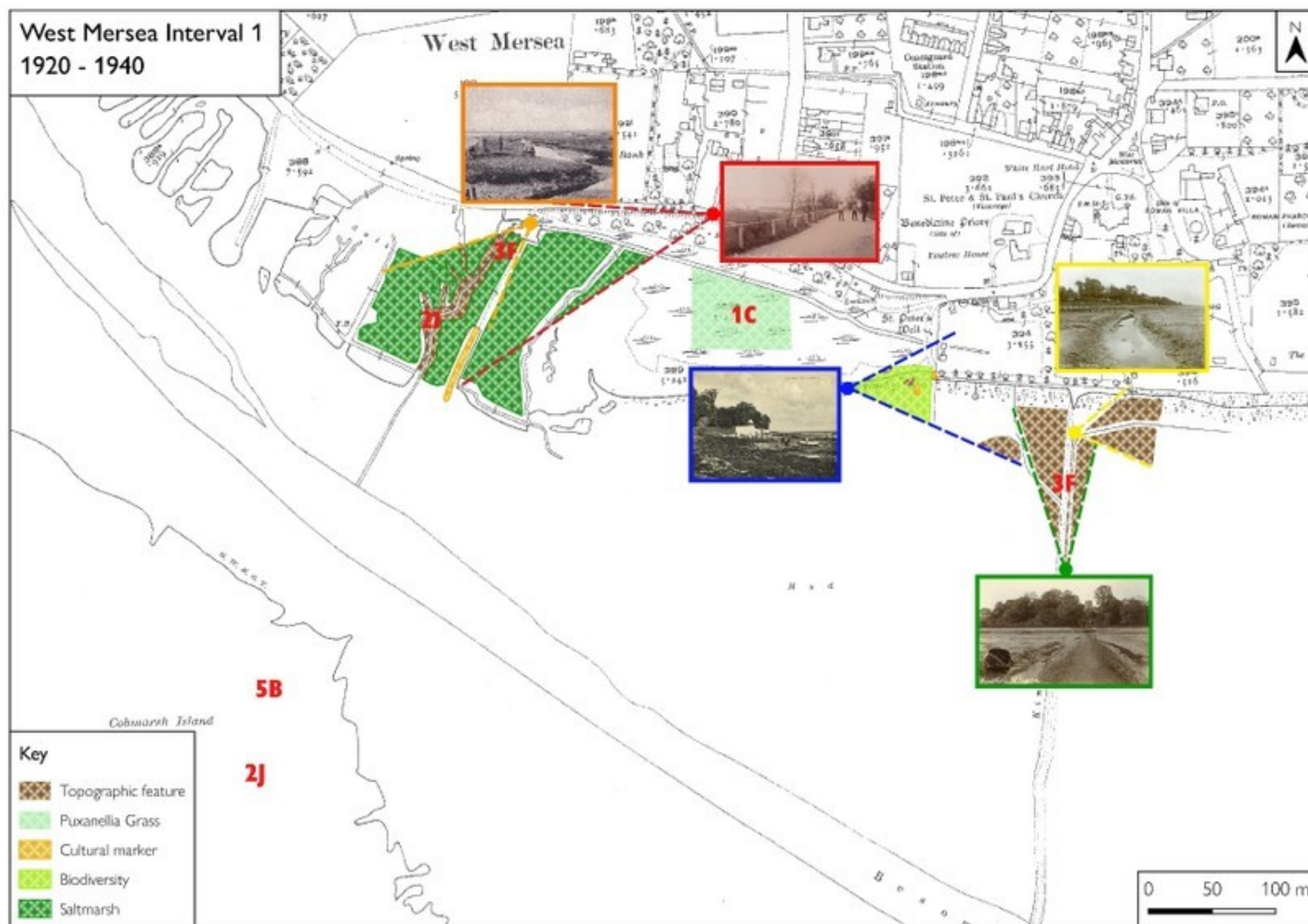


Every place has a climate story. But how can we tell those stories during a global pandemic? On Mersea Island, Essex, a team of volunteers found out using the unique lens of local memories. CMCC was developed to establish and map the nature and scale of coastal change on Mersea Island over a 100-year period. Oral history recordings, photographic and postcard archives, and historic maps, submitted by volunteers, were used to co-create a unique dataset. Archaeological features provided a proxy baseline for the pace of change on the foreshore.



These indicators were analysed in 20-year intervals for each site to create timelines and maps (see above) to analyse and compare known environmental events (such as the 1962-1963 Big Freeze winter) and human driven changes (such as the increase in agricultural use post WWII) that have influenced coastal change on Mersea. They indicate a complex and gradual picture of change between 1920-2020 with erosion increasing exponentially throughout the period. Historically, a balanced foreshore environment provided a defence against erosion and that a decline in foreshore biodiversity, combined with the impacts of other factors, events and natural processes accounts for an acceleration in coastal erosion. **By combining a community's memories of change with a photographic record spanning 100 years we have created a framework for the community to create its own climate story.** To find out more about the Changing Minds, Changing Coasts project, view our digital StoryMaps with oral histories and historic images, and read our full report please scan this QR Code .

The sites of Monkey Beach, West Mersea and Cudmore Grove, East Mersea were chosen to represent both ends of the island. By speaking with volunteers, a series of six indicators were developed that represented their experience of coastal change on the island. They were: Presence of **archaeological features**, presence and character of **saltmarsh**, range of **biodiversity**, **sedimentary** makeup of the foreshore, location of the **high and low water** lines, **cultural** use of the foreshore.



Evidence of heavy erosion at Cudmore Grove, East Mersea. Left image dated to 1920 (Courtesy of Mersea Museum / Wenda Lord Collection) and right in 2021 photograph.



The jetty known as King's Hard, and embarkation stand at West Mersea pre-1911 (Courtesy of Mersea Museum / Peter Godfrey Collection) and right in 2021.



WWII pillboxes of Cudmore Grove, bulldozed off the cliffs in the 1980's due to erosion risk. The left photo dates to the 1970's (Courtesy of Mersea Museum / Essex Records Office) and the right from 2021.



A display of the project at the Mersea Museum for the 2021-22 summer seasons.

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