Lessons from Climate Change Adaptation Engagement in Pembrokeshire

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Engagement Project Scope

PCF was commissioned by NRW to engage with a local coastal community on a key theme of their Welsh Marine Area Statement*: *"Nature-based solutions and adaptation at the coast"*

It was also an opportunity to test out some of the engagement tools developed as part of the CCAT Project

The Havens community in mid-west Pembrokeshire was selected based on:
- Its coastal location
- A significant population size (approx. 1,300 residents)
- No recent engagement activity had been carried out
- Support from the local Community Council
- Recommendations from other partners
- Good broadband connection for online engagement methods

Note: A national lockdown due to COVID-19 was declared shortly after the start of this project and was in place for the full duration of the community engagement phase (Dec 2020 to March 2021)

*https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements/marine-area-statement/nature-based-solutions-and-adaptation-at-the-coast/?lang=en

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Recruiting Community Participants

	What worked	Challenges	Recommendation
Community-based	Approaching the Community Council first ensured permission for the Clerk to assist	Community Councillors did not participate in any of the workshops themselves	Allow enough lead in time for the Community Council to follow their process Offer follow up with individual Councillors
Digital outreach	Invitation to take part was seen by a significant number of people Focussed messaging meant data was collected from people in the community	Digital promotion did not reach key groups in the community (who may not have found the digital tools accessible)	Use a range of non-digital methods to promote digital sessions (signs, press articles, flyers, radio, events) Consider offering a prize or payment for submitting data

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Climate Changes, Impacts and Actions Online Workshops

What worked
Structured conversations were achieved
Participants grasped how to use the tool quickly
Educational value (from cards and peer to peer)
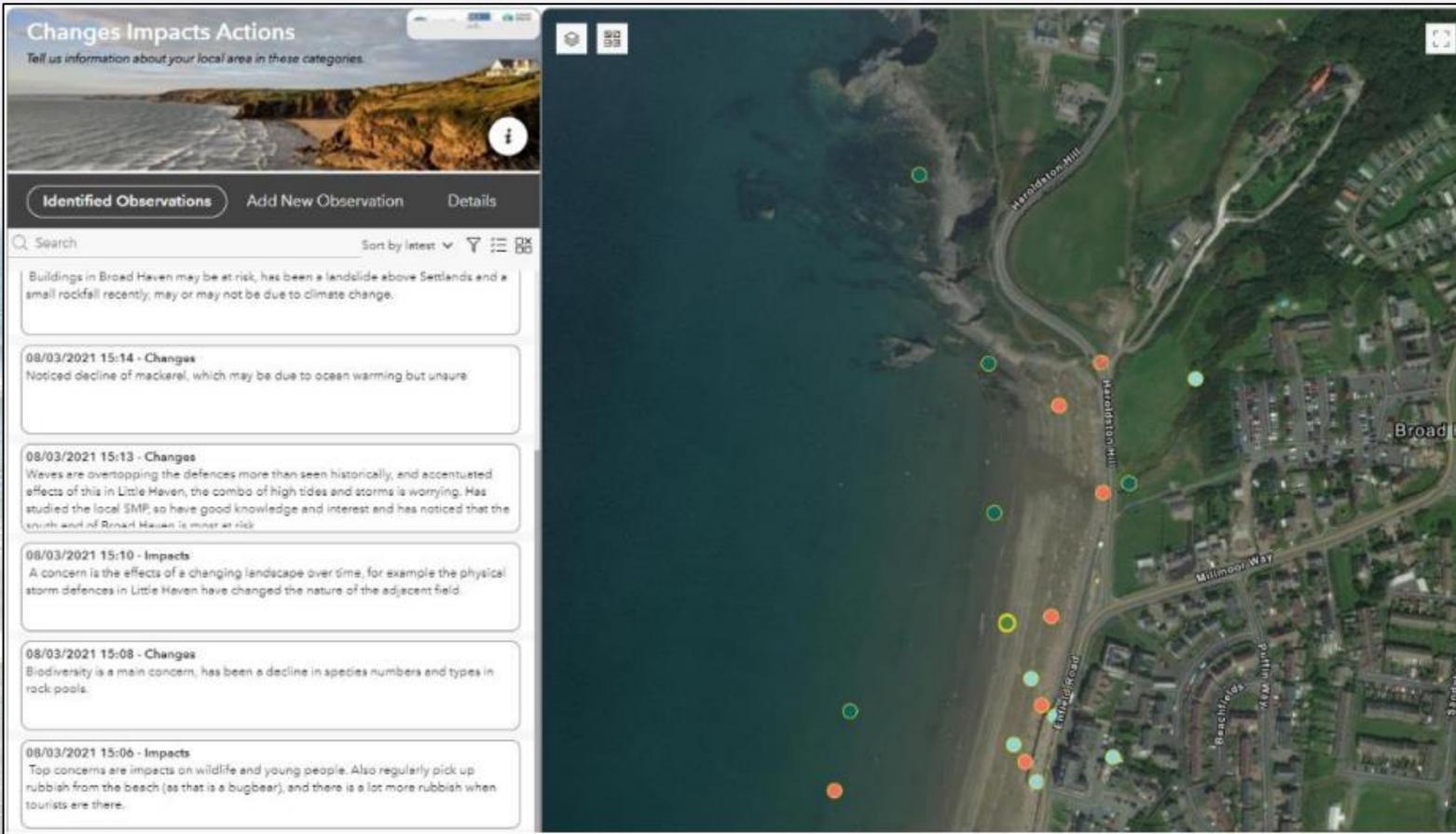
What didn't work
Harder for users without a laptop
Harder for users to move around the board on phone or tablet
Technical problems with videoconferencing

