



FELIXSTOWE YOUTH VOICE

Empowering young people to lead positive eco-social change in the places that matter most to them.

A Furtherfield project. 2025.



SUMMARY

Young People and the Earth Crisis Research shows that young people worldwide are deeply concerned about climate change² and increasingly aware of biodiversity loss, both key dimensions of the broader Earth Crisis—impacted by the ecological overshoot and social shortfall³ that is driven by extractive capitalism. As the generation that will be most affected, they have the impetus to drive change, spreading new habits, attitudes, and technologies. However, they face significant barriers to meaningful action. These barriers are only likely to grow as ‘pollutocrats’⁴ intensify their resistance to change.

What is Felixstowe Youth VOICE? Felixstowe Youth VOICE is a series of creative workshops co-produced by Furtherfield and young people (18-30 years) from the Felixstowe peninsula. We explore how innovative experimental creative practices might open new ways of thinking, feeling and acting to empower young people to lead positive eco-social change in the places that matter most to them.

Exploring Change Through Creativity. In a series of four three-hour workshops, we:

- Explore methods for making common-cause with other species - stepping into the worlds of other life-forms in the locality through experimental role-play, discovering what truly matters to them.
- Unpack the justice issues behind the Earth Crisis, from climate collapse to species extinction.
- Turn insight into action, exploring meaningful ways to create change—for ourselves and the ecosystems we depend on.

Together, We Aim to:

- Explore and experience artistic methods and creative ways of taking environmental action.
- Come together as a community to shape a better future.
- Make sure young voices are heard and take an active role in decisions that impact our planet.
- Empower young people to improve and create real change in the places they love

Exploring Artistic Methods: We’ve been exploring how innovative artistic methods can deepen our understanding of community as something shared between humans and other species, as our lives and fortunes are entangled. This approach encourages exploration of what it might mean for humans and other life-forms to act collectively in response to the Earth Crisis.

Methods include:

1. Multispecies role-play – to gain new perspectives and feel what matters to other species in the web of life.
2. Social holography – to form peer-to-peer networks of care, because all our struggles are connected!

Both of these methods draw on work developed by artists in Furtherfield's community over the last 5+ years as part of Furtherfield's [Citizen Sci-fi: Love Machines 2020](#)⁵. Multispecies role-play was developed with artists, biodiversity experts and park lovers as part of the award-winning five-year project, [The Treaty of Finsbury Park](#)⁶. [The Hologram](#)⁷ is a feminist peer-to-peer healthcare system that was initially developed by artist Cassie Thornton at Furtherfield and is now practiced worldwide by thousands of people around the world.

This project powerfully amplifies the voices of young people, uncovering the structural and social barriers that often hinder their engagement in local and systemic change-making and action. By compensating them for their time and expertise, the initiative not only validates their contributions but also sets a new standard for valuing youth-led work. The young co-producers consistently emphasised that true empowerment comes from being genuinely listened to, involved in decision-making, and treated as equal partners.

This approach has inspired greater confidence and agency among participants, while also generating a strong appetite and laying the foundation for sustained, creativity-led youth leadership and action across the Felixstowe peninsula. The project has played a vital role in shaping the thematic and structural development of Furtherfield's eco-social cultural programming in the region.



Felixstowe Youth VOICE – Barriers Identified. Photo by Chris Clayton

REPORT

Felixstowe Youth VOICE was an ambitious project co-produced by Furtherfield and 9 young people (18-30) living in Felixstowe and the Felixstowe peninsula between November 2024 and March 2025. Over a series of four sessions, this initiative provided a space for young people to engage in deep reflection, role-play, and action-based learning around environmental justice and community resilience in the context of the Earth Crisis.

The project asked

- How do young people and non-human species share struggles in the context of the Earth Crisis?
- What barriers do young people face in taking action, and how can creative methodologies help overcome them?
- How can interspecies role-play, arts-led activist healthcare practices, and creative media strategies amplify youth voices in environmental activism?

This report describes the Felixstowe Youth VOICE Workshop Programme. It describes the activities: discussions, mapping, and creative activities. It reflects on the strengths of each session, along with the achievements and limiting factors, and reflects on impacts of the overall project, and its future potential.



