



From Surviving to Thriving

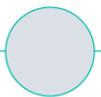
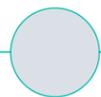
Regenerative Sustainability Report June 2023

Report written by Martin Brown and Anna Williamson, based on workshop material gathered through Echelon Improvement Partnerships' Regenerative Sustainability Group, and a workshop participant co-writing exercise.



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Introduction



Introduction

Are we healing the future or stealing from it?

Working on this insightful and co-creative cross-sector initiative has been a privilege that has enabled us to genuinely understand how to embed deeper sustainable practices and move towards becoming regenerative. Throughout our work, we have developed a greater consideration for the impact that our actions have on the health and well-being of those living in the homes we design, and on the natural living systems on which we depend. We now prioritise the use of sustainable materials and technology solutions to ensure that our work promotes healthy and sustainable living.

Our initiative has taught us that the built environment, communities, and green spaces are all interconnected, and we must work to improve our understanding of this relationship. We recognise the importance of working to promote connectivity between these elements to create a more sustainable and regenerative future. By continuing our efforts, we can ensure that the actions we take today will not undermine the health and well-being of future generations.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with individuals from different sectors and backgrounds, as it has broadened our perspective and provided us with valuable insights. We understand that there is so much more work to be done in promoting sustainable practices and achieving a regenerative future. However, we are committed to continuing to learn, co-create and innovate to create a brighter and more sustainable future for all.

Luke Driscoll, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, Hyde Group, and Chair of the Working Group



Why a social housing regenerative sustainability programme?

The Echelon Group was privileged to host Martin Brown as a guest speaker at our annual conference in 2021. His 'regenerative' presentation was a game-changer as it highlighted the importance of adopting regenerative sustainability principles in every aspect of our lives. We were amazed by the positive feedback from delegates, which convinced us to bring together a group of like-minded clients, contractors, and suppliers.

The primary objective was to define what regenerative sustainability is and means, especially within the context of social housing, and importantly what it means to us as individuals.

It has been an incredible journey and changed the way in which I think about the built environment and how we can positively impact it. Additionally, I have come to understand the significance of connecting with nature in particular with open spaces, and the influence it can have on our well-being and that of the people living in social housing. The government's recent endorsement of this idea (on access to green spaces) serves as a reinforcement of our efforts.

I strongly recommend everyone takes a moment to understand the principles of regenerative sustainability and how to apply them to their personal and professional lives.

We hope this report provides a stimulus for people to embark on this journey of discovery. It has been a pleasure to host and facilitate the group's outstanding work so far, but we are aware that we have all only taken the first steps on a journey. There are many more steps to take.

Mathew Baxter, CEO, Echelon Group



What is regenerative social housing?

The goal of regenerative social housing is to create facilities that not only meet needs, but also contribute to residents, community and environment, well-being, resilience and the ability to thrive.

Regenerative social housing:

- prioritises the needs of the community and the environment, rather than just providing basic shelter;
- seeks to enhance occupants' physical, mental and social health;
- incorporates regenerative sustainable design, construction and management practices;
- aims to actively contribute to the regeneration of the community through the provision of community spaces and services, and by fostering social connections among residents;
- seeks to improve awareness, connectivity and reciprocity with nature.

Introduction

Regenerative sustainability programme overview

The Regenerative Sustainability programme ran over eight months, with 10 interactive workshop modules including two in-nature days. Devised and led by Martin Brown and Anna Williamson, it was based upon Regenerative 'Principles' from the Regenerative Playbook.

It covered what these principles can mean to our regenerative self, a regenerative organisation and a regenerative social housing sector, interactively exploring topics across the current sustainability agenda of carbon, resources, materials, project management, well-being and supply chain management but through a regenerative lens. Significantly, the programme also explored the regenerative mindset and the importance of finding and giving the time and space to ask deeper questions, and the vitality of being mindful.

Regenerative journey for the UK social housing sector

Our regenerative journey embraced a number of objectives:

- to become familiar with the concept of regenerative sustainability;
- to become aware of the root causes of degenerative actions;
- to recognise the current best practice frameworks and legislation and how these are relevant to your business strategy;
- realise your own potential as a sponsor, champion and leader to contribute to the regenerative agenda within the scope of your operation;
- learn essential tools to implement regenerative practice and embed it into the culture of everything you do.

“An incredible journey and changed the way in which I think about the built environment and how we can positively impact it.”

Mathew Baxter



Headlines



Headlines

There isn't a one-size-fits-all definition of what it means to be regenerative, and the common saying of 'doing more good' or 'giving back more than we take' only scratches the surface.

As we progressed through the Echelon Sustainability Regenerative modules, guided by the Regenerative Playbook, several headlines came to the fore that shed more light on what it means to be regenerative.

These headlines from participants and facilitators, outlined below, offer a glimpse into the multifaceted nature of regenerative practice and what it means to be regenerative:

Regenerative Principles

Regenerative concepts fill me with pride and gratitude, reflecting both the recognition of what needs to be done and the willingness to effect change, as well as the acknowledgement of pre-existing good practices.

By applying regenerative principles to each stage of the construction life cycle, we unlock significant potential for sustainable development. Our approach has traditionally focused on conservation, energy efficiency, and minimising environmental harm caused by our actions.

The Regenerative Self is not just about external actions such as meeting standards and completing checklists, but also about internal self-development through conversation, reflection, and taking time for personal regeneration.

Regenerative Impact

As we shift from surviving to thriving, we must consider whether our actions are regenerative or degenerative. Are we contributing to the climate, biodiversity, and social crises, or creating conditions that enable life to thrive?

It is important to identify and acknowledge the positive unintended and regenerative impacts of our actions.

Regenerative thinking can help and guide us to determine where we can make the most significant positive impact in providing social housing.

Become part of the solution and don't remain part of the problem.

Holistic and Inclusive Approaches

Holistic frameworks and programmes, such as the Living Building Challenge, enable us to consider the richness and complexity of project connectivity.

Holistic social justice programmes, such as JUST and BCorp, can help us ensure a socially-just transition towards a positive, inclusive future.

ISO 14001 can be reoriented from a core objective of only reducing environmental impacts to a core objective of providing positive environmental impact, which all processes should align with. The same approach can be applied to ISO 26001 Social Responsibility.

Nature Positive

As we face the critical challenge of halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, it is essential for organisations to understand their impact on nature and to develop roadmaps that enhance and introduce processes and systems to ensure a nature-positive approach across the organisation.

The TNFD (Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures) and other frameworks will become important and mandatory in reporting our nature and biodiversity impacts and action plans.

Being nature-positive means being carbon-positive, going beyond net-zero by removing more carbon from the atmosphere than we emit. Both need to be considered in parallel.

Regenerative Procurement

Procurement is a key and underused tool for ensuring regenerative values are embedded in our projects.

When we ask the question of what good looks and feels like, how will our supply chains respond?

Supply chain development on regenerative principles, concepts and tools is vital in moving towards a net-positive and regenerative future.

Giving Time and Space

To promote well-being, encourage staff to take breaks from their workspaces during the day. Add a "well-being" code to timesheets, requiring staff to take at least one hour per week and document their activities.

Finding time and space for ourselves, and giving the same to those we work with, is vital for reflecting on regenerative practices and asking important questions.

Embed time and space for asking deeper, better questions and for reflection into project timescales.

Being Mindful

Being mindful is critical in design, construction, and housing management. We also need it to address the challenges posed by climate change and social issues.

To enhance our capacity for questioning and reflection in regenerative thinking, it may be useful to incorporate mindfulness practices such as meditation and grounding exercises, allowing us to approach decision-making with a clear and focused mind.

To promote well-being in the social housing sector, it's important to be mindful of the eco-anxiety* that many, including management, contractors, suppliers, and occupants, may be experiencing.

Headlines

Biophilia and Biophilic Design

We spend 90% of our time indoors, that's 72 years of our lives, with 50+ years in our homes alone. Social Prescribing tells us to get out of our buildings into nature. Where did our homes and buildings fail us?

Biophilia refers to our innate relationship with nature, which serves as an antidote to depression. To truly experience good health and well-being, we must recognise that we evolved from the environment and embrace our connection with it. This requires focusing on underlying causes of well-being, rather than just the causes of illness.

Biophilic design is a significant and positive approach to reconnecting our 'kinship' with nature.

