

Climate Beacons

Evaluation report

Learning from a Scotland-wide collaborative project stimulating deep-rooted public engagement with climate change



October 2022



Summary for policymakers

Climate Beacons for COP26 was a pioneering Scotland-wide collaborative project initiated to inspire public engagement with climate change in the lead-up to and following COP26. We now know it simply as *Climate Beacons* to reflect its ongoing nature. Led by Creative Carbon Scotland, it brings together local cultural and climate organisations in seven regional hubs called ‘Climate Beacons’, aiming to mobilise their shared resources and expertise towards climate action, stimulate place-based public engagement with climate change, and platform diverse voices and communities in the climate conversation. The Beacons are located in Argyll, Caithness & East Sutherland, Fife, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Outer Hebrides and Tayside.

Impact of *Climate Beacons*

Project reach

Public reach exceeded expectations with *Climate Beacons* engaging **over 18,135 members of the public** and connecting with **more than 100,000 people** via online media.

164 public events held across Scotland

18,135 people engaged across Climate Beacon activities and events

125,901 interactions via online media

Public engagement

This report shows that **exploring climate issues through place-based creative activity is an effective way of engaging local communities with climate action.**

Results suggest that participation influenced people’s day to day actions and behaviours, their ways of thinking and emotions about climate change.

Activities attracted diverse audiences and successfully engaged new people in the climate conversation, giving voice to those beyond the ‘usual suspects’. Localised creative approaches brought abstract climate concepts to life and audiences expressed a strong appetite for further work.



National Mining Museum Scotland
and British Geological Survey

“ The Argyll Beacon has had a direct and hugely positive impact on public engagement with climate change in our region. ”

(Argyll Beacon, Cove Park)

“ It made me feel quite energised and empowered that small differences have a big impact on the climate.

(Climate Beacons participant, Inverclyde)

Culture and climate

Benefits for organisers were extensive with invaluable connections established between **54 participating organisations** across climate, cultural and academic sectors. Internal training events and **88 paid opportunities** for arts and sustainability practitioners increased local capacity and energised climate action.

54 organisations involved

88 paid opportunities and commissions

13 internal training events or workshops

Organiser engagement

Our research identified that **establishing diverse partnerships successfully mobilised cross-sectoral action on climate change and built local networks.**

Climate Beacon hubs were an effective way to establish place-based professional networks, share best practice and support organisers' capacity to deliver climate-related work and to effect changes in their own organisational practice.

This project has been the catalyst for a fundamental shift in our organisation's perspective and commitment to the environment.

(Fife Beacon, anon.)

Legacy

Climate Beacons has established a pioneering reputation for collaborative and creative approaches to engage the public on climate change and leverage cross-sectoral action. Public legacy is already extensive with activities diversifying and strengthening climate engagement across Scotland. Strong partner relations have built the foundations for future work, with emerging connections and collaborations evidencing a significant legacy of collective climate action.

63 new connections established beyond the Climate Beacon partnerships

38 emerging projects and partnerships

“ This cross-sectoral, collaborative way of working will have a lasting impact on how we continue to think about, and deliver, our leadership role in tackling the climate crisis.

(Tayside Beacon, Dundee Rep)

Lessons for future public engagement

Organisers reported valuable lessons to take forward from *Climate Beacons*:

- 1** Inclusive public engagement on climate change requires long-term, place-based approaches that respond to community issues and needs. Working with cultural partners and creativity provided a powerful basis for connection, trust building and meaningful climate action.
- 2** Cross-sectoral partnership working proved an effective model for empowering collective action, building professional networks and increasing reach. Situated regional partnerships had a powerful multiplier effect on devolved expertise, resources and ambition.
- 3** Public engagement on climate change needs long-term, secure funding. Without a strategic and adequately supported approach, there is a danger that the progress, development and quality of public activity will be compromised.

“ I think that the creative dimension is very valuable in building understanding of climate change and how it is – and will – impact on people and our way of life. It can help us face up to and adjust to the changes that we need to make.

(Climate Beacons participant, Tayside)

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Key recommendations for policy:

- It is important that public engagement on climate change is locally based to meaningfully connect with people’s values, beliefs and sense of place
- Arts, culture and heritage can provide the trusted messengers required to communicate with and engage the Scottish public on the climate emergency
- Cross-sectoral collaborations that bring together diverse stakeholders need to be set up and supported to develop empowered regional climate action and leadership
- Long-term, sustained funding is necessary to promote meaningful public engagement activity and to empower communities through capacity building at a local level

“ **Climate Beacons** demonstrated that climate action needs culture. Climate change requires creative, collective thinking and cultural venues provide great places for empowering communities to come together, think and act on this complex problem.

(Creative Carbon Scotland, Ben Twist, Director)

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Introduction



Photo: Fife Climate Beacon

About Climate Beacons

Climate Beacons for COP26 was a pioneering Scotland-wide collaborative project initiated to inspire public engagement with climate change in the lead-up to and following COP26, the United Nations' annual climate conference, which took place in Glasgow in 2021. We now know it simply as *Climate Beacons* to reflect its ongoing nature.

COP26 presented a major opportunity to stimulate climate action in Scotland. The event generated increased public awareness around climate change and a renewed sense of urgency that presented new opportunities for public engagement. The closed nature of the COP26 talks themselves also created the need to provide opportunities for participation beyond the official spaces.

Creative Carbon Scotland's research into arts and cultural engagement around previous COPs revealed the need for increased cross-sectoral collaboration, participation beyond the host city, a diversity of engagement approaches

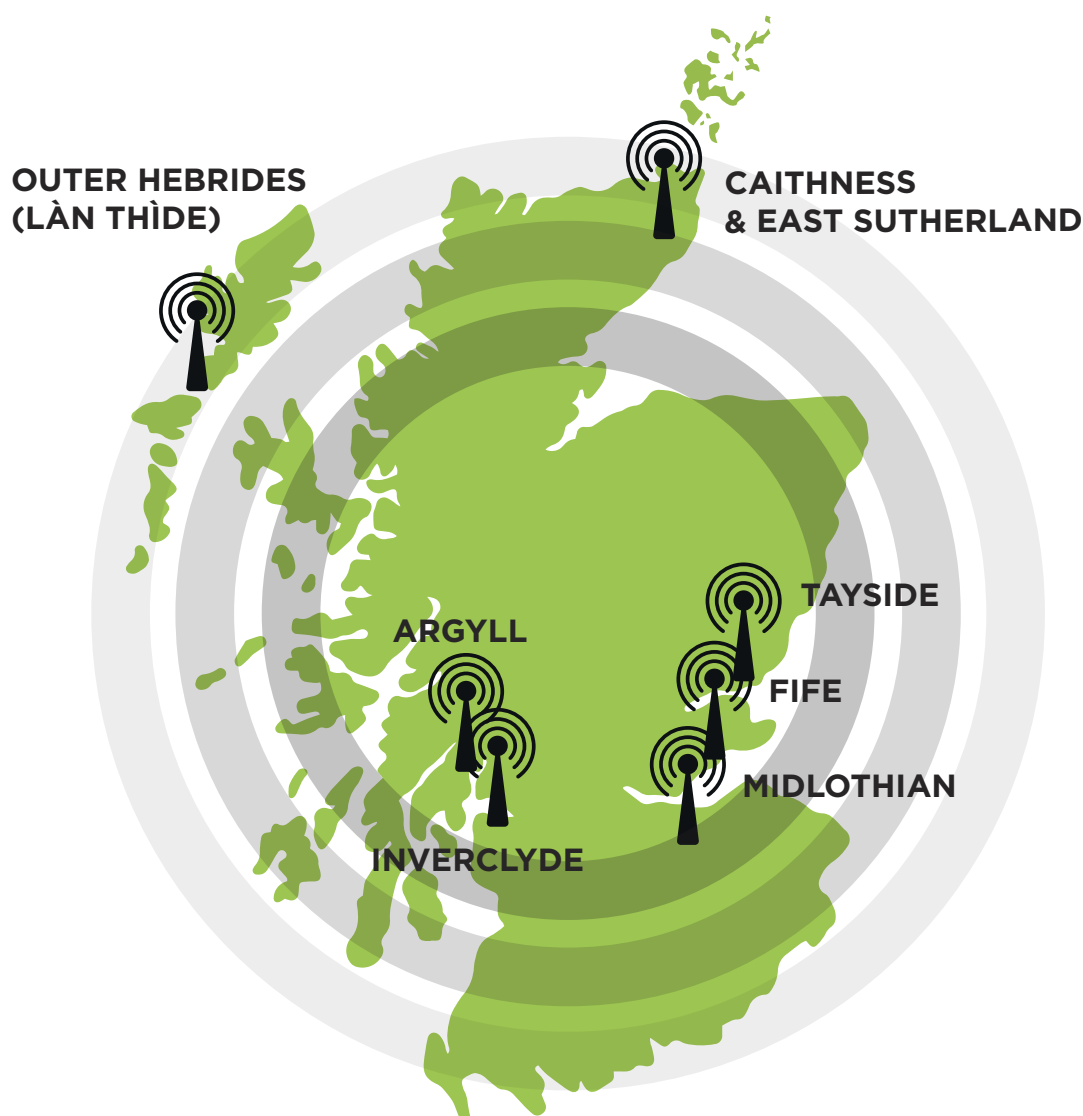
and an emphasis on long-term legacy. *Climate Beacons* was designed with this need in mind.

Led by Creative Carbon Scotland, the project brought together shared resources and knowledge from local cultural and climate organisations to stimulate deep-rooted, place-based public engagement with climate change in Argyll, Caithness and East Sutherland, Fife, Inverclyde, Midlothian, the Outer Hebrides and Tayside. Creative Carbon Scotland also worked with a steering group of six co-ordinating partners: Architecture & Design Scotland, Creative Scotland, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute, Museums Galleries Scotland, Scottish Library and Information Council, and Sustainable Scotland Network.

Climate Beacons was funded by the Scottish Government's Climate Change and Culture Directorates, Creative Scotland, and Museums Galleries Scotland.

The project involved:

- > **One year** of activity from June 2021 to July 2022.
- > **Seven regional hubs** bringing together the skills and resources of local climate and cultural organisations in seven distinct geographic and sociodemographic contexts.
- > **50+ organisations** collaborating across the regional hubs, project steering group and funders.
- > **160+ events and activities** engaging the public on climate change both before, during and after COP26 in Glasgow.
- > **Two online showcases** sharing lessons learnt from the collaborative process and recommendations for designing meaningful and inclusive public engagement on climate change.



About the seven Beacons

Central to the *Climate Beacons* project were seven hubs called 'Beacons', connecting local arts, heritage and cultural partners with environmental and climate change organisations, to engage diverse audiences with climate change. You can read more about each Beacon in their dedicated case study.

Argyll

This partnership between **Cove Park** and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (**ACT**) focused on Scotland's rainforest. Most of this unique, temperate habitat sits within Argyll and the Beacon aimed to raise awareness of this woodland through environmental and cultural activity, and to encourage local and wider communities to enjoy and participate in the region's rich natural heritage.

Caithness and East Sutherland

A collaboration between **Lyth Arts Centre**, the **University of the Highlands and Islands Environmental Research Institute** and **Timespan** for the first phase of the project, the Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon focused on climate colonialism, land justice and redistribution under the heading 'The land for those that work it'.

Fife

The **Leven Programme**, **ONFife** and **Levenmouth Academy** came together with the goal to channel the arts and build on local climate action to engage Levenmouth residents, encourage climate conversations, build stronger communities, and share the work of the Beacon partnership and local community groups to inspire further action.

Inverclyde

Formed of a partnership between **Beacon Arts Centre**, **Belville Community Garden Trust**, **RIG Arts** and **Inverclyde Libraries**, among others, the Inverclyde Beacon focused on the roles of climate change mitigation and adaptation as part of Scotland's most economically deprived area's recovery from COVID-19.

Midlothian

A collaboration between the **National Mining Museum Scotland** (NMMS), **British Geological Survey** (BGS) and environmental artist and soil hydrologist, **Nicole Manley**, the Midlothian Beacon created a transformative journey following the carbon cycle from Scotland's past legacy of fossil fuels towards a future of decarbonisation. It aimed to connect through art and science and to engage with local audiences, particularly those marginalised from climate conversations.

The Outer Hebrides (Làn Thìde)

This partnership between **An Lanntair** arts centre, **Taigh Chearsabhaigh** museum and arts centre, **Ceòlas**, **Community Energy Scotland**, **Western Isles Libraries**, **TSI Western Isles**, **NatureScot**, **Adaptation Scotland** and the wider Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Climate Change Working Group operated under the name **Làn Thìde**. The Outer Hebrides Climate Beacon focused on how the islands can adapt to the worsening impacts of climate change while celebrating their unique natural and cultural heritage.

Tayside

A partnership between **Dundee Rep** and **Scottish Dance Theatre**, the **James Hutton Institute**, **V&A Dundee**, **Abertay University**, **Creative Dundee** and many other partners in Dundee, Perthshire and Angus. The Tayside Beacon aimed to develop an empowered network and connect changemakers to collaborate on public engagement activities and to elevate and champion local work on climate action across rural and urban areas.

Timeline of project events

Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021
Research into previous COPs shared	Expression of interest circulated	Call for applications opened	Two online mixer events held to build partnerships
INITIAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT			
Jun 2021	Nov 2021	Mar 2022	Jul 2022
Seven Climate Beacons announced	COP26	Two online showcase events held	Initial phase of the project concludes
DELIVERY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE			
Sep 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	
Gathering held for Beacon organisers	Evaluation report released	COP27	
REFLECTION AND FUTURE PLANNING			

About this report



Photos from left: Emma Henderson, Làn Thide, National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey

This report was written by Creative Carbon Scotland and an embedded researcher to capture the public-facing impact and reach of project activities, its influence on the organisations involved and the emerging lessons learnt. *Climate Beacons* has been a valuable learning experience for all partners. This report shares our learning with others across Scotland and further afield to build on this work and promote how cross-sectoral public engagement can transform society in response to climate change.