Felixstowe Youth VOICE – Mentor Species Needs. Photo by Chris Clayton

THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

The workshops were designed to connect to the needs, wishes and offers of young people (18-30 years old) living and working in the Felixstowe peninsula, and to identify the barriers they face in bringing their unique perspectives and talents to leading positive change. The funding for this project required our work to contribute to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁸ which we did⁹ while also looking at the benefits and limits of the SDGs for supporting action in local contexts.¹⁰

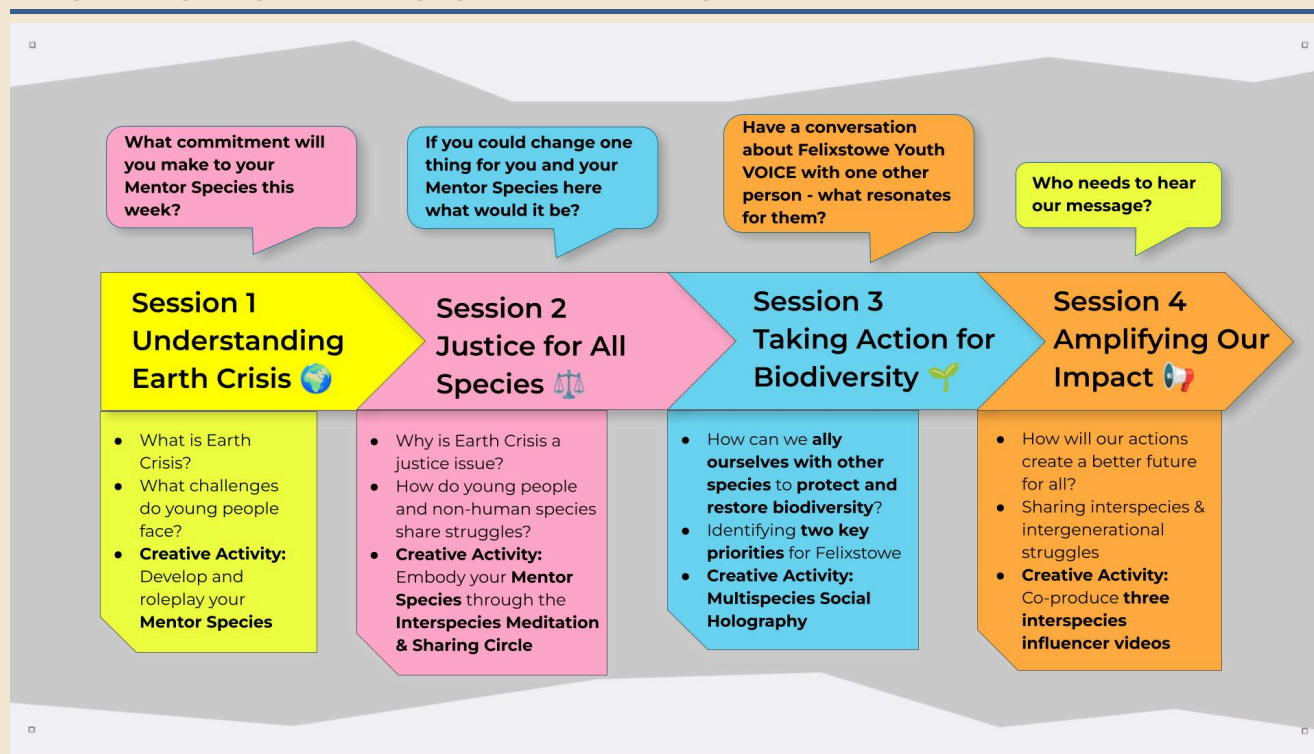
Participants were recruited in a staged manner. Courtney Hessey joined first as a youth empowerment consultant, a Felixstowe born and bred resident and volunteer at Level Two Youth Project. We then recruited the rest of our small organising team who led recruitment for participants via social media and word of mouth.

Throughout the project, plans were evaluated and revised by the Organising Team of youth co-producers in weekly meetings, responding to what we learned about the needs and aspirations of all participants as the project unfolded.

Here we present an overview of the workshop programme.

Each of the four, half day sessions moved through 3 main types of activity: discussion, mapping, and a creative activity. It was accompanied by a slide show and a series of creative activity resources that could form the basis of a shareable youth climate empowerment resource.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



FELIXSTOWE YOUTH VOICE WORKSHOP SESSIONS OVERVIEW

SESSION 1 UNDERSTANDING EARTH CRISIS

-  **DISCUSS:** What is Earth Crisis? - a systems based approach to understanding eco-social change
-  **MAP:** What challenges do young people face? - Housing, Work, Health, Socio-political
-  **CREATIVE ACTIVITY:** Developing and role-playing Mentor Species: Character development, getting into role, roleplay exercises.

SESSION 2 JUSTICE FOR ALL SPECIES

-  **DISCUSS:** Why is Earth Crisis a justice issue? - a systems based approach to eco-social justice.
-  **MAP:** How do young people and non-human species share struggles?
-  **CREATIVE ACTIVITY:** Embodying Mentor Species and finding out what matters to them through the Interspecies Meditation & Sharing Circle

SESSION 3 TAKING ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

-  **DISCUSS:** How can we ally ourselves with other species to protect and restore biodiversity? - another look at shared struggles.
-  **MAP:** Identifying two key priorities for Felixstowe: what matters most?
-  **CREATIVE ACTIVITY:** Multispecies Social Holography: Mentor Species roleplay to map the different perspectives of their struggles.