Agency and Advocacy

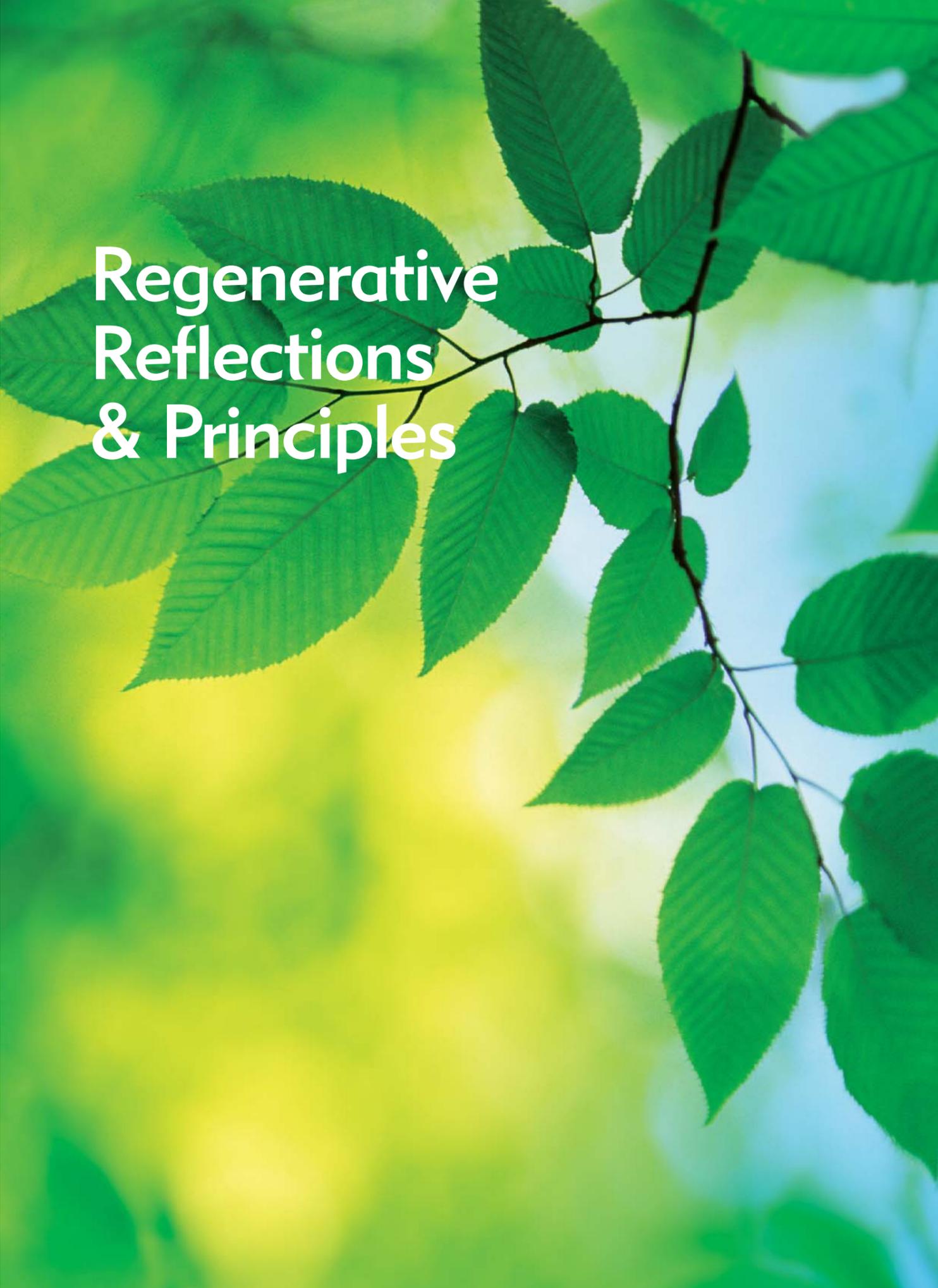
Agency is the ability of individuals or groups to take action and make decisions that impact on their environment and society.

Advocacy is the act of promoting and supporting a cause or issue, with the aim of bringing about positive change.

We all have agency in making that tipping point for a future where we thrive and co-evolve with the living systems upon which we depend.

*Eco-anxiety is a feeling of stress, fear, or overwhelm caused by the ongoing environmental crisis and its impact on the planet and humanity, often accompanied by the sense of being unable to make or influence meaningful action to address the problem. Eco-anxiety also arises from the challenge in imagining how a sought for world built on love, caring and regenerative principles could come about, given that our cultural, commercial, and increasingly digital environment all too often reinforces the opposite. For further information on eco-anxiety please see references.

“We all have agency in making that tipping point for a future where we thrive and co-evolve with the living systems upon which we depend.”



Regenerative Reflections & Principles

Regenerative 'principles'

Exploring the social housing sector through a regenerative lens and through the regenerative 'principles' outlined in The Regenerative Playbook, set the foundation for a regenerative journey.

1) It's about understanding the bigger picture and connected systems, rather than only focusing on parts in isolation.

What are we missing if we only focus on carbon and have a net zero tunnel vision? Will we be sustainable when we fix the carbon issue? The world of sustainability is recognised as complex, with many rich threads and interconnectivity. Our approach to regenerative social housing needs to be holistic, embracing, for example, the Living Building Challenge framework that links ecology, water, energy and carbon health, happiness, equity, beauty and agency. To fully understand, appreciate and respond to the interconnectivity, finding, and giving, time and space for questioning and reflection is essential.

"These sessions have helped us reflect on how whilst this is valuable, to become truly regenerative we need to start to look at the bigger picture and seek ways in which we can reverse damage or have a net positive impact."

Sean Robinson, Mulalley

2) It's a perspective that recognises ourselves as part of, not apart from nature, firmly connected with earth systems.

Our disconnection from nature is considered a fundamental factor responsible for the current climate and ecological crisis. This separation from nature is believed to trigger a range of forms of personal afflictions, such as addiction, anxiety, depression, and anger. As a result of the disconnection, we tend to perceive nature as a collection of objects that lack consciousness or intrinsic worth. We view nature solely as a resource to be exploited for our benefit, rather than recognising its inherent value.

We have an innate relationship with nature that is essential for our well-being, both physical and mental. Spending up to 90% of our time within buildings disconnects us from nature and leads to many health and social issues. Housing design and management can address this through biophilic design, for example, and fully understanding the NHS Social Prescribing 'take a walk in nature' programme.

"Take time out to explore and immerse yourself in nature, for the benefit of your own well-being. Our time these days is spent too much in meetings and on various forms of media- get up and outside for whatever time you can free up and relax away from the hustle and bustle of daily life."

Peter Sharman, Mulalley

"We need to imagine the future we want and be prepared to fight for it."
Arundhati Roy, Author, April 2020

3) It is primarily concerned with the essence of life, creating the conditions that enable all life, human and non-human, in communities and businesses to thrive.

"Taking time out - we need to reground ourselves, it's about the reconnection with who and what we are, and our connection and relationship to the Earth (the mother)."

Felicity Reilly, LCB Group

4) It's about how we act in the world where we love, live, work and play.

"We need to focus on leadership and enabling change - we need to get to a point where the response to 'Should you adopt Regenerative Sustainability Principles?' becomes 'Why wouldn't you?' and moving regenerative principles to become company values will put new life into the business."

Mathew Baxter, Echelon Group and Martin Brown, Fairsnape

"To allow time for breaks and a bit of decompression between meetings, I now schedule what would have been hour meetings as 45-minute meetings. It is surprising how often we fill the content to the allotted time so that we end up with back-to-back hours for whole days at a time. If we run over by a few minutes, that is fine, but there are usually a few minutes left so that attendees have time to collect themselves, have a few minutes break, send the couple of emails that the meeting generated etc. I also try to let people know why I have scheduled it in for that amount of time so people can adopt the practice if it works for them."

Tessa Barraclough, Riverside

5) It is not just something that we do but is something we are.

"We need to change the mindset of a sector away from reactive to proactive. I believe Regenerative Sustainability really reinforces this approach. We have an opportunity, as a sector to engage with youngsters - this is an area they care about - on the development of new skillsets (green skills / sustainability advisors etc) to attract a new generation."

Mathew Baxter, Echelon Group

6) It is not a magic recipe or blueprint but helps us to ask better questions.

"We need to think differently. We keep making the same mistakes. We need the time and space to consider, explore, co-create and reflect on what better questions to ask. We will now seek to do this during meetings and on our projects."

Peter Long, Basildon Council

The need and urgency for a regenerative mindset is well described by David Hinton in his latest book *Wild Minds Wild Earth*, that explores our current separation from nature. "It will be kinship not technical potential that will prevent the sixth major extinction event," he says.

Putting Ideas into Practice: Regenerative Reflections & Principles

Connecting with ourselves

Take time to bring a lens of curiosity to yourself. If regenerative is not just something that we do, but is something we are, take the time to reflect on who you are, and how you act in the world.

Connecting with our organisations and our sector

Look at the connections you have within your organisation and within your sector, what are the better questions we should be asking, and how can they best be asked?

Connecting with the natural world

At your next meeting, or during your next project, consider how the approaches and processes recognise ourselves as part of, not apart from nature, firmly connected with earth systems.



“We need to think differently. We keep making the same mistakes. We need the time and space to consider, explore, co-create and reflect on what better questions to ask.”

Peter Long, Basildon Council

Regenerative Mindset (The Regen-Self)

What is a regenerative mindset?

Employing a regenerative mindset prioritises the restoration and renewal of natural, social and economic systems through an emphasis on the importance of creating sustainable solutions that support the well-being of people and the planet, humans and non-humans.

The purpose of life for everyone – regardless of culture, tradition, race, gender, belief, wealth, or education – is the expansion of happiness. Fundamentally, life is blissful, and suffering is not necessary.

Throughout the group's meetings and during times in nature – notably during the offsite nature day at Kew Gardens – members examined why this is so and how we can actuate this in our own lives.

Below are some thoughts from members of the regenerative sustainability group on how they are developing a regenerative mindset.

“During winter, usually once a week, I have shifted my working day to extend my hours to allow for a longer lunchbreak which means I can get outside in the daylight during short days. It also means I have time to do something meaningful in my lunchbreak as there is time to get there and back.”

Tessa Barraclough, Riverside

“I have continued my trend towards working and being sustainable. Thinking about how what I do impacts the planet and considering whether alternatives would be applicable, using as little plastic as possible, for example.”

Ann Miller, Hyde Group

Consciousness is central to our lives. Everything we feel, think, experience and plan happens in our awareness, our personal consciousness. If we can develop our personal consciousness, we will automatically improve our mind, body, and behaviour and will enjoy more happiness and fulfilment.

As posited from the beginning, our time together used ‘consciousness’ as a touchstone. It is at the same time a

vessel of containment and an infinite reservoir of creativity and intelligence.

It is every person's true self and the ultimate unified level of everyone and everything. The way to develop our personal consciousness – our regenerative self – is to directly experience this unbounded ocean of pure consciousness through meditation and that connection to everything.

