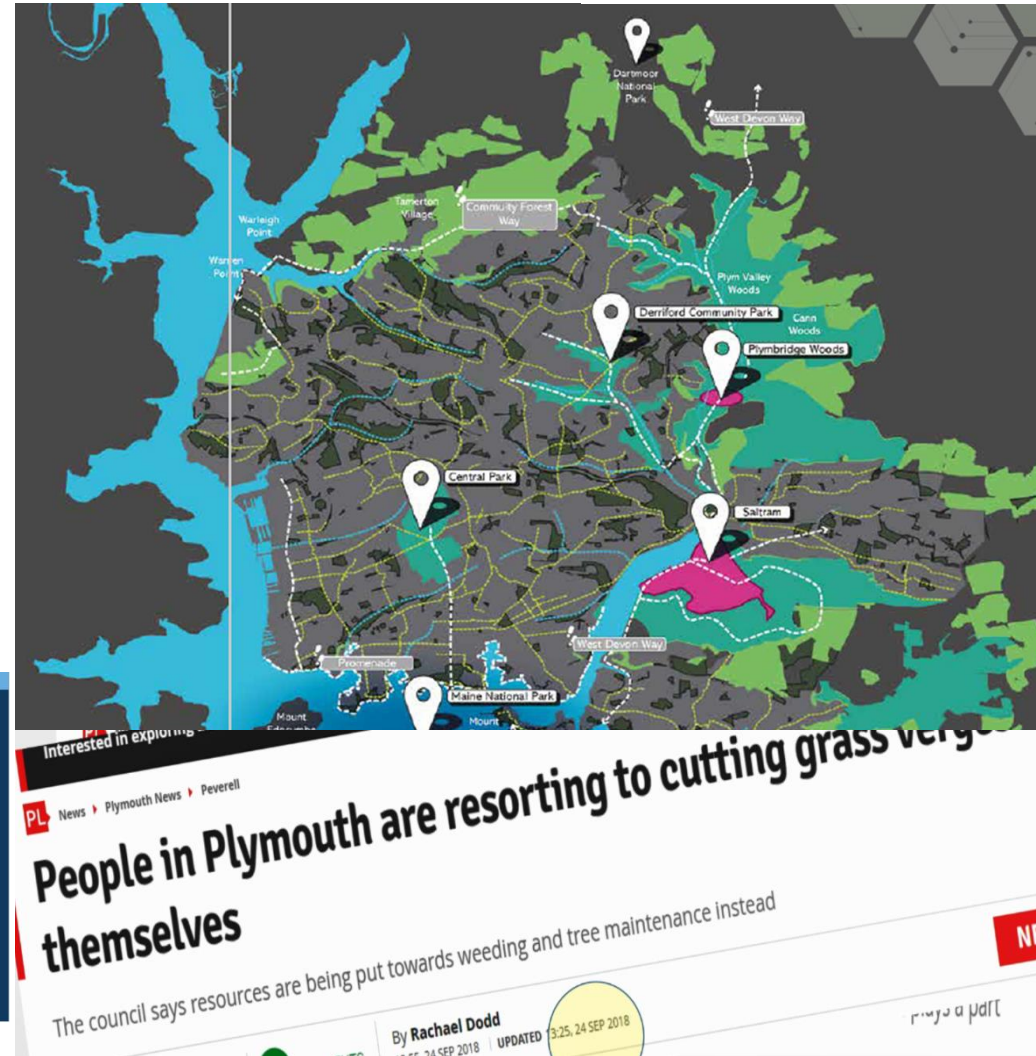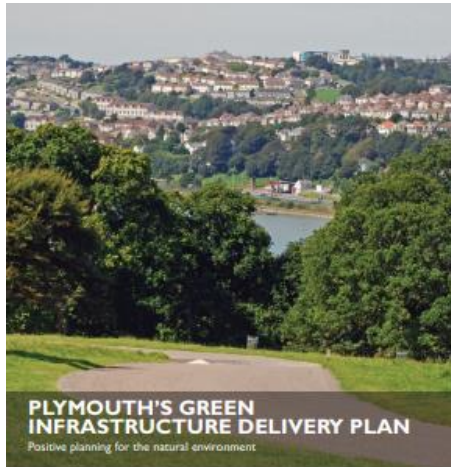# Creative Use of Digital Technology with Communities to Support Urban Nature Recovery