SESSION 4 AMPLIFYING OUR IMPACT

At North Felixstowe as the site where we want to make a difference?

-  **DISCUSS:** How will our actions create a better future for all?
-  **MAP:** Ways of sharing interspecies & intergenerational struggles
-  **CREATIVE ACTIVITY:** Co-produce some media to communicate what matters most to young people and other species*.

WHAT NEXT?

The Co-Production team agrees that these workshops have empowered them to do more in Felixstowe for the community. The work continues through:

1. **A group communication channel for young people** to coordinate eco-social action, keep up to date with local protests, planning groups, and earth-kind actions of all scales.
2. **Engaging with local action groups to improve community outcomes** e.g. those concerned with housing development plans in North Felixstowe¹¹
3. **Young people co-producing Furtherfield's creative programme 2025-26** called *Reimagine This Coastal Town*¹² which includes the exhibition of this work.
4. **Youth-led amplification, advocacy and network building** — sharing this project and all Earth-positive action that they take
5. **Exploring opportunities for paid youth advocacy** - so young adults can share their insights with other businesses and authorities in the regions.

***Mentor Species:** Furtherfield works with the concept of the Mentor Species, a non-human being (such as a tree, beetle or bird) that we learn from - not by observing it as an object, but by relating to it as a teacher, or guide. By matching activity participants to their own Mentor Species we challenge human-centered models of knowledge, asserting that the cultures of other species hold deep, ancient wisdom about coexistence, resilience, and reciprocity. Working with Mentor Species means listening to their rhythms, adapting their strategies, and acknowledging them as active partners in navigating Earth Crisis.

THE FELIXSTOWE YOUTH VOICE WORKSHOP SESSIONS IN DETAIL

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING EARTH CRISIS

 **DISCUSSION:** This session introduced participants to the concept of Earth Crisis, a term introduced and framed in Bridget McKenzie's *Earth Talk*, and chosen to emphasise the systemic nature and interconnectedness of climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic injustices, rooted in extractive capitalism.

We established a shared code of care for the project and we established our priorities:

- To explore creative methods for environmental action.
- To be part of building a better future as a community.
- To have more direct say on what happens to the planet.
- To improve the lives of young people here

 **MAP:** We started by reviewing participants' priorities and strengths. Then, using Dr Dani Admiss's concept of "portalling with others"(2025) - a curatorial methodology for ethical wayfinding, building on Maynard & Simpson (2021) and Roy (2020) - we reflected on barriers such as lack of time, mental health, and systemic inequality. Dani shows how art practices invite self-reflection and pathways to self-determination; we applied portalling to explore building healthier relationships with self and others amid the Earth Crisis

This group of young people face an overwhelming set of barriers across a series of categories:

1. Wellbeing and access to healthcare
2. Access to suitable housing and cost of living issues
3. Access to suitable work and education
4. A range of social, institutional, political barriers

As part of these discussions, we grappled with the very difficult and complex task of mapping how the systemic challenges faced by young people are shaped by broader forces of corporate power, manufactured instability, and exploitation.

🧠 CREATIVE ACTIVITY: "MENTOR SPECIES" ROLE-PLAY EXERCISES,

where participants selected and embodied a species present in the local environment (a tree, a goose, a bee, a dog, grass, a beetle, and a squirrel) affected by environmental changes. Through guided character development, and group role-play exercises they used their imaginations to explore their species' experiences, interconnected struggles, and perspectives.

STRENGTHS OF THIS SESSION

- Engaging introduction to Earth Crisis through creative methodologies.
- **Mentor Species role-play** encouraged empathy and relational/systems thinking.
- Collective creation of a **Code of Care** to foster a supportive and inclusive environment.
- Creation of **post-it note clouds** to map the barriers they face as young people. Participants connected personal barriers to wider societal and environmental challenges.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Raised awareness about the existence of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and their relevance (or not) to coordinated action at local and global levels.
- Participants gained a new perspective on biodiversity and the human role in environmental degradation.
- Shifted participant attitudes from passive concern to active reflection and engagement.
- Strong emotional and enjoyable engagement with the **Mentor Species** role-play exercise.

LIMITING FACTORS

- Initial unfamiliarity with SDGs and environmental justice concepts among participants.
- Some struggled with the emotional weight of discussing **Earth Crisis**.
- Time constraints limited deeper discussions and individual reflections.

REFLECTIONS

KEY REFLECTIONS:

This session revealed how disconnected many young people feel from climate action. Many participants had never heard of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** before the project, which became an important starting point.