Recommendation
Outside of COVID-19 restrictions try to offer remote digital, blended and conventional ways to participate

You can see the full set of cards we used here: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/eaea24fc22144cef86ae43d10f171dc7/page/page_0/

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Participatory Mapping Tool

What worked
Detailed user supplied data for the specific area
Hyperlocal information captured
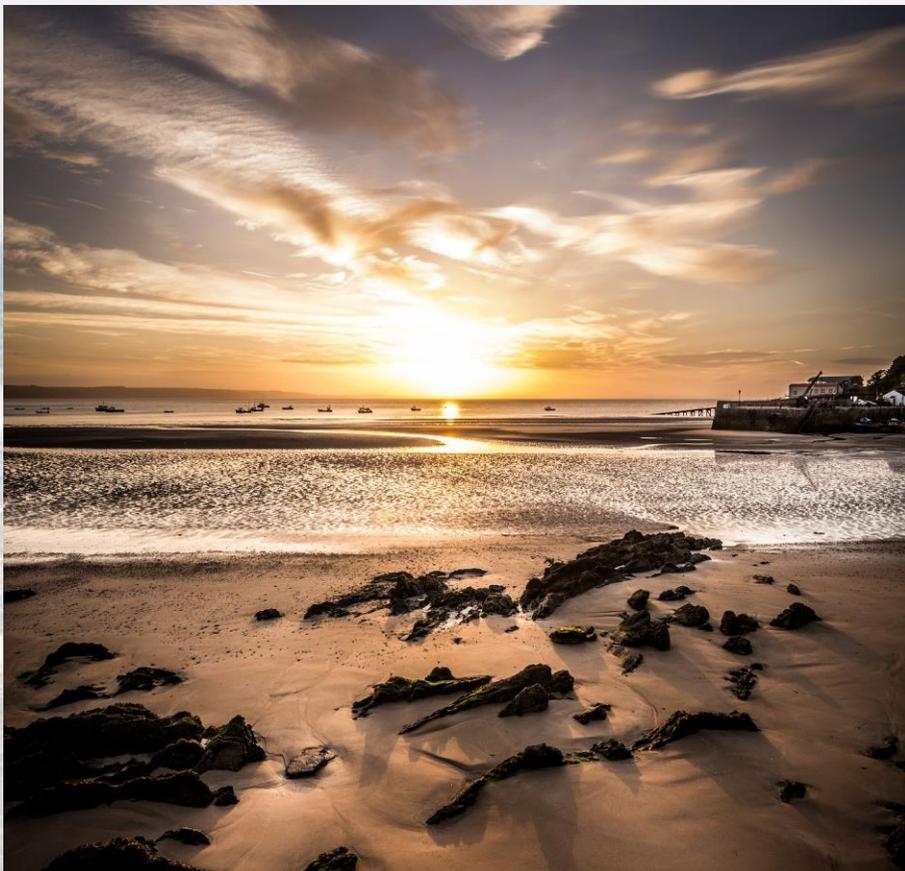Facilitated browsing of peer – peer information by users even if they didn't submit an entry

What didn't work
The URL was blocked for some users
Lockdown restricted use of the mobile version, where users could use their smartphone camera to log data
Some users expressed that it was too complex

Recommendation
Test the link to the map works beforehand
Embed tools in a page on an existing website
Practical sessions to use the map on site

