

COASTWISE CREATIVE COMPETITION 2025



NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment
Agency

The Creative Competition

The competition asked people to consider this question:
How can we communicate coastal change along the north Norfolk coast, its impacts on coastal communities and the benefits of preparing and adapting?

The pieces featured in this exhibition demonstrate an array of innovative ways to explore the impacts of coastal erosion on coastal communities and how to prepare well for the changes ahead. All of the creative works on display have been shared by local people who entered a recent competition run by Coastwise.

We received lots of entries and are really grateful to everybody who took the time to consider the brief, create a piece and enter the competition – many of the fantastic entries are on display here. We hope you enjoy the works and thinking about the different perspectives they offer on coastal erosion and climate change.

What is Coastwise?

Coastwise is a North Norfolk District Council initiative to transition and prepare coastal communities where the coast is eroding. It is part of a national scheme funded by DEFRA and the Environment Agency.

Preparing for and adapting to coastal erosion to ensure a positive future for our coastal communities is at the heart of the Coastwise project. Coastwise is working with individuals, communities, businesses, infrastructure owners, government and others to explore and demonstrate how coastal places can plan and take actions to prepare and transition from coastal erosion risk. Coastwise is also helping to develop nationally beneficial practical actions, plans, policies, and funding and finance options, which will help other coastal places with similar challenges.



Scan the QR code to find out more about Coastwise or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise

Coastal Erosion

Coastal erosion is part of the history of North Norfolk. Between Weybourne and Happisburgh, the cliffs are made of soft materials, including sand, silt, and gravel. Coastal erosion has always happened and is a process which will continue and accelerate with climate change. In some places, our defence structures are well past their design lifespan, and renewal of these is neither affordable, technically feasible, nor environmentally sustainable.

Over the next 100 years, it is predicted that well over 1,000 homes are likely to be lost to coastal erosion in North Norfolk. This will impact communities as businesses, roads, footpaths, utilities such as sewage, water and electricity, agricultural land and natural habitats are also at risk. It will also affect people's wellbeing, access to beaches and heritage assets such as churches, listed buildings, graveyards and much more.





Happisburgh Watercolour Records

John Hurst

Context

John is professional, resident watercolourist who specialises in recording coastal change. His works include the 2013 tidal surge at Cley and Salthouse, the fragile ecosystem of The Broads and the rapid loss of the cliffscape at Happisburgh. The medium of watercolour is used to capture fleeting, increasingly intense weather patterns, all contributing to coastal erosion. The 'photo montage' shows such change at Happisburgh over twelve years. John supports the Norfolk Wildlife Trust at Cley Marshes and Sir Norman Lamb's Wellbeing Foundation by his annual exhibitions and illustrated books and was the Artist In Residence for Scira during the Sheringham Shoal offshore development.

Judges Comments

These are beautiful watercolour paintings depicting well observed 12 years of coastal retreat - painting these over two periods of time in the same location is a great concept. The details of the cliff on the latter painting are done really well and the before painting has almost dreamlike imagery.





Great Barrier Breach'd

Krys Leach

Context

Every year substantial sections of sandy cliffs are lost to the North Sea. Brick wall, concrete platforms and steel RSJs are left protruding from the sand. But this destruction and loss brings with it a paradoxical aesthetic. As structures deteriorate, they acquire a sculptural quality: remoulded by the forces of wind and water. Great Barrier Breach'd depicts a moment of reordering and looks towards a different future as nature reclaims the environment. This 3D image incorporates some of the very materials it depicts, all retrieved from the beach. A rusty piece of girder, a loop of wire, a tangled section of netting and some fragments of concrete provide the foreground detail over a background of oil on canvas board in a glazed case frame.

Judges Comments

This entry captures a real sense of change. It articulates how the local landscape is evolving through the use of the recovered materials incorporated. It's a great use of materials and textures with eye-catching imagery.

Upon the shores of Norfolk's side,
And Suffolk's cliffs so tall and wide,
The sea gnaws fast, with hungry will,
And steals the land both firm and still.
A century's quiet, a moment's slip,
As waves reclaim each shattered cliff.

Houses once perched on steady ground,
Now tumble where no roots are found.
Lives and memories cast away,
Into the churn of brine and spray.
The hearthstone cracks, foundations fall,
As tides erode what once stood tall.