One key challenge noted was how to support young people in processing complex and emotionally difficult topics. Many participants initially struggled with feelings of helplessness. To address this, the team incorporated a 'Code of Care' - a set of agreements designed to ensure a supportive and inclusive space. In the future we would incorporate more of the sensing and framing activities offered by the Earth Talks¹³ resources as a way to better prepare participants by helping them to connect to their values and emotions.

KEY REFLECTIONS FROM THE ORGANISING TEAM

“Participants greatly appreciate being engaged in a creative co-production process, but feel like they have been repeatedly let down in the past. Their experience, knowledge, and ideas are not taken seriously and they feel that they have no opportunities to progress.

Being paid above the living wage for their participation in a project that asks them to shape the change they want to see has been a major motivating factor. This will inform Furtherfield's future plans for eco-social youth empowerment work in Felixstowe.

The species role-play seemed to create a space of deep imaginative engagement which participants greatly appreciated. The fascinating challenge going forward is thinking through how exactly to connect real-world questions and creative modes of being.”

KEY REFLECTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

“Where other people had something direct to reference, an animal being, the embodiment of grass was quite difficult so I was very sceptical about the whole approach. Having gone through the experience I tried different approaches and embodying it (grass) in different ways. I think it's given me a whole new perspective on what we need to be doing and what actions need to be taken in order to meet needs that we didn't even realise previously or I certainly didn't realise previously, were needs for the environment that weren't being met”

LUKE

“It's quite boring sometimes just sitting down and talking about something, so it's good to have that role play to keep you more interested and involved and engaged, I think it's really a more interesting way of doing it and a more inclusive way of doing it.”

JAMIE



Barriers To a Good Life Faced by Young People in Felixstowe Graphic created by James Garden, based on a post-it cloud activity

SESSION 2: JUSTICE FOR ALL SPECIES

 **DISCUSS:** Building on the first session, the second session focused on the idea that **Earth Crisis is a justice issue**—not just for humans but for all species, taking a systems based approach to eco-social justice. In particular we discussed "**Earth Crisis Blinkers**"—ways that society fails to see or acknowledge the full array of material, social and environmental causes, injustices, and impacts affecting both humans and non-human species. We discussed **Justice for All Humans & Species** – examining how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized groups. Through a **focus on urban sprawl** – we took the controversial **North Felixstowe Development** and its impact on biodiversity to explore local environmental justice issues and discuss effective action.

 **MAP:** How do young people and non-human species share struggles? We used a **Post-it Note mapping exercise** – Drawing connections with the barriers faced by young people and organising thoughts into themes of social causes, impacts on lives, planetary boundaries, and solutions.



Barriers To a Good Life Shared by Young People and Other Species in Felixstowe

 **CREATIVE ACTIVITY:** We used our imaginations to embody our Mentor Species and find out what matters to them through Furtherfield's **Interspecies Meditation and Sharing Circle** activity where participants spoke as their Mentor Species to express their challenges and priorities. Participants then shared how they connected with their chosen species and their reflections on what they learned from their experience and that of others.

STRENGTHS OF THIS SESSION

- Structured discussions on **Earth Crisis Blinkers** (McKenzie) helped participants identify systemic issues.
- Connection to local environmental issues, particularly **urban sprawl** and the **North Felixstowe Development**.
- Emphasis on justice for both humans and non-human species.
- Use of **Interspecies Meditation and Sharing Circle** to deepen role-play experience and connection to the experience of mentor species..

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Participants made direct connections between their own struggles and those of non-human species. As part of this they explored the human dominance of other species and engaged in a difficult and wide-ranging conversation about the hard-to-resolve tensions between the needs of growing human populations and destruction of biodiverse habitat.
- Increased understanding of **environmental justice** and the concept of shared struggles.
- Generated critical discussions on how young people are affected by housing, infrastructure, and environmental degradation.
- Strengthened emotional connections between participants and their **Mentor Species**.

LIMITING FACTORS

- Difficulty grappling with the terminology, concepts, and complexity of environmental justice discussions -This highlights a broader concern identified by Climate Outreach, whose research shows that public and youth understanding of climate justice remains very limited.¹⁴
- Need for clearer connections between theoretical concepts and tangible local actions.
- Emotional intensity of role-playing as threatened species was overwhelming for some.
- Limited access to real-world case studies or guest speakers to reinforce learning.

REFLECTIONS

KEY REFLECTIONS FROM THE ORGANISING TEAM

Many participants felt disempowered to make change, yet strongly believed that collective action was necessary.

"There is a huge gap between the critical, systemic thinking happening in activist and academic spaces and the more practical, action-focused approach young people want to take. We need to bridge that gap."

ORGANISERS

It would have helped participants to feel more grounded in place if we had more concrete examples of or maybe more focus e.g. how habitat routes are cut off, impinging on species' freedom to travel, and how these might be addressed through biodiversity corridors.

