

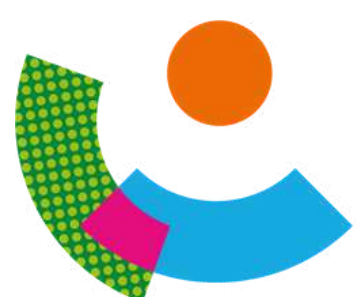


Coastal Futures 2026

From ambition to action

Royal Geographical Society, London & online
28 & 29 January

Programme

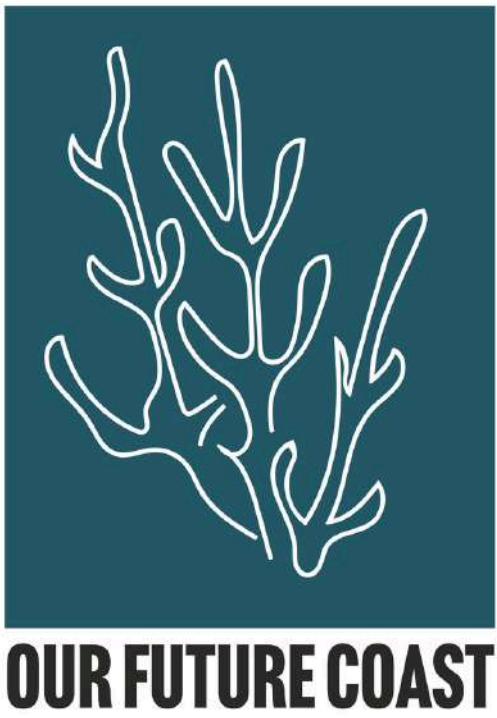


Ocean
and Coastal
Futures

The Royal Geographical Society, London & Online

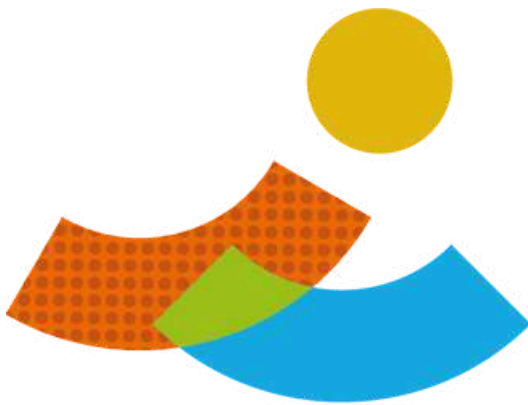


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Coastal
Futures
2026

Delivered by OCF



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OCF & Coastal Futures 2026

Ocean and Coastal Futures (OCF) is excited to welcome delegates in-person and from across the world online for our hybrid Coastal Futures 2026 conference.

The long-running Coastal Futures conference series has been a staple event for the UK ocean, coastal and water sectors for over three decades and is the largest ocean event of its kind in the UK.

The 2025 conference was the biggest ever, with over 780 delegates from 285 organisations, with 585 in-person and over 200 online attendees. In 2026 we are honoured once again to be joined by Minister Emma Hardy, who delivered the opening address in 2025.

Ocean and Coastal Futures (OCF) exists to convene, connect and share. We are on a mission to improve sustainable ocean management by empowering practitioners with the knowledge and connections they need.

As well as Coastal Futures, we run a series of high-impact events, including 'Blue Finance' and the UK's keystone marine restoration event, ReMeMaRe, an ongoing collaboration with the Environment Agency. We host webinars, such as our Ocean Justice and Marine Restoration series and we are working with partners to build a regional conference series across England on the state of the marine environment. We are the home of OCF news, jobs and events, providing targeted high-quality information to our informed and specialist subscriber base - the largest specialist group of ocean & coastal practitioners.

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From Ambition to Action

The ocean underpins our climate, our economy, and our well-being. Yet rising demand for space and resources makes the future of our seas more contested than ever.

Coastal Futures 2026 will bring together leaders and practitioners from across sectors to move beyond ambition and into action, navigating our shared future by exploring the policies, partnerships, and innovations needed to deliver a thriving ocean for all.



