

**Unfiltered Coast**

**Engagement via  
collaboration and  
creativity**

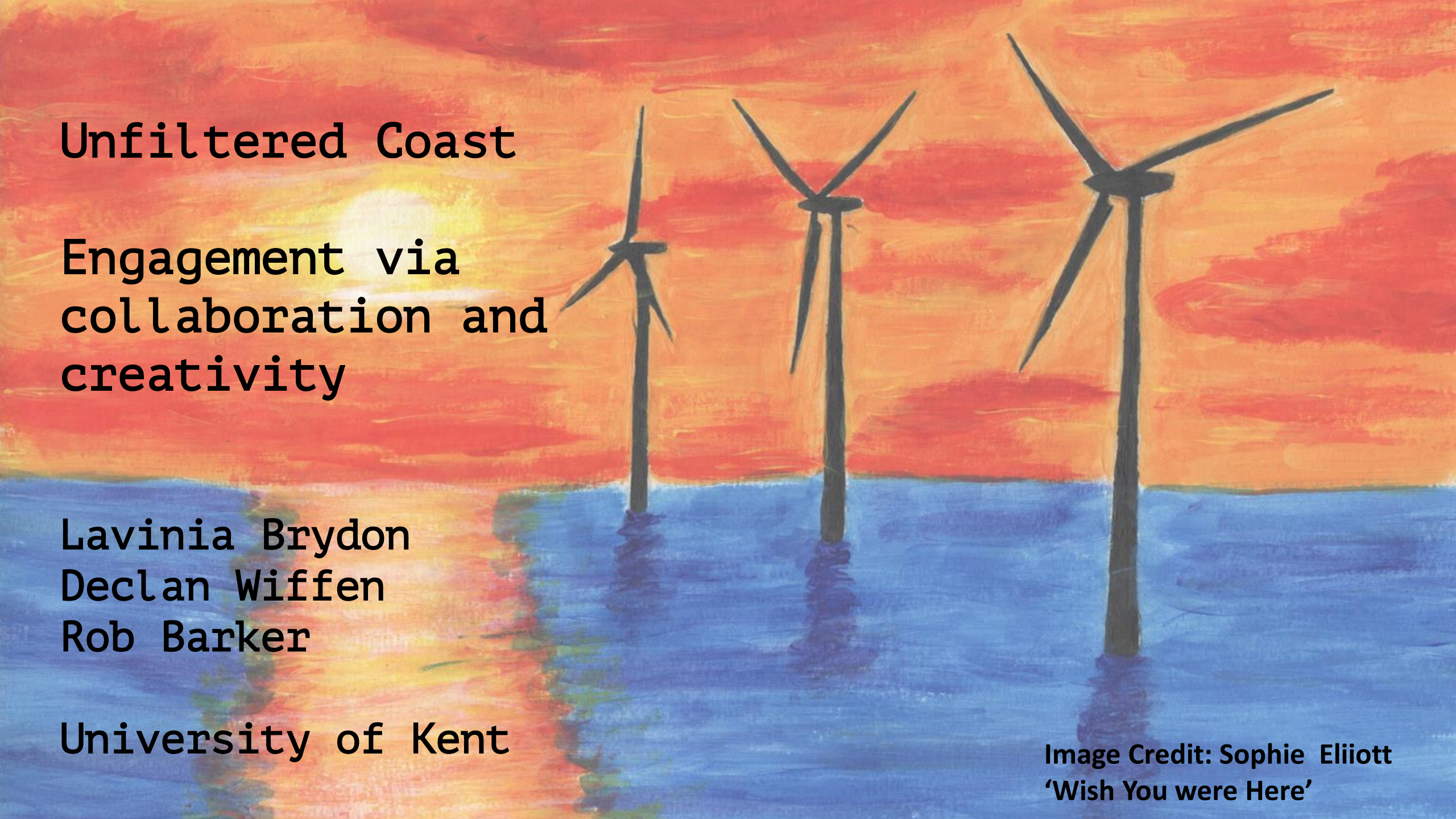
**Lavinia Brydon**

**Declan Wiffen**

**Rob Barker**

**University of Kent**

**Image Credit: Sophie Elliott  
'Wish You were Here'**



# Unfiltered Coast outline

- Unfiltered Coast - a project that engages young people in coastal climate change using the Kent coastline
  - Funded as part of the AHRC's public engagement around COP26
- Initial idea - to make tangible environmental science by going outside traditional classroom spaces and activities
  - Creative practice 'walkshops'
- Bottom-up approach - walkshops were co-designed with a youth-led climate change focus group
  - Themes
  - Locations
  - Activities
- Continued interest and investment from participants - subsequent exhibition

