

# GUILDHE CLIMATE CRISIS REPORT

## CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Writtle University College

The Essex Climate Action Commission was set up in 2020 to develop ambitious recommendations to mitigate the complex problems of climate change. The scope of the Commission includes transport and infrastructure sectors, waste management, energy, green infrastructure and community engagement. It also explores how to attract investment in natural capital and low carbon growth.

An interim report detailing recommendations and strategies was published in November 2020 <https://www.essex.gov.uk/climate-action>. In February 2022 the Commission embarked on phase 2 of the programme – engaging local communities and facilitating implementation strategies.

The ECC Green infrastructure expert group contracted WUC to deliver training and participatory planning workshops to local community stakeholders using MARISCO – a systematic planning method developed and published in 2014 (Ibisch & Hobson 2014; <https://www.marisco.training/>). The target area for delivering planning workshops the Coln and Blackwater Catchments – the designated Climate Focus Area (CFA).



Between April and July 2022 Peter Hobson, Professor in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainability at Writtle University College, coordinated and delivered on behalf of Essex County Council ten community stakeholder workshops attended by representatives from local parish and town councils, government agencies, and various environment NGOs.

MARISCO is an open and transparent full participatory planning process designed to empower local communities to make decisions, share knowledge between all stakeholders – academics, business, professional staff and local community members – and to develop ambitious strategies for the delivery of sustainable action plans to help mitigate effects of climate change, and to recover nature.

Representatives from three Essex Parish Councils have already reported the adoption of the participatory planning process to support the planning and delivery of their Parish Neighbourhood Plans.

Also, at the March 2023 Brightlingsea Nature Event the organisers show-cased their local Nature Recovery Project, community garden, local wildlife and nature mapping, with reference to the ECC-Writtle workshops, including the Brightlingsea Wilder Verges. <https://brightlingsea.info/brightlingsea-nature-event-will-demonstrate-recovery-work-around-the-town/>

Peter said: "Our task is to facilitate community-based climate action and nature recovery planning strategies. The workshops have received excellent feedback and we're delighted to have received 100% satisfaction so far from participants."

**[Read the full GuildHE Report: Tackling the Climate Crisis: A View From Smaller and Specialist Universities and Colleges](#)**

