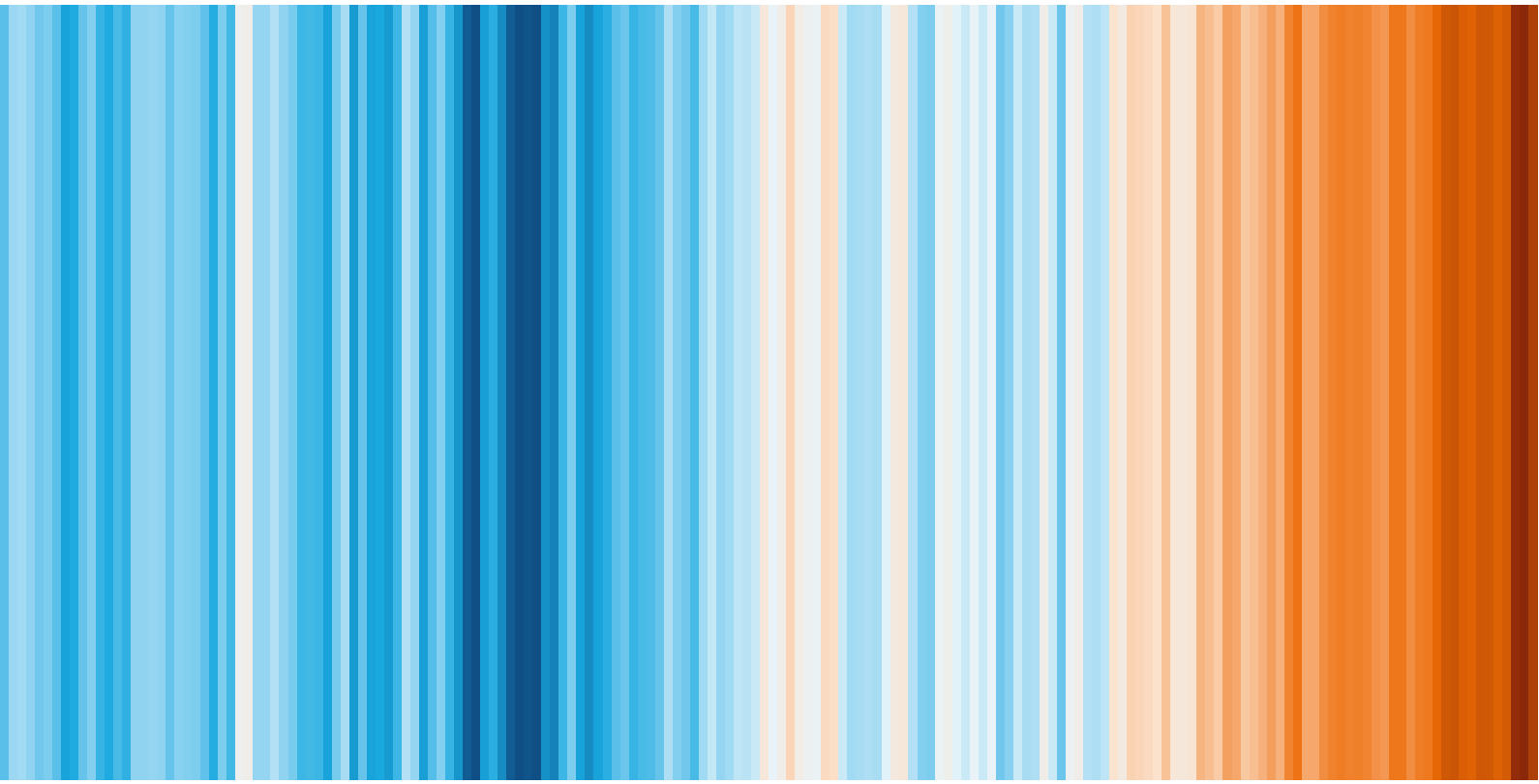
Coastal Futures 2027

#CoastalFutures27
coastal-futures.net

Programme



Warming seas, changing coasts

When

Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 January 2027

Where

Royal Geographical Society, London, and online

Organised by

Ocean and Coastal Futures

At a glance

Coastal Futures 2027

Delivered by OCF

Day 1 Wednesday 27 January

08:30 Registration, coffee and exhibition

10:00 **Welcome**

10:35 **Keynote**
Emma Pinchbeck, Climate Change Committee

10:55 **Warming seas**
Marine heatwaves: what 2026 told us

11:15 CHANGE, GROWTH AND SPACE
Planning for rising seas, clean energy and jobs on a crowded coast
- Funding adaptation on the coast
- Consenting in limited space
- Planning growth and recovery together