The report is structured in three sections:

- **Section 1: Public impact and reach**, identifying the reach and influence of the project on members of the public.
- **Section 2: Organiser impact and outcomes**, focusing on the influence of the *Climate Beacons* project on the organisations involved.
- **Section 3: Towards the future**, reflecting on the learning and recommendations emerging from our research and what they mean for our work going forwards.

Public impact and reach

Project highlights:

164 events } **116** in person **48** online

14 Performances or screenings

13 Exhibitions

32 Talks or panel discussions

96 Workshops, group discussions or conversation events

9 Other public events, including Fun Palaces, conferences and rewilding initiatives

≈ **18,135** people engaged

≈ **4,579** Participants learning, being trained or actively taking part

≈ **13,556** Attendees joining as audience members

125,901 online interactions

24,782 Website visitors

93,975 Impressions on social media

7,144 Engagements on social media

33 legacy resources available publicly online

In bringing together a diverse range of cultural and climate organisations, the *Climate Beacons* was able to access and interact with an unusually broad intersection of public audiences and professional networks.

During a one-year period that encompassed **164 events**, the Beacons **engaged more than 18,000 people** across Scotland and

beyond. Organisers also recorded **more than 100,000 online interactions** with the *Climate Beacons* project through websites and social media. The number of people influenced by the *Climate Beacons* programme without attending an event is impossible to quantify but there are signs that the project had a **cascading effect** on participants' friends and family.



Photos: Emma Henderson, Regina Mosch, Lorna Dawson

Outcomes identified by organisers

Organisers involved in running the *Climate Beacons* identified that the following project achievements had a significant impact:



Generated interest and brought people in

Activities organised by the Climate Beacons **generated wide interest** and motivated people from a range of backgrounds to take part. Organisers commented that many of the activities **encouraged people to engage for the first time** and helped to broaden the reach beyond the typical audiences that cultural venues might expect. Several Climate Beacons sought to reach out to non-traditional audiences.

Stories of change

Encouraging community participation

Visitor feedback for the Midlothian Beacon identified that 55% of participants had never attended an event on climate change. Activities in Midlothian were extremely successful in reaching out and engaging local mining communities in the climate conversation. After being involved in the Midlothian Beacon, all participants described their experience positively and identified that they would attend climate-related activities in the future.

Climate Beacons was designed to be place-based. Adopting a localised approach **motivated community interest** and encouraged people to participate in climate-related activity. In Argyll, organisers commented that the unique focus on the local temperate rainforest and climate change ‘compelled people to come’ and to connect with activities at Cove Park, helping organisers to engage more widely and inspire new people to get involved.

Organiser reflection

A lot of people locally keep asking me about it and are we doing more and how are the trees getting on? It's definitely encouraging people locally who weren't maybe involved through other ways to ask questions and come up and see it.

(Argyll Beacon, focus group)

In Caithness, organisers reflected that hosting a community meal inspired local curiosity and brought together a diverse range of community members, from gardeners to growers, to crofters and climate organisations, to artists and interested members of the general public. Several Beacons emphasised the importance of **bringing diverse people into same room**, identifying that it built understanding and connection for people new to the climate movement and helped to energise and invigorate existing campaigners and local actors.

Organiser reflection

I think people were really just grateful for being aware of things that are happening around them and being able to connect with people that share similar values and want to do actions and I think that was the Beacon all along, wasn't it? It was just about bringing people into the same room.

(Tayside Beacon, focus group)

Improved knowledge and understanding



Photo: Lorna Dawson

Several Beacons observed that activities resulted in **improvements to knowledge** on the topic of climate change and developed people's understanding of ways to get involved in climate action at a local level. In Argyll, organisers reflected that their activities had increased awareness on Scotland's temperate rainforest amongst schoolchildren. In Midlothian and the Outer Hebrides, feedback demonstrated that events were effective at getting people to learn about and understand climate causes, impacts and adaptation.

Beacons testimonial

We visited as we had family who were miners and wanted to see the Museum but stayed longer to learn more about the impact of carbon, the good the bad and hopeful.

(Climate Beacons participant, Midlothian feedback)

Organisers in Tayside emphasised that they resisted 'telling people what to do' at events but focused on helping audiences to learn about what could make a difference in their own lives and to the lives of other people through a **raised awareness of local climate action**. Organisers reported a strong 'appetite' for this type of information.

Organiser reflection

I think people want to be informed. They want to be engaged. They don't always know how to get that information and activities like this [...] have enabled a different audience to become more familiar with some of the collective action and individual actions that are already taking place.

(Tayside Beacon, focus group)

The Beacons emphasised that activities and interactions also enriched the practice and understanding of organisers running the events and challenged their preconceptions. In Caithness, communities were 'open to bringing you along' and willingly shared their local knowledge with scientists and cultural partners, establishing a **two-way learning** between lived experience of climate impacts and academic research.

Elicited emotional response



Photos: Emma Henderson,
Inverclyde Climate Beacon,
Inverclyde Climate Beacon

Organisers felt strongly that arts-based activities had elicited emotional responses from audiences on climate change, helping to get people thinking in new ways and stimulating action. In the Outer Hebrides, organisers reflected that the *Storylines* project had been effective at bringing climate science and lived experience together in a way that allowed local communities to engage emotionally. Làn Thide partners felt the project was ‘hugely impactful’ as it ‘struck a chord’ with local audiences and provided a ‘cathartic’ experience.

Organiser reflection

The facts were there, but it was the artist that really made the difference, turned information to knowledge to action and stimulated hearts and minds and feelings about what we really need to do.

(Tayside Beacon, focus group)

In Inverclyde, organisers identified that performance had been a particularly powerful medium for eliciting emotional response amongst audiences and emphasised the role theatre can play moving forwards as a method for getting the message across on an affective level, developing a collective desire and motivation to act.

Stories of change

Motivating urgent climate action

After Fife’s screening of the film *Living Proof*, attendees identified mixed emotions towards climate change with some respondents feeling afraid or demotivated by the scale of the challenge, whilst others reported feelings of inspiration and empowerment. A key theme that emerged across several responses was a reinforced sense of urgency and determination.

Beacons testimonials

‘We need to act now and make change happen.’

‘We’re at another opportunity for change and we need to be proactive before it’s too late.’

‘These are massive systemic issues we need to collaborate to tackle.’

(Climate Beacons participants, Fife survey)

Created space for conversation



Photo: National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey

Organisers reflected that the activities had enabled space for conversations about climate change within local communities, providing a discussion starter for people to think in new ways. In Caithness, organisers identified that ‘gentle, intimate’ conversation and active listening was particularly important for meaningful engagement.

Organiser reflection

[COP26] felt really loud and it was about like marching and protesting and not being listened to and feeling like you had to scream to get anywhere and then here we were just having these really gentle, intimate conversations and eating some foods that had been locally grown and telling stories about the landscape.

(Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon, focus group)

In Midlothian, the *Weathering Earth* participatory art project provided a thought-provoking discussion starter for conversations both between community members and with the organisers themselves. Organisers described that ‘really active, unexpected conversations’ emerged and identified that this helped participants to meet ‘likeminded people’ and connect with each other, as well as develop new perspectives on climate issues.

Stories of change

Making room for discussion

Organisers in the Outer Hebrides identified that the most important outcome of their *Storylines* project was that it created the space for people to start having conversations about local climate-related issues. Participants sometimes held an emotional burden on climate change and therefore organisers learnt to structure open and loose events that made space for ‘whatever people might arrive with’ and wish to discuss together.

Catalysed changes to behaviours



Photo: Inverclyde Climate Beacon

One desired outcome for *Climate Beacons* was changes to participant behaviours and there is evidence of some success in this area, although attendees mainly identified **changes in intentions to act**. After Inverclyde's Eco-Exchange event with climate author Alastair McIntosh, members of the public commented on their enthusiasm to change their own personal habits in response to what they had heard and felt. Inverclyde Libraries also engaged with prisoners at HMP Greenock and reported that participants demonstrated increased motivation and intention to act.

In Midlothian, school pupils who engaged in the *Weathering Earth* project remembered and continued to act on **individual behavioural changes** learnt during the participatory activity, with pupils eager to demonstrate their progress to organisers on return visits. Schoolchildren involved in the activity also emphasised that they would be sharing learning with their families and asking for support in effecting behavioural change. Organisers identified that this **cascade of new knowledge** may have a multiplier effect on project impact, with greater numbers of people potentially informed and motivated to act on climate change.

Beacons testimonial

I feel more inclined to recycle and help the planet.

(*Climate Beacons* participant, Inverclyde survey)

Developed new perspectives

Climate Beacon partners identified that hands-on activities were a particularly powerful and tangible way to **connect climate change with lived experience**. Organisers in Midlothian recognised that creative, participatory activities gave an ‘opening for expression’ that allowed participants to absorb information and associate it with their own personal circumstances, developing new perspectives on what climate change meant to them.

Beacons testimonial

I was blown away by the exhibition. The science boards gave so much information about climate change that I didn't know about and then the art made me think about so many other things beyond human beings.

(Climate Beacons participant, Midlothian feedback)

Organisers observed that engaging with creative methods and visiting arts, heritage and cultural institutions also helped people to **engage with the complexity of climate change** and explore aspects that may not be easily discernible or seem unrelated to the topic. In Midlothian, a drama residency at the National Mining Museum Scotland helped to provide ‘context and a sense of place’ for students to develop new perspectives and perceptions of climate change.

Organiser reflection

The difference that it made to these five students from the beginning to the end of their residency, it changed their view totally about climate change, about the complexity of it.

(Midlothian Beacon, focus group)

Organisers reflected that the arts-based activities were open and encompassing and could provide a bridge between local and international perspectives, enable **space for ambiguity and unresolved ideas**, and allow time for reflection on points of interconnection between diverse climate-related themes and lived experience.



Photo: National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey

Platformed diverse voices

Climate Beacons platformed a wide range of voices and **enabled different people to share their stories**. In the Outer Hebrides, traditional methods such as consultation can struggle to get responses from a broad range of community members. Arts-based participatory mapping exercises provided a way to engage people meaningfully and understand their perspectives and lived experience in relation to local adaptation planning, helping to ‘gather those voices and allow them to be heard’.

Organiser reflection

Having those conversations, hearing people’s first-hand reflections of how climate change is impacting them. What do they want to do to adapt? What’s important to them to protect? It was really powerful.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, project monitoring)

Similarly, in Caithness, activities sought to share the voices of remote, rural communities whose stories are often ‘not included and not represented’ in Scotland’s climate conversation. Organisers identified that the short film emerging from Caithness’s residency with The Bare Project had **attracted widespread interest** both within Scotland and abroad, resulting in an ongoing legacy of local voices being shared and heard internationally.



Photo: Làn Thide

Organiser reflection

One of the big aims of this project was really to share the voices of Caithness and East Sutherland in the climate conversation because we’re so often not included and not represented [...] having these presentations and things that can really get out there on the world stage, that will continue to be an ongoing legacy.

(Caithness Beacon, focus group)

Activities also platformed diverse **voices from beyond Scotland**, with Midlothian’s Climate Reflections and Witness Report Series bringing together indigenous communities on the frontlines of climate change to share their knowledge and experiences of climate change with people in Scotland.

Encouraged positivity and enjoyment



Photo: Emma Henderson

Organiser reflection

Art is a brilliant access point into understanding what the impact is, what it means, but also fun at the same time.

(Argyll Beacon, focus group)

Combining artistic and scientific approaches helped Beacon partners to create activities that were **unique, enjoyable and positive experiences**. In Argyll and Midlothian, organisers commented on how younger age groups in particular enjoyed the project and learnt about climate change and local environmental assets in new, fun ways. Arts-based approaches were seen as an **accessible and enjoyable method** for engaging with environmental topics and understanding technical concepts like net zero.

Beacons testimonial

Best workshop we've ever taken part in, even before COVID. My class are desperate to tell everyone about their ideas to make our town Net Zero!

(Climate Beacons participant, Midlothian feedback)

Organisers in Tayside identified that the events held also **encouraged hope and positivity** through platforming local climate action efforts, encouraging feelings of empowerment and helping people to see and experience positive change. Similarly, pupils at Levenmouth Academy in Fife became more eager to participate in climate action through seeing 'first hand' that investing in the community creates positive change.

Empowered individuals and communities

Activities undertaken by the Climate Beacons **increased the capabilities, confidence and social capital** of communities, enabling them to participate in work on climate change in the future. In Caithness, organisers identified that events assisted ‘internal capacity building’ within both the Caithness region and local communities. Activities resisted ‘extractive’ conversations and built an opportunity for open discussion, enabling community members to feel that they could participate in conversations on climate change.

Organiser reflection

Our communities feel that they can be part of that conversation as well and take their own action and be present where they want to be, where they feel they need to be as well, it feels like that’s really important.

(Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon, focus group)

Organisers identified that community members often have the relevant knowledge or lived experience to participate in discussions but may **feel they lack the skills, language or self-confidence**. Taking part in *Climate Beacons* helped to empower community members and individuals to feel they were able to contribute to local conversations, engage in climate adaptation planning and advocate for change in the future.

