global dialogic engagement is required. But what is on the other side of climate collapse? We have a cultural history of this story telling – it's the 70th anniversary of the 1953 floods in January – could this be an opportunity to bring the message for Norfolk to the forefront? Is it joy and positive modelling or fear that incentivise action?

We need communication to activation to empathetic engagement to empowerment to make informed, effective change. The informed impact of spending carbon now for long term savings is no longer our solution. We need a model for a less consumptive world.



Some creative people and businesses get 'stuck' serving local markets and customers – missing opportunities to grow outside their home region

Creative event



A concluding thought to the day

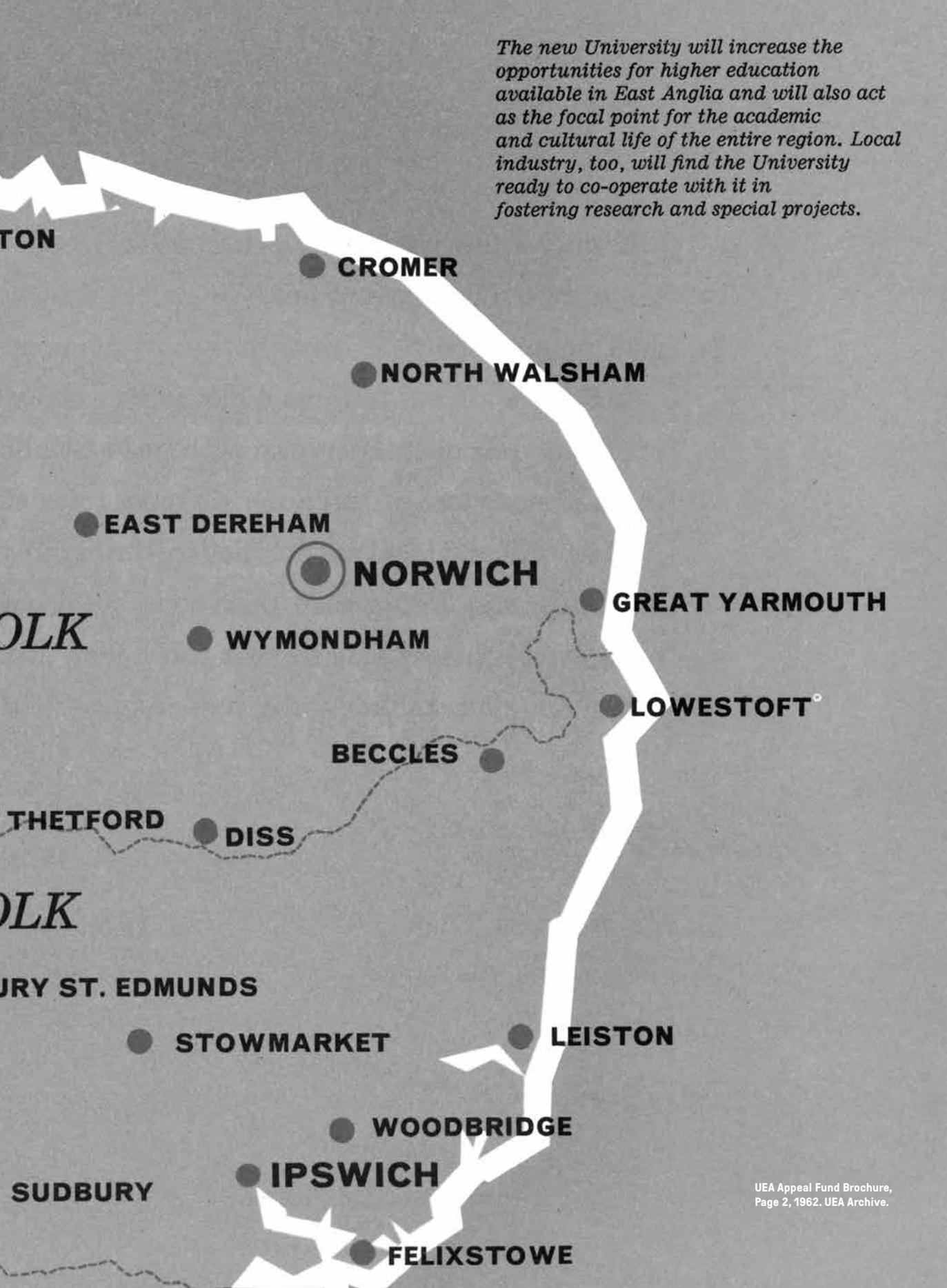
"We were delighted so many people were able to join us at the King's Centre in December to help shape a shared creative and civic agenda. The views presented on the day made clear the power of culture and creativity to support our communities and demonstrated how different artistic experiences – from theatre, to literature, to visual art – bring us together, enrich our lives and are a central part of what makes our region unique, diverse, prosperous and outward looking.

The day was also a chance to think about how we must reshape and refine our responsibilities to meet current and future challenges: around education, around mental health, and in relation to the climate crisis. We explored the connection between higher education Institutions and creative careers and how we can work together, in partnership, to create a sustainable creative ecology for individuals and communities across East Anglia.

A commitment to diversity and inclusion were at the heart of the conversations at the King's Centre and are at the heart of this book, which is intended to be a living document. It is a document that renews our regional commitments to the creative and cultural sector, also providing a springboard for future discussions and partnerships."

John Gordon, Academic Chair, CreativeUEA





3 THE IPSWICH BOOK

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SUPPORTING STUDENTS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EARLY-CAREER PROFESSIONALS IN THE REGION – 87

CULTIVATING ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENT AND THRIVING LOCAL BUSINESSES – 89

IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN IPSWICH AND SURROUNDS – 91

COMMUNITY BUILDING, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ETHICAL BUSINESSES PRACTISES – 93

The Ipswich Book is a summary of the conversations that took place at the Open Event at the University of Suffolk, where participants explored how universities could collaborate with local businesses to better meet regional needs.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EARLY-CAREER PROFESSIONALS IN THE REGION

How can businesses and universities retain students in East Anglia?

How do local organisations cultivate that talent and make East Anglia a place for people to grow, develop

and thrive? East Anglia attracts many students from outside of the region, but to ensure they stay after university, there needs to be attractive opportunities available to graduates.

How can universities ensure graduates are

equipped with the skills that local industry need? It was suggested that there are gaps in the practicality of courses at UEA and University of Suffolk (UoS) and more efforts could be made by the universities to cater to local industry to provide better vocational skills/knowledge.

These could be in the form of apprenticeship degrees, that are both more relevant to local industry and more accessible to potential learners. Courses need to constantly evolve to reflect the long-term strategic direction of the region and business needs – such as around engineering and manufacturing. It was noted that while universities have lots of services and projects that benefit the communities, they are not always well communicated outside of the organisation – so how can universities better advertise their offerings?

Improved communication is needed between the universities and businesses regarding job opportunities, along with ensuring information about these opportunities makes it to graduates, and advice on how to navigate the jobs market. UoS has great access to businesses – can more work experience opportunities be arranged to better inform career choices?

More broadly, it was discussed how to encourage people into Ipswich and Suffolk – and whether it is actually beneficial for them to stay. The visibility of universities in schools in less affluent communities from a younger age, and the diversification of teaching, could encourage greater and more diverse enrolment. The conclusion of the discussion was that a better channel of communication between the universities and external organisation could fill the skills gaps within the region, and that courses in East Anglian universities should better reflect East Anglian industry vocationally.

How can we empower young people to meet and cope with challenges in the system, and connect this generation to create an equal playing field?

This group discussed issues faced by young people in BAME communities and how to improve diversity and inclusivity within the region.

We need to redefine narratives in African and Caribbean communities, especially with young people, teaching them to be proud of their heritage. People don't know what to say in uncomfortable conversations about diversity as they are worried about saying the 'right' thing. How can we help young people express themselves?

Diversity begins in school education, but it has to be broader than that. What's the use if they leave school and face discrimination? We all need Black history learning as so many adults (including Black adults) have no knowledge around it, and this needs to be widespread throughout all sectors – i.e. universities need to know the role of Black people in higher education.

There should be a cultural richness in education not just history but food, music, arts in school should be diverse. Work also needs to be done around diversity in rural areas – how do children in all-white schools learn about inclusivity? We need to tell diverse narratives even in non-diverse contexts. The answer has to be long term programmes, not one-off tick box exercises. Solutions also need to be systemic, regional and council supported.

The council needs to ask, 'why are we not attracting diversity in this area?' Air Force base in Suffolk is highly diverse but never integrates into the local community. Universities are often the same. We need to find diverse spaces and break them open. Town centres should have multicultural offerings. However, improving these issues all comes down to funding and money.



Young people have bold, progressive ideas as a direct result of their lived experience, energy, and drive

Ipswich event



How can we help learners to transition into employment/self-employment? What skills do they need to support not only their confidence but dreams?

Nurturing students' and graduates' skills, confidence and projects can not only foster individuals' development but also help cultivate a thriving local business and entrepreneurial community through encouraging fresh new ideas and an innovative and enthusiastic workforce. What is the best way for universities and businesses to facilitate this?

We need to help learners with the skills they need for employment – including self-employment – so that we make the most of their potential. This will allow our business and academic communities to thrive, but most importantly the learners themselves will thrive too. How do we listen to (and understand) the needs and expectations of learners, educators and employers? The timing of the opportunity is important

CULTIVATING ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENT AND THRIVING LOCAL BUSINESSES

How can we better support early-stage businesses?

Educational institutions have a wealth of knowledge and spaces that could be useful to start-ups – this group discussed ideas of how universities could support early-stage businesses by sharing these resources.

Universities can help entrepreneurs by sharing spaces and resources. Facilities such as the Norwich Research Park could be better utilised for the support of those with business ideas. Entrepreneurial start-up courses should be embedded within the curriculum – long term support is needed, from school age and beyond. Funding is also key – how can universities help gain access to funding?

Norfolk and Suffolk aren't well known outside of the region – we need to get the word out and bring talent here by improving the reputation of the area as an innovative region. Universities could help by branding East Anglia as a hub for innovation, as well as doing more to encourage entrepreneurship amongst students and alumni.

so that it does not detract from learner's education.

Learning opportunities should be transcendent – connected to something – and encourage/develop a more rounded approach to making a personal contribution. Lecturer/ learner relationships are key, as are students' relationships with each other, as these relationships can nurture skills and offer peer support opportunities. This could help students value each other as a resource instead of defining the lecturer as the sole source of information, as well as instilling comfort in not having all the answers – being comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Opening up dialogue between students and businesses could be mutually beneficial, giving the student the opportunity to show businesses how what their learning could impact their business, empowering them with the skills to communicate their learning and the idea that they are also educators.

Connection, innovation, communication and uniqueness – improving communication between universities and communities

Many participants felt that it's not always easy to find out what events and opportunities universities are offering – what can be done to improve communication and ensure information reaches the right groups?

Some participants felt that communication between UoS and Ipswich needs to be improved, as it can be difficult to know what events are happening and when. Businesses and community leaders need a better point of contact for the University to learn of opportunities and events, and how best to spread the word so that everyone can utilise these offerings.

In a place like Ipswich there isn't one community, there are many communities, so how can a stream of communication be built to enable them all to talk to each other? Some cross pollinations exists but usually between small groups, not whole institutions like the University. An open-access diary would really help –

a centralised calendar between universities and the local communities so that everyone can see what’s on offer in the region.

It is also important to deconstruct hierarchies and for communication to be more accessible. Universities could communicate and coordinate regular, sector specific, networking events so that students, organisations and communities can create better connections.

Be bold, brave and ambitious! How can society and individuals’ ideas shift and evolve, post-pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we live and work, with many people’s priorities shifting over the last few years – and businesses need to evolve to accommodate this.

People’s values have realigned post pandemic, with a greater importance placed on work/ life balance, so organisations need to work with an altered value structure and new ways of living. This means creating a people-first agenda, in which successes are celebrated but failures destigmatised and used as opportunities for innovation – even if an idea is not quite right, it may be useful in the future.

Requirements/qualifiers also need to be re-evaluated, and offers made more attractive, to expand the talent pool. Resisting comfort makes space for experimentation – we need spaces to be made for people to share ideas – such as innovation platforms available to businesses, researchers and community to drive new projects and collate resources.