Beneath these cliffs, the wildlife flees,
As habitats collapse to seas.
Marshland drowns, where bitterns call,
Dunes dissolve and sandbanks pall.
Rare orchids gasp, swift sandlings cry,
In lands where salt now claims the dry.

Climates toll a whisper turned roar,
A warming breath that stokes the shore.
Melting poles, the sea's slow rise,
Swelling waves beneath grey skies.
Storms emboldened, ever near,
Devour more, year after year.

Yet far offshore, a silver line,
Where turbines twist with bold design.
Windmills rise from North Sea mist,
Turning gales to green assist.
A fight to counter carbon's claim,
To ease the heat, to cool the flame.

But still, the soil, it gives, it slips,
As if it mourns the endless rips.
Short-term yields of silt and clay,
Long-term loss in every bay.
When topsoil sinks, the earth can't bind,
Its fertile touch left far behind.

And what of walls, of rocks and steel,
Of breakwaters built to block and heal?
A costly shield—a billion spent,
For fleeting gains that won't relent.
Defences rise, and then decay,
For seas persist in their decay.

This fragile edge we seek to save,
A precious line from wave to wave.
Yet money pours like grains of sand,
To hold back seas that sweep the land.
In every storm, a choice we trace:
How much to save, how much to face.

For cliffs may fall, and tides may turn,
But in these lessons, let us learn.
That balance found through human care,
Might yet preserve what hangs so rare.
The coastline lost, but hope not gone
Our fight endures; the work goes on.

The Crumbling Edge

Dave Fincham

Context

Working in Blakeney has made me very aware of the challenges that nature brings, the impact that its high tides and variable winds have on nature, the public and the coastline. I have used poetry and photography via the Blakeney Facebook group during the season, which has created conversation with the people that read my poetry. I also worked as crew on a retired Dunkirk little ship, Lucy Lavers out of Wells-next-the-Sea, sharing stories of the sea and its challenges with the general public.

Judges Comments

A flowing poem that takes you along a journey tackling some complex areas. This poem has a clear, impactful message about resilience and the unrelenting power of the sea.



“If My Home Could Fly”