The team also noted **the importance of storytelling in shifting perspectives**. This was evident in how participants engaged with their Mentor Species, **experiencing their struggles firsthand through role-play**.

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

"I still feel the same way I feel about conservation of the environment and climate but, I'm now more thinking about how I can do something about it rather than just "this sucks and there's nothing I can do about it"."

CAMERON

"I think that it's empowering to want to support Felixstowe because I have a soft spot for it. It's nice to be part of something that isn't just in my hometown, but it's surrounding areas.."

LAUREN

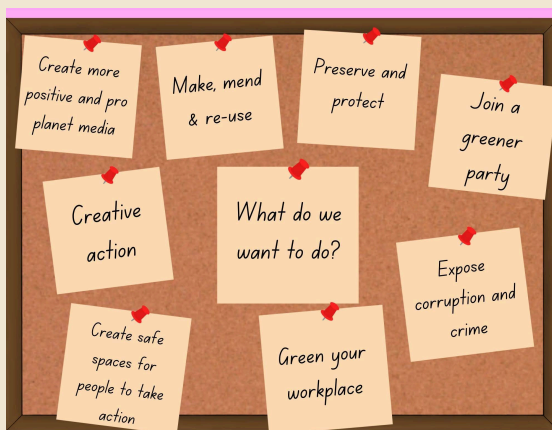
🌱 SESSION 3: TAKING ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

DISCUSS: Our discussion in this session was focused on identifying **shared struggles** – **Comparing barriers faced by young people and Mentor Species**. James Garden presented a Communication Strategy that set out how we could co-create media to share experiences and new understandings using recorded audio in the sessions as the basis for animations. The idea was to work on **interspecies influencer videos**, blending **documentary-style footage**, **direct-to-camera speeches**, and **animated representations of their Mentor Species**.

Through conversation and reviewing the post it clouds from previous sessions the group defined two key priorities for taking eco-social action in Felixstowe:

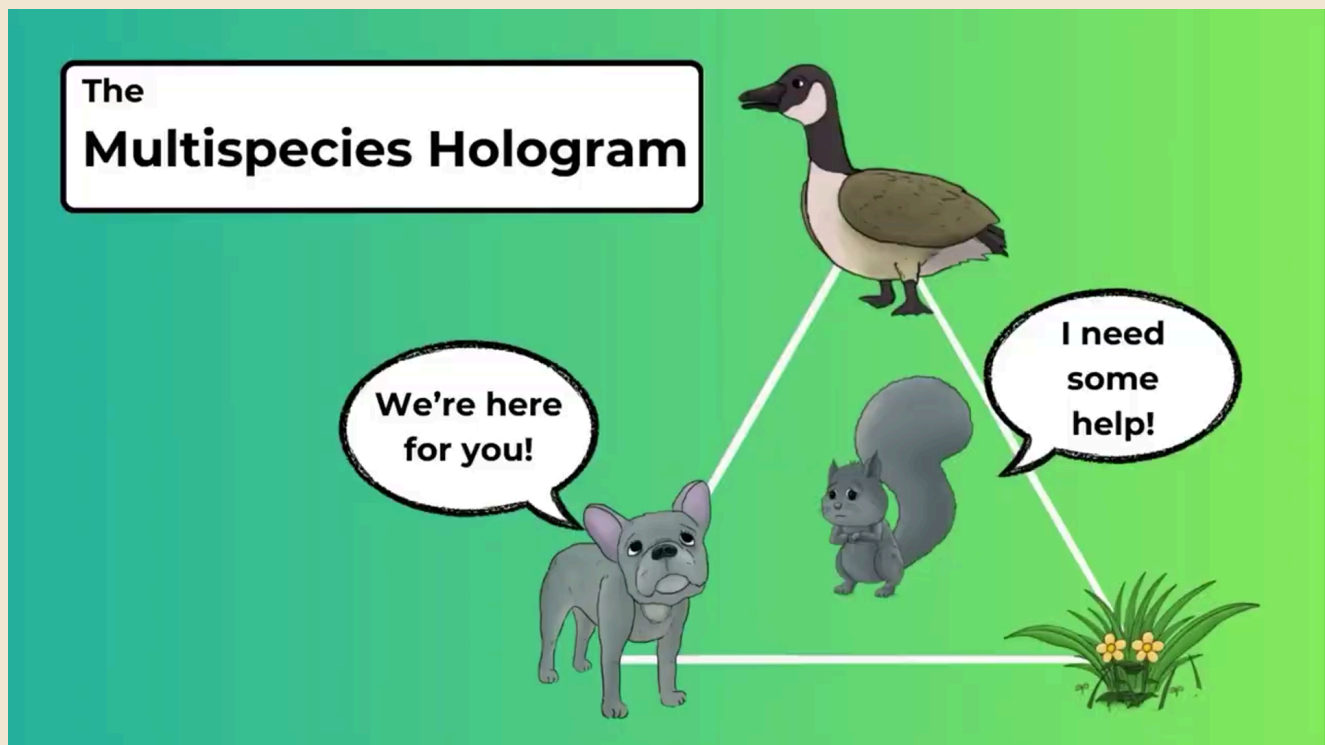
1. Feeling safe in special places.
2. Not being used and abused.

