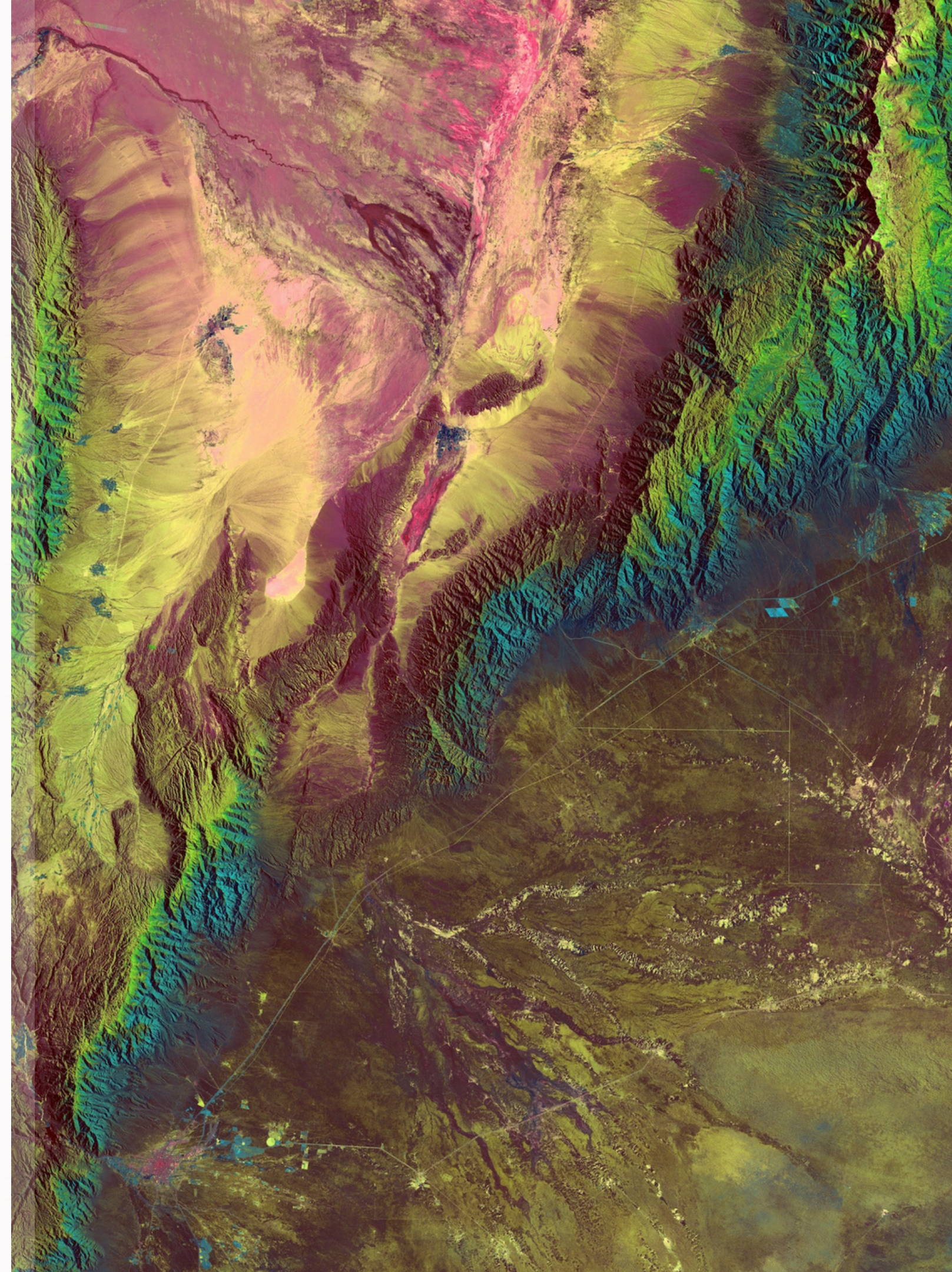