Gennadiy Ivanov

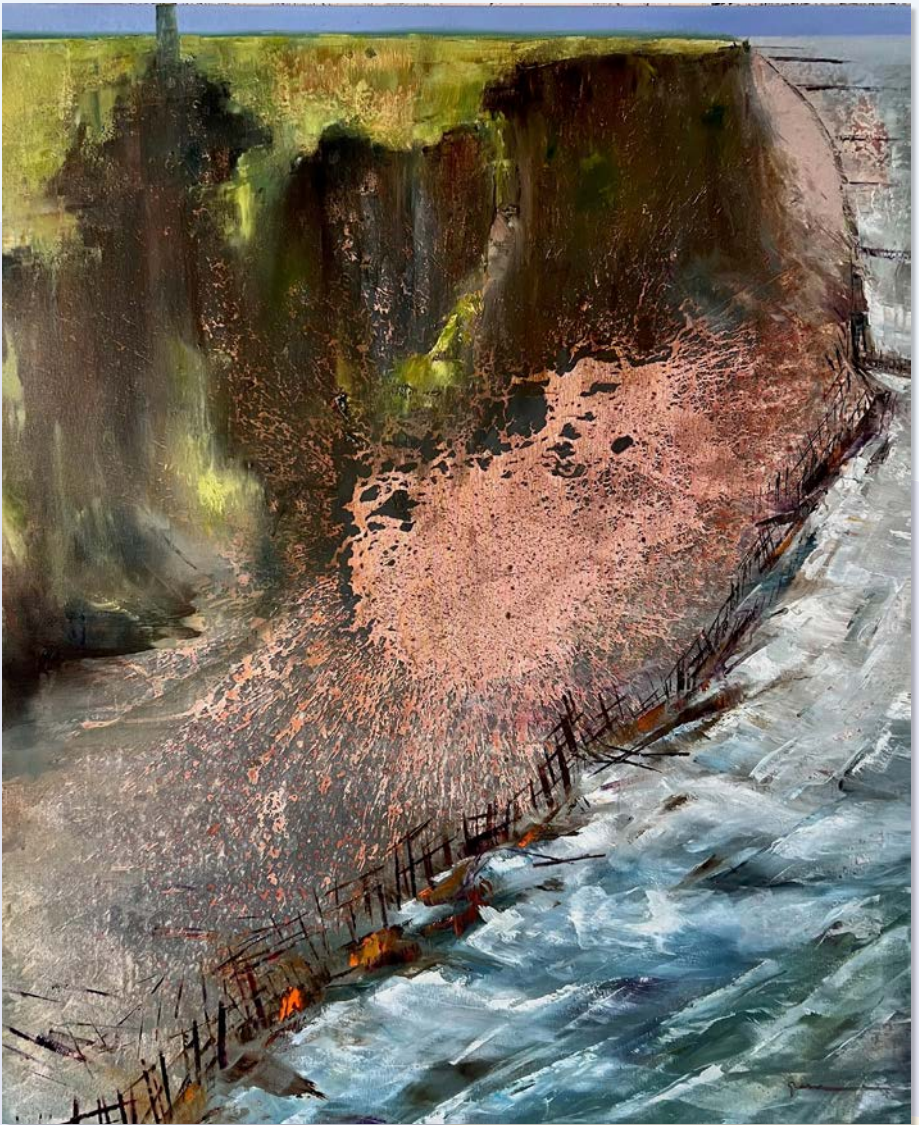
Individual
1st
Place

Context

I first started painting the impacts of climate change on the Norfolk coast in 2015. Since then, I have produced 35+ paintings and 20+ field drawings of the continuing destruction of our coast. All this activity started with the deep emotion I felt when I first saw – and then started painting – the destruction of our beautiful Norfolk coastline. After major international exhibitions, I would like to offer my paintings to this fantastic local initiative: to seek further inspiration from those people who are at the sharp end of the impacts of human-induced climate change; and, ideally, to help build a cadre of local artists who can help portray deeply-felt emotions and channel them into constructive engagement with Norfolk citizens and decision-makers.

Judges Comments

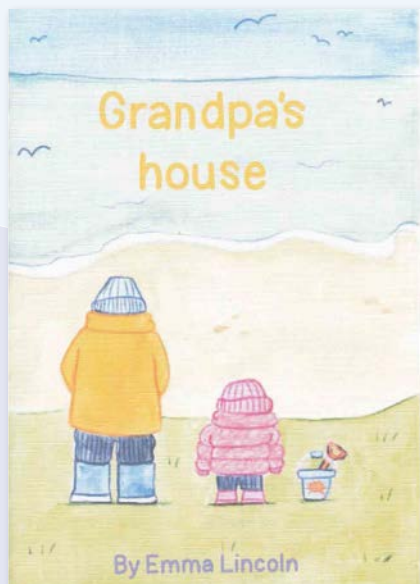
Original, immediately understood and imaginative. Powerful impactful images showing coastal change, very accomplished work.



“Collapsing Cliffs at Happisburgh”
Gennadiy Ivanov



“Sadness at Happisburgh”
Gennadiy Ivanov



Scan the QR code to read the full book



Grandpa's House

Emma Lincoln

Climate Winner

Context

I have created a short book which teaches younger children (and adults) about coastal erosion and how we can help prevent it. It was inspired by a lifetime spent in Norfolk, with regular visits to the coast! It was created from original watercolour paintings which are finished with coloured pencils before being scanned. The text, background and spot illustrations were added digitally. The pages are trimmed and then stitched together by hand.

Judges Comments

Beautiful illustrations and great use of mixed media. Concept is great and well executed with really clear and a dedicated section on actions to reduce climate change. We were really struck by the hopeful and practical messages that it gives in the face of really profound change. Engaging with some great messages.

The Arc

A site specific community performance set
on the beach at low tide in Sheringham.

by

Marina Baker

Scan the QR
code to read
the full play



The Arc Marina Baker



Context

The Arc is inspired by moving to one of the frontlines of climate change in the UK and realising hardly anyone thinks the unthinkable can happen (catastrophic coastal erosion and storm surges) and have no knowledge that the unthinkable has happened before. Only by learning from the past, and working together can we carve out a sustainable and resilient future for all. The Arc is our story.

Judges Comments

The ARC was a unique and original entry. We could see this being performed. A tale of caution bringing together a number of threads around coastal change and showing an opportunity to learn from the past.