“Through the practice of mindfulness, we can learn to see the world with new eyes, and understand our place in the web of life,”
Thich Nhat Hanh (Zen Master, global spiritual leader, poet, and peace activist).

Mindfulness is the practice of being present and engaged in the moment. It involves paying attention to one's thoughts, feeling, and sensations.

Regenerative mindfulness is a holistic approach to mindfulness that emphasises the reflection on the interconnectedness of all living things and the role that individuals and communities can play in promoting ecological, social, and economic regeneration.

Each of us has a worldview based on our assumptions and beliefs. Our worldview conditions our feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. For millennia, great thinkers and scientists in both the East and West have sought a unified understanding of life and they have puzzled over how our subjective experience, based on our personal consciousness, relates to the functioning of our brain.

There is a field of pure consciousness at the source of thought that is an infinite reservoir of creativity and intelligence and it's possible to access this field of pure consciousness through specific meditation techniques.

By developing personal consciousness in this way, we can improve our mind, body, and behaviour and enjoy more happiness and fulfilment.

Mindfulness sessions can be taken anywhere, anytime and in any manner where you feel comfortable (sitting, lying, walking, cycling, even driving was suggested) Make it work for you. Having a few minutes of peaceful reflection in the mornings can be something to recall and return to later in the day should stress/work or other pressures increase.

We took learnings from the modules with us to Kew Gardens and where they might previously have felt too ‘theoretical’ or abstract, the Kew tour guide spoke of the interconnectedness and importance of the mycelium network making the theory become real – and evident in nature.

Autumn and winter should be that time when we as humans rest, reflect on the year's work done, and prepare for what's next. Yet in a world driven by

productivity and results resting and reflection are not seen as part of our lives.

Living Building Challenge encourages us to think of buildings as trees, becoming part of the Place, of the natural ecosystems, protecting, restoring and regenerating soils, aquifers and the environment that enables all life to thrive.

During that visit to Kew Gardens, with the theme of biophilia, members of the Regenerative Sustainability Group reflected on how they have become regenerators, in their own way – advocating on behalf of the biosphere with new eyes and new considerations.

Below is some of the feedback from participants about how they felt from “noticing nature” during the visit:

Meditative At Peace
TIME OUT OF THE OFFICE
Shameful (what we have and haven't done)
Released from the busy day

SAD (noise - under the flight path)

INSPIRED
Wake up to nature on your doorstep
Lacking basic natural knowledge

GUILTY (climate impact) Positive

CONNECTING
Noticing (took pictures with eyes)

GRATEFUL
Wanting to know more
FELT THIS WAS 'ME TIME'
In the moment
Mind-blowing natural cycles (fungi)
Less effort to see more

Present, in awe
Noticing - previously taken for granted

Seasonal (autumnal)

With a key feeling around being present, calm, and relaxed, a facilitated mindfulness discussion ranged from gong baths to yoga and meditation with a short mindful breathing introduction using an ‘I am connected’ affirmation.

Putting Ideas into Practice: Regenerative Mindset (The Regen-Self)

Connecting with ourselves

How to find the time and space for reflection and enhancing your awareness.

Take up the practice of Transcendental Meditation (TM). Not ready for TM? Incorporate mindfulness practice into your day then expand the practice of noticing nature into practising the Alexander Technique, to further develop that strength in stillness, enabling you to respond instead of reacting, using our senses in a more conscious and intentional way.

Connecting with our organisations and our sector

Look at the connections you have within your organisation and within your sector. How can you give the time and space, (or the opportunities for well-being, for time in nature, or for mindful time) to those you work with for their reflection and development?

Coordinate well-being days across your supply chain – host an event that has employee wellness and reflection at its centre. Partner with a mentor organisation to deliver guided meditation.

Connecting with the natural world

Simply spending time in nature can be a great way to cultivate awareness and appreciation for the world around us. Whether you take a leisurely stroll through a park or go for a more challenging hike being in nature can help you slow down, tune in to your body and surroundings, and notice the beauty and complexity of the natural world.

Focus your attention on the present moment and let go of distractions and mental chatter. You may find that you are able to connect more deeply with the natural world around you.

“The Regenerative Self is not just about external actions such as meeting standards and completing checklists, but also about internal self-development through conversation, reflection, and taking time for personal regeneration.”

Regenerative Project Management

Regenerative Project Management

Solution or Problem?

How are you making your projects become part of the climate and biodiversity solution, not continuing to contribute as part of the problem?

Regenerative project management, irrespective of the framework or standards followed, requires a different approach to the more traditional or business as usual project management approaches.

Is the vision and purpose of your project regenerative or degenerative? Will it heal the future or steal from the future? (Re)establish a REGENERATIVE VISION for your project.

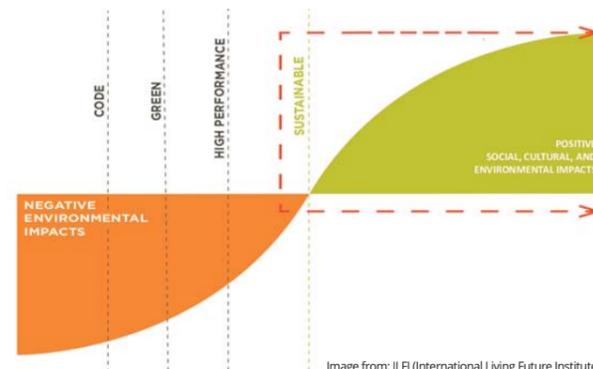
Allow the time and space for the whole project team to come together and co-create the regenerative road map to enable the vision and purpose.

Who is the project regenerative champion, conscience, arbitrator? Who will ensure that all decisions, actions, specifications and methods enable your regenerative vision and purpose?

Include time and space within programmes and schedules for regenerative understanding, questioning and reflection for all across the project supply chain.

The Living Building Challenge

The Living Building Challenge (LBC) is a stringent certification programme for buildings promoting the creation of regenerative spaces, rather than just being sustainable. The LBC outlines seven areas, known as petals, which include place, water, energy, health, materials, equity, and beauty. Across the petals are 20 imperatives to drive a regenerative built environment.



The programme goes beyond conventional sustainability certifications by requiring buildings to not only reduce their impact on the environment but to also have a positive, regenerative impact. This means that buildings must generate energy and water, use healthy and non-toxic materials, be part of place and local ecology and support local food production. The holistic Living Building Challenge sets the high bar for the built environment, pushing the boundaries of what is possible and demonstrating a regenerative future.

Alongside the Living Building Challenge, there are related regenerative programmes that further support the transition to a regenerative social housing sector. For social aspects, these include Living Community

Challenge and the JUST programmes. For materials, the Living Product Challenge, Red List and Declare. For carbon and energy, the Net Zero Carbon and Net Zero Energy programmes

Where to start?

What if our ISO 14001 vision, policy and objectives were regenerative and not only based on reducing impact?

Most organisations in the social housing sector now hold ISO 14001 certifications. Unfortunately, based on organisational policies, processes and procedures that only seek to reduce impact on the environment the majority of certifications fall into the degenerative camp.

Making the flip of policies to not only reduce impact but to provide greater, better and positive impacts can move an organisation's governance into a regenerative mode. Here all processes, procedures, targets, training, procurement, performance and auditing are aligned to a regenerative policy and targeted to doing more good for people, planet and purpose.

Biophilia and biophilic design

"During winter, usually once a week, I have shifted my working day to extend my hours to allow for a longer lunchbreak which means I can get outside in the daylight during short days. It also means I have time to do something meaningful in my lunchbreak as there is time to get there and back."

Tessa Barraclough, Riverside

During the pandemic, many people discovered the rejuvenating effects of nature, within the allowed one hour outdoors. It seems we were all motivated to increase our time in nature. Biophilic design is aimed at bringing the experiences, the feelings of joy and calm of being outdoors into our buildings and homes. Given that we spend 90% of our time indoors, yet we have an innate relationship to be within nature, it is no wonder

then that our buildings are a contributory factor to mental and ill health.

Biophilia refers to our innate relationship to and love for nature. It is an inherent connection essential for physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Biophilic design seeks to incorporate elements of nature into the built environment, such as green spaces, natural light, air and temperature sensing, along with organic patterns and materials to support well-being and cognitive function, whilst in turn promoting connection to the natural world.

It is also about reducing negative costs –around health, absenteeism, productivity and churn. It's about the many benefits of connecting people and nature and the benefits around well-being.

So, how do we create biophilic homes and buildings? A powerful approach is to take a biophilic walk in nature, take the project team and supply chain, take time to notice nature, a moment or two to be present and have conversations around the project and its connection with nature. Be inspired and incorporate feelings and thoughts into your designs.

Housing

Biophilic design in housing incorporates elements of nature into residential spaces to create a harmonious relationship between the homes and the natural world. It seeks a relationship that triggers a similar physical and emotional response to that we have when we are in nature, creating spaces that are calming, restorative yet also stimulating and exciting.

Benefits of biophilic design in residential settings, through increased planting and trees is reported to reduce personal and property crime, and connecting with nature creates a positivity in community.

Regenerative Project Management

Next-Gen materials

Fractals

Biophilic fractals are the repetitive patterns and elements that are present everywhere in nature, from a tree to the petals of a flower. Viewing and being aware of these fractals can reduce stress, aid wayfinding and provide a degree of calming reassurance. Geometric lines, patterns and shapes, which form the core of our social utility areas, housing estates, home layouts and wall finishes, conversely are found to increase stress and wayfinding confusion.