How do we know what problems businesses have?

If universities are to provide opportunities to local businesses, a better understanding of their needs is required.

Further events could be held for networking opportunities between students and businesses. Grants aren’t readily available for all sectors (i.e. retail), leaving whole groups of businesses excluded by grant structures . Who leads these grants? Business grants should be available from the bottom up, and shouldn’t be run solely by public sector – is the language used by public sector a barrier?

Sector leads could collaborate with businesses to get an honest representative view of issues facing the same kinds of businesses and work together to find solutions. Applying for grants is a cost in itself, due to the admin involved. Funded consultancy could be one solution. Universities could collaborate and co-create the support that businesses need.

Financial sustainability and a collaborative approach for the future

This group discussed the need for collaboration, instead of competition, to ensure financial sustainability for small businesses and community groups in the region.

Organisations need to join forces because there’s a competitive fundraising environment with limited pots, whether grants, private funding or national schemes i.e. NPO/ NHLF/arts councils. Rather than creating individual projects to generate crowdfunding/ sponsorship, a collective approach could have greater impact.

We need to collaborate and have critical friends/ mentors – such as friendly, informal audits and information sharing. Having events like this one more regularly (every quarter?) would help with long term planning.

We should take advantage of new local talent and connections – spurred on by pandemic migration to rural areas. Local communities can benefit from knowledge, skill sets and resources. We should be sharing resources in general – speakers, furniture, venues, audiences etc. We need to reevaluate and create sustainable business models and investment in communities/local economy.

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People’s values have realigned post pandemic, with a greater importance placed on work/life balance, so organisations need ... an altered value structure
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Ipswich event



How do we identify issues 10 years in the future?

A short but sweet discussion around creating a long-term vision for the region.

Can we/should be we plan that far in advance? Is there any benefit? We need more open collaboration between policy makers, researchers and businesses. Communication could be improved by the creation of university ‘hubs’, allowing the curation of a shared vision.

How do businesses and universities effectively communicate a willingness to collaborate?

Issues around communication were raised again – here with a more specific focus, around what UoS could do to communicate the services and opportunities they have available to local businesses.

Expectations need to be managed – businesses often try to reach out to specific academics and don’t hear back which can affect reputation, but individuals cannot always have the capacity to take on additional obligations. Universities could be asking businesses what information they want from newsletters – there are lots of facilities, but the awareness isn’t

IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The direction/future plan for Ipswich – effects on community, student/staff experience, employability and investment in the area

How to change perception of Ipswich to bring more people to the town? Some participants felt that there is a negative perception of Ipswich, or that it is lacking in a recognisable identity, so they discussed how to raise the town’s profile as a hub for quality local businesses and improve reputation.

It was agreed that Ipswich does not feel like a county town to the wider region, and that an ‘Ipswich strategy’ is needed. One suggestion was a map/ guide to the town, either paper or digital (or both), that links all of the independent businesses in the area. This could be

widespread, so better communication of the facilities and opportunities available needs to take place both internally and externally.

Word of mouth is so powerful, so tools are needed for staff and academics to confidently discuss our services. How do we make time to get services out there? Often, organisations wouldn’t automatically think to look in education – would Google for services in the first instance. We need a holistic approach to what success looks like and this needs to be measurable.

The University and Suffolk County Council should be doing more press releases and PR as a service together. The University collaborates with history students/ English students – why aren’t we joining up on this? We could utilise creatives to extract the interesting stuff press will use (which might not be what the institutions thinks it should be, so getting an outsider opinion may be more in public interest). External audits could also be useful.

There’s a need to think about being more commercial and where these easy wins are – we cannot expect things to sell themselves. Meetings need to have goals in order to be constructive – non-conference events with tangible long-term objectives. For example if we hold an event, this should lead to something in a defined time period.

shared with the student union and SU building could serve as focal point for information about the town and facilities.

Weekly markets in the town could be improved using the ‘Treacle Market Macclesfield’ model, driving a local, high-quality approach with a focus on food and artisan goods, building upon the Saints markets, to incentivise shoppers into the town.

Raising awareness of amazing things in the region to attract business, investment and students

East Anglia is not widely known for its innovation outside of the region, but there are many businesses

and organisations involved with exciting projects – they are just not always well advertised. What can be done to platform brands and opportunities to boost the region's reputation as a hub for innovation?

Branding is important, and East Anglia has some very successful brands – Colmans, Ed Sheeran. We need to elevate other brands e.g. GENERATE, degree courses, people. The influence of tourism is important in making people aware what a brilliant place the region is – we need to attract events, from big gigs to national/ international business events.

Industry/job opportunities need to be highlighted to (potential) students, for example through sponsored degree courses. Students are attracted by business engagement and job opportunities, so how can universities make potential students aware of the size and diversity of the industry offering in the region (e.g. energy industry), prior to university choice?

There are hundreds of SMEs innovating in the region, but we need to promote them. There is a problem with platforming – websites just aren't enough. The recommendations were put forward that universities could support 'Brandland' to elevate regional brands and seek out businesses to work with on opportunities such as degree sponsorship, to highlight the opportunities within the region and attract more students.

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Mature workers hold a wealth of experience that could be valuable to businesses and learners

Ipswich event



Transport links for rural communities – what impact does poor public transport options have on communities and what can be done to improve?

The duality between urban and rural areas of the region can lead to an imbalance of opportunities, with young people in more isolated communities missing opportunities. One of the biggest barriers to education in these areas is a lack of reliable and/ or affordable public transport – what can universities do to improve rural outreach?

There are similar issues in both Norfolk and Suffolk – the chasm between the hub of diversity found in universities which is not reflected in the rural communities. A key obstacle to accessing education for those in rural areas is a lack of affordable, regular transport, as well as a cultural mindset that can impact educational aspirations. Solutions to bring more opportunities to rural areas could include a roadshow to go around villages showcasing universities and greater outreach to rural state schools – and teachers at these schools need to encourage children to be aspirational.

A permanent hub or library area providing a University presence in sixth forms (or secondary schools) could increase visibility and raise aspiration. State schools should utilise alumni the way that is common within independent schools – bringing them in to give talks on their careers can raise ambitions (as well as possible financial implications such as philanthropy.) The aging population in rural communities could also be included within the university system, providing opportunities for connection for those at risk of social isolation.

The Norfolk Science Festival has the potential for a great Suffolk presence and could help increase STEM education in rural areas. Further solutions could involve creating 'roadshows' to take the University out to rural areas, to provide better support with affordable travel/travel grants, creating University 'hubs' within rural communities, and alumni could visit local schools for inspiring talks.

COMMUNITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTISES

How can universities work with businesses to improve jobs and contribute to a better future and more ethical businesses?

Ethical business practises are increasingly important to consumers, workers and employers, but it can be difficult for businesses to know the best way to make changes – what could universities do to help?

We need more co-produced research, and the mechanisms to enable this. 'Business Ambassadors' could be appointed within universities to encourage businesses to collaborate with the institution.

Businesses want to respond to the demand to be more responsible, and there is a changing expectation/ demand from workers and consumers, but how can universities support businesses in making these adaptations, as well as incentivising these collaborative relationships with (especially small) businesses?

Solutions put forward include organising 'sustainability clinics' for organisations to access expertise, reverse internships that bring organisations into the universities, and opportunities for students and other stakeholders such as local authorities to facilitate collaborative conversation.

How can universities better support charities?

University involvement with charities and social enterprises needs to go beyond volunteering or fundraising opportunities to make the most impact – can a system or network be developed to support those with social impact ideas?

A 'Make a Difference' social enterprise creation program at UoS could provide an opportunity for students and alumni to develop their passions into a business idea that benefits social good. The Anglia Capital Group (a network of East of England start-up and innovation investors) only deal with private investment – it's not clear if there is a localised social investment network.

Could universities support the establishment of a regional social/charity investment network – and could students and alumni with social impact ideas

get seed funding from this? Research could be carried out within universities into social investments made in the region over the last five years in order to build a business case.

How can universities support community groups?

Volunteering opportunities can be an important way for students to get practise work experience that is both constructive and rewarding.

Universities also have facilities and knowledge that could be valuable to the users of charities or community groups to help people gain professional skills and knowledge. Forming stronger relationships and sharing opportunities would be mutually beneficial.

Collaboration between universities and community groups to provide volunteering opportunities to students would be mutually beneficial, giving valuable, practical work experience while creating stronger bonds between students and the community. Appointing sector co-ordinators to link with universities could create better opportunities for these collaborations.

One challenging issue experienced by local community support group, BME Suffolk, is getting service users into employment that matches their qualification. Universities could help by highlighting opportunities to transition into new roles – could this be developed into a program to support adults struggling to enter professional roles? This could involve workshops on skills such as CV writing and applications, how to job hunt, interview techniques etc.

What does it mean to be a 'professional'? Body language, self-confidence and self-awareness play a part – this should be nurtured as well as more tangible knowledge and skills. Could universities open up their career resources to the public? There are different ways to transition into different roles and career pathways need highlighting.

Universities could also provide the space for businesses to talk to each other, as well as other stakeholders such as local government and third sector groups, as well as students, to find out how we can support each other and the users of local services. Events could be held in which local businesses and

community groups are invited to hold talks for students. A problem sharing/solving forum could allow different disciplines to help each other find innovative solutions. Universities should also work with local authorities to support disadvantaged groups – such as qualified migrant workers that are struggling to continue their professions in the UK. Talent should be harnessed – there is a shortage of talent in every sector. More events like today’s could be held on a bigger scale for wider collaboration between universities and community groups.

Connecting UEA to young people to drive social change

Not all young people in the region are UEA students – how can the University forge beneficial relationships with young people from outside the University to help them facilitate civic projects?

Young people have bold, progressive ideas as a direct result of their lived experience, energy, and drive. The University has space, buildings and access to funding. Young people need access to these things and the University needs to hear their ideas, so there needs to be a mutually beneficial link formed between these two groups. For example, experts at the University could be brilliant resources for young people, and these connections should be taken seriously and give a real value, and not just seen as a potential opportunity to recruit students.

A better ecosystem where these encounters and connections could occur would encourage people to connect across academic disciplines and more events/opportunities that focus on cultivating these connections should take place. We could do this by working with local youth organisations such as Norwich YAB, LBGT project, School strike groups, Young Activist Network etc. They could equally be educational to UEA and help UEA develop its civic connections.

Meaningful community partnerships

The University has extensive community partnerships. Some between the institution as a whole, others with student groups, or individual staff and students. How can we make sure this activity is best supported in a way that works for people inside the University and the communities and charities we partner with?

We need better two-way interfaces between community groups and the University. When working together, we should think about the legacy that we will generate as well as the different models of learning, more fruitful engagement opportunities and longer-term strategic connections. Finding the right people to connect with can be challenging.

An opportunity to map the many network connections that we have between organisations and the UEA would be a useful start, or perhaps an interface by which community groups and researchers could connect. We really like the science shop model, where people outside the university pose problems for university researchers to solve, but it should also work the other way where researchers have effective ways to access community groups, perhaps through the Citizens Academy.

UEA could also be more aware that community groups are worried that the Civic University Project might be about trying to access the funding they depend upon, at the cost of the community groups. The University must be generous and ethical within that funding ecosystem.

To summarise, we need a well-designed interface between community groups and researchers. Also, we should explore whether we can support projects like ‘Pit Stop’ – an organisation bringing men together through a variety of activities to build social connection, friendship, and a sense of belonging – with discounts for members.

Harnessing mature workers and not losing their wealth to unemployment or ‘stuckology’

Mature workers hold a wealth of experience that could be valuable to businesses and learners – how can we foster opportunities for mature workers to share knowledge with others, whilst ensuring they are equipped to thrive in their careers for as long as they choose?

Mentoring programs – this can encompass both mentoring the workers themselves and empowering them with a greater sense of purpose with the opportunity to mentor the younger generation. By encouraging knowledge transfer via skills sharing and training programs can help ensure the mentors’ intellectual wealth is not lost.

But how do you pass on the ‘knowledge baton’, and how do workers equip others to do their jobs? Suggestions included online courses, a mature jobs fair, face-to-face conversations to explore options and opportunities, and events that can help open-up opportunities and inspire hope. Could the universities’ career services be opened-up to this cohort, in order to help with upskilling, filling gaps in workers’ portfolio of skills needed to transition within the jobs market, and advice on CVs, interviews, body language, digital skills etc?