Stories of change

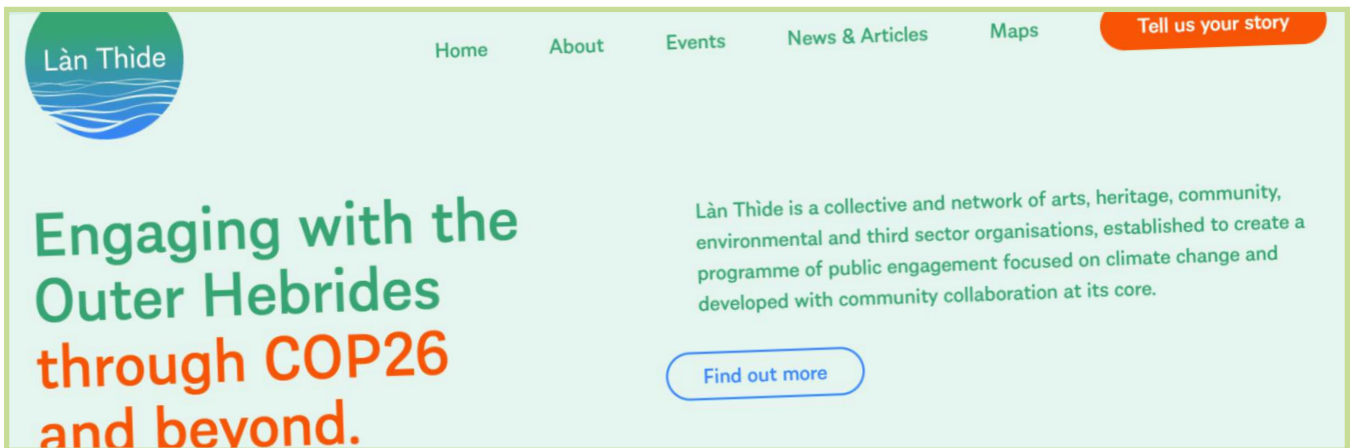
Taking the first step

Organisers in Midlothian reported that members of the public were more empowered to ‘take that first step’ after attending community events and observed participants speaking to members of staff about further resources they could access or about actions they intended to take. Organisers reflected that cultural venues can act as community hubs, providing ‘safe spaces’ to learn new skills, build local networks and develop trusting relationships that enable people to engage meaningfully and feel supported in making changes.



Photo: Regina Mosch

Produced legacy resources and assets



Organisers reflected that events provided a good proof of concept in terms of the approach but that it was sometimes a **challenge to attract big audiences**. Both the Outer Hebrides and Tayside Beacons identified the struggle of reaching out to and attracting audiences to attend live events. Permanent shared websites created by the two Beacons provided a good platform for transferring event recordings and emerging resources online and extended the reach of the initial engagement. For events held by the Tayside Beacon, organisers identified that uploading recordings ensured a **repository and online archive** for people to continue engaging with climate action across the region.

Organiser reflection

We have the recordings and people can refer to it. I've heard a lot of people saying that they watched the events afterwards, so I was pleased that it is there as an archive because it's such an amazing catalogue of amazing things that are happening across the region.

(Tayside Beacon, focus group)

Outcomes identified by participants

Survey results indicate a promising pilot project, with participants selecting that *Climate Beacons* helped them in diverse ways, fulfilling each of the project outcomes envisioned by Creative Carbon Scotland. Results indicate that *Climate Beacons* was especially influential on participants' emotions, ways of thinking and behaviours and additionally helped to cultivate feelings of optimism, agency and efficacy that are essential to empowered climate action.

Changing thoughts and emotions

Results indicate that *Climate Beacons* was most influential on participants' **emotions and ways of thinking** about climate change. **Three in 10** identified that the project had been 'very influential' on their ways of thinking and **7%** identified that it was 'extremely influential' on their emotions about climate change. Participants mainly reported a range of positive emotions in relation to taking part in *Climate Beacons* and described that they felt **optimistic, involved and inspired** by their experiences. Participants commented that taking part had made them feel **energised and empowered** about acting on climate change and identified that it felt like they were **making a difference**.

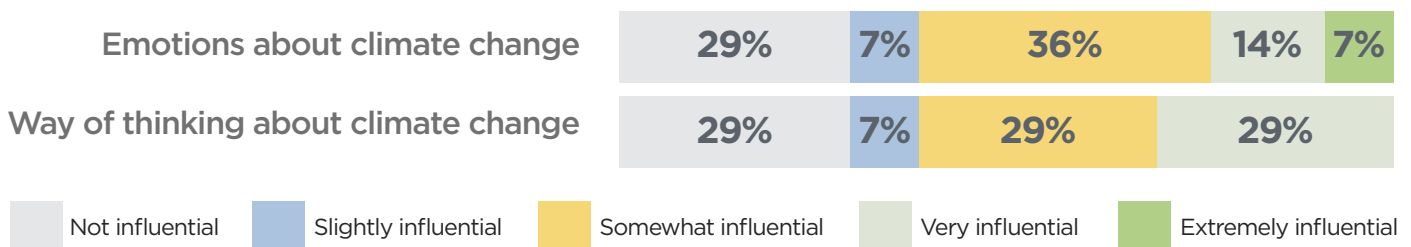
Beacons testimonial

It made me feel quite energised and empowered that small differences have a big impact on the climate.

(*Climate Beacons* participant, endline survey)

Comparing responses over time revealed a significant average **reduction in concern** about climate change for those who participated in *Climate Beacons*, potentially linked to the feelings of optimism, efficacy and agency that participants described experiencing. Alongside these positive emotions, participants identified that they also felt **anxious or overwhelmed**, reflecting that increased engagement with the climate crisis can be emotionally challenging. Participants took comfort in the collective action taking place and identified that they were **amazed and inspired** by their new knowledge of local groups taking action. *Climate Beacons* inspired feelings of collective local action that helped participants to remain **positive and hopeful**.

Influence of *Climate Beacons*



Transitioning behaviour and action

Participants reported that *Climate Beacons* helped them to feel **motivated to act** on climate change and **empowered to participate** in future climate-related initiatives. **Sixty-four percent** of respondents identified that the project had been influential on their behaviour. **One in two** identified that *Climate Beacons* had been ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ influential in changing their day-to-day actions. Participants reported **changes in their daily routine** and lifestyle that illustrate the positive and lasting influence of *Climate Beacons*.

Beacons testimonial

I have changed my daily routine to include making it easier to focus on climate change.

(*Climate Beacons* participant, endline survey)

After events, participants identified that they felt more **inclined to change their behaviours** and reflected that activities helped to ‘really link our actions with impact’. On average, engaging with *Climate Beacons* long-term resulted in a **significantly greater influence** over participants’ behaviours and day to day actions.

Developing knowledge and awareness

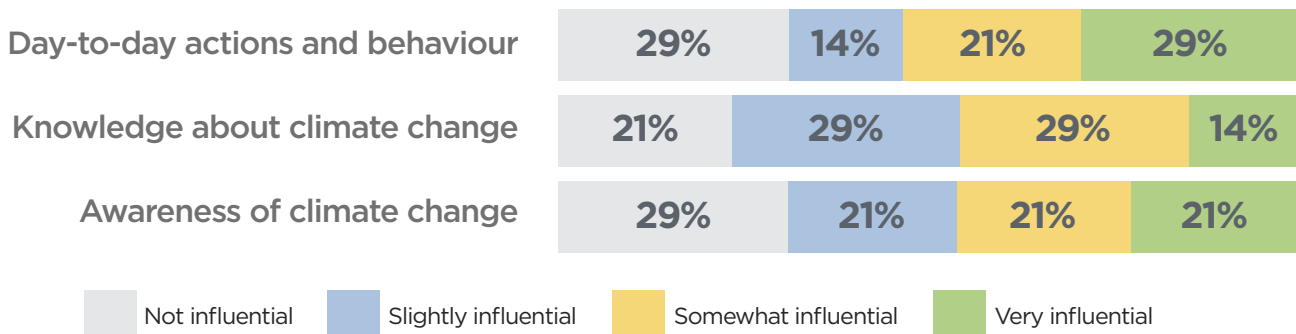
Climate Beacons was effective in developing public knowledge and awareness on climate change. After involvement with *Climate Beacons*, **72%** of respondents identified that they felt the project influenced their knowledge about climate change and **1 in 5** identified that the project was ‘very influential’ on their awareness of climate change. Participants felt that combining science-based information and art-based approaches helped to **develop their understanding** of climate change. After taking part, participants identified that *Climate Beacons* had assisted them to **learn about adaptation** at a community level and helped them to **understand the role of arts and culture** in addressing climate change.

Beacons testimonial

It was great to see the mix of science and art. Having them both together really helped me understand climate change.

(*Climate Beacons* participant, Midlothian feedback)

Influence of *Climate Beacons*



Stimulating interaction and connection

Participants identified new interactions and local connections as key outcomes of *Climate Beacons*. Most commonly, participants identified that the project had helped them to **interact in new ways** with arts, heritage and cultural organisations. Participants felt that the programme had also enabled them to **connect in different ways** with environmental and climate change organisations. *Climate Beacons* was designed to be place-based and participants identified several more localised benefits. Participants recognised that activities had helped them to **develop relationships and connections** within their local community. Taking part in *Climate Beacons* gave people the opportunity to **rethink their relationship** and reconnect with their local environment and the natural world.

Stories of change

Inspiring local connection

Visitors attending the Fife Beacon's photography exhibition commented that the photos had helped them to feel positive, connected and better informed about the importance of the River Leven. Attendees identified that the exhibition had helped them to understand the local benefits of the river, enjoy the natural beauty and feel inspired to access it in future.

Climate Beacons Top five benefits reported by participants

- 1 Interacted with arts, heritage and cultural organisations in new ways
- 2 Understood the role of arts and culture in addressing climate change
- 3 Interacted with environmental and climate change organisations in new ways
- 4 Understood how their community can adapt to climate change
- 5 Made new connections or developed existing relationships within their local community



Appetite for further outreach

Participants felt that they enjoyed taking part in activities and events run by *Climate Beacons* and **6 in 10** identified that the creative aspect of the project had helped them to feel more engaged with the topic of climate change. After taking part in the project, participants were **significantly more supportive** than wider audiences that arts and creative events illustrate the impacts of climate change better than facts alone.

On average, engaging with *Climate Beacons* long-term **significantly increased the influence** of the project on participants' emotions, cognition and behaviours. However, responses emphasised feelings that *Climate Beacons* had 'just made a start' and that **more education and outreach was needed**. This appetite for further engagement was accompanied by a strong desire to participate in future activities, with **86% agreeing or strongly agreeing** that they would take part in further creative projects on climate change in their local area.



Beacons testimonial

I think that the creative dimension is very valuable in building understanding of climate change and how it is - and will - impact on people and our way of life. It can help us face up to and adjust to the changes that we need to make.

(*Climate Beacons* participant, endline survey)

Interest in taking part in future projects

I would participate in more creative projects about climate change such as this in my local area



Organiser impact and outcomes

Project highlights:

54 participating organisations across Beacons and Steering Group

25 Arts, heritage and cultural organisations

13 Environmental or climate change organisations

7 Research, legal or educational institutions

5 Government or government-funded organisations

4 Community-based organisations

88 paid opportunities

} **49** creative commissions

39 science or sustainability commissions

13 training events and internal partnership activities

240+ relationships established between Climate Beacon organisations

63 new connections established beyond the Climate Beacon partnerships

38 emerging projects and partnerships

Organiser outcomes

Although *Climate Beacons* was primarily focused on public engagement, changes in organisational practice were also an aspiration for the project. Part of the rationale for involving arts and cultural organisations was based on Creative Carbon Scotland's intuition that *Climate Beacons* may lead to longer term sustainable change in the sector. Organisers reported that their involvement in the project had resulted in a number of significant outcomes:



Built capacity and confidence

Climate Beacons expanded the knowledge and skills of partner organisations, building their capacity and confidence, and empowering them to undertake climate-related work in future.

- Organisers in the Outer Hebrides described two-way learning between climate and cultural partners. Climate organisations undertook ‘capacity building work’ on adaptation with local arts and cultural organisations, whilst creative partners helped them to design and run inclusive public activities that ‘made space for emotion’.

Organiser reflection

We learned so much from it as well ourselves, I think, on the impact of climate change, so that was a huge learning opportunity for the staff as well. I think we gained so much awareness of climate change and now are in a better position to share that information out.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, Western Isles Libraries, focus group)

- Organisers commented that they felt supported working with skilled partners across disciplines, instilling confidence in the ‘breadth, expertise and depth of knowledge’ that could be drawn upon. *Climate Beacons* motivated cultural organisations to undertake further staff training, from climate literacy courses to climate emergency training for arts, heritage and cultural organisations.

Stories of change

Improving climate knowledge

Organisers at Cove Park reported that being involved in the Argyll Beacon had helped to improve their individual and collective knowledge on climate change. Training and working in partnership with ACT developed their understanding of how climate change impacts their locality, promoting the capacity of Cove Park to engage in climate action and to support their local community.

Organiser reflection

On a personal level, we (Emma Henderson, Curator of Engagement and Alexia Holt, Senior Director of Programmes) both feel the training received, and the opportunity to work alongside ACT colleagues, has improved considerably our own knowledge of climate change and its impact on our local area, and as a team we are therefore far better placed to answer questions and direct colleagues, residents, and individuals and groups within our local community to specialists when required.

(Argyll Beacon, Cove Park, project monitoring)

Empowered changes in practice and strategic role

Organisers reported that *Climate Beacons* had empowered organisations to think differently, inspiring significant changes to their internal practices or external strategic role.

- > In the Outer Hebrides, organisers recognised that the project had a transformational influence on the strategic priorities and practice of the Climate Change Working Group, emphasising a new focus on ensuring climate resilience work is based on the needs of local communities. In Fife, organisers reported that *Climate Beacons* prompted them to be 'art-led and art-inspired' in their practice and ongoing public engagement work. Inverclyde and Western Isles libraries reflected that *Climate Beacons* had redefined the strategic role libraries can play, recognising resultant changes to both their internal operations and their external public offer.

Organiser reflection

It's helped the staff to realise that this is not just a passing project, this is something we need to make visible. This is one of the greatest crises of our time.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, Western Isles Libraries, mid-project reflection)

Stories of change

Influencing a museum's practice

For the National Mining Museum Scotland (NMMS), being involved in *Climate Beacons* resulted in changes to their 10-year masterplan, directly influencing their strategic aims, the ways in which they work as an organisation, and how they run their projects. Going forwards, NMMS is opening up a new Green Zone on site and will ensure that 'every single project' foregrounds environmental sustainability.