Slippage (Hunstanton)

Mike Dodd

Context

I live close to the north Norfolk Coast and regularly walk along the beach between West Runton and Cromer. I have seen the progressive effects of coastal erosion on the cliffs above the beach and am aware that these effects are even more severe on other parts of the Norfolk coast. I have chosen to illustrate my concerns over coastal erosion with an image in gouache and pastel of the cliffs at Hunstanton with their layers of white chalk, red chalk and carrstone. I have trisected the image and lowered the middle section in order to suggest the serious dangers of the long-term and far-reaching impact of coastal erosion due to climate change.

Judges Comments

A talented artist illustrating cliff fragility with a unique approach. Well executed and effective in conveying change. Beautiful cliff layers, impactful with the cut out section going down.



Happisburgh Lighthouse in Winter

Pat Jones

Context

My painting Happisburgh Lighthouse in Winter is inspired by its unique history, beauty and importance, in providing a shining light to guide shipping to safety on the North Sea.

It is a proud symbol of hope and service, saved by the local community; not only the oldest lighthouse in Norfolk, but the only independently operated lighthouse in the UK, maintained and operated entirely by voluntary contributions.

Judges Comments

This is a great use of materials that's created a very attractive piece of art. The contrast between black, white and red is well executed - it's great to see the lighthouse in this.



