



Community Engagement Report

Your organisation:

Bridging Change CIC



Lead contact and email:

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Date of discussion group:

9/05/25

Venue:

BMECP Centre, Brighton and Hove, BN1 4ZE

Facilitated by:

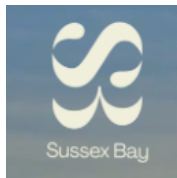
Kiran Sasidharan (report writer)

Number of people attending:

10 (2 cohorts of 5 respondents)

Details of the “community” engaged

Black and racialised older people



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Section 1: Benefits of the Sea Wheel

What did people say were the most important areas for them personally?

After giving a brief explanation of Sussex Bay and their aims, respondents were given three mini stickers to nominate what areas they found most important on a personal level.

A significant number of votes (14) were given within the **cultural** segment, which covered five categories. **Health and wellbeing** were the most common area of importance (7). Several votes were also chosen for **Tourism** (3) and **Wildlife watching** (2), with 1 vote each being chosen for both **Seascapes** and **Creativity and art** (both 1).

Provision was the next most common area (9), with an equal amount split between **Sand and gravel**, **Energy** and **Fish and Shellfish stocks** (all 3)

Provision was closely followed by **supporting** (8). Majority of results were placed in **Food web** (4), then **Water cycling** (3). Singular votes were also selected in **Nutrient cycling** and **Habitats for species** (both 1).

Maintaining was the least selected category (3). This consisted of only two categories chosen by respondents. **Waste breakdown and detoxification** (2) and **stabilise sediment** (1).

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Benefits of the Wheel





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Why did they say this?

Cultural:

Beginning with **health and wellbeing**, majority of respondents had a shared sense of the sea offering a “soothing” experience where people could “unwind and get fresh air”. The sea was also described as somewhere that offers a highly a “relaxing” time to get away. Not just seeing but also hearing the sea acted as a form of “medication”. Overall, health and wellbeing provided a unique opportunity to help around mental health but also physical health.

Tourism was highlighted as a key factor contributing to the success of Sussex beach. Firstly, there was a particular emphasis on the importance of local cafés, restaurants, and stalls around the beach, which benefited directly from increased visitor numbers. This in-turn allowed for reinvestment into local businesses, helping to make the beach and the city more appealing, not just to tourists, but also to local residents. Tourism was also described as an essential element of the beach’s identity, drawing people to the area and helping to enhance its overall reputation.

Additionally, other areas around the cultural segment (**wildlife watching** and **creativity and art**) were described as “healthy activities”, offering calming and collaborative activities.

Provisioning:

Energy was a popular topic supported by many, with a strong focus on using natural, resources such as the sea. Participants highlighted the potential to harness energy from the sea and wind, given the access of the coast. Many also noted that using renewable energy sources, like the wind turbines, could contribute to cleaner water, making the beach more suitable for activities such as swimming. Overall, there was a shared sense of optimism about the environmental and practical benefits of sustainable energy.

Of the people that chose **sand and gravel**, many of the points were made about the unique qualities of the beach’s natural features. The combination of sand and rocks provided an area that was “nice to walk on”. **Fish and shellfish stocks** were another area highlighted for their contribution to the diverse range of local seafood. In particular, species like lobster and crab were mentioned as valuable for the local economy and the food experiences.



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Supporting:

The importance of the **food web** was described in various ways, although perhaps the understanding of this topic was unclear with some respondents having differing views. Several respondents claimed the accessibility to multiple fish to eat was important and helpful, particularly around cooking fish such as lobster and crab. On the other hand, another respondent said the importance of “making sure the food was not polluted” was another point made.

Water cycling was an important aspect for respondents. Through filtering and removing the dirt around the sea, it could heavily improve the attractiveness of the beach resulting in more tourists visiting, more inclined to swimming in the sea and accessibility in drinking water. The importance of **habitats for species** was also highlighted, as they play a vital role in supporting the overall health and balance of the marine ecosystem.

Maintaining:

Several respondents mentioned the importance of **waste breakdown and detoxification** and spoke especially around the issue of rubbish around the beach. It provided the unattractive side of the beach. Those who littered were described as “thoughtless,” with concerns raised about the harm it causes to wildlife and the impact on the beach's appeal to visitors. One respondent emphasised the need for greater education on the issue, as “fines alone are pretty ineffective”, - particularly when the beach is crowded where people felt less accountable for their actions. Another individual pointed out how other countries have much better systems in managing waste and rubbish. **Stabilise sediment** was the final topic where the individual mentioned the importance in using natural resources to maintain the beach and was against the use of wind turbines, mentioning the damage to birds and sea creatures.

What did people say were the most important areas for wider society now and why?

Many respondents felt their views resonated with wider society views, particularly regarding the **supporting** and **provisioning** categories alongside **health and wellbeing**. **Supporting** was seen as a crucial element since sea creatures and



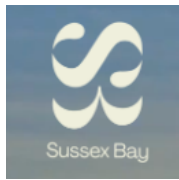
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protection of the ocean are already highly vulnerable and it is imperative that these aspects are valued.

Provisioning was described as significant for wider society, as it provides access to essential natural resources such as fresh water, while also supporting the sustainability of the beach. This allowed people to benefit from the ocean's resources in a safe and long-lasting manner, helping to preserve the area for future generations. **Health and wellbeing** remained an important category, appreciated for the variety of experiences the beach provides. "It's a space where people can walk alone or with family, ride bikes, bring their dogs, and enjoy the outdoors- activities that many associated with positive effects on mental health and quality of life."

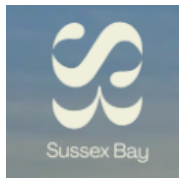
On the other hand, areas like creativity and art, and wildlife watching were replaced by priorities in provisioning and supporting services, which were seen as offering greater benefits to wider society.

Furthermore, several people also believed that **all areas** from the cycle **coexist together**, to the point where they all impact each other and are all important. An example of this was when someone stated how "all areas influence one another" and to maximise the benefits of the sea (personally and collectively) each area must be at a sufficient level.



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Section 2: Other areas discussed

What did you talk about? (health of the sea? Access to the sea? Other areas?)

Accessibility was a key area of discussion for respondents, both physically and socially. Fortunately, all respondents lived in a reasonable distance from the beach which were “very easy to get to”. Several people required one bus to travel to the beach whilst majority of respondents lived in a 10-minute walking distance. Several residents had noted the issue around lack of benches around the beach.

Furthermore, several members from the group mentioned weekly walks, starting from Brighton beach and either going to the Marina or Hove. There were also a few mentions of social challenges, particularly from respondents who felt they received unwelcoming looks based on their skin colour or for wearing a hijab, making them feel as though others were silently questioning, “*What are you doing here?*”. This aspect of the human environment, at times, left them “feeling uncomfortable” and out of place. Additionally, one individual mentioned the lack of drinking water along the sea front particularly around less populated areas such as Rustington beach.

Finally, there was a shared concern about the beach (particularly Brighton) becoming overcrowded during peak times. Many felt that less space made the experience less enjoyable but also led to increased litter, reduced access to local cafes and amenities. Some also mentioned feeling less safe or relaxed in such crowded conditions.



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Is there anything else that came up in discussion that Sussex Bay needs to know?

Providing a brief overview of each of the Sea Wheel's benefits could be helpful, especially when there were some complex areas- although the images were helpful

Would you like to see a copy of the final report on this engagement work?

Yes

Are you interested in keeping in contact with Sussex Bay?

Yes

Would you be prepared to do more community engagement, if needed?

Yes