Organiser reflection

It has had a really great impact on us, I think. So our 10-year masterplan, the start of it got changed because of this project, which I'm quite excited about [...] every single project now, we are looking at the environmental sustainability.

(Midlothian Beacon, focus group)



Photo: National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey



Expanded audiences and reach

Collaborating with diverse climate and cultural partners, community groups and third sector organisations helped organisers to expand their outreach, audiences and local networks.

- > In the Outer Hebrides, the Climate Change Working Group identified working with cultural partners had significantly expanded their ability to connect with local community networks. Several cultural organisers commented that *Climate Beacons* provided a 'gateway' to extend their public reach, accessing a range of audiences who 'might not be so arts minded' and developing fresh interest and engagement with arts and culture.

Organiser reflection

There is a far greater awareness of our work now locally, and this has the long-term benefits of bringing more people to Cove Park to take part in our wider programmes.

(Cove Park, Argyll Beacon, project monitoring)

Cultivated cross-sectoral networks

Climate Beacons established and strengthened partnerships between diverse organisations to create regional networks and a strong ‘community of practice’.

- Organisers reported that *Climate Beacons* was extremely successful in establishing ‘better links’ with regional partners, cultivating professional networks and a ‘community of practice’ united and motivated to act on climate change. Strengthened relationships were identified as a ‘hugely beneficial asset’ to future work and organisers reported an eagerness for partnership action and a ‘shared appreciation of the need for collaboration’.
- Our analysis revealed that *Climate Beacons* has both originated and strengthened relationships between regional partners, and generated important external connections beyond the Beacons network. Some organisers are already building on these relationships as part of their ongoing work on climate change, whilst others identified the potential for these new connections to lead to future opportunities.

Stories of change

Motivating partnership action

In the Outer Hebrides, organisers identified that one of the ‘big gains’ from *Climate Beacons* was that it demonstrated the value of cross-sectoral partnership work. Connecting the Climate Change Working Group with Làn Thìde, the Outer Hebrides Beacon, has been a ‘game changer’ for increasing resourcing, capacity and legitimacy. This successful collaboration inspired an excitement for further partnership action, with Western Isles Libraries now formally represented as engagement leaders in the Climate Change Working Group.

Organiser reflection

One of the major legacies is the strength of the partnerships. We’ve got to know people better, we’ve got to see how different organisations with completely different aims and objectives or delivery methods can work together.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, Western Isles Libraries, mid-project reflection)



ARGYLL

2 organisers

12 new connections



INVERCLYDE

9 organisers

5 new connections



CAITHNESS

3 organisers

2 new connections



FIFE

3 organisers

4 new connections



MIDLOTHIAN

2 organisers

9 new connections



OUTER HEBRIDES

9 organisers

10 new connections



TAYSIDE

17 organisers

21 new connections

Organiser reflection

Làn Thide has catalysed the excitement of different organisations to partner and to co-operate. There's been this really big excitement around partnership and co-operation and I think Làn Thide has really been an important vehicle for that.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, focus group)

Established shared practice and understanding

Collaborating across disciplines helped to share best practice, build an understanding of how different sectors and organisations operate and develop a common language.

- Academic partners in Caithness reflected that it was useful to learn how arts and cultural organisations operate to find new ways of collaborating and to share best practice across professions. Working together enhanced a shared understanding of technical terms between different disciplines and built confidence to interact across different audiences with 'confirmation that it's not going to fall flat'.

Organiser reflection

The Tayside Beacon is giving us a real opportunity to exchange with other organisations in the region, to see where we are regarding our activities, compare experiences and have a sense of the difficulties we are facing.

(Tayside Beacon, V&A Dundee, project monitoring)



Photo: Lorna Dawson

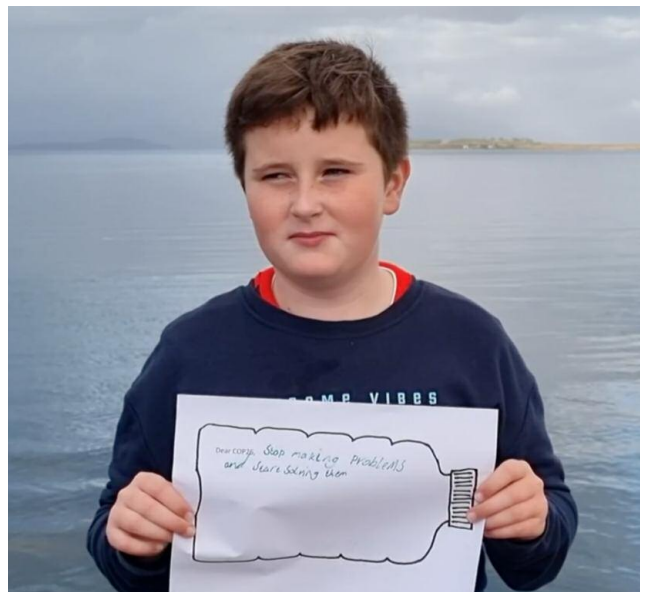
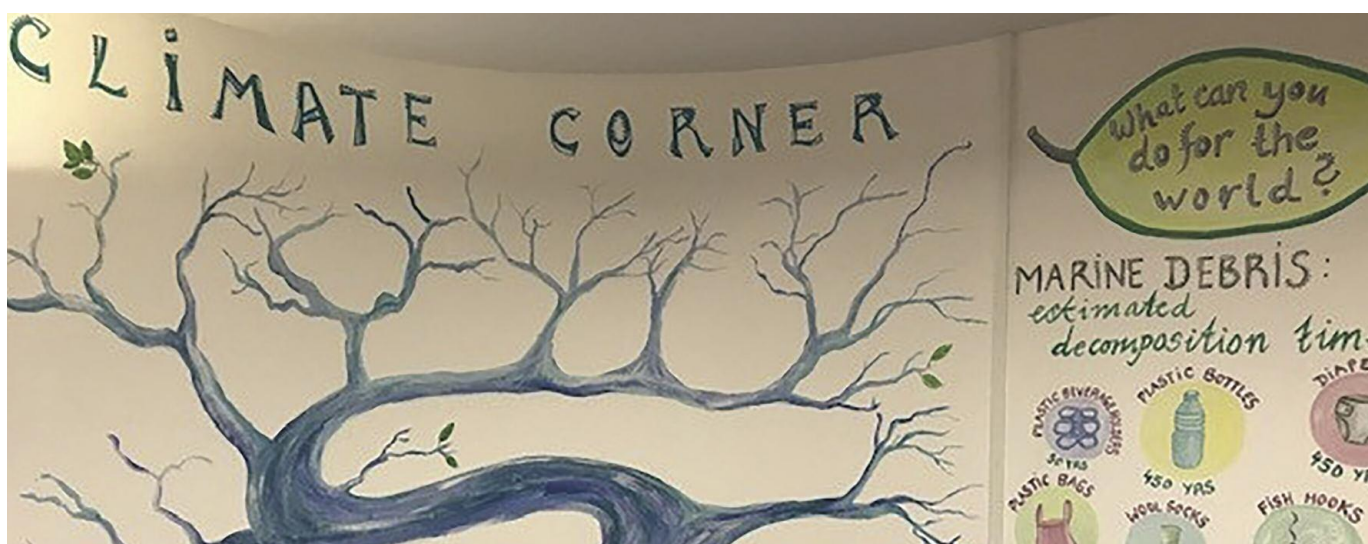


Photo: Làn Thide



Photo: Lorna Dawson



Provided status and authority

Climate Beacons branding was a useful addition to existing activities and helped leverage resource from different directions, increase trust and catalyse local activity and involvement.

- *Climate Beacons* provided a form of ‘corporate structure’ that complemented existing work by strengthening organisers’ ‘persuasive ability’ and helping to attract attention and connect local efforts into broader constellations. In Argyll, organisers identified that *Climate Beacons* brought a ‘stamp of authority’ to activities hosted by cultural organisations and the expertise of climate organisations provided a critical factor in building local trust.

Generated emerging opportunities

Involvement in *Climate Beacons* created connections that provided opportunities for future work, with organisers already collaborating on emerging projects and partnerships.

- In Inverclyde, organisers identified *Climate Beacons* as having a ‘ripple effect’ that led to further collaborations between existing partners and generated new

opportunities beyond the original partnership. Organisers reflected that the ‘understanding that there are willing people’ has helped them to take on larger cross-sectoral projects on climate change. Several emerging projects involve further public engagement work on climate change and are therefore an important legacy of the project.

Organiser reflection

It's already led onto other projects. I think it's going to be a bit of a ripple effect, I think this is the stone that dropped in the water and I think you'll get those ripple effect rings going out from this project.

(Inverclyde Beacon, focus group)

Organiser reflection

This feels very much like a gateway project. You know, it's really opened up the doors to a whole new world for us.

(Argyll Beacon, mid-project reflection)

Stories of change

Inspiring a 'domino effect'

The Midlothian Beacon reflected that *Climate Beacons* created a 'domino effect' that led onto several emerging projects and partnerships. As a result of *Climate Beacons*, the National Mining Museum Scotland is hosting a GeoEnergy exhibition by British Geological Survey, delivering a new Green Zone, and sharing renewables collections with other museums in England.

ARGYLL

4 emerging projects & partnerships

CAITHNESS

2 emerging projects & partnerships

INVERCLYDE

7 emerging projects & partnerships

FIFE

3 emerging projects & partnerships

MIDLOTHIAN

9 emerging projects & partnerships

TAYSIDE

7 emerging projects & partnerships

OUTER HEBRIDES

6 emerging projects & partnerships



Demonstrated role of the arts in climate action

Climate Beacons helped to demonstrate the role of the arts in climate action on a national scale and built interest in arts collaboration within regional partnerships and externally.

- Organisers in the Outer Hebrides and Midlothian commented that collaborating on *Climate Beacons* project helped climate and environmental organisations to 'see the value of working with creative partners in this way' and to recognise the importance of 'emotions and experiences' alongside climate science. Strategic discussions with senior colleagues and institutions were seen as an 'important part of the legacy' for building awareness of the role of the arts and laying the foundations for similar cross-disciplinary project work in the future.

Developed evidence and resources

Activities held as part of the *Climate Beacons* project helped organisations to develop an evidence base for climate resilience work and build resources for future public engagement.

- In the Outer Hebrides, events helped the Climate Change Working Group to gather societal data and local knowledge that provided underpinning evidence for regional adaptation planning. Work by architect Ian Parsons in Inverclyde helped to evidence the potential for a community hydroelectric energy scheme in Inverkip. Planting a micro-rainforest at Cove Park established a legacy engagement resource for educating local communities and schools.

Organiser reflection

It just helps making our case that the arts, it's not aloof, it's not elitist, it's grounded in the need to communicate about things that affect us all and have universal impact.

(Argyll Beacon, focus group)

Steering Group impact



Photo: Lorna Dawson

Individuals and organisations participating in the *Climate Beacons* Steering Group reported significant and unexpected outcomes through their involvement in the project. For example, members described an **improved awareness** and ‘much better appreciation’ of the varied initiatives and groups undertaking climate action across Scotland, as well as an **increased knowledge** and understanding of how culture and climate action are interrelated.

Members also reported legacy outcomes in terms of **changes to practice** or **strengthened relationships**. For example, the Scottish Library and Information Council reported that *Climate Beacons* had motivated action and momentum towards delivering its own Climate Action Plan,

resulting in sustainable changes to travel, materials and project delivery, with major initiatives increasingly tied into the Sustainable Development Goals. Working as part of the Steering Group also provided a ‘catalyst’ for Museums Galleries Scotland to collaborate with the Scottish Libraries and Information Council on a number of emerging initiatives.

Edinburgh Climate Change Institute commented that the success of developing personal and organisational relationships between Steering Group members ‘builds on Creative Carbon Scotland’s long running expertise of forging such partnerships’ and identified that their strengthened links with Creative Scotland will make a lasting difference to the Institute.

Likewise, the Scottish Government's Energy and Climate Change Directorate reported that participating in the Steering Group enabled 'introductions and links to various important cultural stakeholders' whom they intend to continue working closely with as trusted messengers to engage the Scottish public on the climate emergency, as well as assisting the **development of strategic links** between internal policy areas.

Steering Group reflection

This was the first time that [Scottish Government's] Climate and Culture Directorates had collaborated on a project of this kind. It has created extremely useful links and relationships between the two policy areas that have resulted in further joint working prior to, and since, COP26. These connections are invaluable given the cross-cutting nature of climate change across all policy areas.

(Scottish Government Climate and Culture Directorates, Steering Group reflection)

Members felt that the success of *Climate Beacons* had **provided an exemplar** within their respective areas of work, with the Scottish Library and Information Council reflecting that the project had put participating libraries 'front and centre' of a green library movement across the UK. Scottish Government members reported that the project enabled them to 'highlight unique and interesting content' around COP26, providing significant opportunities to illustrate and communicate the importance of culture in climate action.

Architecture & Design Scotland also identified *Climate Beacons* as a significant example of 'delivering change' via place-based collaborative climate action.

Steering Group reflection

[Climate Beacons] has demonstrated the need and demand for place-based collaborative climate adaptation focused projects across Scotland. It has highlighted the benefits of partnership working across design and cultural focused organisations to support grassroots action. It is one of the few projects that has moved beyond discussing a whole place collaborative approach and is delivering change. I frequently reference the Beacons project when talking about place-based adaptation projects.

(Architecture and Design Scotland, Steering Group reflection)

Funders similarly reflected that the project had provided a 'ready-made and proven collaborative model' for engaging the Scottish public on climate change and identified that the success of this pilot could be usefully rolled out to other areas and showcased internationally. The success of *Climate Beacons* has already generated international interest and funders reported 'a positive and unanticipated result' in **building an international network**, enabling both Scottish cultural actors and Scottish Government officers to establish 'close working relationships' ahead of COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh.