The Collapse

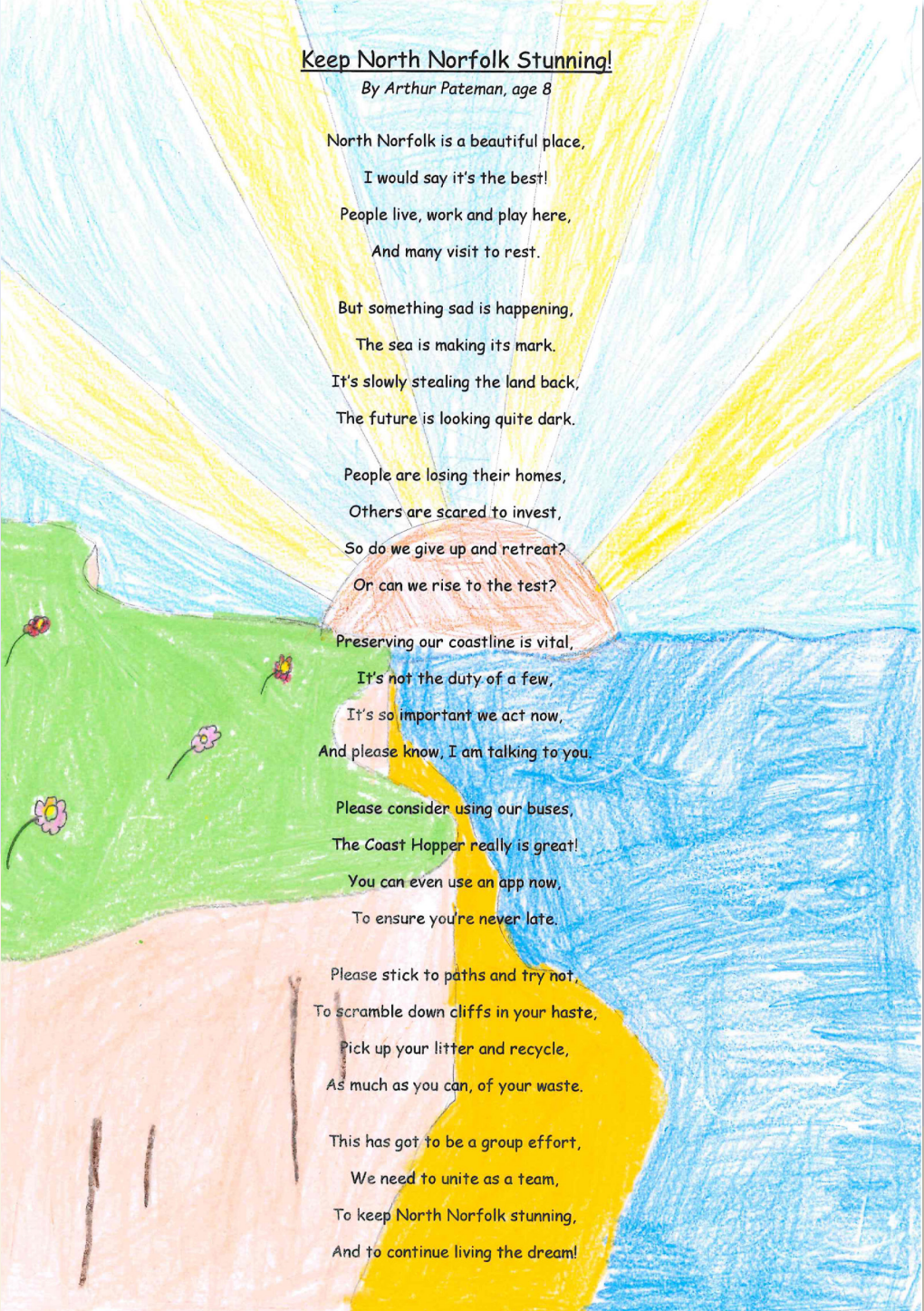
Brian Edwards

Context

This oil painting seeks to raise awareness of coastal change and communicate visually the ecological and landscape impacts of coastal erosion. The cliffs between Sheringham and Weybourne are subject to dynamic and unpredictable change. Through painting the impact of sea level rise and greater storm intensity can be explored and exploited artistically. The newly formed amphitheatre in the cliffs west of Sheringham opens up potential artistically but with worrying ecological and landscape consequence.

Judges Comments

This painting captures a real sense of the dynamism of our coast and the forces that shape it. It portrays a depiction of the real softness and vulnerability of our coastal cliffs, and the power of the elements.



Keep North Norfolk Stunning!

By Arthur Pateman, age 8

North Norfolk is a beautiful place,

I would say it's the best!

People live, work and play here,

And many visit to rest.

But something sad is happening,

The sea is making its mark.

It's slowly stealing the land back,

The future is looking quite dark.

People are losing their homes,

Others are scared to invest,

So do we give up and retreat?

Or can we rise to the test?

Preserving our coastline is vital,

It's not the duty of a few,

It's so important we act now,

And please know, I am talking to you.

Please consider using our buses,

The Coast Hopper really is great!

You can even use an app now,

To ensure you're never late.

Please stick to paths and try not,

To scramble down cliffs in your haste,

Pick up your litter and recycle,

As much as you can, of your waste.

This has got to be a group effort,

We need to unite as a team,

To keep North Norfolk stunning,

And to continue living the dream!

Keep North Norfolk Stunning!

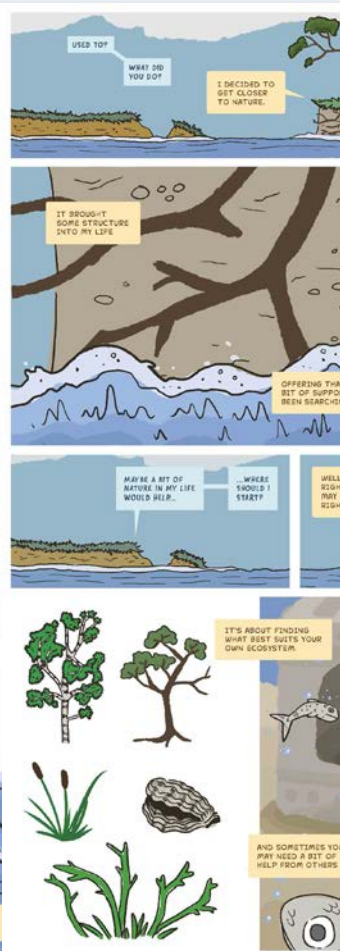
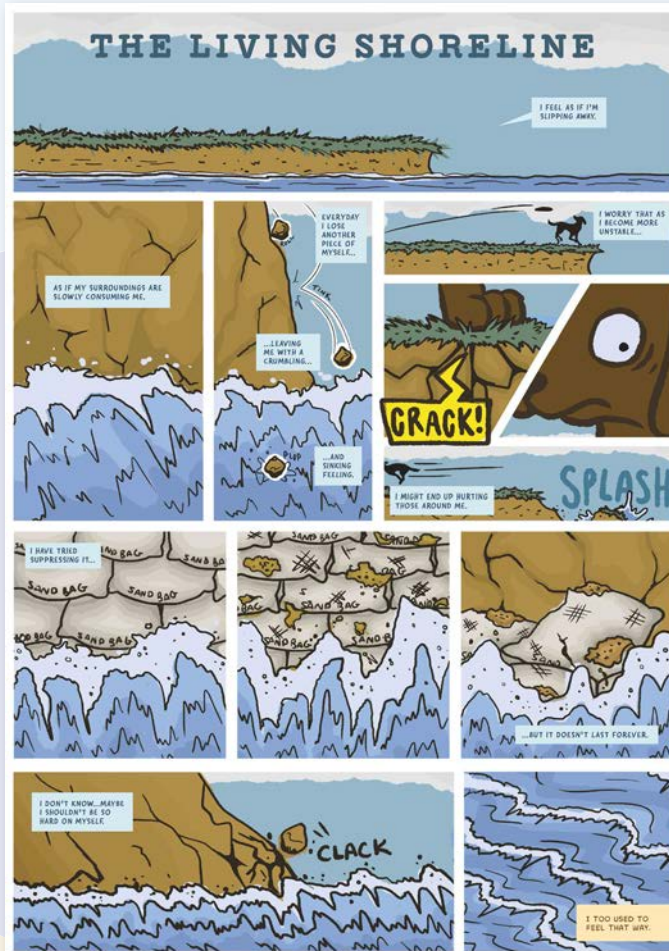
Arthur