# Co-designing the workshops with 14-20 year olds (drawn from our partner's Youth Board)

- Three coastal themes emerged: water contamination, shortage and flooding
  - The sewage overflows of summer 2021 was a particular point of focus in the discussion and is a clear example of the youth group's influence on our workshop themes.
- A shortlist of locations was drawn up: Whitstable, Margate, Ramsgate, Folkestone
  - The group was most familiar with North Kent locations but we discussed the need for greater reach across the county
  - Ramsgate and Folkestone were finalised by the project investigators
- A range of activities were discussed: creative writing (lyrics, poetry, protest slogans); photography; drawing; filming
  - To ensure easy participation, we agreed that no special equipment should be required.

# Engaging 14-20 year olds with workshops

## Some challenges

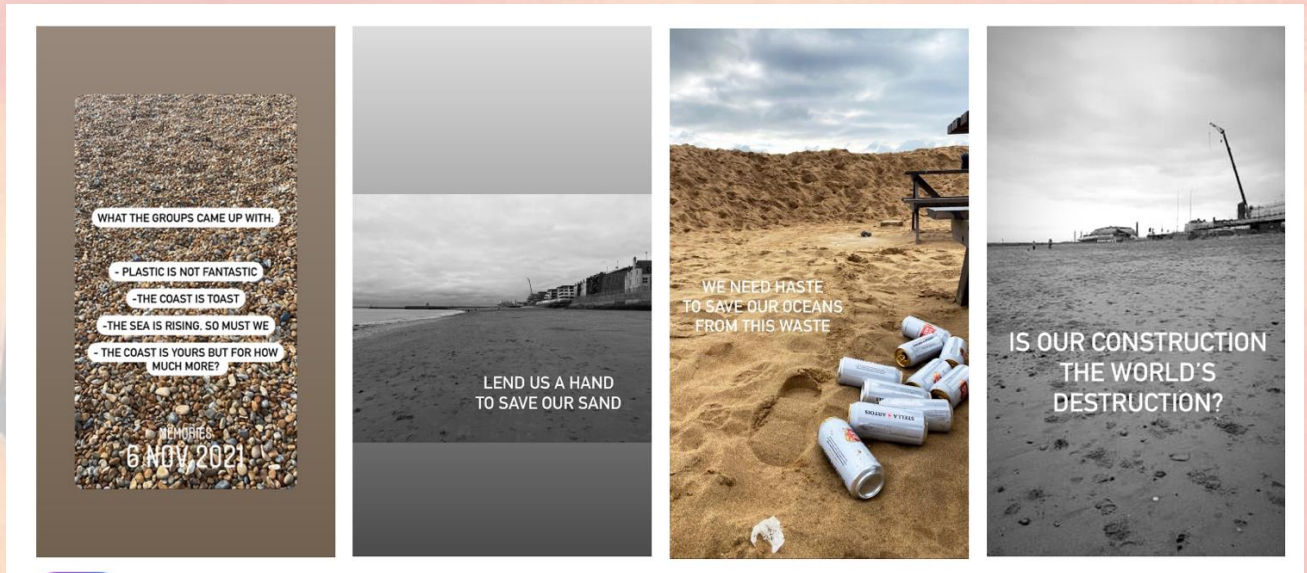
- Marketing challenges
  - Delays in getting youth group to sign off social media ads
  - Political content
- Time restrictions
  - Not tied to an existing school project
  - Time bound to COP26
- Weather
  - Wind at Folkestone
  - Rain in Ramsgate



# Engaging 14-20 year olds with the workshops

## Some positives

- Avenue for local activism
  - One young person stated that this offered a good (accessible) alternative to attending the COP26 events in London
- Seeing the coastline anew
  - Some subsequent artwork was directly informed by walking the local environment e.g an acrylic painting 'inspired by seeing wind turbines off the coast of Dungeness [...] I call it 'Wish You Were Here' because it highlights how I, and possibly many others, wish that governments and fuel companies would get on board with increasing our green energy production'
- Avenue for creativity no matter skill or experience
  - Every participant contributed to social media posts event if they didn't submit an artwork to final exhibition



# Engagement - from collaboration and creativity to consistency, continuation and circularity

- Finding ways to bring in young people's voices throughout the project's lifetime
- Developing new workshops that reflect/respond to the exhibition and add into it

- Feedback postcards
- George Harper stands by his photograph
- Zines