Towards the future

Alongside collecting data to understand project impact, Creative Carbon Scotland invested in gathering lessons learnt from *Climate Beacons* to inform our own practices and to share with others. The following section summarises two professional showcase events and gathers key takeaways from the project to inform policy and practice. Project learning from *Climate Beacons* represents a significant legacy for planning future public engagement on climate change.

Professional showcases

- 2 online showcase events were held to share learning
- 134 people signed up to attend the events
- 47 watched via catch-up on Vimeo

Showcase reflection

The success of the Climate Beacons in the build-up to and following on from COP26 in Glasgow is testimony to the spirit of collaboration as well as the tremendous hard work that has been put in by each of the seven Beacons. And it's fantastic to have the Climate Beacons in Scotland as it is vital that we bring together environmental and cultural organisations, like we are today, to underline the important role that the culture sector has to play in tackling the climate emergency.

(Neil Gray MSP, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, Showcase 1)

Two **online showcase events** were held in March 2022 as part of efforts to share learning from the project with professional audiences interested in undertaking similar work themselves. Each event focused on a different theme.

The first event – **‘Collaboration and how to work together’** – focused on the inward elements of the project, looking at the diverse partnerships created through the project, their process of collaboration and what they learned from each other. The event was introduced by Neil Gray, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, followed by presentations from representatives of the Argyll Beacon, Outer Hebrides Beacon and Tayside Beacon.

Showcase reflection

The Climate Beacon project in Tayside has really injected some energy and some innovation and some cross-disciplinary, cross-sector collaboration, which is very welcome indeed. We need innovative approaches to deal with the complex problems that we're facing. We need to recognise that we're stronger together, whether it's science and arts, heritage and culture.

(Dr Rebecca Wade, Lecturer, Abertay University, Showcase 1)



The second event – **‘Inclusive public engagement and climate justice’** – focused on the outward elements of the project, looking at the public engagement activities run by the Beacons and their efforts to make these inclusive and accessible. The event featured presentations from the Caithness & East Sutherland Beacon, Midlothian Beacon and Fife Beacon.

In September 2022, a gathering from representatives of the Beacons took place at the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute. This provided an opportunity for the Beacons to present their work, share learning with each other, and discuss key ideas for the future development of their work.

Lessons learnt



Inclusive public engagement

- Working with empathy and emotion
- Starting from where people are at
- Valuing the role of creativity, arts and culture
- Being mindful of the approach
- Operating in a local context
- Embracing virtual methods
- Allowing time to reflect and connect



Cross-sectoral collaboration

- Building diverse partnerships
- Strength of collective action
- Working through challenges
- Strength of collective action
- Ensuring a co-ordinating resource
- Identifying structural opportunities



Supportive process and policy

- Committed resource
- Mitigating risk
- Supportive governance
- Regular contact, training and capacity building



Evaluation

- Developing an evaluation approach
- Building a comprehensive picture

Lessons on inclusive public engagement

Being mindful of the approach

Project approaches were carefully designed to consider how things were carried out and who was engaged. Being mindful of the approach requires a greater lead-in time but enabled the Beacons to reach and engage beyond the 'usual suspects' and to design activities that were inclusive and accessible. Organisers reflected that climate change needs to be approached holistically and events were especially successful when the messaging emphasised the co-benefits of climate action, encouraging people to take an appropriate first step without a didactic, preaching or reproachful tone.

Valuing the role of creativity, arts and culture

Creativity provided a different lens for public engagement, acting as a catalyst for positive emotional connection and providing a translation role in making abstract concepts tangible and personal. Arts, heritage and cultural organisations operated as hubs that supported communities to collect and gather, to create new stories and to generate connections that helped people to understand complexity and see the world differently. Organisers were skilled at engaging with communities in new ways and developed trusting relationships that encouraged individuals and communities to meaningfully engage with climate action.

Operating in a local context

Adopting a place-based approach to climate engagement helped to contextualise global issues in a local setting and informed the development of meaningful activities in each region. Engaging with local needs and issues made climate change real and relevant by connecting to people's values, beliefs and sense of place. Regional hubs helped to put community voices centre stage and worked to build on initiatives already in place, supporting the delivery of shared goals and preventing feelings of disillusionment or duplication.

Starting from where people are at

Organisers sought to engage with community members from the ground up and events showcased the action and passion of people within local communities. Activities resisted telling people exactly what to do but shared local climate activity and showed positive change. Organisers sought to go beyond climate science to consider social context and work towards building empowered and resilient communities. Discourse on climate change can be overwhelming and organisers identified the importance of using language that was accessible and relatable. Talking about things that mattered to local communities like 'land' and 'food' helped to enable a more open and encompassing discussion on climate-related issues.

Allowing time to reflect and connect

Stationary exhibits and knowledge-based approaches were not enough on their own to engage audiences with the topic of climate change. Organisers identified the need to provide space and time to reflect on the information and to generate connections between data and lived experience.

Activities that were hands-on and tangible proved particularly effective in helping audiences to visualise and interact with climate impacts in relation to their everyday lives. Organisers emphasised that future projects should incorporate more open, reflective elements through participatory arts-based or dialogue-based approaches.

Working with empathy and emotion

Organisers reflected that working on the *Climate Beacons* project helped them to learn the importance of making space for emotion when planning public engagement on climate change. Creating space and time for people to share emotional responses was important during events to create connection and share the burden of climate change. Activities that harnessed emotions proved an effective way to engage audiences, with organisers reflecting on the importance of transforming scientific information into something that could stimulate and trigger responses from people's hearts and minds.

Embracing virtual methods

It remains a challenge to attract diverse audiences to climate-related events. Organisers achieved some success in reaching beyond the 'usual suspects' but it remained difficult to interest large audiences and attract new people to the climate movement. Employing virtual platforms and storing online recordings of events helped to widen access and increase engagement with activities. Archive footage and online resources provided a record of material for future public engagement and a catalogue of local activity across different regions. Embracing virtual methods also helped to reduce the carbon footprint of travel to in-person events, particularly in remote areas.

Recommendations for practice

- Allow enough time to ensure public engagement activities are carefully designed and inclusive of diverse audiences
- Ensure messaging on climate change is holistic and emphasises benefits of action, and take care with 'preaching', 'reproaching' or 'telling people what to do'
- Harness creativity to communicate concepts in new ways, attract attention, trigger emotional response and foster awareness of climate-related topics
- Connect with arts, heritage and culture to support communities to connect and gather in a welcoming space and to involve practitioners skilled at public engagement
- Contextualise global issues in a local setting by adopting a place-based approach that prioritises engagement at a community or regional level
- Work with communities and build on existing initiatives and expertise to support the delivery of shared goals and a broader connected vision
- Incorporate space and time for reflection into events through hands-on or dialogue-based approaches to help people to connect with climate change on a personal level
- Seek to meet local needs and address key issues identified by people on the ground
- Use language that is accessible and relatable for communities
- Work with empathy and emotion to effectively engage audiences and stimulate action
- Use virtual platforms and online websites to extend the reach of activities and provide a centralised resource for easy access

Recommendations for policy

- Support arts, culture and heritage to provide trusted messengers to communicate with and engage the Scottish public on the climate emergency
- Fund place-based approaches to climate engagement to meaningfully connect with people's values, beliefs and sense of place
- Provide long-term, sustained funding to foster inclusion, meaningful interaction and empower communities through capacity building work at a local level



Lessons on cross-sectoral collaboration

Building diverse partnerships

Climate Beacons encouraged organisations from arts, science and community engagement backgrounds to work collaboratively alongside government, policymakers and public bodies. Working across silos in this way assisted organisers to empower one another, and to learn different ways of working, engaging, thinking and communicating. Interdisciplinary knowledge was critical in building organisational capacity and generating new expertise. Pairing environmental organisations and trusted messengers enabled organisers to access and engage communities who might otherwise have been challenging to reach, such as crofters, and mining or remote island communities.

Organiser reflection

I would always encourage anyone in the academic community to work with as many community organisations, arts, creative, cultural organisations as possible because the amount of learning we as an academic sector can get from them is huge and it shouldn't be perceived as just, well, academics we can teach stuff. You get so much back.

(Environmental Research Institute, Caithness focus group)

Strength of collective action

Collective action across partnerships is key and can have a powerful multiplier effect for resource and ambition. Working collaboratively on *Climate Beacons* became a catalyst for organisational change, stimulating the growth of local and regional networks and enabling active communities of practice to develop. Commitment was cultivated amongst organisers to deliver project activities to a very high standard and feelings of interconnection were fostered within and between the Beacons themselves. Working with organisations, rather than individual practitioners, provided access to wider networks and structures, resulting in systemic, governance and policy changes that would not have been possible otherwise.

Steering Group reflection

We can achieve more by working collaboratively. There is a willingness to collaborate on climate issues within the culture sector. We should continue to collaborate in our drive to net zero.

(Scottish Library and Information Council, Steering Group reflection)

Ensuring a co-ordinating resource

Individual partnerships addressed the challenge of co-ordinating project activities differently. Smaller Beacons generally did not have a formalised system whilst larger partnerships adopted a very specific role or approach, such as appointing a producer or establishing a rolling chair system. Co-ordination was demanding on staff time and resources and establishing a formalised role helped with admin, brought momentum to larger partnerships and strengthened relationship building. Allocating sufficient resource towards co-ordination increased the likelihood that organisers felt it was a sustainable way to work.

Organiser reflection

I'm glad that the core team made that decision early on to check with Creative Carbon Scotland that a producer role could be how we would spend a large amount of our funding and I think we've been able to then develop and deliver as a result of that organisational decision.

(Tayside Beacon, focus group)

Identifying structural opportunities

Organisers recognised systemic opportunities as an important component that needed to be built into future work. Outer Hebrides partners established connected governance and found ways to systematise the flow of information from a local level into regional planning, whilst the Fife Beacon's collaborative structure incorporated the voice of younger generations at a partnership level. Structural decisions taken early on resulted in a more just and inclusive approach to project and partnership activities and ensured longer-term legacy.

Working through challenges

Collaborations are not always easy as different organisations can be accustomed to different ways of working, with differing expectations, languages or timescales for project work. It is important to allow sufficient lead-in time to adjust to working in a non-hierarchic, collective way. Cross-sectoral collaborations work well when skill sets are complementary, but this means it can be challenging to provide support or replace partners' skills and experience if difficulties arise.

Recommendations for practice

- Promote effective cross-disciplinary action between different skill sets
- Situate partnerships geographically to develop regional resources and devolved expertise on climate change and public engagement
- Pair environmental organisations with trusted messengers in the community to help to empower one another and increase reach
- Mobilise organisations to engage collectively on climate change to amplify motivation, resource and ambition on common goals

Recommendations for practice

- › Improve internal practices alongside delivering external public engagement to strengthen project outcomes
- › Work with paid local artists, community connections and wider institutions to share collective motivation and ambition and extend the project impact and reach
- › Establish regular meetings to foster trust building and connection both within and between regional partnerships
- › Dedicate staff time and resource in advance to support relationship development, project management and administration between partner organisations
- › Formalise a rolling chair system or a climate officer role from the start to co-ordinate activity and maintain long-term momentum across larger partnerships
- › Establish a governance plan to identify structural opportunities to incorporate and platform diverse voices and mechanisms to promote long-term systemic change
- › Ensure additional time and resource to develop supportive organiser relationships, work through emerging challenges and reach a shared understanding
- › Empower partnerships to adapt project activities to match their available resourcing levels and skill sets or to complement existing projects and core programmes
- › Share learning on the benefits and challenges of cross-sectoral collaboration to inform future practice and project work
- › Set targets on partnership aims to help develop formal mechanisms to understand and evaluate the benefits of the co-operation model

Recommendations for policy

- › Prioritise funding sources for projects that bring together coalitions of diverse stakeholders

Lessons on supportive process and policy

Committed resource

Partner organisations identified that limited budget and reliance on in-kind support could be a struggle. Invaluable time and resources were shared in kind by partner organisations, but adequate support needs to be allocated if activities are to be repeated or scaled up in future. COVID-19 resulted in additional burden on partnerships as extra time and resources were required to re-engineer and replan activities when circumstances changed rapidly. Partnerships expressed an appetite for further work but finding funding for cross-disciplinary projects remains an ongoing challenge.

Steering Group reflection

The financial support for such projects is fragile and too short term. There is appetite, at a local level, for projects that enable change and there is appetite within national organisations to break down silos and to work together on this critical issue.

(Architecture and Design Scotland, Steering Group reflection)

Supportive governance

It is important for geographically distributive projects like *Climate Beacons* to be supported by a central project team and an assembly of expert co-ordinating partners. The governance model of *Climate Beacons* brought in knowledgeable 'key players' at the outset of the project to help advise on strategic decisions, build networks, and provide support and advice. The skills and experience of Creative Carbon Scotland and the Steering Group members were

invaluable for co-ordinating and raising the profile of activities carried out across the Beacons. Maintaining a non-prescriptive and flexible governance approach ensured the Beacons could define their own locally relevant activities, whilst receiving appropriate support and advice from co-ordinating partners.

Steering Group reflection

The success of the Steering Group also shows the importance of including bought-in, informed and 'key players' from the beginning, to problem solve, make connections and support with resource where possible.