Get Out

The UK government is planning to ensure that every household in England will have access to green space or water, within a 15-minute walk by 2040. The goal is to improve access to nature and the environment, boosting the health and well-being of citizens, and enhancing the quality of life for all. The government says it will work with local authorities and communities to achieve this, creating new green spaces where necessary, with the aim of giving people more opportunities to enjoy nature, reducing stress and improving mental health.

It is a poor indictment on our housing design, construction and management that to improve occupant health GPs through Social Prescribing, or the government through green space access, are telling occupants to get out of their homes into nature.

Biophilic design for ageing residents and individuals living with dementia

Biophilic design can have a positive impact on ageing populations, particularly for individuals living with dementia. Connection to nature provided by biophilic design can improve mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and enhance cognitive function. Additionally, biophilic design can create a more homelike environment, which can be especially important for individuals living with dementia, who may experience disorientation and confusion in unfamiliar surroundings.

Amelia Chasey whose master's degree explored the power of Biophilic Design in end-of-life care environments said: "Despite the pressures and social circumstances of contemporary existence, a significant proportion of our everyday actions and behaviours are nevertheless responses to the environments that surround us.

"The decisions we make, our emotional states, our sleeping patterns, and general well-being are all influenced by the environment that immediately surrounds us. Biophilic design is not a utopian ideal, rather it is a recognition of the material state of contemporary existence and a possible solution for meeting our needs by integrating nature into the design of a building and its immediate surrounding environment."

In the built environment, several materials are gaining popularity and are expected to dominate the market in the coming years. These are referred to as Next-Gen materials since they are derived from higher percentages of plant-based substances. Most are biogenic, which means they also have the potential to be regenerative, for example, by improving soil health during production.

Using biogenic materials not only benefits the environment, but also the health of those who work in construction and their production. Over time, the manufacturing of biogenic materials is transitioning from a traditional craft to a modern industry, allowing for increased production and wider use.

Journal, Architizer identified seven materials that gained momentum in 2022 and are likely to dominate the architectural lexicon in 2023, six of which are next-gen biogenic:

Hempcrete

Hempcrete is a building material made from the woody core of the hemp plant mixed with lime and water. It is a lightweight, durable, and eco-friendly alternative to traditional concrete. Hempcrete is easy to work with and can be used in various building applications such as walls, floors, and roofs. It is breathable, meaning it allows air to circulate and helps regulate indoor humidity. Additionally, hempcrete has good thermal insulation properties, which can result in energy savings and improved comfort for building occupants. Its use is gaining popularity due to its sustainability and potential to reduce carbon emissions in construction.

Bamboo

Bamboo is a highly sustainable and regenerative construction material that has been used for centuries in many parts of the world. It is a type of grass that grows quickly, reaching maturity in just a few years. Because of its rapid growth, bamboo can be harvested regularly without the need for replanting, making it a highly sustainable resource.

Bamboo's strength and durability make it an excellent material for construction. It is lightweight but can be stronger than steel in tension, so is ideal for use in structures such as roofs, walls, and floors. Bamboo also has a high resistance to pests, which makes it an excellent alternative to chemically treated wood.

Furthermore, bamboo has many regenerative properties that make it a more sustainable choice than other construction materials. It absorbs carbon dioxide at a faster rate than most trees, making it an effective tool for reducing carbon emissions. Bamboo's root system also helps prevent soil erosion and can improve soil quality by adding nutrients.

Next-Gen materials

Graphene

Graphene is an innovative construction material with exceptional mechanical, electrical, and thermal properties. It is a carbon allotrope that is one atom thick, making it extremely strong and lightweight. Graphene's electrical conductivity can improve building electrical systems, and it can be mixed with cement and concrete to enhance their strength and durability. Its thermal conductivity can regulate building temperatures, resulting in energy savings and improved occupant comfort. Moreover, graphene is sustainable as it is made from widely available carbon, and its production process has the potential to be carbon neutral. All of these attributes make graphene a potentially regenerative material in the housebuilding industry.

Microalgae

While still in the early stages of development, microalgae is an exciting and potentially regenerative construction material that has recently started to attract interest in the industry. It is a type of microscopic algae that can be grown rapidly and efficiently, using only sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water. Microalgae can be used in a variety of building materials, such as bioplastics, bio-foams, and biomaterials. These materials have the potential to be biodegradable, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly. Additionally, microalgae cultivation has the ability to absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide. The use of microalgae in construction can also create new economic opportunities for communities and promote sustainable development.

Timber

We have seen in recent years, a growing use of once unsuitable timber as a regenerative construction material. Timber that was previously considered unsuitable for traditional construction can now be utilised in the production of engineered wood products such as Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT), Glue-Laminated Timber (Glulam), or Nail-Laminated Timber (NLT), offering a range of benefits, including increased strength, durability, and sustainability. By using small-diameter or low-grade timber, which would otherwise be discarded or used for less demanding applications, these engineered wood products provide a viable and regenerative alternative to traditional construction materials. Furthermore, the use of once unsuitable timber supports sustainable forestry practices, promotes local economic development, and helps to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change by sequestering carbon in the built environment.

Mycelium

Mycelium, which is the vegetative part of a fungus growing underground and forming a network of tiny threads called hyphae, is a versatile and regenerative construction material that has gained significant interest in the industry. It can be used to produce a wide range of sustainable building materials such as biodegradable packaging, insulation, veneers, tiles, and even furniture. Mycelium-based materials are lightweight, sturdy, and can be grown in a matter of days, offering a viable alternative to traditional construction materials. Moreover, mycelium has the potential to break down organic waste and remediate contaminated soil, making it an eco-friendly and regenerative option. By using locally sourced and produced mycelium-based materials, new economic opportunities can be created for communities, making it a sustainable and socially responsible choice for the housebuilding industry.

Straw

Straw is a sustainable and regenerative construction material that has been used for centuries. Made from the stalks of grain crops such as wheat, rice, and barley, it is a waste by-product of the agricultural industry. Straw bales can be used as insulation or as the primary building material for walls, roofs, and floors. Straw-based buildings are highly energy efficient, as straw has excellent insulating properties and can reduce heating and cooling costs. Straw-based construction is also affordable, as the materials are widely available and can be locally sourced, reducing transportation costs. In addition, straw bale construction lends itself to community-built homes. Moreover, straw-based construction can promote sustainable agriculture by creating a new market for agricultural waste, reducing waste disposal costs, and improving soil health through carbon sequestration.

In the near future, we can look forward to an exciting, innovative, and regenerative future for biogenic materials, one such being the utilisation of UK perennial grasses in the production of Plywood and Oriented Strand Board (OSB) boards. Perennial grass varieties such as Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) have the potential to be a low-cost and sustainable source of material since they grow back every year, reducing the need for replanting. These grasses also have deep root systems that help sequester carbon in the soil, mitigating the impacts of climate change. Plywood and OSB boards manufactured from perennial grass have potential advantages over traditional wood-based products, including enhanced strength, durability, and resistance to moisture and insects. In addition, the production of these boards promotes sustainable agriculture practices, can support local economic development, reduce our dependence on non-renewable resources, and contribute to a more regenerative housing sector.



Are our homes trying to kill us?

Our homes potentially expose us to harmful substances such as poor air quality, toxic materials that contain off-gas volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), but it's important to note that not all homes are the same. The potential risks depend on a combination of factors such as the age and condition of the home, the materials used to build and furnish it, the location of the dwelling, and the habits of inhabitants.

Poor air quality can be caused by a mixture of factors such as inadequate ventilation, mould and mildew growth, and the use of products (e.g. paints, cleaning products, and air fresheners,) that emit VOCs. Exposure to high levels of VOCs can cause a range of health problems, including respiratory irritation, headaches, and dizziness.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals that have been used in a variety of products including non-stick cookware, food packaging, and firefighting foam. These chemicals are persistent in the environment and can accumulate in our bodies over time, potentially causing health problems such as increased cholesterol levels, immune system dysfunction, and some types of cancer.

Taking a regenerative, salutogenesis approach to sustaining good health can be an effective way to reduce the potential risks of harmful substances in our homes. Rather than focusing only on reducing the negative impacts of exposure to these substances, a salutogenesis approach aims to stimulate overall health and well-being by creating a positive, healthy living environment.

Such an approach involves a holistic view of health to consider physical, emotional, and social well-being. It includes deep consideration of materials used in the home construction and furnishings, but also home environments that enable a healthy lifestyle, eating, regular exercise, stress reduction and adequate sleep, through biophilic design.

Red List materials

The Living Building Challenge (LBC) Red List is a tool for building product transformation. It documents the "worst in class" materials, chemicals, and elements known to pose serious risks to human health and the environment. The International Living Future Institute (ILFI) believes that these materials should be phased out of production due to human and/or environmental health and toxicity concerns. It is a mandatory imperative of the Living Building Challenge standard that projects must avoid the Red List materials and elements.

The Red List

- Antimicrobials (marketed with a health claim)
- Alkylphenols and related compounds
- Asbestos compounds
- Bisphenol A (BPA) and structural analogues
- California-banned solvents

Chlorinated Polymers, including:

- Chlorinated polyethylene (CPE)
- Chlorinated polyvinyl chloride (CPVC)
- Chloroprene (neoprene monomer)
- Chlorosulfonated polyethylene (CSPE)
- Polyvinylidene chloride (PVDC)
- Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)

- Chlorobenzenes
- Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)
- Formaldehyde (added)
- Monomeric, polymeric, and organophosphate halogenated flame retardants (HFRs)
- Organotin Compounds
- Perfluorinated and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances (PFAS) / Perfluorinated Compounds (PFCs)
- Phthalates (orthophthalates)
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)
- Short-chain and medium-chain chlorinated paraffins

Toxic heavy metals: • Arsenic • Cadmium • Chromium • Lead (added) • Mercury

- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in wet-applied products [1]
- Wood treatments containing creosote or pentachlorophenol

Putting Ideas into Practice: Regenerative Project Management

Connecting with ourselves

Consider the role you play within project management and note how you could improve your awareness in understanding regenerative trends such as biogenic materials, biophilia and our reciprocal connectivity with nature.