Context

"My motivation was supporting North Norfolk. I am very lucky to live here. I love living here. I want people to look after this beautiful place. To do that we all need to work together. I am proud of my poem. I thought about lots of different things like less people using cars, more people taking their waste home to recycle properly. It makes me cross when I see a bin full with fish and chip wrappings. Lots of that paper can be recycled. I do litter picks with my brother to help. Mum and Dad say "every little helps" so I tried to put that into the poem. I like writing poems. I write poems at school so that's why I chose a poem".

Judges Comments

We found this poem - and the commentary - very insightful and extremely moving. Your analogy of living on a cliff being akin to the global precipice we are on is a really novel perspective. This poem demonstrates a clear message.



Climate
Creatives
Challenge
3rd
Place

The Living Shoreline

Hazel Campbell

Context

This comic personifies the shoreline underlining the parallels between a cliff in decline and how a person might describe declining mental health in a comic strip. It raises awareness of coastal change in an incredibly relevant way.

Judges Comments

Innovative and clever in its use of analogy. Great concept. I love the way that the entry makes coastal erosion relatable and also seamlessly shines a light on mental health awareness.



THE LIVING SHORELINE

ALTHOUGH THE AVERAGE COAST MAY SEEM STRONG AND CAPABLE IT IS ACTUALLY VERY VULNERABLE TO THE WATER WHICH SURROUNDS IT. THE WATER IS SLOWLY DESTROYING THE SHORELINE IN A PROCESS KNOWN AS COASTAL EROSION.

SHORELINES NEED SUPPORT AND CAN BENEFIT FROM A FLOURISHING ECOSYSTEM. SURROUNDING A SHORELINE WITH THE APPROPRIATE NATURAL MATERIALS REDUCES THE RATE OF COASTAL EROSION IN THE LONG TERM, HELPING THAT AVERAGE SHORELINE FEEL AS STRONG AND CAPABLE AS IT LOOKS. THIS IS KNOWN AS A LIVING SHORELINE.



Erode to Nowhere

Dylan Stokes

Context

This photograph illustrates the dramatic effects of coastal erosion on the landscape and human-made structures. The cliff face, with eroded loose soil near its edge, highlights the instability caused by the natural forces of wind and waves. A pile of debris lies at the base of the cliff, suggesting that erosion has claimed part of a previously built structure. The image reflects on the destructive power of coastal erosion, a force which not only reshapes the natural environment but also impacts upon communities along vulnerable North Norfolk coastlines.

Judges Comments

A dramatic photo in black and white that shows the manmade features of the environment in colour to demonstrate the impact. A striking image, well-crafted and thought provoking. Angle and colour are great conveying a clear message.



The Inevitable Truth

Bella

Context

Artwork created in response to the theme focusing on coastal erosion and climate change. Painted canvas depicting impact of climate change on half of the world.

Judges Comments

A powerful, clear message has been created with this illustration. There is a great use of colour - vivid and direct. This is a great perspective of global climate change that we found really eye catching.



Coastal Erosion - The Waves of Fate

Charlie

Context

Artwork created in response to the theme focusing on coastal erosion and climate change. Painted canvas depicting impact of climate change on half of the world.

Judges Comments

We really enjoyed the movement, vivid colours, and textural brush work included in this piece. This is a great depiction of climate change, with a great colour palette.



The Beach of The Undead

Danny

Context

Artwork created in response to the theme focusing on coastal erosion and climate change. Painted canvas depicting impact of climate change on half of the world.