12:15 Lunch, exhibition and posters

13:30 SOURCE TO SEA
Joining up land, rivers, coast and sea
- Sediment, nutrients and pollution
- Linking river basin and marine plans
- Partnerships from catchment to coast

Including quick-fire talks

15:00 Break, exhibition and posters

15:50 **Parallel sessions**
Early careers · Coastal communities
Finance · Nature restoration

17:00 **In conversation**
[Guest speaker]

17:30 **OCF Bob Earll Award**

17:40 **Close of Day 1**

17:40 **Evening reception**
Until 19:30

Day 2 Thursday 28 January

08:00 Registration, coffee and exhibition

09:30 **Welcome back**

09:40 **Keynote**
To be confirmed

10:05 NATURE RECOVERY
Protecting and recovering marine and coastal biodiversity
- Protected areas and 30 by 30
- Species and habitats on the move
- Restoring seagrass, saltmarsh and reefs

11:25 Lunch, exhibition and posters

12:35 SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES
Evidence from scientists, managers and fishing communities
- Fisheries management plans
- Access and quota with neighbours
- New arrivals as seas warm

14:05 Break, exhibition and posters

14:40 COASTAL COMMUNITY VOICE
Who decides, and how, as coasts change
- Cables, grid and sea defences
- Local knowledge and citizen science
- Natural capital and rights of nature

16:30 **Close**

Themes

Five themes, two days

27 and 28 January 2027

Coastal Futures 2027

Delivered by OCF

Coastal Futures 2027 looks at what a changing climate means for the UK's coasts and seas, and for the work we do on them.

Seas are warming, marine heatwaves are reaching our shores, species are moving north and into deeper water, and storms and flooding are testing coastal defences and the communities behind them. The summer of 2026 brought sustained heat and wildfire risk to parts of the UK that rarely see them. For many people working on the coast and at sea, climate change now shapes decisions they make every week.

Each session takes a subject our delegates care about (coastal change and marine planning, joining up land and sea, protecting and recovering nature, fisheries, and how decisions are made) and asks how it needs to adapt: what the evidence says, what is already working, and what has to change. Scientists will share the stage with the people who plan, regulate, develop, fish and live on the coast, bringing practical examples from the ground. We will also hear from countries that have been adapting for longer than we have.

The programme is practical and forward-looking. Government plans for clean energy, jobs and regional growth, new legal drivers for nature restoration, and a stronger public voice bring opportunities as well as pressures. Over two days we will look at where recovery and resilience can be built into growth, where that is already happening, and what it will take to go further.

1 Change, growth and space

Day 1
11:15

Planning for rising seas, clean energy and jobs on a crowded coast

Rising seas and stronger storms are forcing hard choices about where we defend the coast, where we adapt and where we let it change. At the same time offshore wind, grid connections, ports and shipping all need space, often in the same places, and governments across the UK want growth that brings jobs and lasting benefits to coastal regions. This session looks at how coastal management and marine planning can deal with both: funding adaptation where defences are no longer possible, planning and consenting infrastructure on finite space, and whether growth and recovery can be planned together rather than traded off. It asks who carries the costs and benefits, and how developers, regulators and NGOs can work together.

2 Source to sea

Day 1
13:30

Joining up land, rivers, coast and sea

Rivers, estuaries, coasts and seas work as one connected system, but we still plan and manage them in separate pieces. What happens upstream shapes what happens to the sea: sediment and nutrients, flood water, pollution, and the movement of fish and other wildlife. Heavier rainfall, drought and rising seas make those links harder to ignore. Integrated coastal management and catchment-based approaches have been pursued, but source-to-sea thinking is now gaining ground. This session asks what joined-up management looks like in practice: how voluntary partnerships, regulators, water companies, farmers, planners and marine managers can work to shared goals, how river basin planning and the UK Marine Strategy can connect, and how to work at a larger scale whilst delivering locally.

3 Nature recovery

Day 2
10:05

Protecting and recovering marine and coastal biodiversity

Marine and coastal wildlife is under pressure from fishing, development, pollution and warming seas, and a changing climate is shifting where species can live. Marine protected areas now cover a large share of UK seas and the UK has committed to protecting 30% of its seas by 2030, but many sites are not yet well managed, and sites designated for today's conditions may not suit tomorrow's. This session looks at marine and coastal nature recovery as conditions change: what the latest science says about species and habitats on the move, how protected areas should be managed and adapted, how to reduce the pressures on them, and where restoring habitats such as seagrass, saltmarsh and shellfish reefs fits alongside protection.