Recognise the importance of and learn to implement the practice of feedback loops and continuous learning. Develop an action plan for yourself and team members that ensures you are at the leading edge of regenerative practice. Using feedback loops, projects and their delivery will evolve and adapt over time and how they adapt will need recording.

Connecting with our organisations and our sector

Describe ways in which our organisations and sector can shift to the use of regenerative materials and design homes that are biophilic, enabling life to thrive.

By its very nature, regenerative project management considers the interconnectedness of all elements of a project. Align your regenerative principles with those of your clients and incorporate principles of sustainability, resilience, regeneration, the use of natural materials and energy-efficient technologies into your projects. Plan with these activities in mind.

Throughout the project, feedback loops and continuous learning would be used to adapt and evolve the project based on feedback from stakeholders and the natural environment. This approach would create a long-term, sustainable solution that benefits both the ecosystem and the local communities and creates positive impacts for future generations.

Connecting with the natural world

If nature had a voice in your organisation, or on your project, how would that be heard? How would you listen and act?

Research the impact of mineral mining on communities in Australia, Argentina or central African countries. How do purchasing choices made here in the UK impact those communities, those workers and that biosphere? Keep a journal of your thoughts and reflect on how they evolve.



A Regenerative Community

A Regenerative Community

How do you listen to and manifest a regenerative community?

Regenerative housing refers to a design and construction approach for homes and buildings that goes beyond traditional sustainability principles to create positive impacts on the environment, community and the occupants of the building.

It aims to restore and revitalise the natural systems and resources that make up our communities, instead of simply reducing the negative impacts of construction and building operations. This is achieved through a holistic approach that incorporates not only energy-efficient and environmentally responsible materials and technologies, but also healthy indoor environments, community-oriented design, and the use of locally sourced materials.

Regenerative housing seeks to create a closed loop of resource use, where waste from one process is used as a resource for another. Water (a resource, or a commodity? What response do you arrive at if distilled through 'consciousness?') is collected and treated on-site, food is grown locally, and materials are sourced from the surrounding area to minimise transportation emissions. By being and feeling part of a community – an eco-system – we can perceive resources differently.

It is about creating homes and buildings that give back to the environment and community, rather than just taking away. By prioritising the health and well-being of people and the planet, regenerative housing has the potential to transform the way we live, work and build our communities.

The COVID pandemic has seemingly turbocharged a move towards regenerative communities, as outlined by Peter Sharman and Sean Robinson:

“During the COVID pandemic society in general did reconnect with nature much more as we were allowed out for a walk once a day and due to their being no flights and limited traffic, nature itself became much more regenerated. We must not lose sight of the benefits this gave to individuals and the wider ecosystem we inhabit.”

Putting Ideas into Practice: Regenerative Community

Connecting with ourselves

By definition, a community enjoys a shared vision. It is also formed and shaped by its members so everyone should ask themselves: What are the goals of the community? What values are important? This shared vision will guide decision-making and help to ensure that everyone is working towards the same objectives.

How will you support the development of a governance structure that is democratic, transparent and equitable for humans and non-humans?

Connecting with our organisations and our sector

Notice how you collaborate and foster working together towards common goals – advocating for humans and non-humans. Organise regular community meetings, events and activities with the intention of promoting engagement and participation. Go beyond your CSR responsibilities and organise actions that truly are regenerative in their intention. Some examples might be implementing zero plastic policies, supporting local food production and investing in renewable infrastructure.

Connecting with the natural world

The nature-based equivalent of a 'community' is an 'organism'. Nature works together and collaborates for the benefit of the whole, not the individual. Developing and supporting community orchards and events, projects and businesses will reward the whole in terms of social, economic and environmental well-being.



Regenerative Organisation



Regenerative Organisation

In what ways are your carbon reduction, material, biodiversity, community, water conservation, policies strategies and approaches Regenerative?

If you're running a business, you have one eye on business continuity and one eye on the future, so why do you need a regenerative sustainability implementation plan?

You want your business to not only survive, but to thrive for years to come. And the best way to do that is by taking care of the planet and the people who call it home. That's where a regenerative sustainability plan is essential.

By putting regenerative at the forefront of your business strategy, you're setting your company up for success. You're reducing your environmental impact, creating a healthier workplace and building a strong, positive reputation in your community. By using regenerative practices, in the long run resource is protected, salvaged and reclaimed.

When implementing a plan, you must consider all the aspects of the comprehensive regenerative sustainability approach:

- Environmental impact – Consider the impact your business has on the environment and what you can do to reduce it, such as reducing waste, using renewable energy and choosing sustainable suppliers.
- Social impact– How is your business impacting and improving the community and the people you work with? Are you promoting fair labour practices, diversity and inclusion and giving back to the community?
- Economic impact – Adopting regenerative economic principles such as Doughnut Economics demonstrates a consideration of the financial benefits of sustainability. Look at reducing costs through energy-efficient practices, attracting customers who are passionate about sustainability and building a strong, positive reputation in the sector with investors and tenants, suppliers and employees.
- Innovation – What does regenerative innovation look like? Using regenerative principles to drive innovation can ensure a climate adaptive business. Focus on developing new products and finding creative ways to minimise environmental impact.

Living systems thinking

Living systems thinking is a way of looking at the world that recognises the interconnectedness of all living things and the systems that support life, pulling the threads of consciousness and the regenerative self together. It is based on the understanding that everything in the natural world is connected and interdependent and that the health and well-being of each part of the system is critical to the health and well-being of the whole.

It has the potential to transform the way we think about and approach some of the world's most pressing problems, including environmental degradation, social inequality and economic instability. By recognising that everything is connected and that our actions have an impact on the wider world, we can create more sustainable, resilient and equitable solutions.

The impact of living systems - and therefore, regenerative - thinking on all humanity is immense. It can help us to understand the root causes of problems and to see how we can work together to create lasting solutions. By embracing this way of thinking, we can create a world that is healthier, more equitable, and more resilient for all.

It is important to approach living systems thinking with empathy and a deep understanding of the complex relationships between people, nature, and the systems that support life. We must be mindful of the impact our actions have on others and work to create solutions that are just and equitable for all.

Peter Long of Basildon Council outlines the impact that a Living Systems Thinking approach has had on the way in which the working day is structured at the local authority:

"At Basildon Council we have recognised that we are at a tipping point. Prior to COVID we were based in offices and meetings were scheduled with gaps in between. This was not always by design, but due to the lack of meeting rooms.

"We are now all working remotely and for the first few months, the number of meetings were manageable. Probably, because we had to learn how to use Teams. Now, meetings are literally being scheduled one after the other. As one meeting finishes, another one starts. No time for a walk, a toilet break, a drink, etc. This is taking its toll on people and all our talk of fitness and well-being has gone out of the window. Lunchtime is the only time to catch up with emails.

"It is necessary for the organisation to think differently. Can we create 'fire breaks' in the middle of the day, where meetings are not booked? Can we have one day a week that is meeting free? The volume of work seems to be continually increasing, but we have the same number of hours in the day."

Putting Ideas into Practice: The Regenerative Organisation

Connecting with ourselves

Instigate check-in times. Our group work identified the need for 'fire breaks' – time to think and create, innovate and develop. Meditation is a good fire break, as is a walk in nature sometime during the day. As you walk, consider using the Go Jauntly app, or listening to the DeepTimeWalk app. If you would prefer to listen to the sounds of nature around you, consider learning more about the Alexander Technique and utilising the power of 'noticing' and listening.

Connecting with our organisations and our sector

Green infrastructure is being legislated for to mitigate impact. However, you can lead the way by specifying regenerative green roofs, urban gardens and bioswales that help capture and filter rainwater, reduce urban heat islands and improve habitats for wildlife.

