



Big Ideas By The Sea Scarborough

14-16 May, 2021

'Big Ideas By The Sea' (BIBTS) is a festival planned for May 2021 in Scarborough, UK. This year's theme is "Then, Now and the Future: Environment, Education & Employment". The aim of this festival is to bring together a group of dynamic and interdisciplinary thinkers, to discuss and disseminate issues surrounding three big challenges (Environment, Education and Employment) in today's world. More specifically, 'What are the issues and opportunities for coastal communities within the UK and abroad over the next 25 years?'

Education



Environment

Employment

Artwork by Kelly Stanford @TheLabArtist

An Unconference

Often in traditional academic conferences, the most stimulating conversations take place during coffee breaks when attendees can interact with each other, discuss their research interests and expand their professional networks¹. A unique feature of BIBTS is its emphasis on the facilitation of these conversations and thus the 'Unconventional conference' - Unconference format. At BIBTS, the agenda, topics and workshops will be participant-driven and oriented, making this a valuable event for PhD and early career researchers from virtually any academic background. Three speakers have been invited to deliver **keynote addresses** around our theme to provoke and inspire the dissemination the topics.

- 1) Professor Dan Parsons: Director of Energy & Environment Institute, University of Hull.
- 2) Charlotte Bonner: National Head of Education for Sustainable Development. Education and Training Foundation.
- 3) Wave Crookes: Co-founder of SeaGrown Ltd, a sustainable business that harvests a 25-hectare seaweed farm off the coast of Scarborough.

Chaired by: Dr Magnus Johnson, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Marine Science, University of Hull.

Attendees are encouraged to think outside of the box regarding the application and relevance of their research to the Environment, Education and Employment in coastal communities locally, regionally and globally. The challenge is to respond to a series of questions and propositions posited within the event, in a structure determined by the unconference attendees during BIBTS. With PhD students and early career researchers from a range of backgrounds to help drive these debates, BIBTS hopes to spark alternative ideas and roadmaps to approach many pressing societal and environmental problems.

Some keywords of ideas that are sure to have an impact on our theme are: archaeology, arts and culture, Artificial Intelligence (AI), bioregionalization, circular economy, climate change, conservation, decolonisation, food production, gentrification, geopolitics, higher education, mental health, nature, pandemics, pollution, population and demographic change, social media, sustainability, tourism, urban planning... the list goes on.

¹ Budd et al. (2015). Ten simple rules for organizing an unconference. PLoS Computational Biology. 11(1): e1003905. doi: [10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003905](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003905).

Field Trips

Attendees have the opportunity to visit Scarborough Castle, Scarborough Harbour and Scarborough Art Gallery. The Scarborough Big Dig, a community archaeological excavation in Scarborough Old Town, will form part of the festival and all delegates will be able to visit the archaeological trenches over the weekend.

Scarborough²

A lot of coastal cities and towns in the UK had booming economies in a bygone era (based on sea-faring trades, tourism and fisheries), and could even be considered melting pots of cultures from the movement of people. Scarborough is no different. However, since the 1960's lots of these opportunities have moved away from coastal places to locations further inland and even abroad³. Despite societal changes – the sea has continued to be an invaluable resource rich in inspiration, natural and maritime history, as well as untapped renewable energy fit for a sustainable 21st century. It is clear that coastal communities 'left-behind' have a lot to offer still – but would require economic investment to allow regeneration and investment in connectivity nationally and internationally. For example, in 2019, Scarborough Borough Council received £302,019 from the UK government to 'level-up'⁴. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the region particularly badly due to over 70% of Scarborough's businesses are from the tourism and hospitality sector⁵.

Looking forward, how can we concretely act on: 1) unlocking potentials in coastal towns and cities, 2) mobilizing individuals in coastal communities, and 3) attracting and retaining young, educated people in coastal communities like Scarborough?

Conference location and COVID-19 safety measures

Assuming no lock-down measures, this will be an in-person event held in the town library and Grand Hotel, Scarborough. Safety measures will be in place to allow a maximum of 30 attendees to engage in a COVID secure manner. Government regulations will be followed at all times and the conference will adapt and change in format in due course.

² [Visit Scarborough; Scarborough Town Deal – Town Investment Plan; Borough of Scarborough – Visitor economy strategy and destination plan.](#)

³ BBC (2015). Britain's seaside ruins. <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20150609-britains-seaside-ruins>

⁴ [Towns Fund' prospectus.](#)

⁵ [Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Businesses.](#) Scarborough Borough Council.

Application to attend the Unconference

We welcome applications from PhD students and Early Career Researchers. All applications will be assessed on their merits, interests and ability to contribute to the event. The panel will be looking for a variety of approaches to problem solving and a wide range of academic disciplines to ensure innovative thinking and creative responses to the issues raised. Please [click here](#) to fill out the application form on the BIBTS website.

Costs and bursary to cover transport and accommodation

If selected BIBTS is free to attend. We encourage PhD students / ECR to use their departmental outreach funds, or their research training grants to facilitate their attendance. BIBTS can offer four bursaries of up to £100 to successful applicants travelling to Scarborough from further afield (> 100 km). If selected applicants will need to detail a cost breakdown (transport and accommodation) from their origin to Scarborough. The cost breakdown and personal statement should be sent to before 23:59 on 5 March, 2021 to Magnus Johnson (M.Johnson@hull.ac.uk).

Output & Deliverables

It is suggested that everyone in the world are only separated by three degrees⁶ of contact through social media. The challenge to the attendees is to promote BIBTS globally via social media throughout the duration of the conference, and through traditional press after the event. Throughout the conference, discussion points and content will be documented. Ultimately, we hope to distill the ideas and outcomes of this unconference into three key messages that reflect the three core themes of BIBTS.

The key messages will be delivered academically (potential for joint publication(s)) and also to non-academic audiences (such as coastal town councils). The format of the output is yet to be determined by the conference attendees – and BIBTS will continue to encourage and enable creativity, innovation and imagination. BIBTS hopes to report these outputs at the COP26 (United Nations Climate Change Conference) due to take place in Glasgow, November 2021.

University of Hull
Big Ideas By The Sea

⁶ Six degrees of separation is now three. <https://techcrunch.com/2008/09/03/six-degrees-of-separation-is-now-three/?guccounter=1>

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