4 Sustainable fisheries

Day 2
12:35

Evidence from scientists, managers and fishing communities

Fishing matters to coastal economies, food security and the health of the sea, yet it is often treated as a side issue in wider marine debates. Warming seas add to the pressure, changing where fish live and breed, bringing new arrivals such as bluefin tuna and octopus to some waters and putting familiar stocks under strain. This session brings together fishers, managers, scientists, the seafood sector and conservation organisations to look at where UK fisheries management is heading: how fisheries management plans are being delivered, how access and quota arrangements with neighbouring countries are working, how monitoring and new technology are changing the way fishing is managed, how management can keep pace as stocks move, and what role aquaculture should play. It will also look at the pressures fishing communities face, from costs and access to competition for space with offshore wind and protected areas, and ask whose voices shape the decisions that affect them.

5 Coastal community voice

Day 2
14:40

Who decides, and how, as coasts change

People who live on the coast are seeing climate change at first hand, and many want a say in how their coast changes: new cables and grid connections, sea defences, managed realignment and restoration schemes. Too often decisions arrive with little real engagement, and the places that host new infrastructure are not always the ones that benefit. New regional structures in England and regional marine planning in Scotland create a chance to rethink how coastal and marine decisions are made. This session asks whether our decision-making is ready for the climate we face: how participation, local knowledge and citizen science can shape marine planning and major projects, what working together looks like beyond consultation, what devolution means for the sea, and what different ways of valuing nature, from natural capital to the rights of nature, bring to those decisions.

Venue

Getting there

Royal Geographical Society, London, and online

Coastal Futures 2027

Delivered by OCF

Coastal Futures 2027 takes place at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in South Kensington, on the corner of Exhibition Road and Kensington Gore, and online.

Registration opens at 08:30 on Wednesday 27 January and at 08:00 on Thursday 28 January. Lunch and refreshments are included for in-person delegates on both days, followed by the evening reception on Day 1.

ADDRESS

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
1 Kensington Gore
London SW7 2AR

Conference entrance: Exhibition Road

BY UNDERGROUND

South Kensington (Piccadilly, District, Circle): 11 minutes on foot. Not step free.

Knightsbridge (Piccadilly): 15 minutes on foot. Step-free access via the Hooper's Court entrance.

Gloucester Road (Piccadilly, District, Circle): 17 minutes on foot. Lift available.

BY BUS

9, 52 and 452 stop at Exhibition Road or Royal Albert Hall, next to the Society.

360 stops on Prince Consort Road.

BY RAIL

Paddington 28 minutes on foot.

Victoria take the 52 bus to Exhibition Road.

CYCLING AND PARKING

Bike racks are on the north side of the building, with more nearby.

Santander Cycles docking station on Kensington Gore, outside the Royal College of Art.

No parking at the Society. Use public transport if you can.

ACCESS

Both entrances on Exhibition Road and Kensington Gore are wheelchair accessible, and an accessible toilet is available.

Tell us in advance about any access needs so we can help on the day.

JOINING ONLINE

The main conference sessions are livestreamed for online ticket holders. Joining details will be emailed before the conference.

QUESTIONS

Email **conference@coastms.co.uk** or visit **coastal-futures.net** for the latest programme and booking information.

About

Ocean and Coastal Futures

The organisers of Coastal Futures

Coastal Futures 2027

Delivered by OCF

Our mission is bringing the ocean and coastal community together.

Ocean and Coastal Futures

Ocean and Coastal Futures (OCF) supports the people who work in, on, around and for the sea, across science, policy, industry, government, charities and communities. We help them build networks, stay informed, grow their knowledge and find opportunities, and we back projects and policies for a sustainable ocean and coast.

What we do

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

We run Coastal Futures, the UK's annual ocean and coastal conference, and our own Blue Finance conference. We deliver the Environment Agency's ReMeMaRe conference in partnership with the EA, along with webinars and online events.

NEWS

Our two weekly newsletters keep people across the marine and coastal sector and the water sector up to date with news, events, research and policy.

JOBS

We advertise jobs across the ocean, coastal and water sectors, helping people find their next role and organisations find the people they need.

RECOGNITION AND OPPORTUNITY

The OCF Bob Earll Award recognises people making a difference in ocean and coastal management, and our bursaries help young people attend Coastal Futures.