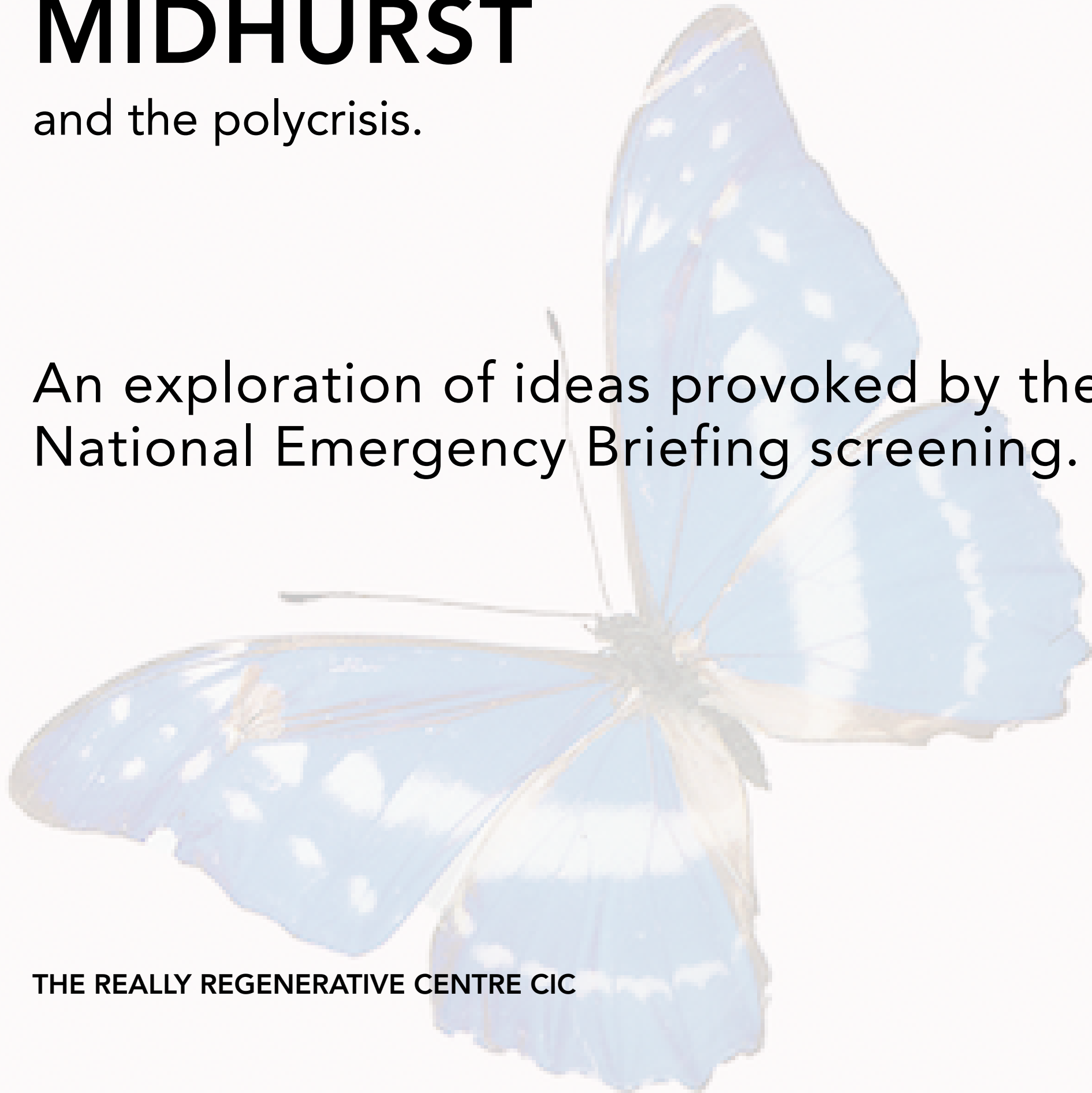