(Scottish Government Climate and Culture Divisions, Steering Group reflection)

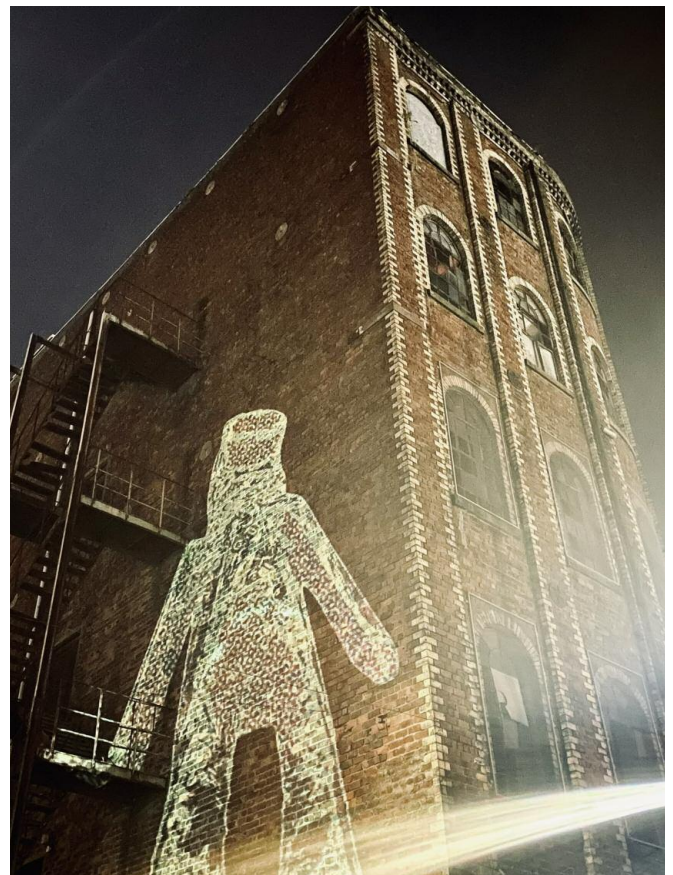


Photo: TRANCND



Regular contact, training and capacity building

Several partnerships undertook informal capacity building work to develop skills for cross-sectoral working. In future, organisers identified that formalised training sessions could assist organisations to engage across disciplines and build their skills and capacity early on. Regular contact between Creative Carbon Scotland and the Climate Beacons was also recognised as an important component for capacity building and frequent contact with the lead organisation ensured team members were approachable and could provide support to projects when needed.

Mitigating risk

Structural and institutional changes can have a big impact on collaborations and on the delivery of project plans. Often, Climate Beacon partnerships were driven by passionate, committed 'keystone' contacts who worked with enormous amounts of dedication and motivation to realise project activities. Sudden changes to the functioning of smaller institutions can compromise the availability of key contacts and it can be challenging to replace the unique skill set of a project partner within those organisations.

Recommendations for practice

- › Provide transparency on funding and decision-making to enable planning by project partners and to manage expectations about ongoing work
- › Allocate resources equally across collaborations to support new activity and prevent tensions arising from existing work being rebadged
- › Recompense organiser contributions as much as possible across all sectors to allow them to invest time and effort on an equal footing
- › Adopt an adaptable governance model comprised of a central project team and expert steering group to effectively support distributed public engagement work
- › Involve knowledgeable co-ordinating partners early on and set up regular monthly meetings to help with strategic direction, support and resource
- › Run training sessions to build capacity and skills across partnerships to ensure organisers have access to sufficient skills, information and resources
- › Establish regular contact between the lead partner and regional partnerships through monthly meetings with an open offer of support
- › Conduct risk assessments and risk registers to identify and mitigate potential challenges within partnerships before circumstances arise
- › Establish multiple points of contact at partner organisations to provide additional support and skills if the circumstances of key contacts change

Recommendations for policy

- › Ensure long-term, secure funding to sustain effective cross-sectoral climate action
- › Embed opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration into funding mechanisms to empower collective action on climate change
- › Establish flexible funding structures that can support the continued development and growth of pilot projects over time

Lessons on evaluation

Developing an evaluation approach

Creative Carbon Scotland initially sought to review all levels of public interaction with the Climate Beacons by using network surveys, post-event surveys and organiser reflections. However, this approach required too much time and resource alongside the delivery of project activities. Flexibility and adaptability are paramount as collaborative projects introduce uncertainties and complexities that complicate intended evaluation. Developing an evaluation framework and theory of change with organisers early on would help to negotiate expectations, streamline activities, and ensure evaluation is sensitive to the nuances of each location and appropriate for the resource levels of partner organisations.

Organiser reflection

Thinking about evaluation going forward, if that could be embedded into future activity in a streamlined way, or a regular kind of way, and also thinking about if we are referring back to the aims, how that can be a really reflexive thing to be looking at evaluation and garnering feedback from participants or audiences and then taking that back to the aims and just seeing how that loops in.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, focus group)

Building a comprehensive picture

Partner organisations identified ongoing challenges with managing to deliver evaluation without impacting the inclusivity of events or interfering with the outcomes sought. Surveys can obstruct relationship building with participants and communities,

as well as compromise emotions elicited by event interactions. Adhering to academic best practice and standard survey measures limited survey effectiveness as questionnaires became too long and complex for participants to willingly engage with.

Organiser reflection

Feedback was like, 'this is a lot' and it almost started detracting from the event [...] we pulled out the main important questions and we made it just double-sided A4, and so we made it more punchy.

(Midlothian Beacon, focus group)

Organisers also opted to record qualitative data during workshops and events using informal methods to provide an alternative to structured surveys and to understand how people were feeling, without distracting from the activity itself. In general, surveys received low response rates, resulting in a partial view of project reach and outcomes. Reflective conversations with organisers were effective at incorporating the expertise and knowledge of partners to build a more comprehensive picture of project achievements, share project learning and identify unexpected outcomes.

Organiser reflection

We didn't put in formal M&E [Monitoring and Evaluation] systems, but we did have informal systems to actually check with people how they were feeling because we also wanted to make sure people were okay as part of the process.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, focus group)

Recommendations for practice

- Dedicate time and resource to co-create an evaluation framework and theory of change with organisers to ensure an appropriate, streamlined and reflexive approach
- Focus evaluation efforts at the participant level and design survey questions to collect data on what has changed as a result of the activity
- Design post-event surveys with clarity, concision and accessibility in mind to encourage responses from those beyond the 'usual suspects' and offer paper-based versions
- Use formal and informal methods to adapt evaluation to different communities and levels of interaction and to check participants feel safe and comfortable
- Assign time and resource for organisers to actively participate in reflection sessions or focus groups to complement quantitative project data
- Support organisers in the delivery of 'hands-on' data collection at events by identifying additional skills, resources or tools required
- Allocate resource to a dedicated evaluator to support the project in evidencing change and assist organiser capacity and expertise through regular contact
- Collect data on project learning alongside impact to strengthen institutional learning and provide useful resources for interested stakeholders and collaborators

Recommendations for policy

- Allow outcomes and an evaluation approach to be identified or refined as part of a joint co-creation process after project funding is allocated
- Value the lessons learnt and recommendations alongside evidence of project success to promote the transfer of useful knowledge
- Provide allocated funding for evaluation to ensure a rigorous and well-resourced approach that supports the capacity of delivery partners

Legacy and next steps

The legacy of *Climate Beacons* is already extensive. Public activities have diversified and strengthened climate engagement across Scotland and many of the partnerships and projects have also acted as catalysts for further collective work including: future screenings of the films created by the Argyll Beacon; ongoing work between the Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon and the Bare Project; Fife's Levenmouth Fayre Day uniting local communities through climate action and culture; the delivery of a new Green Zone at Midlothian's Mining Museum; interconnected activity between Làn Thìde and the Climate Change Working Group in the Outer Hebrides; and Tayside's synergy artist-scientist collaboration for a five-year Scottish Government research programme on Environment, Agriculture, Food and Communities.

The *Climate Beacons* pilot project has also provided a blueprint for further public engagement and arts-science organisational collaborations in this space. There will be an ongoing need to maintain and build on climate engagement as the buzz of COP26 fades and as rising living costs result in increasing barriers to climate action. Creative Carbon Scotland identifies a key role for the *Climate Beacons* model to continue supporting climate engagement at a local and regional level, and realising positive outcomes for communities long-term. The success of *Climate Beacons* also provides an opportunity to build more widespread understanding and support for the essential role of arts and culture in delivering effective climate action in Scotland and further afield.

Steering Group reflection

As a result of these positive experiences, we will now seek to collaborate with more cultural projects involved in climate action and use our communications activities to increase the reach of this transformational work as we progress toward a net-zero future.

(Scottish Government Climate and Culture Directorates, Steering Group reflection)

Organisers identified that the enduring impact and legacy of *Climate Beacons* is partly contingent on an ongoing commitment of resource to support the continuation of the relationships, trust and activity generated through this pilot project. Creative Carbon Scotland is already building on the legacy of *Climate Beacons* through connecting people in Egypt and Scotland working on climate and culture in the run-up to COP27. Creative Carbon Scotland will also be exploring how to further connections with existing organisers, build on our collective learning, and engage more widely with other locations and diverse arts, cultural and environmental partners across Scotland.

Finally, despite the impact of the *Climate Beacons* project so far on members of the public, on partner organisations and on our own thinking, Creative Carbon Scotland recognises that there is more work to be done. *Climate Beacons* has been an important pilot and a valuable learning experience for all partners involved. Sharing our learning with others from across Scotland and further afield will help to build on this work and assist in the transition to a sustainable, resilient and just society.

Case studies

Argyll Beacon

This partnership between **Cove Park** and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (**ACT**) focused on Scotland's rainforest. Most of this unique, temperate habitat sits within Argyll and the Beacon aimed to raise awareness of this woodland through environmental and cultural activity, and to encourage local and wider communities to enjoy and participate in the region's rich natural heritage.



- 500** native trees planted on a 50-acre site
- 15** paid opportunities created for artists and environmental practitioners
- 11,117** online interactions were recorded

The Argyll Beacon planted a '**micro-rainforest**' at Cove Park; hosted three residencies with commissioned artists; developed and screened a short film by **Rachel McBrinn and Alison Scott** titled *Congenial Soils and Favourable*

Situations; ran an 'Artist in Schools' programme with **Juliana Capes** to engage local pupils; organised guided school rainforest visits; hosted **Climate Cafés** with ACT; and ran participatory school and family workshops that explored Scotland's rainforest via creative methods, including foraging, creative writing, and relief printing.

Micro-rainforest

With support from local communities and woodland experts, the Argyll Beacon planted 500 native trees, including rowan, oak, elder and others on Cove Park's 50-acre site. As it matures the woodland will become a focal point within Cove Park's programme and will provide a permanent project legacy.

Climate Cafés

Argyll's Climate Cafés included a series of four free public events at Cove Park that brought together local communities, artists, researchers, rainforest and woodland specialists, and environmentalists, to hear expert presentations and participate in local climate-related discussions.



Photo: Emma Henderson

Key outcomes

Raised local awareness: Tree-planting coincided with Climate Café events to increase awareness of Scotland's rainforest. Participants commented that interacting with ACT experts informed their understanding of local woodland habitats and developed their place-based awareness of climate impacts. Many artists and writers worked directly with environmental professionals for the first time, enriching their practice through increased awareness of climate change and Argyll's natural heritage.

Generated interest: Organisers identified that audience numbers steadily increased throughout the year, with activities generating local interest and excitement. Young children and families enjoyed the outdoor events and workshops in particular, with organisers reflecting that they helped to make climate concepts hands-on, positive and tangible.

Broadened audiences: Activities were designed for people of all ages to engage with. Organisers reflected that events brought a range of people to Cove Park for the first time and reported successes in engaging primary and secondary school pupils and families with rainforest-related activities. Hybrid events also helped to attract new participants to attend online from more remote areas in Argyll.

Access to ACT's expertise has enriched our own programme significantly and embedded our work more directly within our region and within our local communities. As a result, there is a far greater awareness of our work now locally, and this has the long-term benefits of bringing more people to Cove Park to take part in our wider programmes.

(Cove Park, Argyll Beacon, project monitoring)

Organiser legacy

Strengthened connections: *Climate Beacons* generated a wealth of cross-sectoral connections. Being able to access ACT's local expertise has strengthened Cove Park's offer to artists, researchers, and educators over the long term. Establishing direct working connections with artists, film makers and writers also demonstrated to ACT the role and opportunity to continue using creative activity for climate engagement moving forward.

The different skills and disciplines alongside a shared goal of our two organisations were very complementary and we would be happy to seek new opportunities to work again with Cove Park.

(ACT, Argyll Beacon, project monitoring)

Improved cross-sectoral knowledge:

Organisers at Cove Park reflected that working with ACT and undergoing internal training increased their understanding of climate change and its impact on their locality. This made them better placed to answer questions and direct community members and artists to specialists when required. ACT organisers identified that their understanding of using film and creative methods as mediums for public engagement had also increased.

The training received, and the opportunity to work alongside ACT colleagues, has improved considerably [our] own knowledge of climate change and its impact on our local area.

(Cove Park, Argyll Beacon, project monitoring)



Project learning

- Communities are concerned about climate change and have a desire to engage with grass-roots activity on local issues and to make tangible positive change
- Hands-on activities in an outdoor setting are particularly effective approaches to engage young children and families with climate change
- Hosting hybrid events helped to overcome geographical challenges in Argyll and attending online saved people time and associated travel costs
- Offering outdoor workshops linked to an environmental theme helped to re-engage existing audiences and attract new attendees to Cove Park
- Ongoing programme modifications were necessary to ensure ambitious activities remained within budget
- Communities valued opportunities to interact with local environmental and woodland specialists

Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon



A collaboration between **Lyth Arts Centre**, the **University of the Highlands and Islands Environmental Research Institute** and **Timespan** for the first phase of the project, the Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon focused on climate colonialism, land justice and redistribution under the heading 'The land for those that work it'.

- 2** week residency with **The Bare Project**
- 134** online views of *The Fifth Giant* film
- 8** paid opportunities created for artists and local practitioners

The Caithness Beacon hosted a residency with **The Bare Project** during COP26, culminating in a **community meal** with local residents, and produced a film of the project titled **The Fifth Giant (or What Would You Do?)**. Ongoing work includes a touring cinema programme around community halls and finding effective ways to share work from the Environmental Research Institute.