MAP: A recurring theme in our sessions was a desire to **understand the possible paths to effective action**. We discussed the *People Take Action: Eight pathways for individuals to act for systemic change*¹⁵ (McKenzie) and brainstormed the "actions we are already taking, actions we want to take, and actions we'd like to take but don't know how." It was energising for everyone to realise how much they were already doing and to share their ambitions to take next steps.



🧠 CREATIVE ACTIVITY:

Multispecies Social Holography Exercise – A role-play activity exploring issues from physical, emotional, and social perspectives. This experimental session blended multi-species role-play with *social holography*. Participants explored challenges faced by their mentor species and young people in Felixstowe. *The Hologram* is a peer-to-peer care system that reveals different dimensions of our struggles. Three non-experts map a fourth participant's physical, psychological, and social health—creating a network where each person both gives and receives support. Originally developed by artist Cassie Thornton in 2020, the *Hologram* is now practiced world-wide—because all our struggles are connected! Audio recordings of these sessions have been used as the basis for animations created by James Garden and to be exhibited as well as shared on social media. See animations and videos of discussion on [Youtube](#).



STRENGTHS OF THIS SESSION

- **Multispecies Social Holography** enabled deep reflection on the physical, emotional, and social struggles of species.
- Participants identified two key priorities for Felixstowe:
 1. **Feeling safe in their special places.**
 2. **Not being used and abused—both as humans and as part of nature.**
- Strong emphasis on practical action planning.
- Creation of **Post-it note clouds** to map actions: things they were already doing, things they wanted to do, and things they didn't know how to do.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Shift from conceptual learning to embodied and action-oriented thinking.
- Participants reported feeling more empowered to engage in local activism.
- Key barriers to action were identified, making future steps clearer.
- Encouraged participants to see activism as a long-term process rather than a one-time event.

LIMITING FACTORS

- Some participants still felt uncertain about how to take the next step.
- Need for additional facilitation in linking personal concerns to broader activism.
- Limited time to explore practical solutions in depth.
- Concerns about long-term sustainability of efforts beyond the project, designed to analyse struggles from physical, emotional, and social perspectives.

REFLECTIONS

KEY REFLECTIONS FROM THE ORGANISING TEAM

The team noted a key shift in mindset: **from feeling powerless to realising that small actions, when sustained, can create real change.**

"Young people are often told they are powerless. But in this session, we saw participants begin to believe in their ability to shape the future."

ORGANISERS

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS ON TAKING ACTION

"Having this project has made me realise I can do a lot more than I was before, and makes me feel a lot better because I can do more.."

ALEX

"I don't remember much of being taught anything related to climate change really in school. So, for a lot of people our age, before this (Voice Project), it was difficult to know what came under the terms and how you can do stuff. What we're not doing and what we can do and all the things that go into it.."

KATIE

📣 SESSION 4: AMPLIFYING OUR IMPACT

The final session took place at Abbey Grove, the site of the planned North Felixstowe developments, and a site of many multi-species habitats, discussed in previous sessions. This session focused on **creative media production**, led by James Garden to capture reflective discussions by participants on their experiences, with Courtney Hessey and Lauren Bruen directing professional photographer Chris Clayton to create powerful images. The goal was to communicate the group's learnings and insights through digital storytelling.

STRENGTHS OF THIS SESSION

- Focus on **co-creating media content** to share insights beyond the group.
- Strong emphasis on messaging: **Who needs to hear this? How do we reach them?**

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Produced powerful **videos** blending documentary footage and direct-to-camera storytelling.
- Participants gained skills in **digital storytelling and media production**.
- Empowered young people to see themselves as communicators and change-makers.
- Strengthened **peer-to-peer engagement** as participants shared content within their own networks.

LIMITING FACTORS

- Limited resources for high-production-value content.
- Time constraints meant some stories were not fully developed.
- Without proper context, the creative media outputs, particularly the multi-species hologram animations, may not be easily understood (or misunderstood) by external audiences.

KEY REFLECTIONS FROM THE ORGANISING TEAM

Despite the significant journey undertaken by the organising team and participants, a sense of incompleteness remains. For future iterations, we recommend concluding the project with a group-defined act of Earth-Kindness. This shared action would celebrate new knowledge, strengthen community bonds, affirm a sense of common purpose, and offer the collective joy and satisfaction of making a tangible, positive impact on the wellbeing of other life forms.