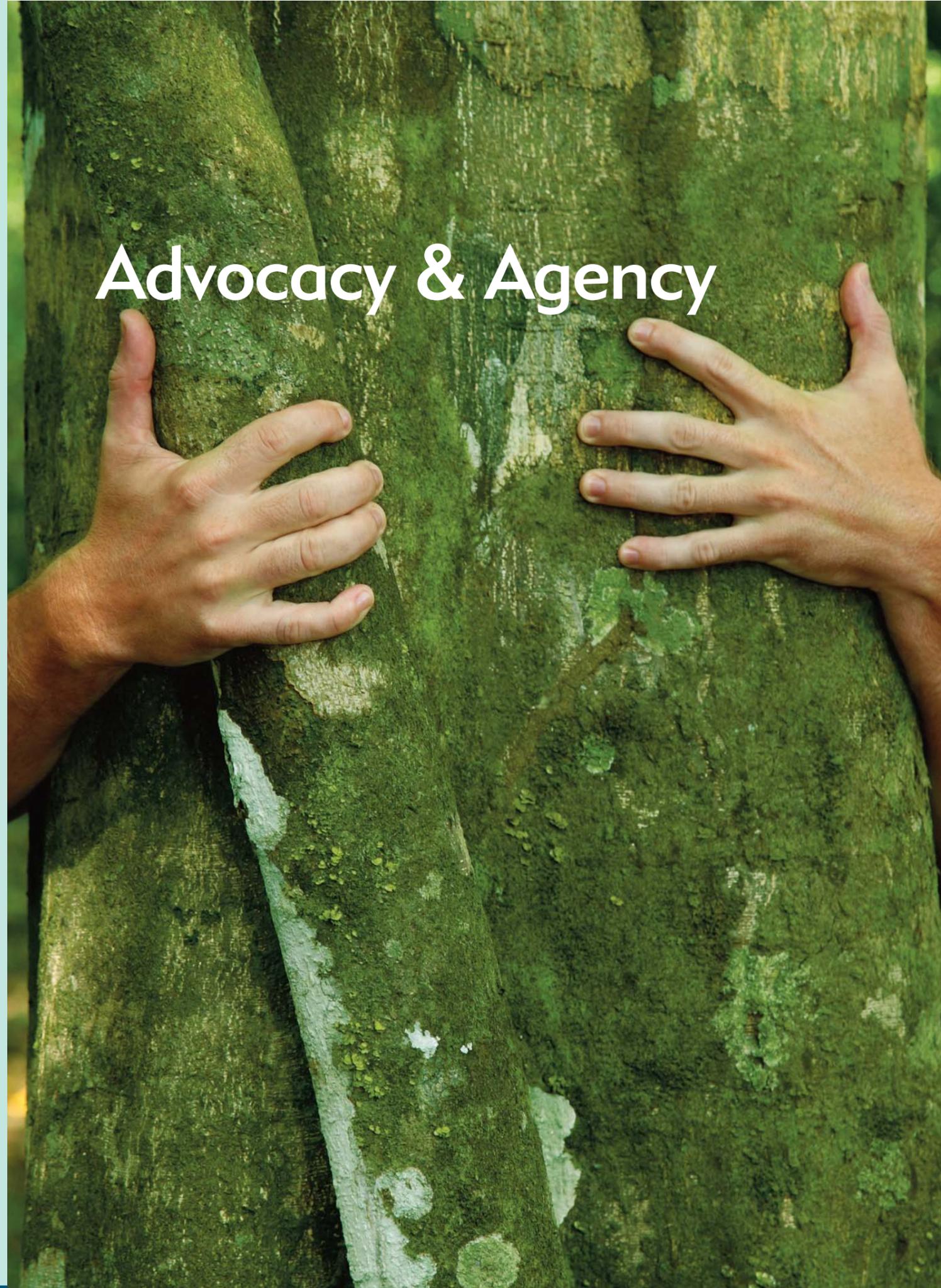
Implement a circular economy mindset internally but also with your supply chain, that focuses on reducing waste, reusing materials and recycling resources to minimise environmental impact and reduce the consumption of finite resources.

Connecting with the natural world

Support biodiversity efforts to regenerate nature's carbon sinks. Consider combining a connection with the natural world with the activities of your organisation through engagement with local projects to regenerate biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

“You want your business to not only survive but to thrive for years to come. And the best way to do that is by taking care of the planet and the people who call it home.”

Advocacy & Agency



Advocacy & Agency

R. Buckminster Fuller was an American architect, systems theorist, author, designer, inventor, and futurist who is perhaps best known for popularising the geodesic dome. He is considered one of the most influential figures of the 20th century in the fields of architecture, engineering, and design, and is credited with developing numerous innovations and technologies that have had a major impact on modern society. Fuller was also an advocate for sustainability and environmentalism and the relationship between humans and the natural world. He said: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

The thread woven through regenerative thinking is that of advocacy and agency, in one way or another, both being essential regenerative concepts as they relate to promoting positive environmental and social outcomes.

Advocacy is the act of promoting and supporting a cause or issue, often with the aim of bringing about positive change.

The group found that advocacy around regenerative sustainability is essential in raising awareness and promoting actions that support regenerative practices and protect the environment. It found that working to change policies and regulations in our organisations, to raise public awareness and influence our supply chain to support regenerative practices was a way forward.

Agency is the ability of individuals or groups to take action and make decisions that impact their environment and society.

We cannot employ advocacy without using our agency. Using the analogy of slime mould (see references for more information), we understand that coming together as one group working for the common good, that combined ability of individuals and communities to make meaningful change to promote sustainable practices and protect the environment, is achievable. We discussed supply chain and the embodied carbon inherent in that relationship, we reflected on the fact that over 90% of carbons can be in the supply chain

and that now we have this knowledge, we must use our influence to support the supply chain to diversity but that is not without its challenges as relationships can be much more complex than merely transactional.



Learning from Slim Mould - Creatures That Don't Conform. Lucy Jones / Barry Webb, Emergence Magazine

The natural evolution when exploring how we can each employ our advocacy and agency was the understanding of 'why'.

Together, advocacy and agency can help to promote a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

We undertook an exercise to identify our main stakeholders. The usual were identified, such as tenants, shareholders, colleagues and employees but

they were then asked the following question from the regenerative perspective: "What if Mother Earth, to give the biosphere her rightful identity, was the only stakeholder, certainly the only stakeholder that matters? How different would our procurement processes look?"

Advocacy on behalf of the biosphere involves promoting actions and policies that protect the Earth's ecosystems, species, and natural resources. The biosphere refers to the part of the Earth's surface, atmosphere, and water where life exists, including all living organisms and their interactions with their physical environment.

This can take many forms including raising public awareness about environmental issues, lobbying governments and businesses to take action on environmental protection, supporting conservation initiatives, and promoting sustainable practices that reduce the negative impact of human activities on the environment.

Some specific examples of advocacy on behalf of the biosphere include advocating for the protection of endangered species, promoting sustainable land use practices that preserve natural habitats, supporting the transition to renewable energy sources, and advocating for stronger environmental regulations to limit pollution and resource extraction.

Advocacy on behalf of the biosphere is critical for ensuring a healthy and sustainable future for all living beings on Earth. By promoting policies and actions that protect the biosphere, we can help to preserve the planet's biodiversity, maintain ecological balance, and ensure the continued availability of essential resources for future generations.

"The most important aspect of regenerative business today is to inspire future generations, future projects and future ideas to reach higher, to be bolder, and to be far far more disruptive." RESTORD 2030: A Regenerative Guide for Educators, Students and Practitioners

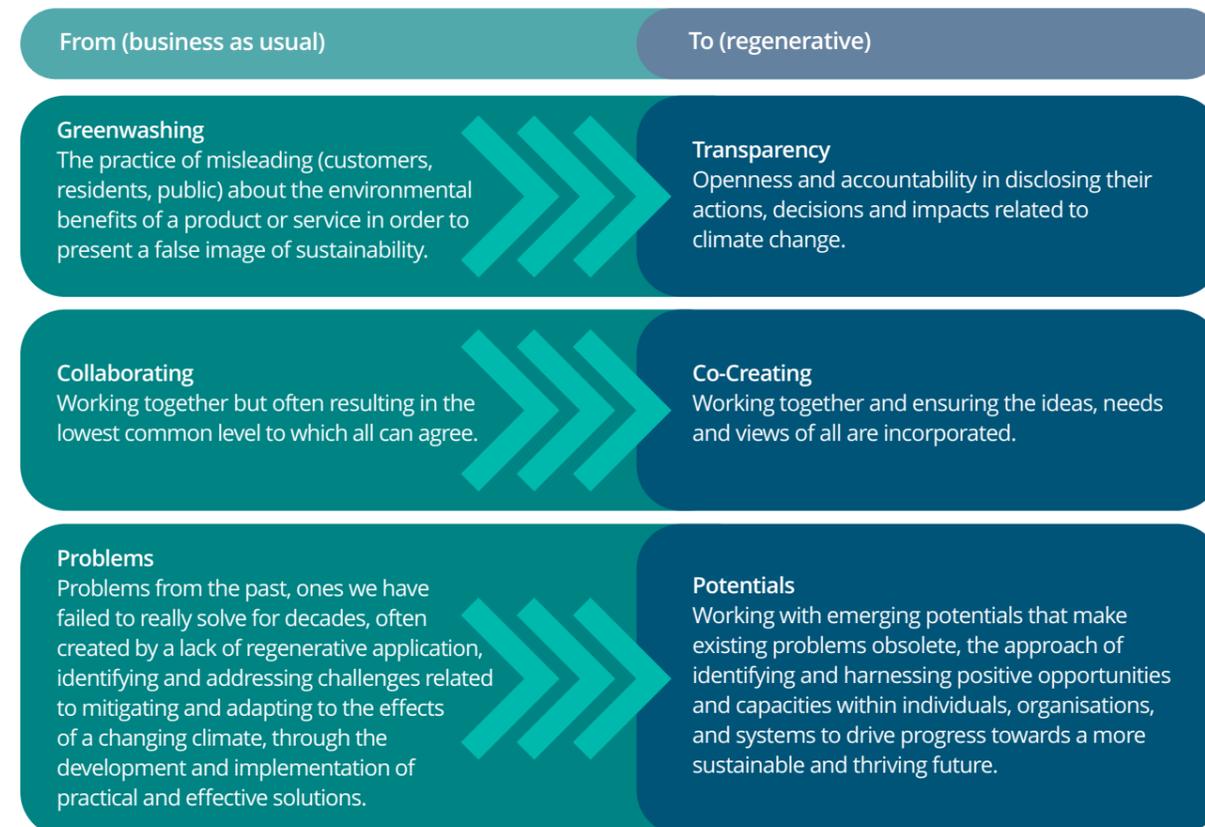
Advocacy & Agency

Shifting our language

The language and words we use play a critical role in advancing towards a sustainable, regenerative future. It is time that we move on from an overused and confusing “business as usual” sustainability language that can mask inaction and start adopting a language that inspires and encourages positive action.

To this end, presented here are powerful “regenerative” expressions that can replace conventional and tired sustainability words.

“To support a shift in ourselves, we need a tone of voice with a shift in our vocabulary. Let’s begin to incorporate regenerative language at a commercial level,” explains Anna Williamson.