Work is also needed in driving businesses to value mature talent more highly, instead of prioritising younger (cheaper) talent, and validating existing skills and experience.

How can university facilities be utilised to benefit the community?

A further discussion on how university spaces could be shared with businesses and the community.

Campus cafes could be utilised as community spaces. A regular roadshow bus (not a one off!) could take services tackling sustainability issues, well-being and young person centric topics to rural areas. Could library services be opened up for public use?

Open lectures – what do businesses and the public actually want to learn about? The Innovation Labs at UoS could be grown and publicised beyond ILUOS members. Creating child-friendly areas at universities would create visibility from a young age and raise aspiration.

Social justice and blurred learning spaces

A brief thought on taking learning outside of traditional educational establishments. We need to bring learning into different community settings instead of taking it for granted that people already know – taking learning ‘on the road’ – a spiritual and literal journey. Fostering a community improves social skills.

How can we ensure that UEA/Norwich is fighting for social justice?

A truly civic university ensures that it is representing what’s right, not only for its immediate community, but at regional, national and global levels. How can UEA ensure a commitment to addressing fundamental ethical issues?

This group felt that a less talk, more action strategy should be employed by University leaders, particularly when challenged by students with sensitive issues. Putting the voices of marginalised groups first is key, and engaging with young people in Norwich and Norfolk, in order to implement social transformation where its most needed. Advocating government policies that centre positive change, as well as challenging legislation around student fees, debts etc could contribute to major structural improvements.

While equal opportunities are vital and the needs of marginalised students must be recognised, support should be individualised based on complex needs rather than grouping people in pre-determined categories. Investment into the local area is needed,

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Could library services be opened up for public use?
Ipswich event
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as well as consideration how to avoid contributing to gentrification – connecting with and supporting local grass roots organisations could be a factor in implementing this.

UEA is an international hub and should increase efforts to consider global issues. Furthermore, international students should not be coveted for financial revenue, research and learning should always be paramount.

Some would like to see police removed from job fairs on campus, and alternative approaches to campus security to ensure police is the last possible resort, in line with the SU's commitments to restricting the role of police on campus.

A concluding thought to the day

“The business community in East Anglia is vibrant, dynamic and thoughtful. They are eager to engage with universities not just in helping us to address their needs, but in coming together to address social problems. The exceptional body of ideas that emerged from this Open Space is testament to two sectors enthusiastic about engaging with one another, but also cognisant of the barriers that collaboration faces. It was an important step to better dialogue and partnership work and we look forward to how we can take these ideas forwards as a region.”

Julie Schofield, Associate Director,
Business Partnerships, UEA

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The visibility of universities in schools in less affluent communities from a younger age, and the diversification of teaching, could encourage greater and more diverse enrolment
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Ipswich event



4 THE NORWICH BOOK

CIVIC LIFE – 99

CULTURE, SUSTAINABILITY AND WELL-BEING – 105

DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY AND IDENTITY – 106

99

The Norwich Book is a summary of the conversations that happened during the event about what “civic” should mean in the context of a regional university.

CIVIC LIFE

Cycles of history – the dialectic of UEA's civic mission

Norwich fought hard to have a university. Its initial aims were focused on improving the economic, cultural, and educational enrichment of the surrounding areas. The questions asked in this group were: are these aims still what UEA strives to achieve.

Has UEA become less about the purity of education and more about growing its income? If so, what happens next? Does UEA continue down a more commercial route? Or does it attempt to reignite the ideals it was initially founded on? Or could it do both?

When it comes to working within the contemporary system of education as a commodity (generating income through student fees for instance), UEA could reflect what Norwich has always done: be a trade centre but in this case trade ideas. For example, could the agriculture sector teach UEA about what students on an agricultural degree should learn? Can we imagine a collaborative effort, a sharing of ideas and information between different sectors with the university at the centre? Could UEA explicitly become the ideas broker for our region?

We spoke about how the benefits between the University and the region are reciprocal, not

least because UEA is more multicultural than the surrounding areas. Students volunteering at local organisations and working for local businesses counter the ‘pale, male and stale’ reputation Norfolk has.

We then moved on to discussing how a new Agora Model could emerge by UEA giving ‘open to all’ educational talks from a market stand with smaller groups or with larger groups from the steps at City Hall. This would also help UEA go back to the principles it was founded upon: the cultural, economic and educational enrichment of the local area.

What does civilised mean? How can we have conversations without anger?

Conversations around our community and ‘civic activity’ tend to involve talking about political topics. These issues can be polarising and cause anger, which makes them difficult conversations to hold in a civic manner. To be careful in our usage of words like civic we need to use language to open conversations in positive ways that encourage cooperation and mutual understanding.

Recognising that UEA’s size and scale in the region’s economy mean it already wields considerable power, it is important to ask what we can expect participants to get out of such conversations. Setting ground rules would allow discussion to start with a clear and shared understanding of what a civic university is, what it means and how power is shared.

- Questions for further discussion could be as simple as:
- ~ How can UEA students better integrate with the local community?
 - ~ How has COVID-19 changed our perceptions of what a civic university is and what it could be?
 - ~ What does it mean to be international in Norwich?
 - ~ How can we use technology to include more people without isolating other citizens?

We are the University of East Anglia. If we become a civic university, what does it mean for the entire East Anglian region?

This topic focused on the idea that the UEA name was inclusive of the entire region, but we asked if it is becoming more frequently associated with Norwich and less so with the surrounding region. Someone asked if the University of East Anglia might become Norwich University?

However, it was agreed that a Norwich focus could have a negative effect on the rest of the region. Instead it is better to move the conversation into discussions about areas where UEA could improve upon its engagement with East Anglia rather than just Norwich. This is, of course, a two-way street. It isn’t solely up to UEA to put itself out there; it is also up to the wider communities from across the region to engage positively with UEA.

How could further engagement be achieved with the wider community then? School trips is perhaps a good starting point (as adults tend to be busier than children). It could be an idea for UEA representatives to go out to schools and give lectures and vice versa. Maybe schools could come to UEA and simply use a lecture hall for the day, therefore reducing what is required of UEA. This would give students in communities where UEA is not so well known an insight into what it is like to be a student at UEA.



We need to encourage new and diverse ways of engaging with learning that might benefit from more varied methods of communication

Norwich event



Building the bridge between UEA and the future civic university

This group discussed how to make the benefits of academia more accessible to those in the local community.

UEA should start building common ground with the local community. The barriers of ‘jargon’ and intellectual snobbishness in academic research – which could be useful to the local area – creates a language and communication barrier that can stop academic research being civic.

To combat this, we should create opportunities for equality and equity between UEA and the local community, breaking down the pre-conceptions of UEA and hierarchy of academia by brainstorming ideas of how academia works best for our region. This would allow us to embrace the people outside of our institution that make our community better, who perhaps do not learn in what is considered a ‘conventional’ way. We need to encourage new and diverse ways of engaging with learning that might benefit from more varied methods of communication.

How can a civic university help us improve different ways of organising things for community benefit?

This group discussed the need to create a space for bottom-up demands to be accommodated. These were suggested as ‘listening hubs’. Furthermore, the question ‘what could UEA do to support community initiatives?’ was raised.

Communities and sectors such as agriculture, energy, co-operatives, housing associations, co-housing, credit unions and SME’s could all benefit from support. Could we embed the culture of community engagement into education? This concept could help to engage students with the City of Norwich and may be achieved through paid placements and work experiences. UEA in return can offer a wide range of its expertise to the community: from science and technology, to health and social care, to creative and educational knowhow.

It is likely that money would be needed to support these activities, and all stakeholders would need to be clear on boundaries of what will and will not be possible to do due to limited resources. Managing

expectations is important for creating a civic atmosphere where people feel promises made by UEA will be kept. UEA has to hold these values, deliver what is promised and change must be meaningful.

Connecting students and citizens of Norwich

This group asked how students and citizens of Norwich could be better connected. Are there specific activities that UEA could host that would encourage intermingling between Town and Gown?

We need to break down the barriers between the University and the city, as well as sending UEA representatives across the region to encourage community engagement. UEA should not appear to be a spaceship landed at the edge of the city.

Perhaps UEA could send experts to public events to share knowledge and resources with the local community, as well as hosting events that allow citizens to use UEA facilities. There is a clearly perceived divide between students and locals; there are often housing policies aimed at students and there are problems with noise complaints as well as problems with student behaviour in the city.

What can the University do to foster a non-confrontational atmosphere when addressing these nuisance-based incidents? It is important not to side with students and alienate the public, but also important for UEA to support its students. To improve student reputation, perhaps we could send students to local schools to deliver workshops. Students undertaking teacher training might help with this too. It would be very beneficial to develop a network of local schools in more rural Norfolk and Suffolk schools that might also benefit from access to University expertise and resources.

How can societies and clubs improve outreach?

UEA has a wide variety of societies, sports clubs and peer support groups, covering interests ranging from bowling to ghost hunting, yet some students find it difficult to find the right one for them. What could UEA do to ensure everyone feels welcome?

There is a strong undergraduate focus to UEA's societies and sports clubs, which can leave mature students and postgrads feeling like they do not belong. Furthermore, with most socials and events happening in the evening, this can exclude commuters and those with caring responsibilities.

There is often a lack of diversity in society social media, which can put some people off – but time is a precious resource to committee members, it can be frustrating to invest efforts into social media and not get engagement, and it is not always clear who officers should be trying to reach.

UEA and the SU could offer society and club committees more help to communicate to diverse groups effectively and help boost the profile of smaller societies rather than making the focus on sports clubs. A thriving community of societies and clubs will feed into the local area, reflecting the Civic University ethos.

How can UEA engage with local night clubs and pubs to keep students safe?

For many students, nightlife is a rite of passage within the university experience, but pubs and clubs can come with risks. How can the University help to keep students safe on nights out in the local area?

UEA should encourage bars and clubs in the city to provide anti-spiking lids for free. Door staff are also important – more female bouncers are needed, and staff should be properly trained in how to safely and sympathetically assist victims of spiking – could UEA provide these training opportunities? A minibus shuttle service could help ensure students have a safe way to get home. Could UEA facilitate a student spiking helpline?

How can UEA better link with schools?

UEA has an extensive and targeted outreach programme across the region, and our relationship with schools comes up frequently in Civic open space events. In this discussion, participants looked at how we could support that work in different ways.

It was suggested that schools place too much importance on employability rather than the value of life experience and skills, which can be equally important. Improving outreach could provide opportunities to better inform young people and provide insight into how university works, preparing children well in advance.

More schemes in which school children are invited into UEA, and students/graduates visit schools, could be in place, and targeted at younger age groups. These could also be tailored to children with additional needs or responsibilities, such as young carers.

What can UEA do to help students navigate the private rental sector?

Comfortable, safe and affordable housing is paramount to a quality of life that allows students to thrive within the university environment, but for those living off-campus, finding and maintaining private rentals can be challenging – what can UEA do to improve this experience and help resolve housing issues?

It was felt that the University could take a more active role in assisting students with housing issues, from process of looking for and acquiring a property, to providing support in resolving difficulties during or at the end of a rental contract. Easily accessible information should be provided, with an insight to the different areas of Norwich, unbiased housing advice and a guide to tenants' rights, to ensure students are properly informed. Furthermore, the University could act a positive advocate for student renters.

International students face additional barriers, particularly post-Brexit, requiring UK-based guarantors, which can be difficult to obtain and/or involve expensive fees – could UEA provide financial assistance where needed? They are also less likely to be aware of their rights as tenants and therefore need more robust support and education around housing.

The HomeRun scheme is useful, but it's not well

publicised. A detailed charter of safe, reliable, and reasonable landlords could be created – advocating landlord licencing by the council could provide additional security for students in ensuring fair practice by landlords. Organisations such as Shelter and Acorn could also be platformed by the University to provide a deeper understanding of tenants' rights.

Students are often unfairly perceived as being bad tenants and/or neighbours, but student renters are just renters. Where issues are raised within the community, the University could provide a mediating service to neighbours or landlords, in the form of an app or reliable phone line, giving the opportunity for problems to be resolved before they escalate.