MIDHURST

and the polycrisis.

An exploration of ideas provoked by the
National Emergency Briefing screening.

THE REALLY REGENERATIVE CENTRE CIC



7 KEY THEMES

Seven key themes emerged from the workshop held after the screening of the National Emergency Briefing documentary in Midhurst.

THEME 1

Local action and community organising

Change happens locally and needs structures to make it stick.

- More local coordination — car clubs, food sharing, community gardens
- Local funding for local projects
- Building momentum — general public seeing the film, citizens assemblies, regular meetings
- Cross-party accountability to progress on shared goals
- How to reach beyond the usual suspects — parishes, local authorities, farm clusters
- Every community has a network of active residents supporting climate-positive action

THEME 2

Food systems

We want to see a different approach to how food is grown, consumed, and priced.

- Regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and local land use
- Food growing in schools, community farms and allotments
- Reducing food waste and removing unnecessary plastic packaging
- Coaches to help people who want to grow more of their own food
- Foraging and bushcraft for resilience
- Oat milk as default, not cow — small choices at scale matter

THEME 3

Energy and infrastructure

We are looking for more autonomy and agency over energy and infrastructure.

- Solar panels, batteries and connecting local generating schemes to the grid
- Community energy schemes people can buy into — like Energise South Downs
- Better public transport and safe cycle routes
- Circular economies and home and community composting
- Toilet waste into gas rather than waterways
- Demo projects — food, rainwater, zero carbon houses

THEME 4

Planning, regulation and policy

How can planning regulation and policy work in partnership rather than as a handbrake?

- Stop building on flood plains
- Regulation change around efficient, affordable and sustainable development
- Change in planning laws around social housing — if people want to live off grid, let them
- Conflicting planning around biodiversity needs resolving
- Tax on plastic manufacturing companies
- Push boundaries on landscape and buildings — put survival first

THEME 5

Economics and finance

You want a different economic story, not just a moral one.

- Doughnut economics for communities — how they can use it
- Localising economics and increasing circular economies
- More positive economic impact data — consider all the benefits of change
- Economics that supports businesses working to improve the natural environment
- Reversing climate change is economic — make that case louder
- Local funding streams for local projects

THEME 6

Communication, culture, collaboration and leadership

How we do this matters as much as what we do. The language we choose, the stories we tell, and the way we work together will shape whether change happens at the scale and speed we need.

- Artists and the cultural sector integrated into this work
- Communicators who can translate scientific language into accessible ideas
- Stories that inspire, engage and encourage — tell the success stories
- Positivity and hope — from “what if” to “what is” (Rob Hopkins)
- Collaboration, common sense and courage — pilot, take risks, lead by example
- Streamline decision-making on principles and values, not process
- Civic responsibility — talk to people, bring others with you