Advocacy & Agency

From (business as usual)

To (regenerative)

System Thinking

An approach that considers the interconnectedness of all elements within a complex system and the impact of actions on the system as a whole, leading to more holistic, sustainable solutions.



Living System Thinking

A holistic approach that views the earth and its ecosystems as complex, interconnected and dynamic systems, and seeks to address the challenges posed by climate change by nurturing the health and transilience of these systems.

Linear

Clear cause-and-effect relationship, in which a single input leads to a single output and does not consider the complex and interrelated nature of the system.



Emerging

Evolving perspectives or solutions that arise from the interactions and feedback within a complex system and lead to transformational change.

Transactional

Relationship or communication characterised by an exchange of goods, services, or information, in which each party has something to gain or lose.



Co-Evolving

Dynamic and reciprocal relationships that continuously adapt and change in response to each other, leading to mutual benefit and shared value creation.

Anthropocene

Current geological epoch in which human activities have been the dominant influence on the Earth's climate and environment and are causing significant and lasting changes to the Earth system.



Symbiocene

Epoch characterised by a shift from human domination to symbiotic relationships with the natural world, where human activities are aligned with the principles of ecological and social sustainability, resulting in a regenerative, resilient and harmonious Earth system.

Human Being

Beings whose actions are contributing to and impacting climate change, and who have the ability to take action to address it.



Inter-Being

The interconnectedness and mutual dependence of all living and non-living beings in climate and biodiversity systems.

We encourage you to grab a blank piece of paper and see if you can come up with any of your own "regenerative" expressions that can replace conventional and tired sustainability words.

Below group members share their experiences of how their organisations have changed the way in which they communicate:

"Travis Perkins recognises the shared sustainability goals and (looks at) how in its communications it can have a unified voice on the changes we need, whether with supply chain partners, government, our own colleagues, residents or other stakeholders."

Megan Adlen, Travis Perkins

"We all have power to implement change, no one's voice is too small. We should never leave this to others, we shouldn't be waiting for some amazing panacea which will magically improve everything. We, as individuals and as leaders, have the power to influence and make change through our choices, our actions and our words. And moreover, we have a responsibility to do this."

Felicity Reilly, LCB Group

"A project Mulalley has been working on, from the influence of these sessions is to harness the power of communication and be an agency for change. This has been done through a number of campaigns starting with publicising Earth Overshoot Day. Canvassing colleagues' ideas and raising the profile of these issues, helps bring the rest of the company along with us, influencing our collective ability to be a force for regenerative change."

Sean Robinson, Mulalley

Advocacy and agency potential

In conversation, we worked through our own advocacy and agency potential. Working group participants' conversations, summarised below, emphasised the importance of taking action in advocacy and driving necessary transformation, rather than relying solely on the government or legislation.

They highlighted the influential role of corporations in leading change and recognised that both individuals and companies influence change. The conversations centred

around the significance of identifying opportunities and in maximising influence, along with the importance of early adopters and followers in both shaping and driving change. Overall, the primary focus of the conversations was on the urgency of advocacy, agency and action in making vital changes during this decade of action:

"If we are to advocate, who needs to incentivise? Traditionally we would look to the government etc to act for us - but who are our leaders in this field? How do we find a voice to deliver what we know is needed?"

Anna Williamson

"Travis Perkins can't incentivise, but it can certainly influence and shift a market. We need the Government, yes, but we can and should lead without having to lean on them too (where possible). The largest economies in the world are often companies now, not countries - the corporate world has a significant role in leading the charge on the changes we need. We can require change and influence change - it's important to know where our opportunity and influence lies to maximise that."

Megan Adlen

"Absolutely, if we wait for the government or legislation/policy to change before acting do we then change back when the government/legislation/policy changes back or is rescinded? (e.g. the relaxing of UK legislation on Site Waste Management Plans, post-Brexit)."

Martin Brown

"Now is the time for action and not just talking."

Peter Sharman

"The need for trailblazers - early adopters."

Mathew Baxter

We came to understand that this is Symmathesy in action: the creation of networks of relationships and interactions between diverse actors, such as communities, organisations, and systems, where collective learning, co-creation and co-design lead to transformative and regenerative solutions for a more sustainable and resilient future.

Putting Ideas into Practice: Advocacy & Agency

Connecting with ourselves

What's in a word? Are you clear in the meaning of the words and expressions that you use? Are you using them because they are in common use – and do they inspire or confuse you?

When focusing on restoring, revitalising and regenerating natural resources and ecosystems, we are also meeting our basic human needs.

Connecting with our organisations and our sector

Look at the connections you have within your organisation and within your sector, how can shifting the language act as advocacy for progressing sustainable regenerative?

Use your agency to promote a circular economy that focuses on reducing waste, reusing materials and recycling resources to minimise environmental impact and reduce the consumption of finite resources.

Advocate for political change. As soon as we put the biosphere at the centre of every decision we make, we are forced to make different choices. Pick one of the top five items within your supply chain – and ask if you know the true cost in its impact.

Connecting with the natural world

We talk of being nature-positive, of reconnecting with nature, but how does that manifest itself? Is it closing the separation we have from the natural world?

Advocate for practices that focus on restoring soil health, increasing biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions while also providing nutritious food for communities. Community gardens and orchards can support community development and cohesion – two key ingredients in sustaining communities.

Go beyond the promotion of restorative practices to supporting community-based conservation. Work with local communities to develop sustainable livelihoods that support conservation efforts and community-managed conservation areas.

“It is time that we move on from an overused and confusing ‘business as usual’ sustainability language that can mask inaction and start adopting a language that inspires and encourages positive action.”

Conclusion

In conclusion

We started this Sustainable Regenerative programme with the analogy of the pinecone, representing a collection of seeds waiting for the right conditions to thrive.

Through these highly interactive modules, we have brought together a pinecone of regenerative ideas, as reflected in this report. While many of these ideas have been discussed, tested, and adopted by participants and their organisations, others are yet to open and thrive.

We urge you to take your own pinecone from this report and sow the seeds when the conditions permit, (which is most likely today).

It's important to note that this wasn't just another sustainability event or course. Instead, it focused on the individual, the regenerative self, and how we shift our mindset to ask better questions and to better address the wicked problems of carbon, waste, health and biodiversity loss that we face.

With the acknowledgement that there isn't a one-size-fits-all definition of what it means to be regenerative, and the common saying of 'doing more good' or 'giving back more than we take' only scratches the surface, if there was a conclusion from this programme, it is about who we are, and how we act in the world where we love, live, work and play.

Giles Hutchins in *Leading by Nature* talks of the threshold-crossing in worldview/mindset as "essential, and yet sometimes overlooked in our excitement to use the word 'regenerative'.

"Regenerative is not simply 'net positive', nor a trade-off of negative and positive impacts. Regenerative is about deepening our sense of connection

with inner-outer nature, so that we work more in harmony with life".

A crucial theme from this programme was our relationship with nature, not just as individuals but as projects and organisations, moving beyond a passive 'connectivity with nature' to a symbiotic and reciprocal relationship that listens and repairs the separation we have created from the natural world.

As we discussed throughout the modules, we are at a tipping point that could lead to a wonderfully regenerative or irreversibly disastrous future. The energy and enthusiasm shown by participants for a regenerative future gives us all hope.

As Mathew Baxter noted in the introduction, "we've only taken the first steps on an exciting journey". After reading this report, we wish you well on your regenerative journey and wait to hear your regenerative stories.



Author Profiles

Martin Brown, FRSA

Martin is a Regenerative Provocateur, and VP at Living Future Europe. With over 45 years' experience in the built environment, he has become a recognised pioneer in the regenerative movement through his work as an advisor, writer and speaker.

He is also the author of RIBA publication *'FutuREstorative, Working Towards a New Sustainability'*, co-author of *'The Regenerative Playbook'* and *'RESTORD'*. He is preparing *'FutuREgenerative'* as a follow-on from *FutuRestorative*.

Martin is the founder of Zoom Regenerative and co-founder of ConstructCO2 and BE2Camp. He is also the co-chair of Longridge Environment Group and the past chair of RESTORE and the Lancashire Best Practice Club.

Martin writes regularly on the substack Regen/Notes newsletter <https://fairsnape.substack.com>