What would an uncivic university look like?

An uncivic university is socially distant from its local community and detached from local affairs. A key uncivic factor might be short-termism, where the university becomes an unreliable partner for its local community. Another factor could be the tensions between serving private and business interests whilst being part of the public sector.

A civic university would be connected to its local area and engaged in long-term, local pursuits.

To be civic, UEA needs to have more and better communication with its local area; this would help to build mutual trust and a stronger relationship instead of just discussing key issues within the university setting. An example of this was UEA's civic service during the COVID-19 crisis where we worked with partners in the community to share resource and problem solve issues raised by the pandemic. Can this kind of civic support be continued into the future?

UEA needs to be more accessible and provide better platforms, engagement opportunities and learning opportunities to create and share knowledge more widely outside a university setting. Perhaps being more open to the public would help with these changes. Running events such as a Christmas Market where students collaborate with local farmers, firework night, cultural activity nights, and groups for children could bring people together in different ways than simply holding lecture events on campus.

Other ways of achieving civic engagement could be providing education opportunities to the public

so that it is a key area of knowledge within the local community and not just for students. How would people be invited to come and learn, and is this something that would be taken up by locals?

UEA supporting music/culture/ equipment repurpose into schools

As local schools come under increasing budgetary pressure due to rising inflation, there is concern that things like music, computer equipment and art will come to be seen as optional. What could UEA do to help this situation?

UEA has such a useful array of equipment, such as musical instruments, IT equipment etc, it would be great to see it utilised more effectively to benefit those outside of the University, as well as students and staff. Widening the requirements of lending schemes could contribute to this, as well as starting a donation scheme for equipment that is no longer required, so that these could be utilised by schools and community groups.

Student volunteering opportunities could be co-ordinated to provide instrument lessons, digital skills/ internet safety tutoring etc – lots of people have skills or qualifications that they do not realise they could utilise to help people. School based partnerships and philanthropy could boost these schemes, and outreach opportunities could be integrated into modules that are mutually beneficial to students and the community.

The projects and opportunities that do already exist should also be better communicated, to ensure awareness reaches those that could benefit.

What could a civic university do to support a thriving local economy?

This group asked how UEA could better support a thriving local economy. It was suggested that skills and employment advice and opportunities would be a useful asset to local people not just to students. UEA is a large employer in the local area and apprenticeships could be a wonderful opportunity to enter higher quality jobs.

This also works the other way around; connections allowing UEA students to undertake internships within

the local community that include partnerships with small businesses could be hugely helpful to graduates, business and students alike.

The charity sector could also benefit from this: by providing volunteering opportunities for students, who in turn would gain skills that benefit the local community, and generate a social impact. It would also be good to give young people the opportunity to become charity trustees which would further develop skills as well as enterprise in local young people.

Businesses could also be more involved with UEA. Having stalls in the Hive and being encouraged to sell on campus would lead to new links between local businesses and students. UEA could also offer staff opportunities to move and retrain so that those who

wish to use their skills and expertise in different careers are supported. It would also be good to reimagine employment at the University – moving away from like for like replacement of staff to consider other needs and solutions.

So, how could UEA take steps towards these goals? It could start by improving the advertising of volunteering opportunities to both staff and students, create a strong network of local organisations who want to be involved, pool resources into pro bono activities, provide evening classes for the local community focused on developing employable skills, get career central services offered to local people and connect the curriculum to real work.

Ipswich Open Space Event. UEA Image Archive REF 46080.



CULTURE, SUSTAINABILITY AND WELL-BEING

From the 95% rule to well-being as a social movement

The 95% rule in palliative care is that only 5% of a dying persons time is spent with clinicians. What happens the other 95% of the time? How could a civic university help meaningful end of life support in East Anglia.

Well-being is a social movement and should sit with arts and creatives as well as healthcare professionals. There were questions about UEA as an institution becoming more civically involved in local well-being efforts: is the whole of the institution on board and does it trust the community to collaborate? While the conversation started focusing on the 95% rule, it quickly opened out. What specific activities could UEA engage with to improve the well-being scene in Norwich? Suggestions were as follows:

- ~ Having well-being highlighted as important in the arts scene
- ~ Open student society memberships so all can get involved
- ~ Having UEA develop a policy for volunteering
- ~ Having a neighbourhood support scheme
- ~ Support mutual aid
- ~ Create foundations for close-knit community groups
- ~ Provide community lectures and seminars, and set up coordination hubs that help the community collaborate with UEA.

How can everyone live healthy and sustainable lives?

It is clear there is a need for a positive health infrastructure to support individuals within the local community.

A healthy and sustainable lifestyle can be seen as elitist, especially considering the language often used around the subject – it can be critical of how some people live or suggest activities that time-poor people can struggle to integrate into their lives. Systems need to be in place to improve access for all as health is, in fact, a social justice issue. Would UEA be able to facilitate community hubs to improve the accessibility rates of these kinds of services? The feel of these hubs would not be patronising but encourage voices to

be heard and diversity to be celebrated. UEA has much staff and student expertise to offer to an initiative such as this e.g. sustainability experts. How do we transfer this knowledge held within UEA to the wider community?

Our campus isn't always the most accessible for the local community, but making services available on campus such as vegetable box pickup hubs for Norwich FarmShare, could widen accessibility rates for the public and students. These examples would potentially help improve knowledge of healthy and sustainable cooking in our local area, as just one benefit, which in turn would benefit local health and well-being.

Understanding the day-to-day changes we can make to avoid the climate crisis

We need to work with the local community if we are going to tackle the climate crisis.

This means going to where the local community are, not where we want them to be. To do this we should have knowledge exchange roles embedded in the community and these should be seen as an important part of the University's activity.

We should facilitate a climate of equal partnership and listen to and understand the expertise of those groups we currently partner with. Those at UEA should not assume they have the monopoly on expertise. UEA should also acknowledge and mitigate against a project based approach where funding ends and UEA simply walks away from communities.



Can we imagine a collaborative effort, a sharing of ideas and information between different sectors with the university at the centre?

Norwich event



Incredible Edibles community project

There are many benefits of local community projects such as Incredible Edibles.

The University should support important initiatives such as promoting dialogue around sustainable growing and eating; it could also help to create opportunities for conversations about this topic and build bridges between research relevant to such projects and the potential impact of that research locally.

It would be helpful if UEA assisted in pulling community initiatives together, perhaps providing expertise and utilities for projects such as Incredible Edibles. Connecting science, art, nutrition, horticulture and creating community growing sites on unused land is an example of a helpful action that might enable this.

How can UEA help produce and enrich an economically successful cultural sector?

The main idea that arose from this discussion was to connect UEA students with Norwich's cultural sector.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY AND IDENTITY

What could a civic university mean for those who feel education isn't for them – who haven't felt included in education so far?

What impact will COVID have on educational attainment in the long-term? It is important to consider the impact of this and why university education can be deemed as more valuable than apprenticeships or practical experience, despite this being an elitist point of view.

How can we celebrate vocational education more strongly, so that there isn't a noticeable distinction between respect for certain types of achievements? All post-school destinations should be celebrated.

Defining education from a civic perspective would be a good place to start: why do we consider some people are not an ideal fit for higher education? Is education daily learning or inherent knowledge, and

The reasoning for this approach is that currently Norwich isn't known to be multicultural, whereas UEA is. We spoke about how organisations such as the Sistema Group could benefit from having UEA students from BAME backgrounds connect with other locals from BAME backgrounds.

We then moved on to how UEA could help facilitate these links between students and local organisations. Could UEA do more to increase the profile of arts in Norwich? One of the ideas which arose from this question was UEA offering residential summer schools focusing on the arts. We then started discussing potential problems with this approach. For example, Norwich doesn't have an inviting infrastructure: it's difficult to travel here and the accommodation isn't very well located for travel to UEA and Norwich's other surrounding arts/cultural centres.

It was also discussed whether Norwich seems to have an issue with promoting itself, for example whether locals are aware of what the Sainsbury Centre has to offer (could UEA and Sainsbury Centre learn from NUA in the way they promote themselves?) and nationally Norwich isn't recognised for its arts and cultural sectors. Can we work to change this?

is experimental and creative learning still considered as valuable learning? Let's question why we separate the study of maths, English and science both in school and at university level. Holding more events in the city centre could tackle the elitist stance of higher education. Protests about things that matter to the local community can be boosted through UEA's connectivity to local businesses.

There is an issue with the way UEA promotes events and initiatives within Norwich; it doesn't always reach effectively into local communities. Support is provided by UEA to the local community, but it can seem uncoordinated, and UEA volunteers can be inconsistent due to competing demands on their time i.e. during exam time.

How can a civic university support a community of learners work with all levels of lifelong learning?

This group discussed the ways in which a civic university can support a community of learners and work with all levels of learning in a lifelong way.

There is already outreach provided by the University, but it needs to be more continuous. Fees for access to these services are a barrier, but so are other factors like commuting and having the time to study. Perhaps it would be good for UEA and UEA students to make more of an effort to go out into the community e.g. do public lectures.

It is also a problem that a lot of graduates, due to lack of available funds or positions, don't end up in a job related to their degree. To tackle this issue, could the University offer some additional 'follow up' teaching related specifically to careers in that degree? It is important that the students have skills, but also important they truly understand the impact they can have on their local community.

Being involved in schools would also be beneficial, but schools in Norwich are short on time and funding. Setting up support systems for these schools, such as youth groups, might help.

Local scholarship and financial assistance

UEA has a range of scholarships available, but we need to ensure that they are accessible to those that need them most.

While there are a lot of scholarship opportunities available, some, such as music, are more likely to be available to those from a more affluent socio-economic background, and learners from low-income families may not be aware of the help available. For instance, more efforts could be made to communicate to applicants that scholarships can be paid direct rather than applied to tuition fees, providing immediate, rather than long term, financial help.

There's an incongruence between UEA's childcare discounts versus young carer discounts – the help available to young carers should be better communicated by student services so that those eligible can access support more easily. A gap between national and international scholarships was also noted.

It was suggested that the scholarship system could

be restructured to create one 'pot' with a more general application process, rather than individualising based upon criteria such as sporting difference. Improving relationships and trust between the University and donors (active or potential), scholarships are more likely to be developed, and be received by the students that most need support. Could UCAS be approached to advertise available scholarships on application pages?

How could a civic university support positive masculinity and activate well-being within/ across Norwich's communities?

This group discussed the spectrum of masculinity from the toxic end to the positive end.

Positive masculinity is defined as understanding and talking about men's emotions but also understanding and respecting women's emotions. Emotions are key to understanding masculinity; assertiveness can be mistaken for aggression in men, confidence mistaken for anger, etc.

Terminology is very important when describing men's emotions, and phrases such as 'mummy's boy' can be very damaging. However, men also limit themselves by not listening to women. We need to democratise and recolonise conversations we're having about this subject to enrich knowledge.

In context of university, people and their emotions are extremely important. People are encouraged to adapt to university, but perhaps universities could be more 'people-shaped'. White working-class men are the least likely to attend university and this must be recognised.

Similarly, the rate of male suicide must be acknowledged. So how do we provide education for those who might not normally access it? Could we come up with a local currency, such as those who work locally being rewarded with university tuition hours?

Lifelong learning will be introduced into universities from 2021, but this will be open to interpretation. Those who are in a good place should be kept there and healthy minds should be invested in. To ensure trust in this exercise, the work from 'listening sessions' like today must be followed up and taken seriously.

How can a civic university help to promote positive masculinity and attitudes around well-being in Norwich?

This group discussed the possibilities of UEA getting involved in local activism regarding the promotion of positive masculinity.

UEA has already done things such as the Movember campaign and producing the play How's Your Father, but how can we raise awareness and money to address this issue and to close the divide between student and wider society attitudes to 'positive masculinity'?

Firstly, the group's definition of positive masculinity is as follows: "promoting positive attitudes towards mental health and giving men more of a choice in what they do from a young age, not forcing them down a 'masculine' path. This could also mean changing attitudes about what it means to be a man, taking out violence as a necessity of 'proving yourself', thus helping to sever links to gang violence."