Zoe Sydenham, Natural Infrastructure Manager

Emmie Readman, Engagement and Campaigns Officer
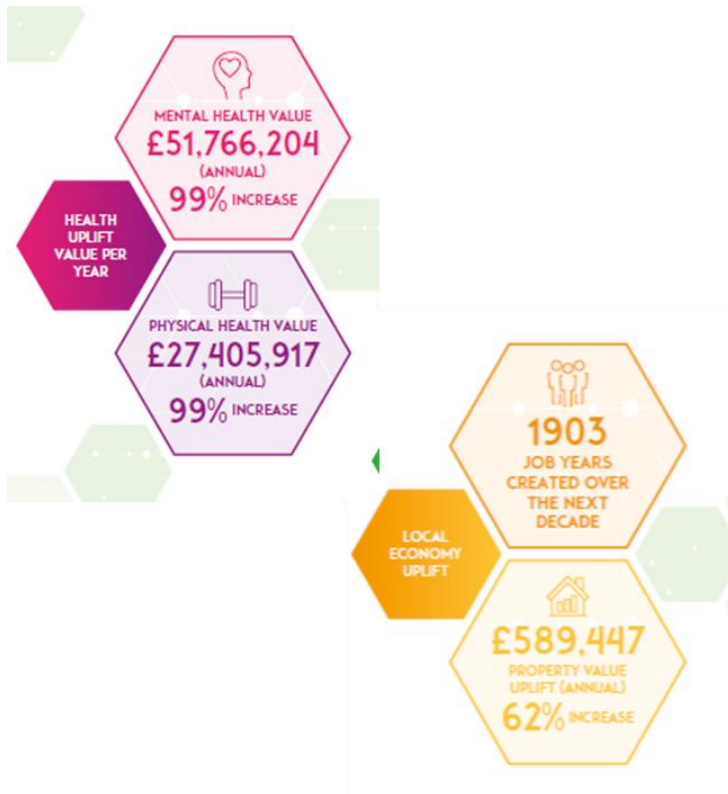
Plymouth: a nature city

A growing city

32% greenspace

National Marine Park

Health inequalities

Greenspace access inequalities

Some of the most deprived UK LSOAs

Campaign Aim

'Transform how we as a city collectively care, use, and value our parks and urban greenspaces'

- Nature recovery for biodiversity and carbon sequestration

- Long-term policy and practice for nature

- Creating green mindsets through partnerships

Audience Targeting

Nature Neutrals

Inner city residents
Some young people
Too busy for nature

We don't necessarily feel connected to nature, yet, or don't know how to connect with it/don't want to

Nature Networkers

Partners
Funders
Businesses
Land managers

We are professionals who want to change how we do things

Nature Enthusiasts

Amateur naturalists
Gardeners
Specialists/Creatives

We are excited by nature for nature's sake- the details, the ecological side of wildlife, and the inspiration it provides

Budding Leaders

Young people
School pupils
Youth Groups

We want to make a difference and take part in shaping the future of the planet we'll inherit

Audience Categories

Guided Green Hands

People with different needs
New residents to Plymouth

We're looking for accessible ways to engage with nature around the city, looking for guidance about inclusive places to go

Wise Wanderers

Older people

We want to enjoy and protect nature, either in accessible places, or at home/donating. We have time on our hands and want to get out and about and help in a community of people.

Naturally Active

Runners
Dog walkers

We're looking for new places to go and to connect with fellow exercisers!

Family Explorers

Families around the city

We're looking for child-friendly, safe places to go for a day out, preferably with a few amenities to make it easier for us!
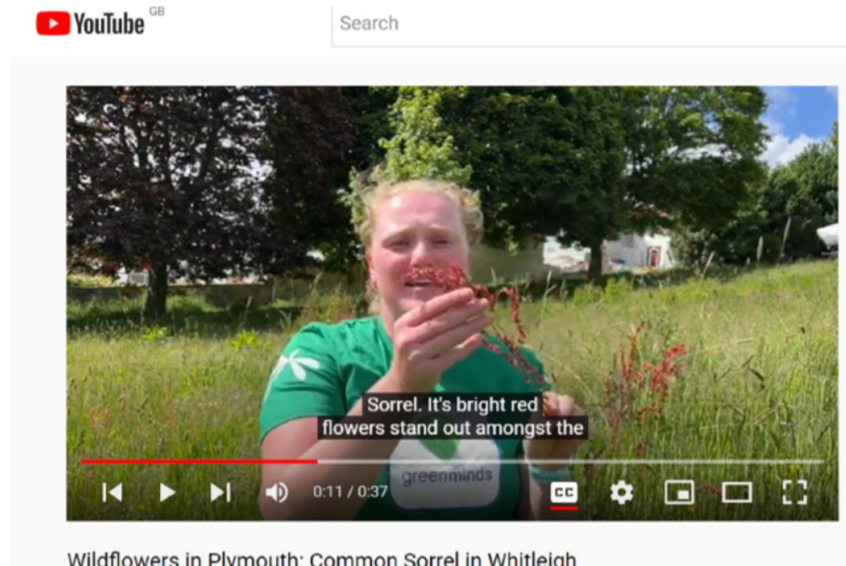
See
↓
Think
↓
Do
↓
Care

Avinash Kausik 'See, Think, Do, Care' digital marketing framework, [https://www.kaushik.net/avinash/seethink-do- care-win-content-marketing-measurement/].