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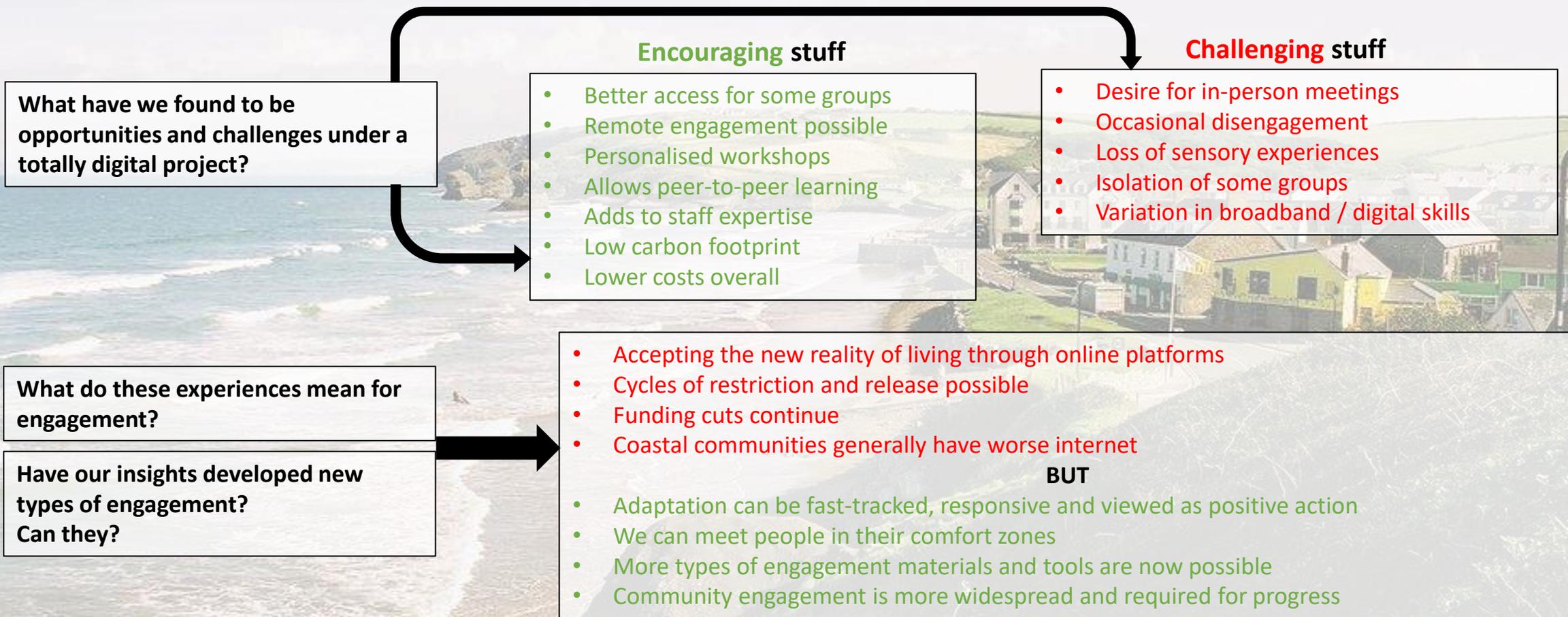
What Actions Do People Want?

Priority themes

1. Preventing and minimising flooding risk

2. Maintaining and increasing biodiversity

3. Beach clean-ups

4. Plant trees

5. Adjusting farming practices

6. Observing and recording environmental change

7. Addressing community-led renewable energy potential

Next steps

Advice from a local environmental consultant, then over to the Community Council…

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Going Digital in Response to COVID-19 Restrictions

What have we found to be opportunities and challenges under a totally digital project?

Encouraging stuff

- Better access for some groups
- Remote engagement possible
- Personalised workshops
- Allows peer-to-peer learning
- Adds to staff expertise
- Low carbon footprint
- Lower costs overall

Challenging stuff

- Desire for in-person meetings
- Occasional disengagement
- Loss of sensory experiences
- Isolation of some groups
- Variation in broadband / digital skills

What do these experiences mean for engagement?

**Have our insights developed new types of engagement?
Can they?**

- Accepting the new reality of living through online platforms
- Cycles of restriction and release possible
- Funding cuts continue
- Coastal communities generally have worse internet

BUT

- Adaptation can be fast-tracked, responsive and viewed as positive action
- We can meet people in their comfort zones
- More types of engagement materials and tools are now possible
- Community engagement is more widespread and required for progress

"'Going digital' - Lessons for future coastal community engagement and climate change adaptation" is available here: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0964569121001149

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Recommendations for Future Community Climate Change Engagement

- Avoid engaging with a community during a lockdown or other community stress
- Digital tools work well but aren't for everyone
- Hold a series of demonstration events for any tool you want people to use
- Conversations are a great way of collecting data
- For most people climate change and the environment are more or less the same thing
- Engagement sessions should be repeated and flexible
- Collect participant feedback on your engagement methods and evaluate throughout

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The full reports are available to download here: https://www.pembrokeshirecoastalforum.org.uk/projects/ccat/

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