

HASTINGS KELP PROJECT

Restoring marine ecosystems. Advancing scientific understanding. Inspiring future generations.



Project Report 2024/2026

**A two-year journey of
marine restoration,
scientific research and
community action.**

Prepared by:

Hastings Kelp Project CIC
Hastings, East Sussex, United Kingdom

August 2026



Foreword



Chris Williams

Founder & Restoration Ecologist

"Healthy oceans are the foundation of a healthy planet. By restoring marine ecosystems today, we invest in the resilience, biodiversity and wellbeing of generations to come."

Building something that lasts

Two years ago, the Hastings Kelp Project began with a simple ambition: to explore whether kelp forests could once again thrive along the Hastings coastline. Since then, that vision has grown into a wider commitment to restoring and understanding our local marine environment through science, education and community action.

During this time, we have established the Hastings Kelp Project as a Community Interest Company, developed valued partnerships, created a dedicated marine research laboratory and laid the foundations for what is becoming the Hastings Community Coastal Centre.

While kelp restoration remains at the heart of our mission, our work now extends across environmental monitoring, biodiversity, water quality, marine technology and scientific research. Together, these programmes support a long-term vision of healthier, more resilient seas.

This report celebrates the progress made during our first two years and the dedication of everyone who has helped make it possible. Although we are only at the beginning of our journey, we believe the foundations are now in place to create lasting benefits for our coastline and the communities that depend upon it.

Thank you for your continued support.



Project Overview

Project Vision and Mission



Project Vision

To establish Hastings as a nationally recognised centre for marine restoration and coastal research, generating long-term scientific knowledge while inspiring communities to protect and value the ocean.



Project Mission

To restore marine ecosystems through science, education and community action, creating healthier seas for both nature and future generations.

Our core pillars

- Ocean restoration
- Biodiversity
- Environment Monitoring
- Climate Research
- Water Quality
- Blue Carbon Research
- Education & Community
- Research & Innovation
- Marine Technology

Founded: 2024

Organisation: Community Interest Company

Project Area: 4.5 miles of Sussex coastline

Location: Hastings, East Sussex

Core Focus: Marine restoration, research and education





Building the foundations

Key Achievements



Marine Research Laboratory

Established a dedicated marine laboratory in partnership with Hastings Aquarium, providing controlled facilities for kelp cultivation, experimentation and marine research.



Kelp Research Programme

Successfully initiated kelp culture trials, refining methods for cultivating local kelp species under controlled environmental conditions.



Strategic Partnerships

Developed collaborations with universities, conservation organisations, researchers and marine practitioners to strengthen scientific capability and knowledge sharing.



Community Marine Education & Restoration Centre

Expanded the project's vision beyond kelp restoration to establish the Hastings Community Marine Education & Research Centre, integrating restoration, research, education and community engagement.



Community Engagement

Built an enthusiastic volunteer network, delivered educational activities and engaged local residents, schools and organisations in marine conservation.



Scientific Innovation

Began developing new scientific frameworks, including the Marine Carbon Pathway Framework (MCPF), to improve understanding of natural marine carbon processes.



Research in Action

Laboratory Research

Building controlled systems for kelp cultivation and experimentation.

30 research tanks and 3 cultures in growth.

Field Research

Developing propagation techniques for native Sussex kelp species.

9 research programs operational.

Environment Monitoring

Collecting long-term environmental and biodiversity data.

8,000ha over 10 miles assessed.

Community Science

Engaging volunteers, schools and researchers in marine conservation.

300+ volunteers and 14 schools engaged.

Healthy marine ecosystems are built on strong scientific evidence. At the Hastings Kelp Project, research underpins every stage of our work, helping us better understand the coastal environment and providing the knowledge needed to support future restoration.

Working with partners and volunteers, we are developing long-term monitoring programmes that will build one of the most comprehensive community-led datasets for the Hastings coastline.



Scientific Innovation

Research and Protocols

KCPF --->

Kelp Carbon Pathway Framework

A scientific framework describing how carbon moves through kelp ecosystems, from growth and export to long-term sequestration, providing a structured approach to understanding kelp's role in the marine carbon cycle.