Digital campaign examples

- Wildflower social media campaign – led by our Grass Cutting Team Leader
- Over 25,000 views, with 79% of comments positive
- 362 people participating in our Take Action for Wildlife online webinars

Wildflowers in Plymouth: Common Sorrel in Whitleigh

- Arts University Plymouth collaboration
- Rewilding augmented reality experience
- Bringing together fashion, gameification and arts students to raise awareness of the importance of ecosystems

- Immersive nature experiences with schools
- 36,000 seed packets went out to each child

- 'Rewilded Building' light show at Illuminate 2021 asking the question 'What if we just left it?'

Digital campaign examples

- Setting up a wireless network in one of our key parks
- Revealing Hidden Nature through park environmental sensors
- Interactive Live Chatbot on the park café
- Creation of a portable digital schoolkit trialled with local secondary school pupils to build their confidence to use the park
- Fixed point photography posts linked to a social media record to support citizen science

- Working with Arts University Plymouth students and local communities to create laser cut wildflower signs in their FabLab
- Installed across the city's wildflower areas to raise awareness
- Arts University now incorporates the environment in its policies and vision

Sustainable change to support front line services
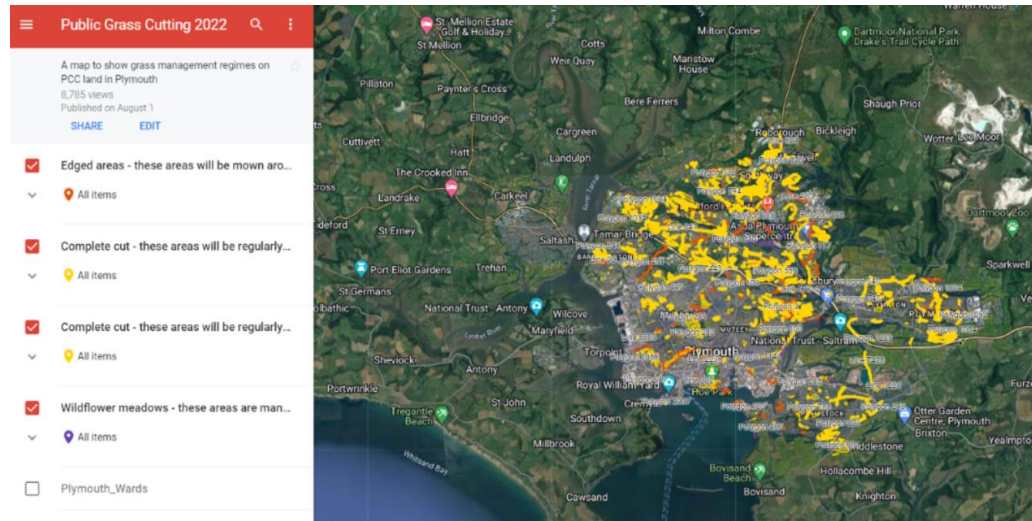
- User-friendly, online Google Map of grass cutting schedule

- Simple tool which team leaders can update

- Training in partnership with Devon Wildlife Trust

- Regular staff newsletters and positive customer feedback to celebrate progress

'The map has been useful both operationally for the street services team but also in a front facing way engaging and informing the public about the grass cutting policy in their local area.'

Grass Cutting Team Leader, PCC

Impact

- Increase in biodiversity, and therefore increased opportunity for residents to connect with nature

- 110 people registered in our Plymouth Rewilding Network

- 40% of PCC's grasslands now managed for wildlife (1310 sites)

- Reduced operational costs and increased operational capacity; and 33% reduced fuel use

- Operational staff have reported a greater awareness of wildlife and habitat management and feel more positive about their work

- Stronger, long-term partnerships between community groups, wildlife charities and our operational staff

- Biannual citywide survey monitoring nature connection to evaluate change and inform future marketing campaigns

'As part of my daily walks around Eggbuckland I have been taking photos of wild flowers and then going home to try to identify them. So far I have identified over 90… all within a 1 mile radius of my house, this has been helped in part by the Council not cutting the grass.

It has given me a reason to go out every day and I love it.' Margery