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS ON IMPACT

"If people don't know about it, they can't talk about it. Awareness is the first step to action."

JAMIE

"At first, I was skeptical, but I've learned so much. This project made me feel heard in a way I haven't before."

LUKE

"I used to think 'other people will fix it.' Now I know that change starts with us."

ALEX

KEY OUTCOMES AND FUTURE STEPS

1. GLOBAL IMPACT & FURTHERFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT

In 2025 Furtherfield relocated to Felixstowe, a small port town on the Suffolk Coast of UK, moving from its London base after nearly 30 years. Felixstowe Youth VOICE has **set a precedent for how Furtherfield can expand its work beyond London**, developing eco-social place-making for community transformation. The project demonstrated **how interspecies role-play can engage young people in environmental justice issues**.

2. LOCAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & FLOURISHING

This project revealed **the deep barriers young people in Felixstowe face**, from housing insecurity to lack of community engagement. The interspecies approach helped participants **see themselves as part of a larger ecological system**, fostering a sense of belonging, allyship, shared fortune, and responsibility.

3. MORE THAN HUMAN INTERESTS

By **giving voice to non-human species**, the project expanded ethical discussions beyond human concerns. The Mentor Species role-play method was a **powerful tool for building and exploring the role of empathy in fostering long-term environmental action**.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMPOWERMENT

This project has explored the barriers young people face when wanting to make change in their local communities or get involved with climate action. Paying young people for their participation has been essential in recognising their contributions, ensuring they feel valued and fairly compensated for meaningful work. The young co-producers all agreed that being genuinely heard is a key factor in empowering them to take action and overcome the barriers they face.

CONCLUSION

Felixstowe Youth VOICE was a transformative journey, **equipping young people with the tools, confidence, and imagination needed to start to drive environmental change.** In a survey carried out before and after this project young participants reported a significant increase in confidence in taking action on climate and biodiversity. They highly value, and strongly desire more of, the following:

- Fair wages for meaningful work
- A forum to discuss the complexities of the Earth Crisis
- Opportunities to experiment with creative practices
- Being heard and having their ideas and experiences respected

As one participant put it:

"The most exciting thing is that we can roll this out to others. This doesn't have to stop here."

However, we must not underestimate the real and pressing challenges young people face. Recent UK reports highlight that local authorities encounter significant barriers to advancing climate and biodiversity action, often leaving young people feeling disconnected from—or even in conflict with—local power structures.¹⁶

In Summer 2025, the team will showcase creative media, tools, and learnings in an exhibition in Felixstowe.

POST-SCRIPT: FURTHERFIELD, WHY THIS PROJECT NOW?

After nearly 30 years of work at the intersection of arts, technology, and eco-social change we relocated in 2024 from London to Felixstowe, Suffolk. It's been a transformative move, and we're excited about the possibilities it brings for deepening place-based, creative, and community-rooted work. It's part of our new chapter as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, and we're actively building meaningful partnerships that align with these values.

Reimagine this Coastal Town is Furtherfield's flagship programme for 2025–27. Through creative labs, youth co-production, exhibitions, and networking events we are using Live Action Role-Play (LARP) to foster intergenerational and multispecies empathy and knowledge exchange. This evolving work is grounded in research¹⁷, dialogue, and collaboration undertaken with communities on the Felixstowe peninsula and beyond. It builds on *the pilot we ran in 2024*¹⁸ and offers a proven way of generating visionary new worlds, we aim to inspire community-led environmental and social transformation in Felixstowe, enabling residents to collectively reimagine its future in the context of eco-social change, with a particular focus on youth empowerment and reaching marginalised communities in the town.¹⁹ We want to be part of human and other-species communities that not only imagine, but actively shape the futures they want.

Relocating from a public park in a global city to a small coastal town with England's largest dock in East Suffolk has been both exciting and challenging. This move reflects our growing concern about the extractive nature of global digital cultures and a belief in the importance of imaginative place-based community building in the face of accelerating environmental and social change.

As profit-driven digital infrastructure, particularly social media and AI, shapes how we live, learn and connect, it is more important than ever to consider our role in resisting negative impacts on life in the places where we live. This requires recognising our shared, embodied responsibility to one another, to other species, and to the environments we inhabit. Reimagining our mission, reshaping our organisation, and identifying the right partners is a major task. A key focus is finding meaningful ways to support young adults in the region who face significant structural barriers to a good life.

We have been brilliantly supported in this work by Dr Anita McKeown and Dr Camille Baker who initiated and continue to steward the VOICE project. Joining the VOICE project was an easy decision. We were drawn to its team of researchers and socially engaged arts practitioners who understand the role of critical arts and technology in driving positive change. Their support through evaluation tools, reflective practices, and a community of peers has been invaluable as we shape this new chapter.

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHO IS BEHIND FELIXSTOWE YOUTH VOICE?