MCPF --->

Marine Carbon Pathway Framework

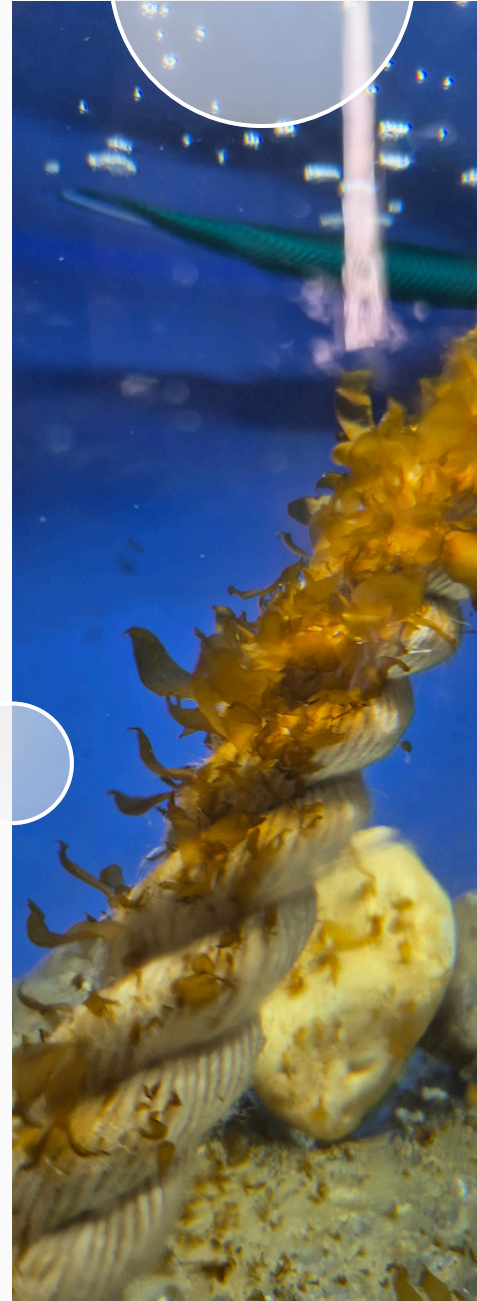
Building on the KCPF, the MCPF expands this approach across multiple marine ecosystems, providing a consistent framework for assessing natural marine carbon pathways and ecosystem processes.

MCPF-P (In Development)

The next generation of the framework, integrating carbon pathways with biodiversity, ecological processes and natural capital to support a more holistic understanding of marine ecosystem recovery and function.

Laboratory Innovation

Beyond cultivating kelp, our laboratory is becoming a centre for developing new research methods, testing restoration techniques and exploring innovative approaches to marine monitoring. Every experiment adds to the growing body of knowledge needed to restore and better understand our coastal ecosystems.



Research and Understanding

Marine restoration depends on understanding how ecosystems function and recover over time. To support this, the Hastings Kelp Project is developing scientific frameworks that improve our understanding of marine carbon pathways and ecosystem processes, helping researchers, restoration practitioners and policymakers measure and evaluate coastal ecosystems using consistent, evidence-based approaches.



Hastings Kelp Project

Collaboration for Impact



Hastings Aquarium
Research Partner



**University
of Brighton**

Brighton University
Academic Partner



Community
Citizen Scientists



Volunteers
Scientific and Research Team

Collaboration is central to our work. By bringing together universities, conservation organisations, volunteers and the local community, we are building a stronger foundation for long-term marine restoration and research.

Looking ahead

Building a lasting legacy



Restore Marine Habitats

Continue research into kelp restoration and support the recovery of healthy coastal ecosystems.



Expand Scientific Research

Develop long-term environmental monitoring and biodiversity programmes that improve understanding of our coastline.



Inspire Future Generations

Create opportunities for schools, colleges and universities to experience marine science through hands-on learning.



Grow Community Participation

Increase opportunities for volunteers and citizen scientists to take part in research and conservation.



Hastings Kelp Project

Thank You!

Building the future of our coastline, together.

The Hastings Kelp Project has grown from a simple idea into an ambitious programme of marine restoration, scientific research and community engagement.

Over the past two years we have established the foundations of the Hastings Community Coastal Centre, bringing together partners, volunteers, researchers and supporters with a shared ambition to better understand and restore our marine environment.

This report marks the beginning of that journey.

The years ahead will bring new discoveries, new partnerships and new opportunities to make a lasting difference for our coastline and the communities that depend upon it. Together, we can help ensure that future generations inherit healthier, more resilient seas.

Read more at: <https://hastingskelpproject.co.uk/>