Themes:

- **Shared stewardship:** Exploring the collaborative efforts needed to manage our ocean and coasts. This theme will highlight how different sectors — government, industry, NGOs, academics, and coastal communities — can work in partnership on sustainable resource management through place-based approaches, moving away from fragmented efforts.
- **Balancing blue growth:** How can society balance economic development, such as offshore renewable energy, shipping and aquaculture, with the need to protect marine ecosystems and minimise pollution? This theme explores the challenges and opportunities of the growing blue economy.
- **Coastal resilience & community well-being:** Centring on the connection between the health of our rivers and seas and the well-being of coastal communities. The theme will address how society can adapt to climate change while ensuring sustainable livelihoods. We want to highlight the work of those building bridges and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities.
- **Innovating for a healthy ocean:** Highlighting the role of science, technology, and finance in creating a sustainable ocean future, this theme will explore how new solutions and innovative financial tools can support policy development, marine conservation, improve ocean management, and drive the restoration of degraded habitats.
- **Planning our ocean space:** Delving into the complexities of planning and sharing space both inshore and offshore, we will examine how to effectively allocate space for various uses — from offshore wind, cables, shipping lanes and protected areas to aggregate extraction sites. This theme will highlight the planning tools and approaches needed to reduce conflict and promote a more sustainable and equitable use of the ocean.
- **Action & accountability:** Focusing on turning ambition into reality, this theme will address the policy frameworks, legal instruments, and accountability mechanisms - both public and private sector - needed to ensure that commitments to ocean sustainability are met, and that progress is monitored and reported on.

Across two days, the conference aims to challenge thinking and move debate forward in an informative and collaborative way.

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*Timings may be subject to change

Day 1 – Wednesday 28 January 2026

09:55 **Welcome** **David Tudor**, Co-Founder & Director, OCF

10:15 **Ministerial address – Emma Hardy, MP**

SHARED STEWARDSHIP

Exploring how different sectors — government, industry, NGOs, academics, and coastal communities — can move away from fragmented efforts to work in partnership on sustainable resource management through place-based approaches.

10:30

Chair: **Natasha Bradshaw**, Co-Founder and Director, Ocean and Coastal Futures

Speakers:

- **Kirsten Carter**, RSPB: Together We Fly – A Collaboration Story of Sandeels, Seabirds and Conservation Success
- **Kim Wide**, Take A Part: A “Community-First” Creative Framework for Cultural Democracy and Ocean-led Environmental Justice
- **Duncan MacRae**, The Protected Areas Foundation: Community 30x30: Supporting 30 community groups to work towards effective management of at least 30 marine protected areas across England and Scotland by 2030
- **Emily Bulled**, AIFCAs: Restoring Balance: Inshore Fisheries, Social Justice, and Local Governance in a Changing Environment
- **Sahar Stevenson-Jones**, Society for Ecological Restoration: The Collaborations We Need for the Ocean We Want

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Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

11:45

Quick Speakers

- **Naomi Roesner**, Sea Ranger Service
- **Chris McDougall**, AtkinsRealis
- **Shovi Anjum**, Solway Firth Partnership

12:00 **Break**

COASTAL RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Centring on the connection between the health of our rivers and seas and the well-being of coastal communities. The theme will address how society can adapt to climate change while ensuring sustainable

13:00 livelihoods. We want to highlight the work of those building bridges and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities

Chair: **Beccy MacDonald Lofts**, Lead Officer, LGA Coastal SIG

- **Jaap Flikweert**, Haskoning and Councillor Harry Blathwayt: Coastwise: helping coastal communities plan for coastal change
- **Karen Thomas**, East Suffolk Council: Resilient Coasts - Strategy to Action
- **Justin Ridgewell**, Environment Agency and Cornwall Council: The road less travelled – charting Bude's unique coastal adaptation journey
- **Heather Coutts**, AtkinsRealis, The Moors at Arne: Delivering coastal habitat resilience
- **Mairi MacArthur**, Environment Agency, CoastCraft: Visualising Coastal Change Block by Block with Minecraft Education
- Councillor **Mark Packard** from East Suffolk Council

14:30 **Break**

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Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

PLANNING OUR OCEAN SPACE

Delving into the complexities of planning and sharing space both inshore and offshore, we will examine how to effectively allocate space for various uses — from offshore wind, fishing, cables, shipping lanes and protected areas to aggregate extraction sites. This theme will highlight the planning tools and approaches needed to reduce conflict and promote a more sustainable and equitable use of the ocean.

