Art Work Exeter

Environmental Policy

Part 1: Statement of intent

Climate breakdown and biodiversity collapse affect us all.

Children and young people are disproportionately affected. They have made little direct contribution to the problems caused by burning fossil fuels and intensive resource use, yet they will experience the harshest consequences of this legacy. Similarly, communities and peoples marginalised because of social-economic background and race inequities are more likely to experience air and water pollution, lack access to green space and are more at risk from climate vulnerability.

The UN warns that the window for keeping warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius is rapidly closing – by 2025 it will be almost impossible to meet the required annual global reduction targets. In 2021, the Government committed to a 78% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, compared to 1990 levels. The UK is also a signatory to the UN Leaders' Pledge for Nature and has committed to protecting 30% of UK land for the recovery of nature by 2030.

Every sector of our economy needs to rapidly transition and decarbonise, this is a whole society transformation, and the arts and creativity have a unique and significant role in this transformation. In a world where creative engagement has the power to broaden horizons, inspire activism and solutions, generate a sense of wonder and enable us to imagine different futures, environmental justice and a zero carbon society is possible.

It is our ethical, moral and legal responsibility to accept environmental responsibility for our practices and activities. This means monitoring, reducing and mitigating our environmental impact as an integral part of our business strategy, operations and programmes. It means doing things differently and being an advocate, working through partnership, collaboration and knowledge sharing, to encourage the people we work with to explore these issues, take actions to reduce their own impact and share this journey with us.

Scope

Our Environmental Policy is aligned to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and the ambition to achieve net zero by 2030. It also offers us the opportunity to ask - how much could we possibly do? This policy extends across all activities of our organisation and should inform all decisions, relationships, partnerships and future operations.

Part 2: Responsibilities

As an organisation, we declared a Climate Emergency in 2017 and following this, require all employees and contractors to review and minimise the environmental impact of any activity that we are undertaking or contributing to. This is embodied in the acts of truth-telling, care-taking, and change-making:

1. We will tell the Truth

Governments and their public broadcasters and cultural agencies must tell the truth about the Climate and Ecological Emergency, reverse inconsistent policies and communicate the urgency for far reaching systemic change.

We will communicate with citizens and support them to discover the truth about the emergency and the changes that are needed.

2. We will take Action

Governments must enact legally binding policy measures to reduce emissions to net zero by 2025 and to reduce consumption levels.

We pledge to work towards reducing our emissions to net zero* by 2025. We will challenge policies and actions of local and national governments and their agencies, where we interact with them, that do not help to reduce emissions or consumption levels. We will actively work to imagine and model ways that our organisation can regenerate the planet's resources.

3. We are committed to Justice

The emergency has arisen from deeply systemic injustices. Arts and Culture can imagine and forge shifts in the ways we relate to one another and the world, in our values and behaviours.

We will do what is possible to enable dialogue and expression amidst our communities about how the Emergency will affect them and the changes that are needed. We will support demands for more democracy within our civic institutions and government. We believe that all truth-telling, action and democratic work must be underpinned by a commitment to justice based on intersectional principles**, led by and for marginalised people.

*Net zero means that on balance one's activities are zero emissions, taking into account all possible Greenhouse Gas emissions and actions taken to mitigate or offset those emissions.

**Awareness of how systems of power combine to multiply the impacts on those who are most marginalised in society.

Part 3: Commitments

We endeavour to:

- Monitor our environmental impact by collecting and measuring emissions data for energy, transport, waste, audience travel and purchasing and regularly review and establish a best operational practice, with the intention to refine our plans and approaches as we progress.
- Communicate with and engage employees, partners and associates on environmental issues. Hold people to account for the operations and materials that they bring to our work together.
- Deepen working partnerships and associations with environmental groups, organisations, leaders and activists and those with a climate-conscious agenda at the heart of their work.
- Listen to the diverse voices, ideas and experience of young people, climate organisations, artists, practitioners and experts by lived experience, through creating and curating opportunities for conversations and shared exploration with these communities.
- Use ethical supply chains, being mindful of modern day slavery and social justice issues along with the on-use of materials and objects.
- Reduce waste across all operations of the organisation: reduce waste to landfill, increase reuse and recycling; improve the environmental impact of our exhibitions, commissions and events.
- Improve our own carbon literacy, incorporate environmental considerations into business decisions at Board level and across the organisation by reviewing progress and reporting each quarter and making it a part of future bids.
- Engage audiences in climate change and sustainability through foregrounding conversations about environmental justice through our artistic programme and practices.

Part 4: Immediate Actions

Our priorities are to minimise the impact of our operations and to move to a place where we are contributing positively to the sector and

- Continue to contribute to discussions and projects regionally with Devon & Exeter Doughnuts, Green Futures at the University of Exeter and the Exeter Climate Hub; and nationally with Culture Declares.

- Sourcing commercial materials and volunteer labour with ethical and community-focussed programmes such as Neighbourly.
- Participate in re-use and on-life actions with materials for and from exhibitions and workshops, including participating in the Sustainable Arts Gathering group for sourcing and divesting exhibition and activity materials.
- Move our banking to Co-Operative at the soonest possible time, as they will support carbon monitoring.
- Monitor our web hosting* and online activity through Website Carbon Calculator
- Work closely with Inky Fingers Workshop as a project with high social and environmental values.

*currently 0.18g of CO2 per page visit.

Part 5: Policy monitoring

This Policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually.
- whenever there are significant changes to the organisation or our work.
- as we receive feedback from partners, advisors, young people, communities, artists and stakeholders.
- when we carry out new activities with different impacts.
- if environmental or social factors necessitate a change in business practices.
- as the scientific basis for global and national targets is updated.
- whenever there are changes to legislation.

This Policy was reviewed and adopted on:

Stuart Crewes Creative Director 

Date for review: August 2025