So, what things could be done by UEA to help? Implementing the idea of positive masculinity in education is a big one, as well as providing support men. It has also been noted that the closing down of community centres all around the country since austerity measures were adopted has led to further isolation and rises in gang violence. Can UEA provide community spaces for groups to meet and therefore reduce these negative effects? It would also be useful if UEA was more involved with local charities.

How can UEA engage the wider community with politics of decolonisation?

The 'Decolonise UEA' campaign has undertaken important work in recent years, recognising the histories and legacies of colonialism and racism within higher education and addressing the lasting effects. How can these efforts be extended outside of the University?

Wider engagement with the community could provide opportunities to extend conversations around decolonisation outside of the University. Ways to do this could include creating a 'People's Library' project to share stories, sports or food events to link local and student communities, or art and visual projects that encourage open conversation and engagement with others' narratives. These could take place at venues away from campus, as it can be intimidating for those outside the University. Decentring academic language from this discourse would make this more accessible – such as the term 'uncomfortable conversation spaces' rather than jargon.

Facilitating oral history projects that demonstrate the value of listening and communication between different groups could offer people opportunities to share stories of their own heritage. Engaging with other educational institutions about teaching methods and informational resources could help to effect changes in schools and colleges. UEA also needs to continue looking inside the institution, such as considering the colonial implications of artefacts within the Sainsbury Centre, re-evaluating policies and advocating changes where necessary.

How can a civic university be playful, and help people play and imagine?

Many of the topics discussed today have been serious and important, but a civic university should also be playful and fun.

Universities are place of knowledge and imagination, but they also have a reputation for being stuffy, dry and fusty. By being more fun, they would become more welcoming. Putting on events that people find exciting and connect to their everyday interests would help people engage, particularly children.

How can a civic university promote equality and diversity?

Systematic change is needed within UEA in order to promote equality, diversity and multiculturalism.

Actions can be taken to do this. There should be more events held at or run by UEA celebrating many cultures which could be organised by collaboration with the local community. It would also be wise to assess who is helping to run these events to make sure they are truly representative. This could be a potential role in itself: a community engagement officer, whose job is to identify communities and how to engage/make an impact within them.

It would also be good to establish safe spaces on campus for both University members and local people, but these don't need to be just on campus. Positive events and gatherings can lead to more important conversations, such as the Sainsbury Centre's family craft days which lead to conversations on the art and culture behind them.

Several factors are vital to the success of this idea: active engagement and active listening; general desire to make change; changes in organisational structure to ensure action; including the wider community in these conversations; active support from the University for students from marginalised groups and intersectional identities; better representation and better internal communication.

These factors highlight the key challenges of communication and providing space to engage. Some ideas for such events might be University-focused events held in the city (not just on campus) such as creating safe spaces in the city, bringing people to

UEA through diverse events, connecting with local businesses and continuing this support for the long-term.

Would a better-connected university help stop students being othered? Can we make everyone feel validated?

There is a disconnect between the University and the city. Due to the location of UEA, there is a divide between the students and the local community, especially first year students. As NUA is in the centre of the city, it might be worth figuring out what they're doing to engage students in their local area, and if there's anything we could learn from them.

It is important to ask what would minimise this divide. Improving public transport links, volunteering to aid the local community, a University pop up in town encouraging the community to connect with the University and active learning spaces in town could help to lessen this divide. At the very least, it would make the city and students seem less scary for both parties. How can UEA also make diversity more of a priority when integrating its students with the local community? And could a civic university help to dispel student stereotypes? Some action points UEA could take forward include:

- ~ Journalistic links between the University and city
- ~ Creation of a community hub page on the Students' Union website
- ~ Including events in Norwich during fresher's week
- ~ Volunteering opportunities being raised more clearly to students
- ~ A good neighbour's scheme to encourage collaboration between students and the community and encouraging businesses to collaborate with students.

What is stopping connection from happening more easily? Perhaps student nights held on campus discourage mingling with local people as well as the institution being far away from the centre. Could the University come up with more participatory modules which include community engagement, as well as allowing the community to join certain lecture series?

To help service this, UEA needs to reach out both to students and the local community and gather unheard and unasked for opinions.



To be civic, UEA needs to have more and better communication with its local area; this would help to build mutual trust and a stronger relationship instead of just discussing key issues within the university setting

Norwich event



How do we get the more marginalised of society involved in conversations like this?

As with many communities, there are marginalised parts of our local community. How do we get them involved in conversations like these? Would today's agenda have looked different if we had more marginalised communities present? The answer is almost definitely yes.

By simply making facilities available to these groups outside of UEA who felt they might be useful could be better than coming up with our own agendas for them, which we might get wrong as we struggle to see things from their perspective. We shouldn't try to impose agendas on groups that we don't understand, and instead should identify and listen to these groups.

How do we approach these groups effectively? Can UEA's outreach service do this, and how can we optimise access to opportunities we might provide once these groups have been identified? It's also worth questioning where we hold these events and what they would be. Maybe holding them in the city might mean they are more widely accessible rather than having them on campus.

There are certain things that we must be wary of when pursuing engagement from marginalised groups. We must be careful to avoid stereotypes, celebrate commonality whilst respecting differences, connect to them in a way that makes them feel comfortable and supported and acknowledge that our ideas of issues might not align with theirs. Do marginalised groups even consider UEA to be useful and welcoming to them? How can we present the University as a space for change?

Emphasis could also be placed on written communication, so that people don't feel confronted or shy when raising their ideas. We want to make sure diverse people become civically engaged with UEA and that we can build trust with these groups in order to create mutually beneficial relationships. We must expand the campus bubble to do this, collaborating with local institutions such as NUA to create safe spaces for these groups.



Collaboration and 'doing it together' – whether it's between businesses, institutions, charities or individuals – is the only way forward

Creative event



What can UEA do to help commuting students integrate?

Not all students live on campus or within the immediate area – what can be done to ensure they are included?

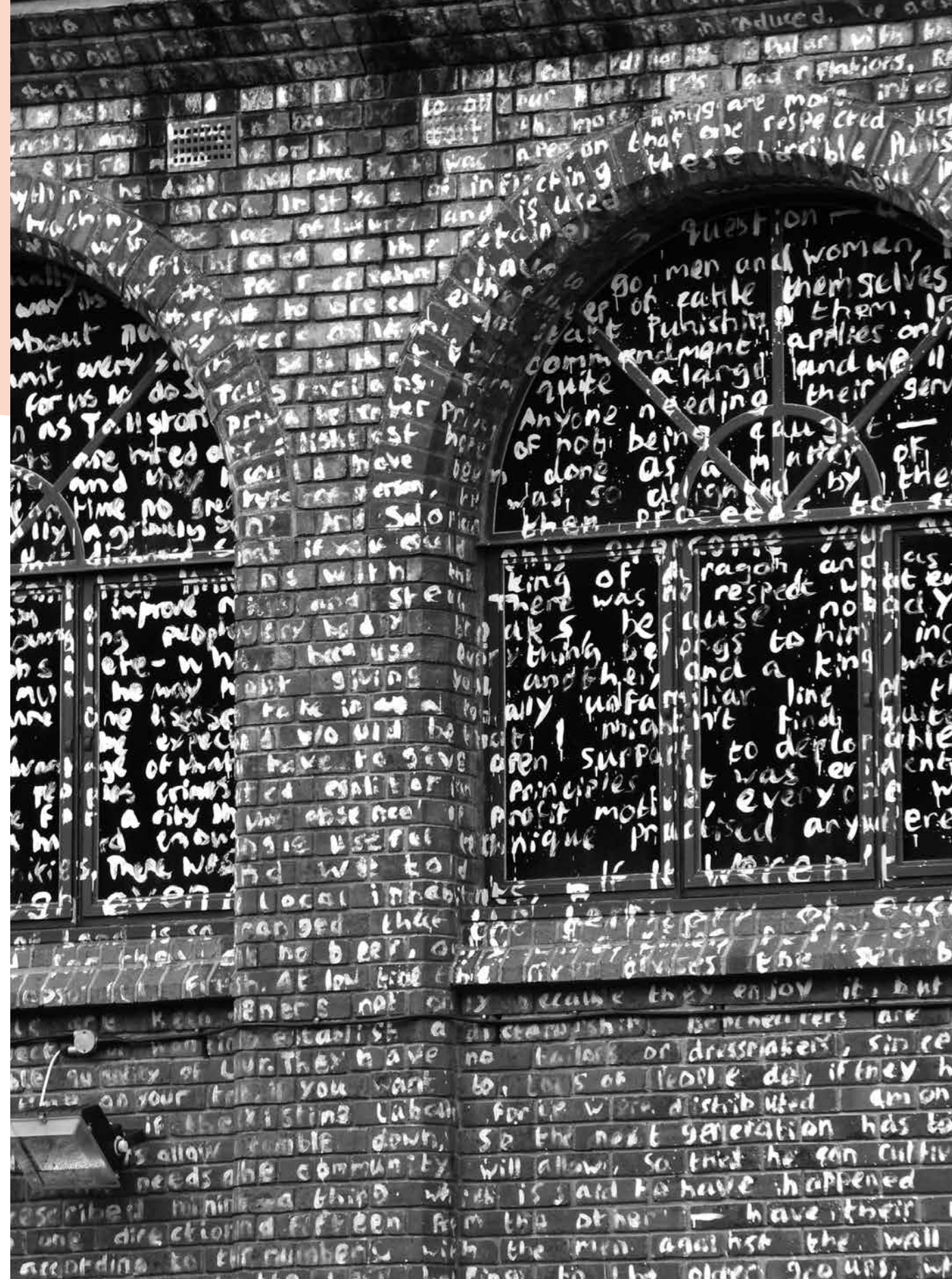
UEA can feel very campus/ Norwich-centric to students that live outside of the city and it can be difficult to plan academic and social activities to align with transportation, particularly for those living in rural areas of the region. If timetables were published well in advance of the start of the semester it would allow commuters to effectively plan their transportation in advance, and remote learning options would be a useful alternative when faced with travel problems.

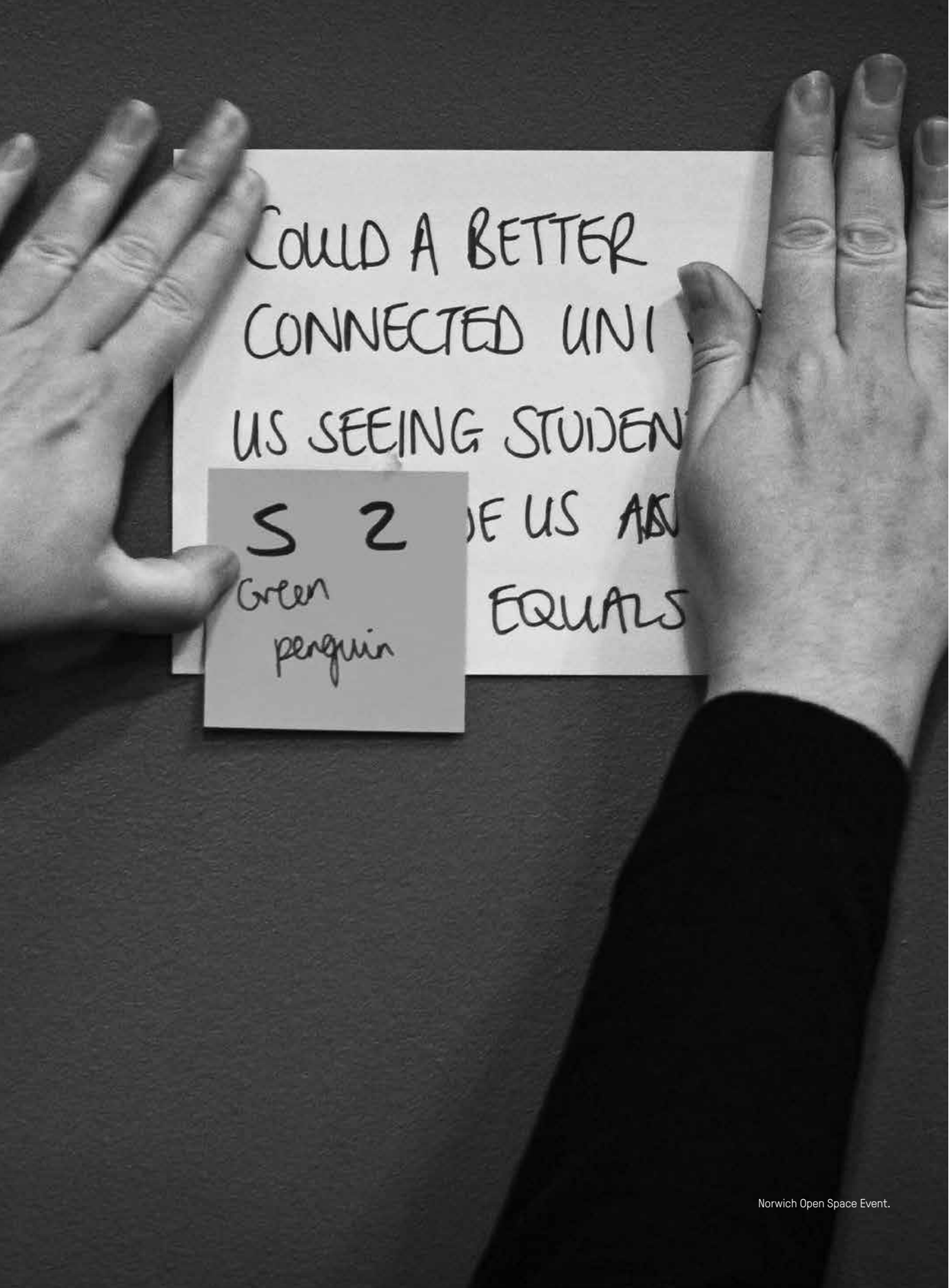
The majority of events organised by societies and sports clubs are held in the evenings, which can be impractical for commuters. More options for daytime socials would improve integration. A more effective parking payment system for those that must drive to campus would also provide more flexibility.