Our values

Honesty: we tell the truth and amplify voices that should be heard

Integrity: we value sustainability over profit

Generosity: we create connections and promote opportunities that benefit the sector as a whole

Equity: we believe in fairness and opportunities to reach an equal outcome

Inclusiveness: we foster a sense of community and champion diversity

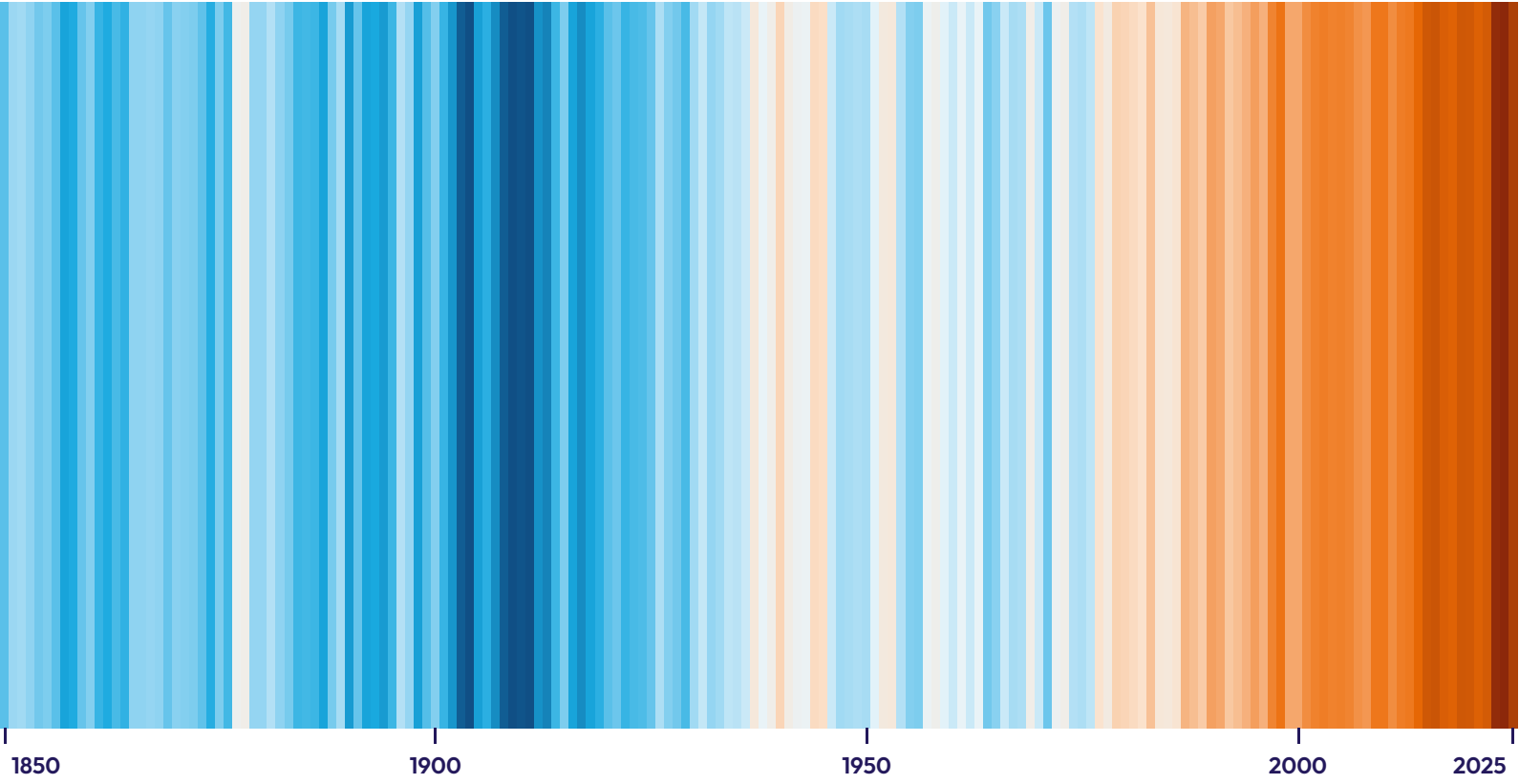
Flexibility: we listen to a wide range of perspectives and work to find common ground

STAY IN TOUCH

Sign up to our newsletters at **OCFonline.co.uk**

Follow **@oceanandcoastalfutures** on LinkedIn

Email **conference@coastms.co.uk**



About the cover

Each stripe is one year of average global sea surface temperature, from 1850 on the left to 2025 on the right. Blue years were cooler than the 1961 to 1990 average and orange years were warmer. The three warmest years in the record are 2023, 2024 and 2025.



0.6°C cooler 1961 to 1990 average 0.9°C warmer

Data: HadSST.4 annual global sea surface temperature, Met Office Hadley Centre. Contains Met Office data © Crown copyright. Warming stripes concept by Professor Ed Hawkins, University of Reading (showyourstripes.info).

Coastal Futures 2027

#CoastalFutures27
coastal-futures.net
Royal Geographical Society, London, and online

Organised by

Ocean and Coastal Futures

Updated 17 November 2026