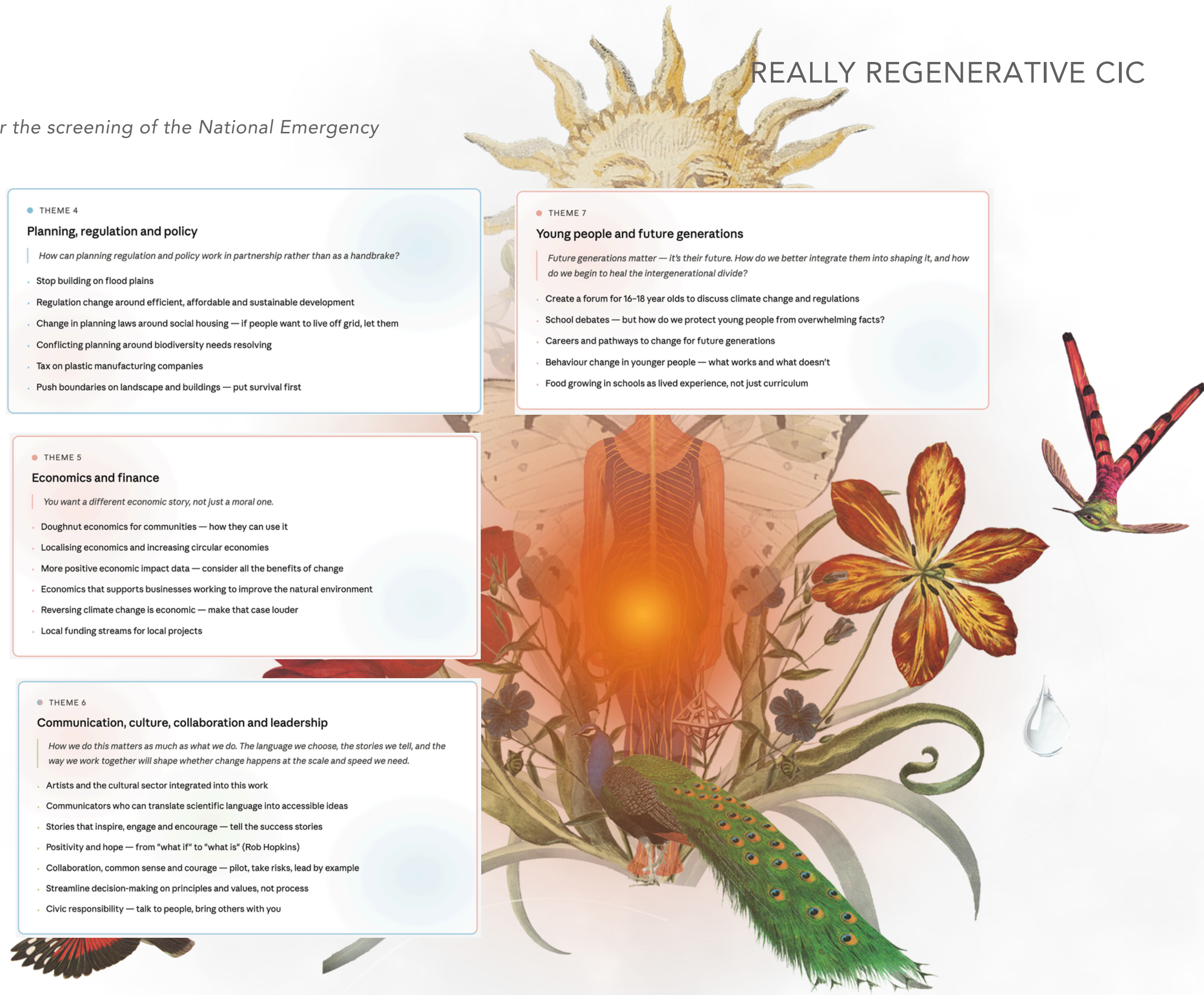
THEME 7

Young people and future generations

Future generations matter — it's their future. How do we better integrate them into shaping it, and how do we begin to heal the intergenerational divide?

- Create a forum for 16–18 year olds to discuss climate change and regulations
- School debates — but how do we protect young people from overwhelming facts?
- Careers and pathways to change for future generations
- Behaviour change in younger people — what works and what doesn't
- Food growing in schools as lived experience, not just curriculum

REALLY REGENERATIVE CIC



HOW REALLY REGENERATIVE EXPLORES RESILIENCE.

Really Regenerative CIC works with questions of future potential rather than problem solving. When we are looking at conditions of community resilience in any place of any size, some of the questions we believe a community should work through, roughly in order of depth, include:

Who are we and what do we have?

- Who is actually "the community" here — who's included, who's often left out, and how do we make sure the most vulnerable have a real voice?
- What do we already have — relationships, skills, land, organisations, local knowledge — that resilience can be built from?
- What is this place's character, ecology, and history, and what does that tell us about what's possible here?

What are we facing?

- Which climate risks are most relevant to this specific place — flooding, heat, drought, coastal erosion, supply chain disruption, migration pressure?
- How do those risks interact with existing vulnerabilities — poverty, isolation, poor housing, aging population?
- What's our timeframe — what's already locked in, what's coming in 10 years, what's coming in 50?

What does resilience actually mean for us?

- Are we trying to protect what we have, adapt and transform, or both?
- Resilience for whom and to what end — who decides what's worth protecting?
- What would it mean to come through disruption more connected and equitable, not less?

What needs to change and at what scale?

- What can we do ourselves, what needs coordination with neighbouring places, and what requires policy change we need to advocate for?
- Where are the leverage points — the things that, if changed, would shift many others?
- What dependencies make us fragile (food, energy, transport, digital), and where can we build genuine local sufficiency?

How do we act and learn together?

- What decisions need to be made now versus what can be kept open?
- How do we build the relational and governance infrastructure to sustain action over decades, not just a project cycle?
- How do we track what's working and stay responsive as conditions change?

The deeper question underneath all of these — which is often the most generative to name explicitly — is: what kind of community do we want to be, and does the climate crisis give us permission to build that? Resilience planning done well is often a disguised opportunity for community renewal.

REALLY REGENERATIVE CIC



WHAT WE EXPLORED.

On the re-gathering we explored some specific questions that you raised as a group, looked at the conditions for place-based resilience and how they affected Midhurst, and explore a Moonshot for Midhurst.