Judges Comments

This work conveys strong imagery with a clear message and there is a good use of colour. We particularly liked the jagged edges splitting the image.



Two Realities

Darcy

Context

Artwork created in response to the theme focusing on coastal erosion and climate change. Painted canvas depicting impact of climate change on half of the world.

Judges Comments

The use of texture in this piece is fantastic, we liked the use of tissue paper coming off the page adding movement to the art. It's really colourful artwork that stood out with a clear message.



Love and Destruction

Pheobe

Context

Artwork created in response to the theme focusing on coastal erosion and climate change. Painted canvas depicting impact of climate change on half of the world.

Judges Comments

The figures you've included in your sculpture represent the message really well. The effective use of three colours to portray the planet with and without climate change create strong imagery.



Unite and Survive the Destruction of Earth

Tayler

Group
1st
Place

Context

Artwork created in response to the theme focusing on coastal erosion and climate change. Painted canvas depicting impact of climate change on half of the world.

Judges Comments

This is a great depiction of togetherness for a better planet. We love the use of 3D texture with tissue paper, it add a great dimension to the piece. This is a really interesting piece.



Edward's Drawing

Edward

Context

"I love living in Mundesley in North Norfolk and it makes me sad to think that houses and land are falling into the sea. I drew a picture of a house on the edge. I think that shows North Norfolk is on the edge.

We need to act and help to save the land! Everyone can help with this. I like to do litter picks with my brother to help. We pick up lots and lots of litter, especially in the summer."

Judges Comments

This is a impactful, colourful illustration with a positive message to save Norfolk. We liked this well observed depiction of a property being lost to erosion.

Video Entries

Skin TWPA

Context

Our Coastal dance school TWPA presents Skin, an emotive and thought-provoking choreography that addresses one of the most pressing challenges of our time: climate change.

This piece, developed and performed by young dancers aged 7-10, bridges the gap between facts and emotions, urging audiences to recognize the impact of their actions on future generations and inspiring change.

Judges Comments

The use of the rope throughout was a unique and original approach. We loved the focus around climate change and the impacts of our actions and our ability to make a difference. It's inspiring to see young dancers portray this message.

Scan the QR
code to watch



Dreams of the Ravaged Breech Asher Harani

Context

This film explored the impacts of natural events and how they affect people. This film raises awareness of coastal change and its impacts and highlights the need for resilience and hope in communities facing challenges.

Judges Comments

A wonderful combination of film, narration, animation, clarity, despair and hope. Impactful writing and stories brought together in a way that was creative and thought provoking.

Scan the QR
code to watch



Climate
Creatives
Challenge
2nd
Place

Video Entries

Climate
Creatives
Challenge

1st
Place

Coast for Kids

Irene Delgado-Fernanedez, Lindsay Zier-Vogel,
Robin Davidson-Arnott, Sharon Zier-Vogel,
Juan B. Gallego-Fernández, Marisa Martínez,
Luciana Esteves, Michelle Barnes, Julie Kirk,
Partick Hesp, Nadia Sénéchal, Luis Hernández-Calvento,
Graziela Miot de Silva, Christina Chislett,
Nicholas O Keefe and Alex Amoakoh

Context

These animations are aimed at young children and adults. They include important concepts in coastal processes and coastal evolution human impacts on coasts and positive management actions. It is a collaborative work and children were involved in its development. A fantastic entry that raises awareness of coastal change and the processes that are causing it.

Judges Comments

Judges praised the series as being a fantastic teaching aid, pitched at the generation most affected (by coastal change). It explains complex issues simply and effectively. Wickedly informative and utterly delightful.

**Scan the QR code
to watch Episode 1:
What is the coast,
and why is it
so important**



**Scan the QR code
to watch Episode 2:
How do people
affect the coast**



**Scan the QR code
to watch Episode 3:
We need to plan!**



In Spring 2025, the winning and commended entries were displayed at an exhibition at the Simon Aspinall Wildlife Centre at the Cley Visitors Centre.





Have you found this booklet inspiring, or useful?

Has it prompted you to be creative?

Are you a teacher who has used these resources in a lesson?

Would you like to host the travelling version of our exhibition?

Any of the above and more, we are keen to hear from you!

Please contact us at coastwise@north-norfolk.gov.uk

This book was produced by Coastwise in 2025.



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