A concluding thought to the day

"UEA needs to make a long-term commitment to the project and that civic action is only meaningful if it is about long-term partnerships and outlooks."

Words of Sir Thomas More's Utopia written on facade of warehouse building in Norwich city centre; Artist: Rory Macbeth, 2006.





5 THE GREAT YARMOUTH BOOK

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113

The Great Yarmouth Book is a summary of the conversations that happened during the event that took place in the Drill House, where participants explored what “civic” should mean for a regional university.

CITIZENS, BIODIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Plants, people and places

This conversation highlighted the importance of teaching the community about gardening.

The positive impact it can have on mental health and the emerging importance of growing our own food as food prices continue to rise. Looking forward, it is important to consider this in the light of the climate crisis. Future generations need to be prepared for change and growing and gardening are a great way to do this. Accessibility and funding for the younger generations to learn to garden is important. UEA

could help with organising accessible routes into this kind of horticultural education. UEA and its research can also be used to look at the effects of gardening, and as a result lead the conversation nationally and internationally.

Norfolk and East Anglia used to be a leading figure in the agriculture sector. We need to return to this and UEA can play a part in making this happen. UEA should first use its expertise within different academic schools to conduct research into how gardening is essential for the future of our region.

REIMAGINING UEA AS A CIVIC EDUCATOR

Pluriversity

Pluriversity is a 'request for education to happen in the community'.

The importance of education was discussed and acknowledged, and there was consensus that learning needs to take place in more varied ways within the Great Yarmouth community. It was recognised that UEA has expertise and knowledge in many areas and across different disciplines. 'How can this knowledge be shared with the wider community in more effective ways?' was a question that emerged during this session.

ClimateUEA was mentioned as a good example of effective community knowledge sharing. This is an interdisciplinary theme centred within the University that explores narratives around the effect of climate change on people's lives. It uses the arts and sciences to express and explore sustainability issues through good outreach events and knowledge sharing. As such it provides an excellent example for future educational projects.

The value of some UEA courses such as economics were questioned for their relevance when climate change is considered. This is because students studying these subjects aren't taught to think in environmental terms. Environmentalism is fundamental to all lives. There was a call for all courses to be future proofed and updated with relevant civic topics such as climate change being embedded within curricula.

There are theatre companies and literary organisations in the region that specialise in science and environmental humanities, but these organisations tend to hold events that are very Norwich based. So how can wider communities be better engaged in these events and how can UEA enable this? One idea was to create a mobile library or a roadshow that could travel the region, visiting primary schools in local villages and hard to reach communities in the town centre that allows local children to engage with the science and the humanities, sparking interest and raising aspirations.

Finally, this group discussed the current Conservative policy on education. It is perceived that the A levels that are offered have been stripped back, which has depleted interdisciplinary courses that focus on the humanities such as world development, culture, and communications and this will impact on students in East Anglia, who no

longer have access to this 'wide sky' thinking.

Then there is the fall out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rise of remote learning. Young people have been particularly affected by the pandemic; they appear apathetic and disengaged – although everyone is a bit traumatised and fatigued. Hopefully as society recovers there will be a bounce back and a pluriversity could play an important role in a brighter future.

Using research and studies to make a difference locally

We need to ensure UEA's research and learning can truly benefit our local communities.

Teaching and research should be practically focused and reflect on student and community experiences rather than impractical learning. One step towards this kind of change could be including university research in A-levels, such as Sociology, to boost local education. Another idea could be relating UEA research and academic content to relevant and recent developments within our region.

We should be making learning change-based and community focused, linking students with communities. This should be an ongoing involvement rather than a project with short-term, transient benefit. Projects which are linked to our region raise the aspirations of local community, and this would feed directly back into the University, making it a win-win for East Anglia.

Other ideas were also discussed with the group. There is room for criticisms of local schooling as well as UEA's education system. No real skills are taught, and skills that are taught aren't taught in a way where interpreting real life situations comes naturally. For example, UEA should also be supporting students with unstable home lives, using its resources to impact learning within the local area, we should be encouraging entrepreneurial young people, using anthropology to have local impact.

We should also be using UEA's research to benefit regional mental health. How and where can these beneficial and better connections be made between academics and East Anglian citizens?

What is UEA for?

This group discussed how to prioritise fulfilling learning experiences and community focus over academic elitism.

UEA is for students, world leading research, local community, climate research, creative writing, employment, community development, growing independence and enjoyable degrees! The quality of UEA's education is important and should mean something different to an idea of academic elitism. We need to place less importance in traditional ways of learning and start to give back to local communities: perhaps by producing local graduates and providing valuable services to our community.

What should UEA's strategic objectives and priorities be? Financial sustainability is, of course, important, but it could also focus on local empowerment, academic excellence, and advocating policy rooted in social justice. It might not be possible to be truly civic while the University sits in a competitive market forcing universities to brand themselves. This emphasis on competition inhibits growth and as a result of it UEA is a very hierarchical institution, making change slow. However, it was set

RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND UNITY

Youth outreach

Isolation is a big issue in Great Yarmouth. How can communities that aren't connected to Norwich get engaged with the different events and activities taking place at UEA?

Great Yarmouth, rural communities, and surrounding areas of East Anglia can offer excellent opportunities for public engagement with the University. However, there is still potential to improve the engagement opportunities that UEA offers especially when it comes to targeting young people. A civic university should invest in the social, emotional, and intellectual well-being of local young people. The University has valuable resources in music, art, creatives pursuits and science – things that schools might struggle to find and to fund.

up to make education accessible for people who may not otherwise achieve a degree.

Could local members of the community be on University councils and strategic decision-making bodies to help UEA foster a more democratic system?

Building education of the whole person

A civic university must be related to the local community and should bring a joyful and even silly approach to education to make it more exciting for people.

Teachers should be able to be themselves without fearing reproach from UEA due to differing opinions or methods and UEA itself should be listening to the needs of the local community more. Could UEA offer more personal development opportunities and vocational training for its local region?

More interactive education would also be beneficial. Local pride is also important to the thriving of the local area. Norwich and Norfolk have incredible histories as city and region respectively, and identity adds to the local area. In order to get young people to stay, long-term engagement policies are needed but these take time to build.

Academic staff could also help young people get connected to their history, wildlife, and culture in order to feel pride for their local community and surrounding areas. How can studying be provided more flexibly for young people? A very expensive, three-year commitment is too much for some young people. Could UEA deliver degrees in a more flexible way, perhaps with a more modular approach? Can UEA explore how it can offer more than just traditional, straight-line, three-year degrees for students who have other requirements?

How can a civic university take and bind the assets already here?

This group started off discussing the tendency of politics to divide people instead of bringing them together, despite most people wanting the same things in life and having similar views in many areas.

Party politics tend to divide people in order to win votes, and this is made possible by the electoral system. However, the group mostly spoke about education in general, and how positive encouragement is crucial from early on and throughout life to encourage continual learning. Communities and the University need to work together to provide more active learning opportunities to help boost the economy and encourage more pride in local community. Students studying at university also need to have more experience in grass roots politics to better understand their surroundings whilst at UEA. UEA should take opportunities to venture out into the local region, rather than inviting people onto campus and into their spaces, which can feel limited. Venturing into the local community doesn't have to be expensive but opportunities to go out and about should be sought out and prioritised.

Bringing people together, not driving them apart

A theme that was raised was around the visibility and accessibility of the executive team including the Vice Chancellor. There was a strong desire to seek assurance that this project is a key priority for the University (even those in senior positions). The Civic University Project is about making sustainable long-term commitments to the region.

It is important that this project makes positive changes that last. One recommendation that came out of this group discussion was that the politics department at UEA should also do more to encourage participation from students outside of the classroom, and that lecturers could play a bigger role in local politics too.

Lifelong learning – pulling people together who may have had a negative experience of education

Organisations that are running services – including UEA – need to understand what is needed by the communities they serve and ensure longevity in what they are creating, producing and delivering for their service users.

People within our local community understand what they want, but it's hard to communicate these needs with UEA. How do we improve this communicative barrier so it's more accessible in the future? Working with a company/organisation like Dial to give clinics like UEA's law student advisor clinic further reach to places like Great Yarmouth would be a great example of effective collaboration that has a direct positive impact.

Education and Aspirations

Some UEA students need to live in Great Yarmouth, but there needs to be better transport options and arrangements to support this happening.

UEA should be actively involved in helping disadvantaged pupils within schools in Great Yarmouth and there are a few ways they could get involved in doing this:

- ~ Giving scholarships to disadvantaged students
- ~ Doing workshops and speaking to whole schools
- ~ Using student ambassadors at UEA to do workshops and outreach within regional schools
- ~ Setting up a 'Parent' ambassador scheme, where a student ambassador is assigned to look after a particular child
- ~ Supporting community activities encouraging educational aspiration (Cubs, Scouts, Guides, DofE, CCP)
- ~ Encouraging regional health and civic pride

Advantages of students going to UEA could include access to facilities and ability to experience a workplace environment. Would there be any opportunity for students to be involved in the LEP? Could Great Yarmouth set up its own Chamber of Commerce?

Is it possible to be civic in a competitive market?

What is UEA for? UEA should be considering the civic agenda above league tables, as a civic university would naturally do well in a competitive market.

Strategic priorities should include financial

sustainability, academic excellence and local empowerment. Quality student education should also be, of course, what UEA stands for. The East Anglian region and UEA can provide better student educational experience by continuing to produce world-leading research, connecting them to the local community and encouraging climate action and creative pursuits.

They should also be encouraged and supported to lead healthy lives, enjoy their degrees, and become independent. Finally, UEA needs to remember that quality of education should always trump the need for academic elitism.

INCLUSIVITY AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Civic Pride

The perceived decay of the 'Great' in Great Yarmouth was greeted with some dismay.

There was a discussion around how tourism and the 'right people in the right place' could help locals to re-establish a positive image of Great Yarmouth. Currently there tends to be a lot of focus on some key societal issues including drug addiction, lack of aspiration and poor educational attainment. There are also concerns regarding the high levels of crime. The participants emphasised that this image of the town had not been there historically. In fact, it was once the wealthiest towns in England! Re-establishing a positive image for the town should be a key focus in reviving its fortunes.

Cultural tourism could help re-establish this image or help make it more appealing. Recommendations included having adverts about Great Yarmouth within the University, as even if people have heard about Great Yarmouth, they may not know about all the positive things it has to offer as a tourist destination. Free trips or societies' involvement with Great Yarmouth could help.