 www.linkedin.com/in/martinbrownfairsnape/

Anna Williamson

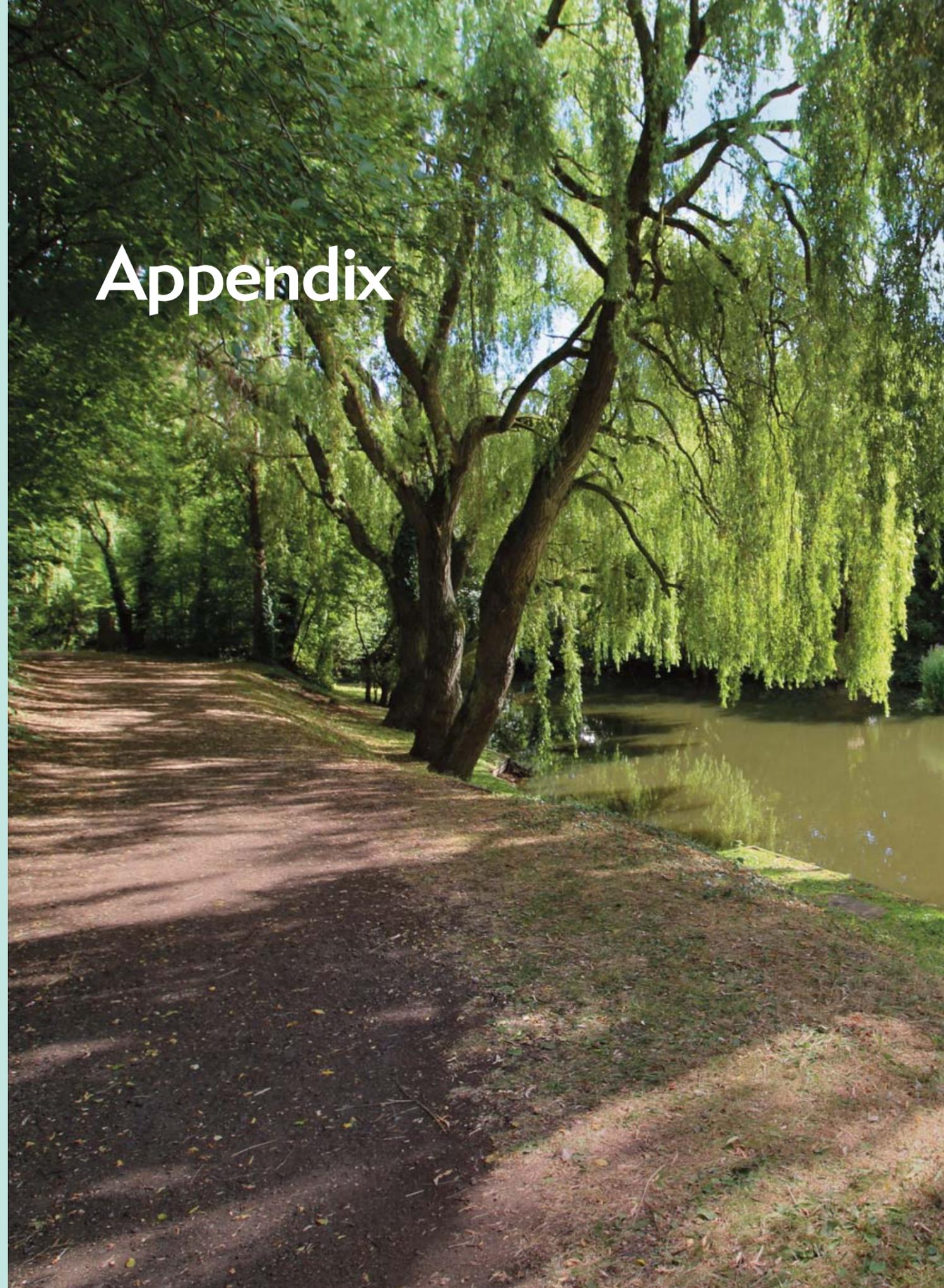
Drawing on over 15 years of corporate design and strategic sustainability practice, Anna has worked within a collaborative of professionals from the built environment using data management and collection platforms in manufacturing, agriculture and logistics to deliver multi-stakeholder sustainability solutions.

She now leads the level 6 Facilities Management apprenticeship degree programme at the University of Bolton, ensuring the FM sector is fit to influence climate adaptive design and maintenance now, and in the future.

 www.linkedin.com/in/annakwilliamson/

Thanks to workshop guests — Ann Vanner UCLan, and Barbara Jones, School of Natural Building.

Appendix



Participants' Listing

Thinking and doing things differently.

Key Questions	Response
Participant Name	Peter Long
Participant Organisation	Basildon Borough Council
Core Business (one sentence maximum)	Management of responsive repair, voids, aids and adaptations, planned works to housing stock and garages.
Your regenerative-related vision statement if you have one, or are intending to introduce	To change the way we have always done things. To explore alternative forms of heating, materials and viability of every property. Should we continue to maintain an existing building with its limitations, or should we replace it with something fit for the future?
What does regenerative sustainability mean from your organisation's perspective?	Thinking and doing differently.
Your key take away from the working group	There is much more to think about when managing property and don't be afraid to do something different.

Key Questions	Response
Participant Name	Peter Sharman
Participant Organisation	Mulalley
Core Business (one sentence maximum)	Construction
Your regenerative-related vision statement if you have one, or are intending to introduce	Mulalley is keen to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
What does regenerative sustainability mean from your organisation's perspective?	We intend to utilise some of the learnings of this journey to inform and create our overarching ESG Strategy.
Your key take away from the working group	Get outside and look all around you, whether on land or sea, and appreciate nature, which is an invaluable natural resource that should not be taken for granted and should be embedded in our day-to-day decisions and lives.

Key Questions	Response
Participant Name	Sean Robinson
Participant Organisation	Mulalley & Co Ltd
Core Business (one sentence maximum)	Construction Managing Contractor
Your regenerative-related vision statement if you have one, or are intending to introduce	It is now necessary to take the next step in our sustainability journey and transition from damage limitation to regenerative sustainability. It needs to be taken from being a concept to being utilised and practised leaving the environment in a better place than we found it.
What does regenerative sustainability mean from your organisation's perspective?	The projects we manage, should have a net positive impact on the local environment and communities they are constructed within. This can be done by embedding regenerative principles in how we manage the procurement and construction of the project, as well as how we fulfil our social value obligations.
Your key take away from the working group	Reducing the damage we inflict on the environment is not enough, we need to give back, reverse negative effects and contribute to creating communities that operate cohesively with nature. We need to work towards a future that secures life for future generations within planetary boundaries regenerating the environment, and in doing so ourselves.

Key Questions	Response
Participant Name	Ann Miller
Participant Organisation	Hyde Group
Core Business (one sentence maximum)	Social Housing
Your regenerative-related vision statement if you have one, or are intending to introduce	To weigh up all decisions and work efficiently with sustainability in mind.
What does regenerative sustainability mean from your organisation's perspective?	To reduce our carbon footprint.
Your key take away from the working group	To be mindful of new ideas and consider different materials.

Participants Listing

Key Questions	Response
Participant Name	Felicity Reilly
Participant Organisation	LCB Group
Core Business (one sentence maximum)	Repairs & Maintenance Contractor
Your regenerative-related vision statement if you have one, or are intending to introduce	To remove/reduce negative impact activities, and increase the potential positive impacts the business can have, beyond carbon reduction, but through increased social/community/people benefits to protect and secure the well-being of our communities and the generations to come
What does regenerative sustainability mean from your organisation's perspective?	To be a force for good. To be better, and to be always seeking to be better. To ensure our staff's well-being is a priority at all times. To seek solutions and drive change.
Your key take away from the working group	We all have power to implement change, no one's voice is too small. We should never leave this to others, we shouldn't be waiting for some amazing panacea which will magically improve everything. We, as individuals and as leaders, have the power to influence and make change through our choices, our actions and our words. And moreover, we have a responsibility to do this.

Key Questions	Response
Participant Name	Joseph Hayes
Participant Organisation	Axis Europe
Core Business (one sentence maximum)	Property Services
Your regenerative-related vision statement if you have one, or are intending to introduce	To work with a greater sense of mindfulness and the intention to limit damaging practices to me, my organisation, those I work with and the environment.
What does regenerative sustainability mean from your organisation's perspective?	Working sustainably whilst encouraging sound mental and physical health in colleagues. Growing a capable and conscious workforce that informs a capable and conscious workforce.
Your key take away from the working group	To be open to new ideas, perspectives and working methods. To promote off-shore wind, and other sources of renewable energy.

Other participants in the workshops included Megan Adlen, Travis Perkins, and Tessa Barraclough, Riverside.

References and going further

To Read:

- **The Regenerative Playbook**
<https://bit.ly/regenplaybook>
- **Regen/Notes - the regenerative newsletter**
<https://bit.ly/Regen-Notes>
- **RESTORD 2030 A Regenerative Guide for Educators, Students and Practitioners, available at**
<https://fairsnape.com/2021/05/21/restord-2030-a-regenerative-guide/>
- **Living Building Challenge**
www.living-future.eu/programs/living-building-challenge/
- **Declare and the Red List**
<https://www.living-future.eu/programs/declare/>
- **Living Community Challenge**
<https://living-future.org/lcc/>
- **ILFI Affordable Housing**
<https://living-future.org/affordable-housing/>
- **14 Patterns of Biophilic Design Terrapin BrightGreen**
www.terrapinbrightgreen.com/reports/14-patterns/
- **Biophilic Design**
www.biophilic-design.com
- **15 Minutes from Green Space**
www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jan/31/every-household-in-england-to-be-within-15-minutes-of-green-space-or-water

To Watch:

- **Make nature part of your business. (KEW)**
www.kew.org/read-and-watch/what-is-cop15
- **Energy Revolution on Water Bear**
www.waterbear.com/watch/feature/6279018913db5feed2877f98

To Listen:

- **From What is to What Next... Rob Hopkins podcast series...**
www.robhopkins.net/2022/06/21/from-what-if-to-what-next-episode-forty-four/
- **The Regenerative Real Estate Podcast**
- **The High Performance Podcast**
www.thehighperformancepodcast.com/podcast
- **Slime Mould – Creatures that don't conform**
<https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/creatures-that-dont-conform/>

To Do:

- **Notice Nature**
- **Join The Biophilic Society**
www.living-future.eu/the-biophilic-society-is-born/
- **Become a Just organisation**
www.living-future.eu/programs/just/

To Explore Further:

- **Biology of Belief**
www.brucelipton.com/books/biology-of-belief/
- **Slime Mold - the Great Escape Artist**
www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/slime-mold-navigate-maze/
- **Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion**
<https://thekelsey.org/design/>
- **BCorp UK**
<https://bcorporation.uk>
- **One Planet Living**
<https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living/>



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-  echelonip.co.uk
-  [@EchelonIP](https://twitter.com/EchelonIP)
-  [Echelon Improvement Partnerships](https://www.linkedin.com/company/echelon-improvement-partnerships)

