

**NEWS**

The King praises our students helping coastal defence project

Date

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His Majesty The King praised the volunteering efforts of some of our students during a visit to Colchester to celebrate its recently-awarded city status.

[Dr Boróka Bó](#), from our [Department of Sociology](#), and [Dr Michael Steinke](#), from our [School of Life Sciences](#), were invited to meet the Royal couple at Colchester Castle yesterday to speak about the University's key role in research to mitigate climate change and adapting to the effects of sea-level rise.

In particular, the researchers outlined the innovative project they are currently working on with Colchester City Council and the [Essex Native Oyster Restoration Initiative](#) (ENORI), where they are looking into the viability of using natural resources in coastal defence development in the face of climate change.

"It was an immense privilege to be able to celebrate Colchester becoming a city along with our rich oyster-farming heritage with His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort," said Dr Bó. "The King was also particularly impressed to hear sociology undergraduate students - Katelyn Lucas and Raisa-Maria Ordace - have volunteered their time to support our local coastal defence efforts.

"The Royal couple also expressed appreciation for our team's diversity and The King was very enthusiastic about our collaborative project being rooted in the wisdom of local oyster fishermen, ENORI and Colchester City Council, whilst also weaving in academic knowledge from Essex's Department of Sociology, School of Life Sciences and Essex Business School."

The university research team includes Dr Bó, Dr Steinke, Dr Maged Ali and research assistant Dr Beth Greenwood.

Dr Steinke said: "It was a proud moment to welcome their majesties to the City of Colchester and engage with them about the ongoing climate change research at the University. Our 'Building with Nature' project is relevant to all layers of society and the King and Queen Consort echoed our concerns about coastal erosion and its effects on coastal communities. They were interested to hear that natural oyster reefs can protect the shoreline and can be used to adapt to the challenges of climate change. It was also really exciting to meet and chat with representatives from local government, charities, the church and the military, and everyone recognised that we must act now in order to mitigate the climate crisis and adapt to its effects if we are to secure a future for humanity."