Increasing cultural tourism would benefit towns such as Great Yarmouth, and learners who are passionate about history would likely be among those who may show interest in a visit. Facilitating transport to Great Yarmouth from UEA as well as from the centre of Norwich

could be another way to enhance visits and trips.
Engaging diverse and migrant communities

Great Yarmouth has a rich history of migration. A key theme that emerged from discussions was around the hostility that migrant families can encounter within the community, with many lacking a sense of belonging within the communities they encounter within their environment.

It was acknowledged that there is no such thing as a 'textbook' student, and not all students should be expected to either be or study the same thing. With that in mind, more can be done to improve engagement with potential students from diverse communities.

UEA should rethink and perhaps re-evaluate what a UEA campus might be like so that it is more welcoming to diverse communities. UEA should also consider what it can do to encourage a more diverse attendance at UEA events (such as today's Open Space).

A first step would include working specifically with migrant families, encouraging access to university, and improving transport links to UEA for poorer communities outside Norwich.

Finally, UEA should be doing more to bring the University to Great Yarmouth instead of expecting Great Yarmouth residents to commute to the campus for events and engagement activities.



Strategic priorities should include financial sustainability, academic excellence and local empowerment

Great Yarmouth event



Cultivating communities and creating community belonging

What makes people happy? Currently there is a restrictive method of measuring success in our local community, and success should not just be measured financially.

A sense of belonging and friendship are what get people through tough times. We need to create community belonging as people are currently defined by their problems rather than their strengths. Local people should be identified by what they are and not what they are not.

There is an issue with short-term projects that eventually expire. We need to create meaning and legacy in any projects working with the local region so that they become longer-term commitments. Communities should be enabled to flourish; “encouraged to flourish”. And UEA should likewise be encouraged to stop thinking of people as clients and consider people more as members of diverse communities. Events such as these Open Spaces events should be regular occurrences, with plenty of opportunities to check in afterwards — not just one-offs. University should be social, catered around community, not just about education. Practically, greater clarity is needed regarding funding opportunities, and resources so that there is more transparency between the University and the region.

UEA should be investing in people over institutions and systems. There is a Five Ways Theory: connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, and give. This comes from the new NEF ‘Five Ways to Well-being’ report. UEA should be more than just education and schooling. It should be about: ongoing/regular conversations within the community, longevity, development, and evolution. We need to make it dynamic and increase sustainability in all projects we support and deliver. Cultivating community conversations is so important, we should ask provocative and powerful questions – personal, ambiguous, even anxiety-inducing and creative questions. This will enable UEA to discover what really matters to local communities. UEA should hold Open Spaces like this regularly so people will connect and care enough to support and develop these dialogues. What can we do together that we cannot do alone? It takes commitment to build trust. It takes a village to raise a child.

How can UEA cultivate a ‘culture of belonging’?

Belonging – a sense of home in a place – is vitally important to students and particularly so on a campus university. In Norwich this extends to the relationship between the campus and the city itself. This group discussed some of the issues raised under this heading.

A feeling of belonging changes over time and can be impacted by different factors – such as a transition from undergraduate to postgraduate, living on or off campus, or other variables in accommodation, or feeling belonging to some aspects or areas of the University but not in others. Some students may feel a sense of belonging to the UEA, but not to the wider Norwich area – which can be exacerbated by the ‘students vs locals’ rhetoric sometimes perpetuated in local media. It can also feel isolating perceiving others as having a ‘hormal’ university experience if it does not align with your own circumstances.

In a campus context, things like group chats, society meet-ups and spaces such as the multi-faith centre and Scholar’s bar can help, but the facilities available should be better communicated by the University in order to help bring people with similar interests or circumstances together. Postgraduates and mature students don’t always realise that events and societies are available to them too and can feel forgotten about, so more could be done to foster a greater sense of community within these groups.

How can UEA better connect to Support Services in the local area and ensure students can access it all?

There are a variety of valuable resources in the region that provide support, guidance, and more complex care – so what is the best way for UEA to signpost and connect with these services?

Charities and support services in the area could offer more tailored or complex support to those that need it to compliment the (often stretched) offerings that Student Services provide, so UEA could forge better connections with them – in the form of referrals, collaborative events, pooling resources etc – to help ensure students can access the help they need.

Students are members of the community, so public initiatives are open to them – can UEA signpost these,

and assist by providing referrals to alleviate the need for struggling students to self-advocate? NHS waiting list times are long, so local partnerships could help to fill these gaps. A more collaborative approach between UEA/Student Services and these organisations is needed, as ultimately the aim is the same – to provide support.

Inclusivity

Making university-related language more accessible is important – no jargon. The easier language is to understand, the easier the University will be to access for the wider region.

Charities also need things like law services and volunteers. UEA and local professionals could play a very valuable role in helping meet these needs. Student involvement would also be mutually beneficial, by taking part in community based activities, students would encounter practical learning opportunities.

How can UEA’s expertise be shared with the wider community? There needs to be better community engagement/visibility outside of the immediate Norwich area – we need to take UEA out to rural communities. Could this be done in the form of a UEA roadshow and what would this include?

Neurodiversity

This group shared their own personal experiences of neurodiversity and emphasised the importance of creating positive affirmation within students with different needs.

Young people with autism or dyslexia should not grow up thinking that their condition is a negative. It is really important to engage people in different ways because of different needs. UEA will not get everyone engaged by offering everyone the same thing. This would not be equitable.

Apprenticeship degrees are a perfect example of providing for people who learn in different ways to the traditional university curriculum. It is important to make young people feel like they are engaged in these activities and that they have value. Positive affirmation for these students from a young age can be so important so that they see their condition

as a positive “superpower” rather than a negative which is what classically happens. UEA should be in a position where they can say that they are the most Neurodiverse university in the country: wouldn’t that be brilliant?

To start tackling this, UEA should begin from within by asking the students who have these conditions what needs to be done to better engage and support them. This would make sure the process is democratised and not top-down, which could come across as patronising. Once UEA is getting it right, they can disseminate that knowledge across the community.

We should also make sure teachers – the ones we train and the ones we work with in the local community – get the training and expertise that is so important when accommodating all students, including those with specific needs. Creating a revolution in the way we think about education is what needs to happen to properly accommodate neurodiversity. Going back to earlier examples, an apprenticeship degree which accommodates people who learn better when they are working can be far more practical for some students. Building programs for mentorship for these students would also be beneficial. Open-source tools reduce the barriers to entry and UEA should be using them.

Bringing students and the local community together to reduce student turnover

The campus is removed and somewhat isolated from the city. This means that many students only see Norwich city centre as a place for shopping and entertainment. This makes them customers of the city, not citizens. As a result, they don’t see it as a place for a career after graduation. To counteract this, UEA should try to build engagement with the city into the curriculum in all subjects.

As an example, why not require every politics student, as part of their course, to spend time (maybe only a day or two) accompanying party canvassers and attending a constituency party meeting, to understand what politics is like on the ground, and get to meet voters in places they would not normally visit. This would widen their horizons, give them a more grounded sense of real politics, and potentially begin to build connections with the city which would encourage them to remain after graduation.

Health and healthy communities

The conversation gravitated towards health, in all its different forms.

Poor nutrition and a lack of exercise are two significant factors that negatively impact physical health. Although the results of this lifestyle are not apparent whilst people are young, at a later stage in life, it may threaten health to the point that it can shorten lifespan. Drug use, including alcohol and tobacco, should be monitored more effectively: one of the issues is that both alcohol and tobacco use are socially accepted. Vaping campaigns and minimising alcohol use would be a good start. However, other unhealthy addictions discussed were caffeine and gambling. Unprotected sexual intercourse and its consequences were also discussed.

UEA could propose community runs, providing good rewards, motivating both students and Norfolk locals to have regular walks and runs in parks and across the county, motivating groups to remain active. Nutrition and general food intake require education, something that this university could provide and discourage the normalised use of alcohol daily.

Drugs should be looked at from another angle and efforts should be made to try to help rather than criminalise those who consume them. A smoking ban on public spaces could help diminish the user base considerably and helping those addicted to nicotine quit may also be another feasible idea. The idea of caffeine as a 'coping tool' should be minimised, and although UEA does not present this image of caffeine, perhaps it can encourage a few different and healthier ways to consume coffee, e.g. 'The caffeine helpdesk'.

Gambling harms many people; not only is it bad for people's mental health, but it also harms financially, which can affect people's finances and relationships deeply. Casinos or houses that hold bets should also be brought into key conversations as stakeholders to prevent gambling addiction from spreading. Perhaps UEA could contribute to mediating the issue.

A concluding thought to the day

"Collaboration and communication are the keys to success. Open Space between UEA and the community should be a regular occurrence. Together, we can make long-term commitments to help Great Yarmouth and East Anglia flourish."



Communities and the University need to work together to provide more active learning opportunities to help boost the economy and encourage more pride in local community

Great Yarmouth event



Ipswich Open Space Event.





6 DEMOS* REPORT SUMMARISED

* Smith, J., Cummins, C. (2022) *Putting People at the Heart of a True Civic University: the Case of UEA*. Demos, pp 63

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In February 2019, The Civic University Commission asked what it means to be a civic university in the 21st century, one that puts its economic, social, environmental and cultural role in the community at the centre of its strategy.

It found great examples of civic activity, but rarely was the approach strategic and based on the real needs of their local communities. It described universities' attempts at civic activity as too often "superficial and complacent". It highlighted an "insufficient connection" with the public and their views.

The Commission made the case to develop Civic University Partnerships putting the needs of their localities front and centre.

Universities have responded to this call and are taking their role as civic institutions increasingly seriously, but too often they fall short in how they engage communities; they seek out conversations that they have already deemed to be worth listening to, rather than creating open listening channels.

The University of East Anglia set out to do this differently.

Demos worked with UEA to use the digital dialogue tool, Polis, to understand what local people really want from a university. Polis is a cutting-edge online engagement tool that is used to identify areas of consensus in a community, and to prompt people to offer fresh ideas. It has been used globally to introduce a nuance and subtlety to democratic processes. Taiwan, Kentucky and Singapore, for

example, have integrated Polis into their democratic landscapes.

Demos deployed Polis within three in-person public engagement events in partnership with the UEA.

Two of these were run as 'Open Space' events, a participant-driven technique whereby the agenda for an event is largely set and overseen by its attendees. The third was as part of a public UEA-run programme at the Royal Norfolk Show.

Over the three events, these digital dialogues engaged 534 people, who cast 15,352 votes and submitted 275 statements that in turn shaped the conversations. This report analyses what people said, drawing out the following insights for what it would mean – in the eyes of local people – for the UEA to be a true civic university.

People want more from a civic UEA: service provision, lifelong learning, economic development and physical presence.

Those who took part felt the notion of civic connections between the University and the region could and should manifest in a range of areas. Most of

all, however, people saw promise in the following four:

- ~ The UEA as a provider of local services.
- ~ The UEA as an institution to improve young people's aspirations and provide lifelong learning opportunities for adults.
- ~ The UEA as an institution driving and supporting the region's economy.
- ~ The UEA as an institution physically embedded across the region but in a way that local people feel they have had a say in.

Most people feel that the UEA could be more of a civic institution, though there is recognition of its existing strengths

A common thread throughout was recognition that the UEA has an obligation to balance its attention on both local and regional demands. Very few participants rejected the view that UEA should be building more links with local people, and in some cases there was agreement that it has existing strengths as a civic institution. The nuance here often comes from people's varying degrees of optimism or pessimism about what is required to develop these links further.

METHODOLOGY

How does polis work?

This research used the online tool Polis to identify where people share consensus, and where they diverge. Polis is a deliberation platform which encourages people to participate in discussions rather than simply responding. It differs from a traditional polling platform in two crucial ways. It is an established tool that is used around the world to support and build democratic participation and engagement.

Participants in a Polis debate are shown a 'stack' of statements, and asked whether they agree, disagree or want to 'pass' on each. They are then able to add

People want a say in the University's approach to its civic role

Participants' responses suggested the following strategies to improve civic connectedness with the University:

- ~ When a topic relating to the UEA's links to the region is framed in terms of how the University can help address a local problem, people tend to respond with more unity.
- ~ Action is important. Even where people disagree about what the actual state of the relationship between the UEA and the region currently is, consensus can be built on what can be done to improve it.
- ~ There is a desire for continued, democratic, inclusive and open engagement on what the UEA will do going forward to become an even more civic university.
- ~ There is a consensus around the idea of the UEA being a university that strives to be connected to the region and beyond.
- ~ Areas of uncertainty often seem founded in perceptions of the UEA rather than lived experience. This speaks to the value of continued, broadened engagement as part of the Civic University Project.

their own statements, which, after moderation, may be added to the stack.