YOUR KEY QUESTIONS

- How do we develop **better local structures** like car clubs, community gardens, food forests?
- How do we make **regenerative and organic food** more **accessible and affordable** here?
- How do we create a **drinkable, swimmable, fishable River Rother** together?
- How do we develop more agency and autonomy over **energy and transport infrastructure**?
- How do we **localise economy** and create more **circularity** here?
- How do we share more **positive stories** of success?

A SNAPSHOT OF PLACE-BASED RESILIENCE

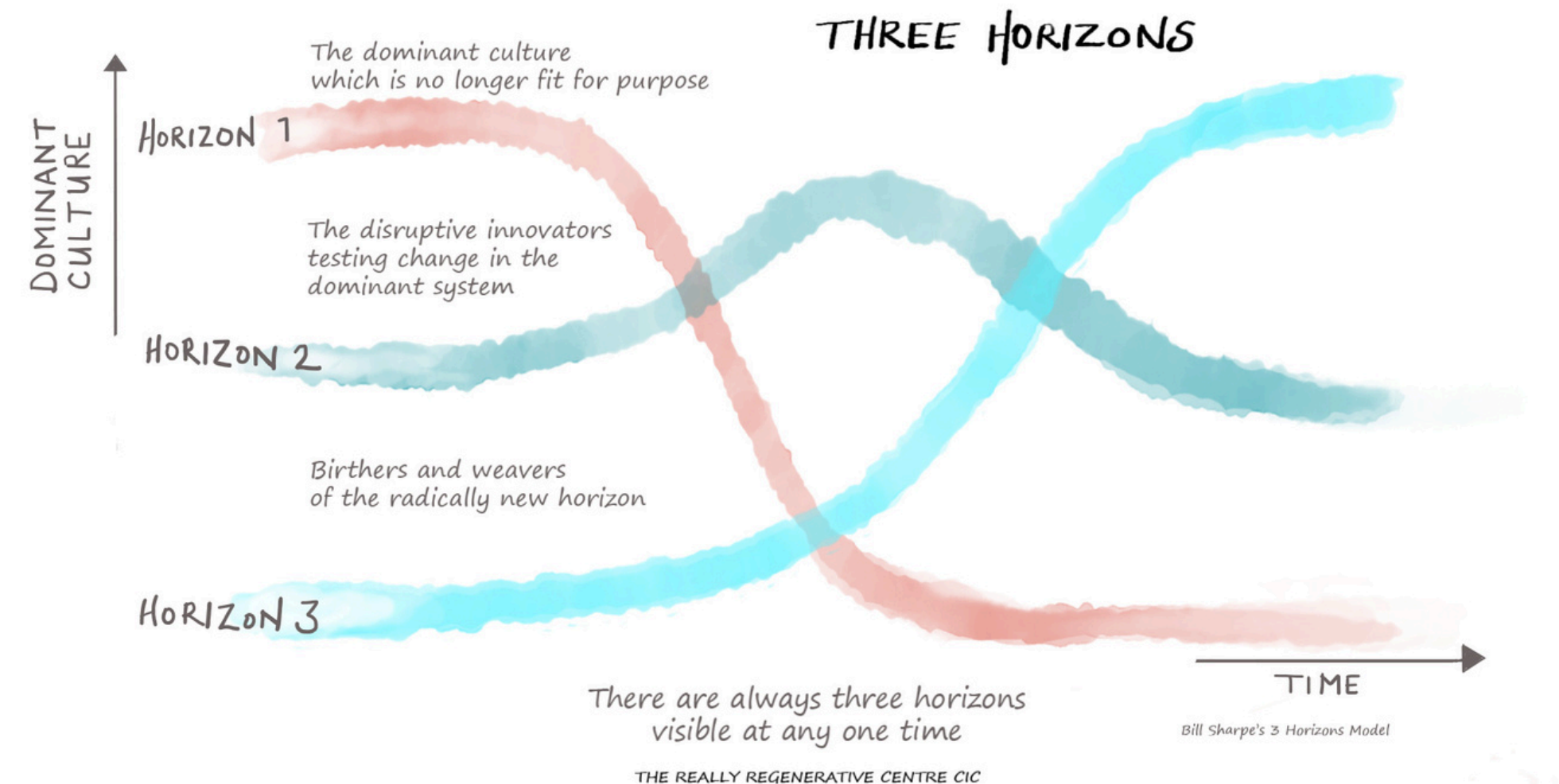
PRESENT MOMENT: A snapshot reminder of what's already at risk and vulnerable here.