Felixstowe Youth VOICE is part of [VOICE](#), a European research project examining how artist-led innovation and citizen engagement can help achieve the UN SDGs. This report was written by Ruth Catlow with the support of the organising Team: Lauren Bruen, James Garden and Courtney Hessey.

Organising Team: Courtney Hessey, James Garden, Lauren Bruen, and Ruth Catlow.

Co-production Team: Alexander Fotheringham, Cameron Sawyer, Jamie Lea , Katie Clark, Luke Winston, and Mark Richards.

Film, animation and illustration by James Garden.

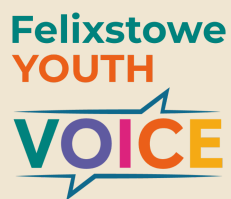
Photography by Chris Clayton

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Special Thanks Thanks to Bridget McKenzie for providing mentorship to Ruth Catlow and to Dr Dani Admiss for her work as Environmental lead at Furtherfield. Special thanks also to Laura Locke for providing us with a free and great space for our team meetings at Felixstowe's Wellbeing Hub, to Adrian Cooper and the Felixstowe Citizen Science Group for their ongoing support, and to Matt Catlow for cleaning the voice recordings from each session. Finally we want to extend special thanks to Anita McKeown and Camille Baker at the VOICE project for their critical friendship throughout this project.

NOTES

1. The term Earth Crisis, is introduced and framed in Bridget McKenzie's [Earth Talk](https://bridgetmckenzie.uk/earth-talk), <https://bridgetmckenzie.uk/earth-talk>
2. Caroline Hickman et al, *Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey*, The Lancet Planetary Health, Volume 5, Issue 12, 2021, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00278-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3).
3. <https://doughnuteconomics.org/news/new-analysis-reveals-that-no-country-is-living-in-the-doughnut>
4. Nafkote Dabi terms those who gain power by profiting from and perpetuating pollution and climate destruction 'pollutocrats', *FROM POVERTY TO POWER How billionaire 'pollutocrats' are driving our climate crisis – and what we can do about it*, 2024, Oxfam. <https://frompoverty.oxfam.org.uk/billionaire-pollutocrats-what-we-can-do/>
5. Furtherfield's [Citizen Sci-Fi: Love Machines 2020](https://www.furtherfield.org/platforming-finsbury-park/) brought together citizen science and the arts to activate the imagination of local park users and community groups to create new visions and models of stewardship for public, urban green space - promoting the wellbeing of humans, other life-forms and machines. <https://www.furtherfield.org/platforming-finsbury-park/>
6. <https://treaty.finsburypark.live/>
7. <https://thehologram.xyz/>
8. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
9. This project complements SDG target 11.4 to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage as it pertains to SDG target 13.3 to improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation.
10. A requirement of the VOICE funding, engagement with SDGs prompted discussions about how, and to what degree the framework could effectively promote global cooperation towards environmental justice. Some of our topics of discussion are also reflected in the 2021 blog post by Climate Museum UK [Our Guide to the Global Goals](https://climate-museum.org/our-guide-to-the-global-goals/).
11. [Felixstowe Says No](https://felixstowesaysno.org/about/), is a community led action group concerned about the master plan under development for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. <https://felixstowesaysno.org/about/>, <https://www.northfelixstowe.co.uk/>
12. In an 18 month project [Reimagine This Coastal Town](https://www.furtherfield.org/this-coastal-town-reimagined-2024-200-years-of-change/) in Felixstowe over Summer 2025 and 2026 Furtherfield is hosting a programme of events, workshops, and an exhibition, culminating in an eco-social Live Action Role Play (LARP), co-produced by 18+ young adults and eight creative practitioners from the region. <https://www.furtherfield.org/this-coastal-town-reimagined-2024-200-years-of-change/>
13. <https://bridgetmckenzie.uk/earth-talk>
14. <https://climateoutreach.org/youth-engagement-climate-justice/>
15. <https://bridgetmck.medium.com/people-take-action-941e90139876>
16. *Empowering local climate action: Advice to government*. Report by the Local Government Association 2025. This emphasises the need for collaboration between the UK Government and councils to deliver on shared climate ambitions. This lack of statutory support hampers councils' ability to implement effective environmental strategies.
17. In collaboration with researcher Dr Ann Light (University of Sussex), and researchers/curators Dr Dani Admiss and Dr Cecilia Wee.
18. <https://www.furtherfield.org/this-coastal-town-reimagined-2024-200-years-of-change/>
19. Reimagine This Coastal Town is going to be realised in partnership with The University of Sussex, Level Two Youth Project, Hamilton MAS, and the Felixstowe Citizen Science Group and with support from Arts Council England and the Suffolk Cultural Fund.



FURTHERFIELD

PARTNERS AND SUPPORT



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