15:30 Chair: **Paul Gilliland**, Strategic Advisor and Deputy Director, MMO

- **Jo Pollett**, ABPmer: Mapping What Matters: Co-designing collection of data on social and cultural values of English fishing grounds
- **Richard Howells**, Marine Directorate: Thinking Big: Enabling Offshore Wind & Marine Resilience through Strategic Compensation in Scotland
- **Rebecca Kavanagh**, Queen's University Belfast, Navigating Co-existence & Co-location in the marine space

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Day 1 – Wednesday 28 January 2026

Exclusive showcase of The Crown Estate's Marine Delivery Routemap.

Built on world-class data, this innovative digital platform will provide dynamic modelling and mapping of potential seabed and coastal use across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for decades to come. See how moving from isolated sectors to a truly interconnected, systems-led approach – underpinned by deep evidence – can bring multiple benefits.

16:15

We're thrilled that Coastal Futures 2026 will exclusively present this showcase by The Crown Estate.

- **Olivia Thomas** – Head of Planning & Technical, Marine
- **Jamie Moore** – Marine Delivery Routemap Director, Marine
- **Ciaran McKeon** – Project Manager, Marine

An Uncharted Course: Breaking barriers in marine and coastal leadership

17:00

Chair: David Tudor, Co-Founder & Director, OCF

- **Tsian Deslandes**, Founder, Mermaids Beyond Borders
- **Ismail Kholwadia**, Founder, Focal Elements
- **Alan Munro**, Founder, Young Sea Changers Scotland

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Day 1 - Wednesday 28 January 2026

OCF Bob Earll Award - Outstanding contributions to ocean and coastal management.

17:30 This year's award celebrates inclusive leadership and community engagement: recognising an individual(s) whose leadership has demonstrably fostered greater inclusion and community engagement. The Award recognises those who are building bridges between diverse groups, breaking down barriers, and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities to participate in and benefit from ocean stewardship.

17:45 **Reception**

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Day 2 - Thursday 29 January 2026

9:25 **Welcome** **David Tudor**, Co-Founder & Director, OCF

Ministerial address – Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs for Wales (by video)

9:35 **Keynote** **Natalie Prosser**, CEO, Office for Environmental Protection

ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This theme will address the policy frameworks, legal instruments, and accountability mechanisms - both public and private sector - needed to ensure that commitments to ocean sustainability are met and that progress is monitored.

9:50 **Panel Session - Robust evidence to actionable policy**

Chair: **Dickon Howell**, CEO, HMC

- **Prof Grant Stentiford**, Chief Scientist, Cefas
 - **Samir Whitaker**, Ørsted
 - **Katie-Jo Luxton**, RSPB
 - **Tim Adey**, OEP
-

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Day 2 - Thursday 29 January 2026

Panel Session - Fresh perspectives on marine recovery

Chair: **David Tudor**, OCF

- 10.35
- **Caroline Price**, Head of Nature, The Crown Estate
 - **Elizabeth Beall**, Managing Director, Finance Earth
 - **Alec Taylor**, Director of Policy and Research, Oceana
 - **Kristin Rechberger**, Revive Our Ocean

11:15 **Alistair Carmichael MP**, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fisheries: 'A Cross-Party Action Plan for a Thriving and Sustainable UK Fishing Industry'

11:30 **Break**

BALANCING BLUE GROWTH

How can society balance economic development, such as offshore renewable energy, shipping and aquaculture, with the need to protect marine ecosystems and minimise pollution?

Chair: **Darroch Baker**, Managing Director, APEM Group

- 12:35
- **Eleanor Besley-Gould**, CEO, Sustainable Shipping Initiative: Focussing on co-benefits: Shared Stewardship for Climate, Nature and People
 - **Jenny Oates**, Natural Resources Wales: Evidence driving action for Welsh Seas
 - **Nicola Teague**, APEM Group: Beyond Compliance: Infrastructure as a Catalyst for Marine Stewardship
 - **Ros Gaulton**, Defra: Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package
 - **Ellie Maher**, CEA: Ensuring Effectiveness & Equity of Offshore Wind Environmental Compensation
 - **Jo Bayes**, Environment Agency: Source to Sea

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Day 2 - Thursday 29 January 2026

14:00 **Break**

15:00 **Keynote** **Tony Long, CEO, Global Fishing Watch**

INNOVATING FOR A HEALTHY OCEAN

Highlighting the role of science, technology, and finance in creating a sustainable ocean future, this theme will explore how new solutions and innovative financial tools can support policy development, marine conservation, improve ocean management, and drive the restoration of degraded habitats.