The Fifth Giant

During COP26, Lyth Arts Centre invited The Bare Project to undertake an in-depth residency in Caithness. Over a period of two weeks, the company worked with crofters, land owners, growers and local artists researching and developing *The Fifth Giant (or What Would You Do?)*, a storytelling project and film that interrogated the forces acting on the area and how citizens living there can also have an impactful relationship with the land. *The Fifth Giant* imagined four giants that stood for the major forces acting on the area and then imagined what a fifth giant made out of empowered community members could achieve.

Shared community meal

The Bare Project residency culminated in a community meal with a mix of people who had collaborated on the project and interested members of the local community. Over the course of the meal, people were introduced to the giants and asked to write handwritten stories about how these giants formed the landscapes around them.

Using these fictional characters helped people to explain the history of the local landscape and the giants became a framework for thinking and talking about the politics of land.

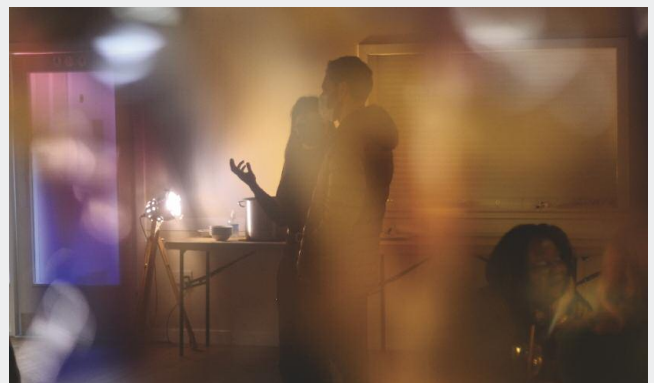


Photo: Regina Mosch

Key outcomes

Challenged urban-centric conversations:

Organisers had felt disenfranchised and disconnected from urban-centric climate conversations in Scotland. Working with The Bare Project provided a 'protest' to urban-centric conversations and helped to amplify rural Caithness voices, providing a platform for communities to engage with academics, cultural institutions and with each other on important land issues.

The Fifth Giant felt like a gentle protest to COP26. It felt opposite to what was happening in Glasgow.

It felt like what we were doing over the two-week period was this collaborative, meaningful, on-the-ground engagement. It felt like that's what COP26 should have been across Scotland, taking into account the multiplicities of life here, instead of jam-packed into the city.

(Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon, project monitoring)

Connected with local communities:

Organisers reflected that the language around climate change and related topics like rewilding can be contentious in Caithness and East Sutherland, with rural communities feeling excluded, threatened or blamed. Beacon activities provided a 'gentle' opener for difficult conversations and were effective at attracting new people to participate in climate conversations, including local farmers and landowners who have been harder to engage historically.

There is often a feeling that rural communities and ways of life are being blamed or being told what to do by people who are very removed from us. As an organisation [Lyth Arts Centre] we've had five years of slow, deep community work, so felt we can maybe start asking some of these questions in a gentle way.

(Caithness and East Sutherland Beacon, project monitoring)



Organiser legacy

Ongoing project work: Informed by *The Fifth Giant* film, the Caithness Beacon will be embarking on a community touring cinema programme between January-March 2023, showing films and hosting discussions that speak to the themes arising through the Climate Beacon. *The Fifth Giant* has also provided a legacy resource that continues to be shared and attract interest, bringing new opportunities for organisers and amplifying the stories of Caithness communities on a national platform.

Reframed approach: Organisers emphasised that they are not here to tell communities what to do but can facilitate interesting and vibrant spaces for communal discussion and problem solving. Lyth Arts Centre reflected that this has transformed their approach as an organisation and will feed into their ongoing public engagement work and future programming.



Project learning

- Public engagement on climate change requires collaborative, meaningful, on-the-ground engagement that is sensitive to local context
- Engaging rural communities requires mindful use of climate-related language to negotiate feelings of exclusion, threat or blame
- Working with paid local practitioners alongside commissioned artists can extend the influence and legacy of a project
- Adapting to changes in staff and organisational capacity can make it challenging to fulfil project activities as planned within the timeframe
- Storytelling can help people to explore and discuss ‘crunchy questions’ surrounding complex climate-related issues

Fife Beacon



The **Leven Programme**, **ONFife** and **Levenmouth Academy** came together with the goal to channel the arts and build on local climate action to engage Levenmouth residents, encourage climate conversations, build stronger communities and share the work of the Beacon partnership and local community groups to inspire further action.

898 local people were engaged through exhibitions, workshops and public events

1,909 online engagements were recorded on social media

6 paid opportunities were created with local artists and environmental organisations

The Fife Beacon held outreach events with **conservationists** and **ministers**; organised climate-related **film screenings**, **photography competitions**, **exhibitions** and book collections; supported Levenmouth Academy's '**Scruffy Spots**' **rewilding initiative** and regeneration of **Bat's Wood**; assisted a pupil to attend COP26 and to **share learning** from this; and promoted

grass-roots partnership work with local organisations to establish **artist residencies** and to co-organise the **Levenmouth Fayre Day**.

Key outcomes

Widened participation: Fife organisers reflected that their engagement strategy was effective in reaching Levenmouth residents, in particular building connections with young people through local educational institutions, engaging community groups, and attracting cultural audiences at local venues like Rothes Hall and the Leven and Methil libraries.

Improved understanding: Survey responses indicated that activities were effective in improving audiences' understanding of climate change and their awareness of local environmental issues facing the River Leven. Organisers identified that sharing information and knowledge across the Fife working group increased their collective understanding of climate change.

Increased motivation to act: Organisers identified that activities encouraged an eagerness from school pupils and community members to get involved in local climate action. Survey responses similarly reflected an increased enthusiasm for taking collective action and several attendees outlined the individual behavioural changes they planned to make.



Photo: Fife Climate Beacon

Organiser legacy

Empowered to think differently:

Organisations identified that the project empowered them to 're-think our traditional, sometimes rigid ways of engaging' and appreciate the importance of creativity, arts and culture in connecting people with climate action.

Another long-term benefit is that this has opened our minds to think differently about how we engage people. People care about their heritage, music, art, dance - things they can feel. Getting Climate Beacon status has provided us with the remit (and confidence) needed to be more creative. This is the way forward to help people connect with their local environment and the challenges it's facing.

(Fife Beacon, project monitoring)

Strengthened connections:

Organisers reflected that the project had strengthened connections between the diverse organisations involved, both within the core partnership and with local grassroots organisations. This resulted in the creation of the Levenmouth Fayre Day as a legacy for uniting local groups, organisations and people through climate action and culture.



Photo: OnFife

Project learning

- Receiving limited funding can make it harder for partners to prioritise and dedicate resources to a project
- Reaching out to organisational contacts and using established channels, spaces and organiser skills can facilitate the delivery of low-cost engagement activities
- Defining project impact is an ongoing challenge as there is a richness of local work that also addresses similar issues
- Creativity, arts and culture can be effective ways to engage communities with climate action and to help people to feel connected with their local environment
- Working with and empowering on-the-ground grassroots organisations that are focused on similar issues is an important way to maximise local legacy

Inverclyde Beacon



Formed of a partnership between **Beacon Arts Centre, Belville Community Garden Trust, RIG Arts** and **Inverclyde Libraries**, among others, the Inverclyde Beacon focused on the roles of climate change mitigation and adaptation as part of Scotland's most economically deprived area's recovery from COVID-19.

36 performances, exhibitions, group discussions and events held in Inverclyde

2,800 local people were engaged

6 online legacy resources for public engagement

The Inverclyde Beacon worked with young people to curate a live performance called *This is how it happens*; hosted author **Eco Exchanges**; held sustainability-related **Chatty Cafes** and writing competitions; researched the potential for hydro power in Inverclyde; lit up local schools with the **LightworkX** project; shared **Creative Climate Responses** by local singer-songwriters at the **Galoshans Festival**; held an exhibition at Rig Arts, and commissioned artist and sculptor, Brody Mace-Hopkins, to participate in the Midlothian Beacon's *Weathering Earth*.

Key outcomes

Explored different perspectives: Beacon Youth Theatre members identified that working on *This is how it happens* helped them gain a better understanding of climate change, developing an awareness of what the effects are locally and what it might look like for individuals in different contexts globally.

Inspired local participation: Organisers reflected that activities exceeded expectations for community participation, both in terms of in-person attendance, online presence and social media impact. Using hybrid delivery for events and connecting activities with the long-standing local Galoshans Festival helped to expand reach.

Attendance by children and their parents was excellent, revealing a community spirit and wonderment at the connection between places and how others see the world through artworks.

(Inverclyde Beacon, Bruce Newlands, TRANCND: LightworkX)



Photo: Inverclyde Climate Beacon



Built ongoing connections: Working on *Climate Beacons* created a constellation of new partnerships locally and sustained existing relationships between cultural organisations. A ‘Libraries Green Team’ has been set up through partnership working with the Local Council and is focused on delivering a sustainability strategy in line with the Sustainable Development Goals to improve local library practice, policy and outreach.

Organiser legacy

Initiated new opportunities: Research by architect Ian Parsons evidenced potential for increased use of hydro power in Inverclyde. Organisers are continuing to collaborate on this opportunity and will be presenting the work at an open forum to explore the opportunity for a community-owned scheme to be established locally.

Our organisation (Beacon Arts Centre) has made new connections with local organisations and strengthened our existing relationships.

(Inverclyde Beacon, Beacon Arts Centre, project monitoring)

Project learning

- Performance provided an important medium for audiences to connect with climate change on an emotional level
- Involving external governing bodies was sometimes challenging as they can operate on slower timescales
- Connecting with existing local events and community groups was important for building audiences and local legacy
- Offering hybrid participation and sharing event recordings online helped to expand audiences and reach

Midlothian Beacon



A collaboration between the **National Mining Museum Scotland (NMMS)**, **British Geological Survey (BGS)** and environmental artist and soil hydrologist, **Nicole Manley**, the Midlothian Beacon created a transformative journey following the carbon cycle, from Scotland's past legacy of fossil fuels towards a future of decarbonisation. It aimed to connect through art and science and to engage with local audiences, particularly those marginalised from climate conversations.

56 exhibitions, workshops and public events

6,646 local people were engaged

94,560 online interactions were recorded

The Midlothian Beacon organised an **art-science exhibition** on climate change; hosted a **participatory art installation** and workshop series called *Weathering Earth*; held a cross-sectoral climate **conference**; brought diverse voices together through **panel discussion**; engaged families on recycling and reuse with **Dr Bunhead's Rubbish Puppet Adventures**; hosted a **student residency**; and rounded up with a Celebratory Day to showcase their activities.

Weathering Earth

Weathering Earth was a series of participatory workshops, installation and outdoor sculpture with activities focused on sculpting clay whilst reflecting and thinking about climate change. Workshops were undertaken with schools, community groups and members of the public across Midlothian.

Carbon Conflict & Climate Change

The Carbon Conflict & Climate Change exhibition brought together scientific research on the carbon cycle with artworks by Nicole Manley on the social and emotional context of climate change and engaged local, national and international visitors.

Net Zero Town Challenge

The Net Zero Town Challenge was run through the Midlothian Science Festival's **STEM Programme**. School pupils from across Midlothian learnt about climate change to create the region's first net-zero carbon town.



Photo: National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey

Key outcomes

Expanded participation: Surveys indicate activities were successful in engaging a wide range of audiences. Organisers sought to remove barriers for mining communities, helping to bring in people who would not normally engage with climate-related activities. Organisers reflected that events had a strong community feel and offered 'something for everyone', enabling people with disabilities and intergenerational audiences to participate together.

Improved awareness: Hands-on activities helped to communicate intangible topics and science-based exhibits provided informative links between past industries and their future potential. Participatory activities also generated discussion between people taking part and with organisers, helping to develop connections and share climate stories.

Enjoyment and curiosity: Participants commented on how enjoyable events were and reflected that the topics sustained their curiosity, with many continuing to check via social media, the website or visiting in person to witness their sculptures as part of *Weathering Earth*. Organisers reflected on a steady increase in new and returning participants as the project progressed.



Organiser legacy

Diversified knowledge and practice: Connecting with different types of organisations through a shared project goal was rewarding and helped organisers to exchange diverse knowledge, extend their individual capabilities and learn new best practice, thereby building a strong foundation for future partnership work.

Without the symbiosis of our organisational aims and our shared project mission, the Midlothian Beacon would not have been as successful as it was in terms of the diversity of activities offered, audiences engaged, and impact on those participating.

(Midlothian Beacon, project monitoring)

Emerging projects and partnerships:

Collaborating led to the development of numerous projects going forwards, including developing a new Green Zone at the National Mining Museum Scotland, hosting a touring geothermal energy exhibition from British Geological Survey and continuing the delivery of the Net Zero Towns school workshop.



Photos: National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey



Project learning

- Designing locally appropriate, inclusive activities can encourage disenfranchised groups into the climate conversation
- Focusing on enjoyment and positive change can inform people on climate change without feeling overwhelmed or disempowered
- Informal feedback or paper-based surveys can help to avoid digital overwhelm and prevent feelings that evaluation was impersonal or onerous
- Providing free activities, offering subsistence and designing accessible engagement activities, such as working with clay, helped to remove barriers to participation
- Creating quiz sheets for children and young people increased engagement with exhibition materials
- Combining scientific materials with participatory creative activities increased audience engagement with climate change

Outer Hebrides Beacon (Làn Thìde)



This partnership between **An Lanntair** arts centre, **Taigh Chearsabhaigh** museum and arts centre, **Ceòlas**, **Community Energy Scotland**, **Western Isles Libraries**, **TSI Western Isles**, **NatureScot**, **Adaptation Scotland** and the wider Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Climate Change Working Group operated under the name **Làn Thìde**. The Outer Hebrides Climate Beacon focused on how the islands can adapt to the worsening impacts of climate change while celebrating their unique natural and cultural heritage.