In this case, moderation was performed by Demos staff, and involved reviewing submitted suggestions before including them in the list of statements presented to participants. This changes the passive process of surveying into a participatory one, allowing people to draw on their own lived experiences to add missing dimensions into the debate, and allowing new ideas and solutions to be sourced from those taking part. This is a departure from traditional polling where the questions are simply put forward by researchers (see Fig. 1).

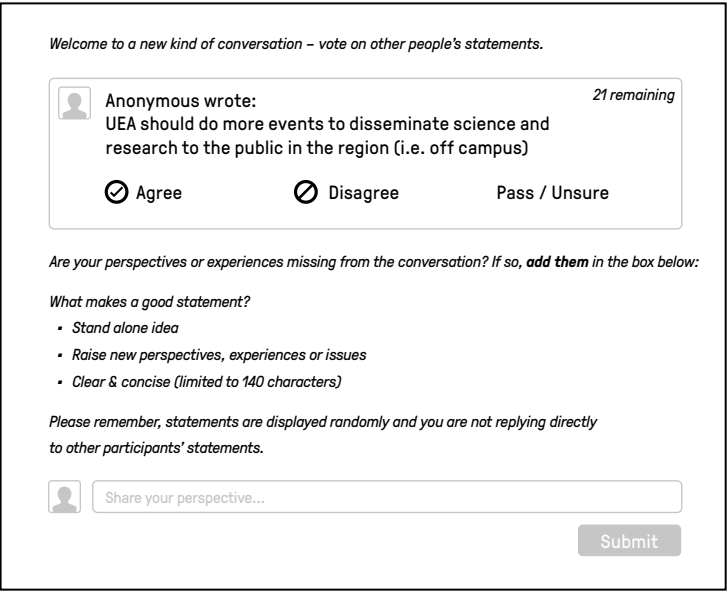


Fig.1: Representation of the Polis interface - voting and submission

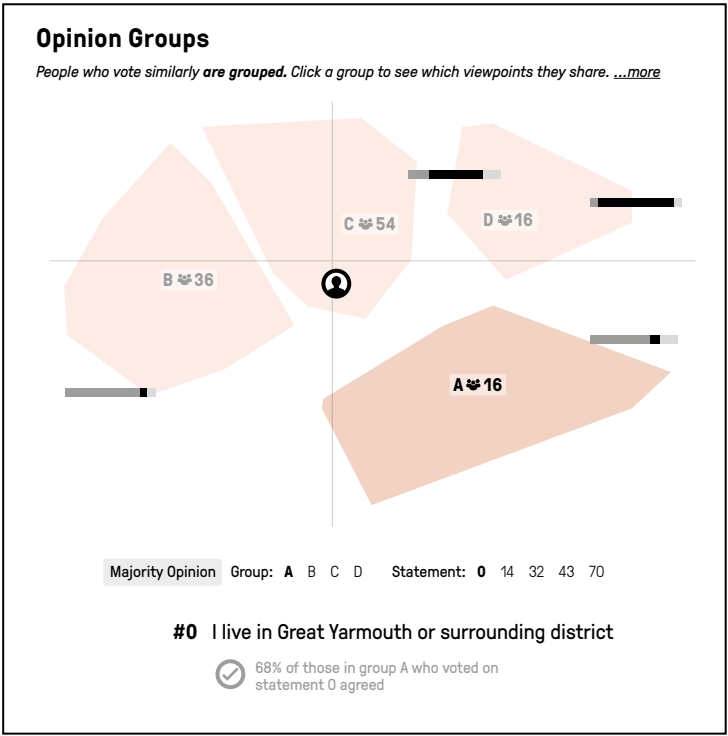


Fig. 2: Representation of the Polis interface - groups

Throughout the poll, Polis employs a technique called ‘Principal Component Analysis’ to place users who vote similarly into groups. A visualisation showing these groups is shown to participants, alongside a circle which identifies in real time where they themselves sit in relation to others. This view also shows which opinions are shared amongst all participants, and which are characteristic of a given group. This approach gives users a sense of where they stand on issues, but also shows them what unites them with those from other groups. After the Polis is complete, each group is analysed and given a unique descriptive name by a researcher, to categorise users within each group. Therefore each time the method is run, and for each of the different events discussed in this report, the group names are different (see Fig. 2).

Integration of Polis in the UEA’s engagement events

Great Yarmouth

For the Great Yarmouth public engagement, Demos ran a Polis alongside the day’s Open Space format. Polis results were projected onto a screen, allowing participants to watch the conversation developing in real-time, and were invited to take part using their smartphones. Alongside this, UEA students, acting as facilitators and note takers from the table deliberations of the Open Space Events, were able to add statements from members of the public. We also drove local residents to the Polis through the main UEA Facebook and Twitter accounts targeting Great Yarmouth for the week preceding the event and for 24 hours afterwards.

UEA Campus

For the UEA campus public engagement, Demos supported UEA students to set-up and run a Polis alongside their in-person event. The event featured the previous in-person integrations used in Great Yarmouth, though a different set of questions was developed to suit the content of an on-campus event. Full details of these statements are included in the technical annex to the full report. We also drove young people and those with relevant interest profiles from Norwich to the poll through UEA social media accounts.

Royal Norfolk Show

For the Royal Norfolk Show public engagement, Demos set up a stall as part of the UEA’s marquee during the show. Researchers ran a Polis alongside the Civic University Team’s stall for show attendees to express their views. Attendees were also able to give feedback on the Civic University Project via written notes and in a physical poll using counters.

Similar to the previous engagements, attendees were able to see the Polis results in real-time on a display, and were invited to take part in it using their smartphones, tablets or the Demos researchers’ laptops. Alongside this, Demos researchers took the tablets ‘into the field’, walking the grounds of the show to invite people to take part.

Strengths and limitations of Polis in the engagements

The key strengths to the use of Polis as part of these events were its ability to widen participation and encourage agenda-setting for the civic university’s outputs more broadly.

As an asynchronous participation tool, Polis offers a level of convenience that other forms of live public engagement cannot, allowing those who could not take part physically on the day or at that time to be part of the conversation. The possibility to take part at a later time also meant that those who were physically present at the engagements could follow-up the discussions at a later time as well, deepening their participation and affording additional time for reflection and potential discussion with others in their lives on the topics.

As a means of polling which allows participants to add their own views, Polis is also extremely good at allowing people to set an agenda. In this way – much like the Open Space format used in-person at Great Yarmouth – it means the UEA’s charter can be further guided by the public themselves. This is particularly pertinent to the driving question at the heart of this research: what does it mean for the UEA to be a civic university?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DEMOS REPORT

Great Yarmouth

Event 1 – Great Yarmouth (30 April 2022)

- ~ 145 participants took part in the poll, collectively voting 3,497 times – an average of 25 votes per participant.
- ~ 84 statements were submitted. Following moderation, the total number of statements in this analysis was 42.

On 30 April the first engagement event was held at The Drill House venue in Great Yarmouth. Polling showed that the vast majority of those who took part on the day had visited the UEA campus at some point previously, with participants including a mixture of those from Great Yarmouth and those who lived elsewhere. Statements contributed to the discussion by participants focused especially on local services and education. Opinion groups within participants were divided along the lines of whether UEA should be more attentive to local interests, but there was nuance here, with varying levels of optimism or pessimism about the state of the University’s existing links to the region and differences in either support or opposition for extending these. Key insights from this discussion were:

- ~ Even where there is division, when a topic is framed in terms of addressing a local problem, people are more unified.
- ~ Young people’s aspirations were a top unifier, something that came through elsewhere in these Polis engagements.

UEA Campus

Event 2 – UEA Campus (7 May 2022)

- ~ 278 participants took part in the poll, collectively voting 9,243 times – an average of 34 votes per participant.
- ~ 138 statements were submitted. Following moderation, the total number of statements in this analysis was 112.

On 7 May the second engagement event was held at the UEA campus in Norwich. Those who took part

were a mixture of students, staff and other visitors to the campus. Statements submitted by participants focused especially on education accessibility and economic connections between the UEA and the region. As we explore below, several divisive topics arose from this conversation. People tended to differ in the levels of optimism and pessimism about the University’s approach to becoming a stronger civic institution, and their assessment of how much work there is to be done. Key insights from this discussion were:

- ~ There is consensus on what can be done to build the relationship with the local area, even if people disagree about what the state of the relationship between the UEA and the region is.
- ~ UEA was seen as an asset to local people, and the local area was seen as a beneficial resource for the students of the UEA.
- ~ As in the Great Yarmouth poll, participants found consensus around the importance of and need for accessibility to education for a variety of people in the region.
- ~ Another clear point of consensus was that the physical relationship between the UEA and the region matters: local people are not against the University’s impact on local spaces but they want the use and impact to be addressed in an open and democratic way with local people.
- ~ Uncertainty prevailed around what the impact of a civic university on the community could be; speaking, perhaps, to the desire for continual, open, democratic interaction to understand what this means for UEA and the community going forward.

Royal Norfolk Show

Event 3 – Royal Norfolk Show (29-30 June 2022)

- ~ 111 participants took part in the poll, collectively voting 2,612 times – an average of 24 votes per participant.
- ~ 53 statements were submitted. Following moderation, the total number of statements in this analysis was 36

On 29–30 June the third engagement event was held at the Royal Norfolk Show in Norwich. Polling found that those who took part were mainly from Norfolk and had visited the UEA. Their submissions were focused on general perceptions and measurements of the University's success as well as how effectively it was connected to the local area. Two distinct groups of participants arose from the discussion: a 'Beyond Regional' group was more comfortable about the UEA's effect on Norfolk, and a 'Regional Focus' more tentative about the University's position in the local area. These stances, however, were not always clear cut.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DEMOS REPORT

Together, these Polis engagements offer several insights for thinking about what it would mean for the UEA to be a civic university.

Those who took part felt the notion of civic connections between the University and the region could and should manifest in a range of areas. Most of all, however, people saw promise in the following:

- ~ The UEA as a provider of local services.
- ~ The UEA as an institution to improve young people's aspirations and provide lifelong learning opportunities for adults.
- ~ The UEA as an institution driving and supporting the region's economy.
- ~ The UEA as an institution physically embedded across the region but in a way that local people feel they have had a say in.

A common thread throughout was recognition that the UEA has an obligation to balance its attention on both local and regional demands. Moreover, few participants rejected the view that UEA should be building more links with local people, and in some cases there is agreement that it has existing strengths as a civic institution. The nuance here often comes from people's varying degrees of optimism or pessimism about what is required to develop these links further.

Alongside significant areas of consensus, we found participants divided around the importance of

- Key insights to emerge were:
- ~ There was consensus amongst participants that the UEA should strive to be both connected to the region and beyond.
 - ~ Participants do not feel there needs to be a trade-off between a local and extra-local focus for the UEA.
 - ~ People who had uncertainty around the remoteness of the UEA from rural people across the region seemed to be basing this on perceptions rather than detailed knowledge

various approaches. However, in addressing these disagreements, a number of strategies emerged from participants' responses as to how these divisions can be overcome:

- ~ When a topic relating to the UEA's links to the region is framed in terms of how the University can help the latter address a local problem, people tend to respond with more unity.
- ~ Action is important. Even where people disagree about what the actual state of the relationship between the UEA and the region currently is, consensus can be built on what can be done to improve it.
- ~ There is a desire for continued, democratic, inclusive and open engagement on what the UEA will do going forward to become a (more) civic university.
- ~ There is a backdrop of consensus around the idea of the UEA being a university that strives to be both connected to the region and beyond. Many feel there doesn't need to be a trade-off here.
- ~ Areas of uncertainty often seem founded in perceptions of the UEA rather than lived experience. This speaks to the value of continued, broadened engagement as part of the Civic University Project





Previous page – UEA Aerial Campus Photograph,
October 2018. UEA Image Archive REF 34589.

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