15:20 Chair: **Ruth Williams**, Head of Marine Conservation, The Wildlife Trusts

Speakers:

- **Audrey Jones**, Howell Marine Consulting: Making Marine Net Gain a reality: how to measure losses and gains in the marine environment
- **Olly Hicks**, Algalpelago: Proving the scalability of ocean regeneration with Blue Forests
- **Rory Atton**, ARC Marine: Reef Enhancement for Scour Protection - RESP Project

16:10 **Keynote** **Michael Fishbach**, Founder, Great Whale Conservancy

16:30 **Close**

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Posters

Posters can be viewed in the Drayson Room during the breaks and evening reception

Abstract #	Name	Surname	Organisation	Title
1	Stephen	Hall	Nippon Foundation - GEBCO Seabed 2030	Closing the mapping gap
2	Jerome	Curoy	JBA Consulting	Integrating Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal and Socio-economic Resilience
3	David	Lamb	OceanOS Earth	Seeing the Whole Ocean: AI approaches to Climate, Fisheries and Policy
4	Kelly	Haynes	The Environment Agency	Local knowledge, national impact: Citizen science empowers collective action for healthier rivers and coasts
5	Jamie	Davies	Marine Management Organisation	Blue Belt Programme: Long-term sustainable financing opportunities in the UK Overseas Territories
6	Phoebe	Holding	APEM Group	Brown crabs – hard or soft? An innovative partnership between academic researchers and the fishing industry with the shared goal of sustainable fisheries management.
7	Jacques	Villemot	Rewilding Britain	Offshore wind for a wilder future
8			Campaign for National Parks	Seabeds to summits: National Parks at land, coast and sea
9	Kate	Jury	National Trails UK	Coastal Wildbelt: A national initiative to unlock and support projects and partnerships to deliver for people and nature,
10	Joshua	Bishop	Risk & Policy Analysts	Tides of Change: Climate, Communities, and Coastal Economies
11	Sophie	Day	University of East Anglia and North Norfolk District Council	When coastal erosion transcends generations – planning for the future of graveyards at risk
12	Emma Jane	Greenway	Natural England	Marine Net Gain: Evidence Development for Marine Nature Recovery
13	James	Ward	Office for Environmental Protection	Plans, Progress and Prospects: Holding government to account on marine targets and commitments

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Abstract #	Name	Surname	Organisation	Title
14	Miriam	White	University of Plymouth's Centre for Coastal Communities	Exploring the Impact of Place on Coastal Youth Future Expectations
15	Georgia	de Jong Cleyndert	Cumbria Wildlife Trust/North West Wildlife Trusts	The Irish Sea Network: Lessons in transboundary collaboration for marine conservation
16	Maisy	Fuller	University of Plymouth	National Marine Parks: Turning the Tide of UK Coastal Management
17	Freyja and Nicola	Thomson-Alberts and Bridge	Ocean Conservation Trust	Mobilising Ocean Action Through Data-led Insights
18	Charlotte	Lyddon	University of Liverpool	Coast-R Network+ and the Resilience Coastal Communities and Seas Programme
19	Ciara	Taylor	Marine Conservation Society	Local, place-based, partnership working in Wales: Lessons learnt from the Marine Conservation Society
20	Robert	Walsh	Northern Ireland Marine Task Force	Northern Ireland's Progression to Achieving Marine Nature Recovery - NIMTF's Recommendations
21	Hannah	Tidbury	APEM Group	What lies beneath: rapid invasive species monitoring in support of blue growth
22	Chantal	Lyons	Mindfully Wired	Building a bycatch mitigation trial around a collaborative core in the North Sea
23	Eloise	White	Intertek Metoc	Spatial Planning for Sustainable Offshore Growth
24	Rada	Pandeva	Thalassophile Project/ University of Exeter	Thalassophile Project: Universally Accessible Marine Science & Ocean Literacy
25	Elizabeth	Brett	Marine Management Organisation	Place-based decision-making in the marine area – the story so far.
26	Pamela	Buchan	University of Exeter	Public Participation in Marine Decisions: The Case of Offshore Wind.

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conference@coastms.co.uk



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