40 in-person and online events were held across the Outer Hebrides

7,126 local people were engaged

11 legacy resources are available online

The Outer Hebrides Beacon organised **climate impact mapping** and solution-focused workshops across the islands; hosted the **Climate Storylines project** with the Met Office; developed the **Earth Stories** and **Design for the Future** schools

events; created a local biodiversity ‘**Green Trail**’; opened an **exhibition and workshop space** on reuse; presented **Message in a Bottle** at COP26; hosted **two environmental exhibitions**; established a library **Climate Collection**; and organised a **Community Climate Action Week**.



Photo: Làn Thìde

Key outcomes

Attracted diverse audiences: Organisers were mindful that locals in the Outer Hebrides can suffer from ‘workshop fatigue’ but activities were well attended and attracted diverse audiences. Organisers found that working with cultural partners, creative methods and the Gaelic language helped local groups, young people, crofters and the fishing community to engage with activities.

Enabled climate conversation: Activities such as the *Storylines* and climate mapping workshops were designed to gather communities together and to provide safe spaces, encouraging people to interact and to share their own experiences of climate change. Community insights were highly valuable and helped to locate the impact of climate hazards and vulnerabilities.

Actually hearing and having opportunity to speak to some local people resulted in the process feeling much more connected to the place. Having those conversations, hearing people's first-hand reflections of how climate change is impacting them. What they want to do to adapt? What's important to them to protect? It was really powerful.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, Climate Change Working Group)

Celebrated local cultural heritage:

The range and breadth of activities and exhibitions supported through Làn Thìde enabled the Beacon to engage with many aspects of Hebridean life. Consistent use of Gaelic language in publicising events and the renaming of the Beacon itself to Làn Thìde also supported a localised approach and celebrated cultural heritage.

Organiser legacy

Established connected governance:

Widening the original Climate Change Working Group governance to include Làn Thìde has been a 'game changer' in increasing resourcing, capacity and legitimacy. Connecting with a network of creative, cultural and community partners deepened community engagement efforts and strengthened organisers' understanding and capacity on adaptation. Western Isles Libraries are now formally represented as engagement leaders in the Climate Change Working Group.

[Cultural partners enable] more meaningful conversations in a language that is going to be understood by a wider range of people.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, Climate Change Working Group)

Strengthened adaptation planning:

Incorporating the voices of communities helped to build understanding of how climate change is playing out in different places, identifying climate hazards, interconnections and a detailed sense of how things work at local levels in terms of who is vulnerable and why. This information has strengthened current adaptation planning, clarified priority actions and provided learning for engaging communities going forwards.

You cannot do good adaptation planning without that understanding of interconnections and that really detailed sense of place. And then there is the issue of ownership and empowerment: without listening to local voices in decision-making you don't have meaningful action. If it's completely top down, actions don't mean anything to the people that are likely to deliver them.

(Outer Hebrides Beacon, Climate Change Working Group)



Project learning

- Meaningful engagement demands linking with and building upon local capacities, groups and initiatives
- Creative mechanisms and place-based activities are important to connect climate science with lived experience
- Adaptation planning must be driven by local issues and gathering data on lived experience can help to understand local hazards
- Involving cultural, creative and third sector partners can encourage a wide range of social perspectives to join in dialogue
- Communities in the Outer Hebrides cannot be engaged in the same way as on the mainland and working with cultural organisations and local partners can help to build appropriate approaches
- Levels of engagement can vary drastically in island communities and working with local partners can give context on what constitutes as meaningful outreach
- People require safe spaces to talk about climate issues that matter to them, and effective mechanisms must be in place to respond and to effect change
- Establishing a 'rolling chair' arrangement helped to ensure equity and shared responsibility throughout the partnership

Tayside Beacon



A partnership between **Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre**, the **James Hutton Institute**, **V&A Dundee**, **Abertay University**, **Creative Dundee** and many other partners in Dundee, Perthshire, Angus and Aberdeen. The Tayside Beacon aimed to develop an empowered network and connect changemakers to collaborate on public engagement activities and to elevate and champion local work on climate action across rural and urban areas.

37 paid opportunities were created to engage creatives, scientists and activists

195 local people were engaged across three fully booked events

17 organisers collaborated across Tayside

The Tayside Beacon ran a two-week design-led thinking workshop for organisers to connect and plan internally; developed an **online web resource and map** of the Tayside region; held an artist-scientist mixer event in Glen Clova; supported three artistic **'micro-commissions'** between local artists

and scientists from the James Hutton Institute; and delivered three **live public events** across Tayside in **Arbroath**, **Dunkeld** and **Dundee**, themed according to the issues and ideas relevant to each area.

Arbroath - In Arbroath, the event explored the themes of journey and leadership within community resilience and action. Visual artist Kristina Aburrow worked with scientist Antonia Eastwood to create **'The Smokie Migration'** - ceramic smokies that responded to local biodiversity and climate change issues and were strung up along the coastal cliff path signposting key environmental areas of interest.

Dunkeld - In Dunkeld, activities focused on culture and community building, connecting through stories and creating collaborative spaces. Storyteller Alex Turner and scientist Kate Irvine spent time with local climate café activists and through these collaborations devised and performed **Storyscaper**, a short story imagining a future Dunkeld, rebuilt after climate devastation using storytelling and community to remake their society.

Dundee - In Dundee, the event considered the role of hope, play and collaboration in climate action. Dance artist Tommy Small and his company Shaper/Caper worked with scientist David Miller to consider the world young people will inherit and what the key issues and questions they will be confronted with, creating a new dance work **The World is My...** aimed at younger audiences.

Key outcomes

Reached historically excluded communities:

Activities were successful at reaching rural communities through strong partnership working and a place-based approach to hosting events, particularly in Arbroath and Dunkeld. Through partnering with local artists and speakers, the Tayside Beacon also had some success in engaging younger audiences and local ethnic minorities (the global majority). The livestream of the event series and the website will also continue to provide a legacy resource for local engagement.

The Tayside Climate Beacon has extended its reach across Tayside through three events once again demonstrating the validity of using creative techniques to open up discussions, this time at a community level. We face a very uncertain future for humanity on this planet, requiring new ways of thinking and new solutions, locally as well as globally. The Tayside Climate Beacon has started to take us in that direction.

(Tayside Beacon, Friends of the Earth Tayside, project monitoring)

Brought together a network of

changemakers: The Tayside Beacon and series of three public events brought together leading stakeholders from the region focused on climate action. This created connection between campaigners and local actors, inspiring passion for further community climate action and partnership work in supporting the Tayside region's just transition to net zero.

Organiser legacy

Driving new projects and programmes:

Collaborating energised organisers to focus on changing their own internal practices, continue developing projects initiated by the Climate Beacon, such as Shaper/Caper's *The World is My...* dance work, and to drive new programmes, with the James Hutton Institute collaborating on an artist-scientist synergy project as part of the upcoming five-year Scottish Government research programme on Environment, Agriculture, Food and Communities.

Established a professional network:

The Tayside Beacon enabled organisers to connect explicitly about sustainability and learn through the perspectives and expertise of others. Establishing a professional regional network helped organisations in arts and culture to reflect on their own practices and make progress towards an organisational and regional sustainability agenda.

The Tayside Beacon is giving us a real opportunity to exchange with other organisations in the region, to see where we are regarding our activities, compare experiences and have a sense of the difficulties we are facing. Next step will be to aggregate all these different experiences and suggest responses to common issues and clarify what sort of help we may need to progress regionally.

(Tayside Beacon, V&A Dundee, project monitoring)



Project learning

- Establishing an organiser network before delivering activities strengthened the quality of events, increased resources and promoted partnership longevity
- Rather than start from scratch, it is important to be responsive to and considerate of existing activity and try to enhance, connect and amplify
- Fostering artist-scientist collaborations resulted in important developments in practice on both sides
- Collaborating with local partners and artists encouraged strong audience turnout, ensured meaningful activity and increased support for local climate work
- Design-led thinking aided relationship building but resulted in 'blue sky thinking' that was then challenging to deliver
- Consolidating a project board and regular meetings helped to keep organisers invested and assisted decision-making
- Longer-term, embedded approaches could help to address ongoing challenges with involving historically marginalised communities in climate action

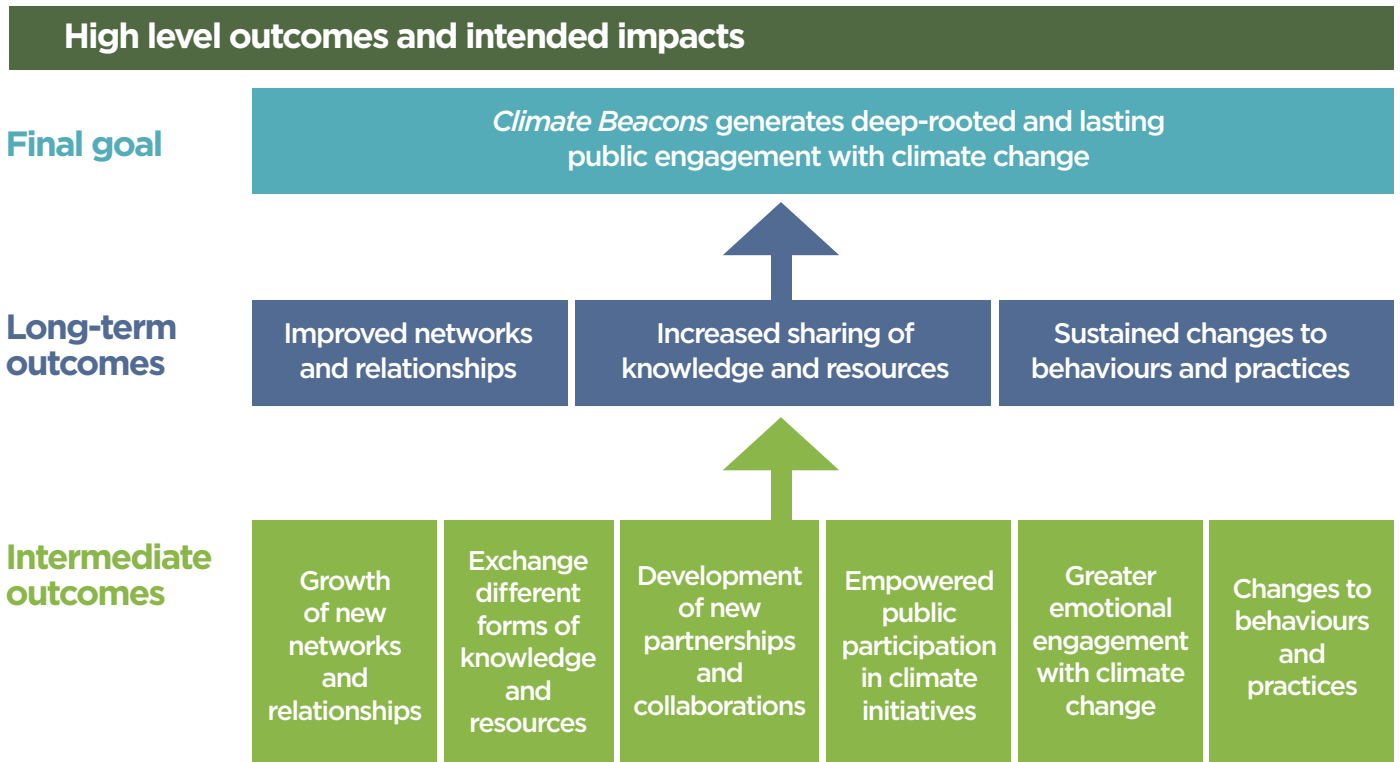
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- > Creative Carbon Scotland’s wider team and project lead, Lewis Coenen-Rowe
- > Embedded postgraduate researcher, Emma Hall

Methodology

Creative Carbon Scotland worked with an embedded PhD researcher to understand both the impact of the *Climate Beacons* project and key lessons learnt from this unique approach to public engagement on climate change. A theory of change model was developed for the *Climate Beacons* to agree on the intended impact and high-level outcomes for the project. Each Beacon also had their own place-based outcomes they were working towards. This report used the intended outcomes from the theory of change as a useful point of reflection for the project learning.



Creative Carbon Scotland designed baseline and endline audience surveys to track changes in engagement with climate change amongst the Beacon networks. Baseline surveys, in both English and Gaelic, were released in August 2021 and received 163 responses, whilst the endline survey released in April 2022 received 53 responses. Creative Carbon Scotland provided a question bank that Beacons could use to create their own tailored post-event evaluation. Beacons employed various ways to collect data including online and paper-based event surveys, gathering informal information during workshops and quantitative data on the number of events held and audience reach.

In general, surveys received low response rates and data was often based on small samples sizes. Although the response rates were low, much of the data gathered was rich and provided useful insights and interesting learning when considered alongside a broader thematic analysis. To complement quantitative data collection, Creative Carbon Scotland hosted seven online focus groups with each of the Beacon partnerships in May–July 2022, jointly exploring reflections on the impact and lessons learnt from the project. Beacons submitted end-of-project monitoring forms to Creative Carbon Scotland in September 2022 and these were used to develop case studies and provide thematic learning alongside the survey responses and focus groups.

Authors:

Emma Hall and Lewis Coenen-Rowe

This report has been created using the following sources:

- Results from baseline and endline audience surveys
- Focus group reflections with the seven Beacon partnerships
- Mid-project reflections with key Beacon contacts
- Post-event feedback collected by Beacon organisers
- Project monitoring forms submitted by each Beacon
- Steering Group email feedback
- Creative Carbon Scotland project team feedback

Front cover photos clockwise from top left: Emma Henderson, Lorna Dawson, Juliana Capes, National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey, Lorna Dawson, Làn Thide , Regina Mosch, National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey



www.creativecarbonscotland.com

email info@creativecarbonscotland.com

Creative Carbon Scotland
City Chambers, Room 9/50, High Street
Edinburgh EH1 1YJ

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