FUTURE HORIZON: if we came through this well, what would the future feel like?

WHAT CAN BE DISRUPTED: what resilience already exists here, who's already working on it, what's most urgent

What change can we materially effect within our lifetimes?

REALLY REGENERATIVE CIC



WHAT YOU SUGGESTED.

In a small but well informed group, here are the suggestions you came up with for Midhurst and the South Downs National Park in West Sussex.

The Octopus Villages

Inspired by Sussex & Surrey Copice Group founder Clive Cobie, we considered coming together as small groups of downs villages to work on particular aspects of future resilience. The Copice Group works on creating the conditions for the kinds of heritage and rural craft which used to support local communities, to thrive, such as coppicing and biochar production, tree nurseries, a compost network, forest schools for adults, and is trying to gather groups of 8 towns/villages in the eastern part of West Sussex to work together.

We considered a list of different issues small groups of communities could work on together: food security & resilience, water health, biodiversity restoration, heating and cooling of homes, community energy, community spaces & ownership, repair cafes, health & wellbeing, all came up as key issues for us.

We proposed a gathering here in west west Sussex rural bioregion to possibly bring together a group from Midhurst, Graffham, Tillington, Stedham, Hoyle/Heyshott, Cocking, The Hartings, Duncton, The Mardens, West Dean, Goodwood. To be investigated further in collaboration with other village groups in climate, biodiversity or other kind of work in our area.

Creativity & Upcycling Centres

The kind of centres for learning we felt needed more local support included both practical and cultural aspects of life. The groups expressed interest in seeing more:

- art and creativity space for workshops, displays, dialogues in the centre of Midhurst, ideally a convsion of the former hotel space on North street
- practical skills revisited - a repair cafe, upcycling centre for workshops and learning, sewing etc but also to designers wanting to work on musical instruments, heritage construction, bio-materials
- an enterprise centre for young people who want to try to create the SMEs that are future focused supported by mentorship from entrepreneurs in the region (they exist but are not well known or integrated into community life)
- better and more maker spaces

Democracy revisited

We spoke about the lack of engagement around devolution and local government reorganisations, as well as activist in general, and asked if we need to work harder as a community at creating engaging opportunities that are informative, future focused, learning opportunities but also fun. Could Midhurst become a centre for a democracy revival, or at the very least - one of many hubs for an evolved articulation of what democracy means to us now?

REALLY REGENERATIVE CIC



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Midhurst Moonshots

The idea of Midhurst having a purpose beyond its own existence - a contributory role to play for people, place and planet - was well received. On the evening, these were some of the suggestions the group were interested to pursue:-

Pesticide-free Midhurst - can we encourage home owners, the council, major stakeholders like Cowdray, store owners, to reshape Midhurst as a pesticide-free-zone? A place where we prioritise insect life. We considered starting with a pesticide-free week.

The home of good food. Could we become a beacon for high nutrient density, organic and regenerative food? How would we work with food growers, major stakeholders, the community? What kind of retail outlets don't we have that we would need? Is this an opportunity for young people to be encouraged in to food retail or to have a community food store in the centre of midhurst?

Home of the Community High Street. What would it take to prioritise space for community endeavour on our high streets - beyond charity shops and retail outlets? What kind of community space are we lacking and do we want? How might Cowdray support that?

Walkable, Breathable Midhurst - our town councillor in attendance mentioned traffic as a key issue for our future. We acknowledge that the shift from canal barge and train to cars in the early 20th century had a significant impact on rural towns and in particular Midhurst which shifted from being a hub to a pass-through town. We discussed - as has been discussed many

times before - a pedestrianised old town but recognised the traffic challenge that poses to the narrow section of North street, whilst recognising the improvement in air quality that might be achieved.

In summary, the group wanted to develop:

- More places for community engagement, learning, activity, enterprise
- A programme of regular events about the polycrisis and what individuals can do together as a community
- A community of interconnected towns and villages acting for the future
- A 'mission' for Midhurst

REALLY REGENERATIVE CIC



MIDHURST

and the polycrisis.

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