

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



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sustaining
great art



foreword

Arts and culture shape our communities and inform our individual perspectives on the world. Arts organisations are leaders in changing social attitudes and can play a major role in promoting environmental sustainability. In collaboration with Julie's Bicycle, Arts Council England's environmental sustainability programme supports environmental reporting within the arts and cultural community. We help put ideas into action.

The Arts Council was the first cultural funding body in the world to factor environmental reporting into funding agreements. As a result, there has been a 22% decrease in energy usage for reporting organisations since 2012, while 70% of reporting organisations declared wellbeing benefits from the environmental programme in 2016/17.

For the past 10 years, the Arts Council's partnership with Julie's Bicycle has helped develop practical methods of addressing sustainability. This has built the sector's resilience and encouraged more organisations to pursue environmental responsibility. Participants are making an impact in an area of pressure concern to our society: they are also making real savings. Participating

organisations will save a predicted £168 million in energy costs between 2012/13 and 2029/30.

Organisational reporting has led to further action and has inspired organisations worldwide. Our partnership with Julie's Bicycle continues to provide organisations with the latest and most effective approaches to environmental issues, and to increase the skills necessary for long-term resilience.

This annual report lays out findings from the 2016/17 environmental sustainability programme. It highlights progress over the past five years of reporting, and shows us how environmental action has changed approaches over the past year. For example, this year, 84% of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) used environmental policy in their strategic business-planning.

For many organisations, 2017 will be a fifth year of reporting. We need this kind of committed and proactive leadership. It shows how environmental thinking can be a part of everyday business, and offers ways to improve our business overall. I am encouraged to see so many arts and culture organisations getting involved with action on climate change, showing how simple measures at a local level can help provide solutions to a global challenge.

We are just setting out on this journey. I know the arts and culture sector is up for the challenge, and Arts Council England will continue to offer its support and encouragement.

Darren Henley OBE
Chief Executive, Arts Council England



executive summary

Introduction

This report marks the halfway point for the 2015-18 Arts Council England environmental programme. In the five years since its inception in 2012, tangible and lasting changes are evident: there is the progress tracked by consistent longitudinal data-gathering of environmental impacts across the sector. This tracking alone has reaped real benefits – environmental and financial – detailed in this report. But environmental and literacy awareness has prompted a much wider range of benefits that speak to the values, resilience and future-proofing of the cultural community.

To achieve international targets which will keep global temperatures within tolerable limits and maintain planetary

equilibrium across a full range of environmental and social parameters, the global economy is making rapid adjustments. And we are beginning to see these adjustments manifesting in the cultural sector: sustainable use of resources, efficient and low/zero-carbon capital investments, renewable energy, sustainable skills and expertise, green cultural services and goods, and new partnerships underpinned by the technological and digital applications that will drive the green economy.

The pace of change has accelerated since the United Nations launched the 17 Sustainable Development Goals¹ and the Paris Agreement² in late 2015. Since then we have experienced major political upheavals, shocks which will affect the UK – Brexit significantly so, and, perhaps equally but more insidiously, the view on climate and the environment currently held by the White House and the ongoing unravelling of environmental regulations in the USA (still the second largest emitter of CO₂e).

In spite of these political changes (or perhaps because of them), the transition to a sustainable economy has accelerated and is well underway, led by cities, corporations and businesses alongside the public sector, and civil society, including culture. Climate leadership is in the ascendant, transforming global resource use and building strong foundations for the global transition.

ABOVE Cornelia Parker's exhibition, The Whitworth (Photo by David Levene)

In the UK, the government's Clean Growth Strategy released on 12 October 2017 covers the Climate Change Act's fourth and fifth carbon budgets, from 2023-27 and 2028-32, by when the UK must have cut its greenhouse gas emissions to 57% below 1990 levels³. Crucially, the strategy presents government thinking on climate as an economic opportunity at the heart of the UK's industrial strategy, making some important commitments: energy efficiency, investment in carbon capture, usage and storage, offshore wind and a phasing-out of polluting vehicles.

And more good news: coal-fired power in the UK keeps declining significantly, reaching zero usage over an entire day for the first time on 24 April 2017⁴, and the low-carbon and renewable energy industry has reported a turnover of £43 billion.

With already 430,000 jobs in low-carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country, the UK's low-carbon economy is growing rapidly, by between 10 and 12 per cent a



D*evastating extreme weather events have hit the Caribbean, Asia, the Americas and Europe over recent weeks and months. We need to step up clean technology, rev up sustainable finance, make our cities green power houses and develop smarter food and forest systems.*

It is not going to happen without arts and culture igniting imagination. Arts Council England and Julie's Bicycle offer one powerful blueprint to inspire the cultural leadership we need – congratulations.

Nick Nuttall

Director, Communications & Outreach
UNFCCC

year, a growth rate projected to continue until 2030. That's four times faster than growth in the economy as a whole.

Government has estimated that this would generate up to two million more UK jobs in this sector and increase exports by up to £170 billion each year by 2030⁵. It is critical to the cultural economy that it aligns with, and benefits from, this new clean and very historic revolution.

The scale of transition is like nothing before. But it needs to be, as the evidence for climate impacts and the assault on the environment continues relentlessly. We are at a crossroads: many are choosing the less travelled but sustainable road. Culture and the arts have a vital role to play in shaping our ideas, values, cultural norms and creative inspiration.

With a focus on embracing – through thoughts, decisions and deeds – a sustainable cultural economy combined with the joyous inspiration of the creative community, we can really make a difference.

Alison Tickell
Director, Julie's Bicycle



the environmental programme

Arts Council England's 2012 strategic policy intervention to make environmental reporting, a policy and an action plan a funding requirement was underpinned by an ongoing support programme run by Julie's Bicycle. The programme continues, and is embedding the expertise, models and narratives for a sustainable future.

The 2015-18 programme's aims are:

- Help Arts Council England's NPOs to meet their funding requirements around impact measurement⁶ and action-planning
- Support and champion the sector's sustainable development
- Deepen understanding of the sector's environmental performance
- Support the development of Arts Council England's approach to environmental sustainability



key findings

1 Literacy in the portfolio has increased

The number of organisations able to report robust data has **increased by 33%** since the beginning of the programme (from 469 organisations to 623), which shows an increase in their understanding of their environmental impacts and a growing confidence in measuring and managing them.

2 Emissions continue to decrease

There has been a **17% decline⁷ in energy use emissions⁸** in the last year. From 2012/13, we have tracked a 5% average annual reduction, well within national and international emissions reduction targets.

3 The cultural sector is improving energy efficiency and prioritising action

There has been a **9% reduction⁹** in energy use in the last year with almost a fifth of all reporting organisations now on clean energy or green tariffs. Onsite generation of renewable energy has tripled since 2015/16, demonstrating the sector's investment in clean energy and sustainable technology.

4 The sector is more resilient

The reporting portfolio has managed to **save £11 million¹⁰** since the beginning of the programme.

5 The environmental programme has catalysed change

This has provoked creative and operational responses in the sector:

- **84%** of NPOs use their environmental policy for strategic business-planning
- **46%** of NPOs found their environmental policy useful for establishing new collaborations
- **73%** (an 8% increase from last year) of NPOs are already producing or planning to produce work exploring environmental themes



conclusions



73%

**NPOs already producing
or planning to produce
work exploring
environmental themes**

These statistics and the stories behind them show that the sector has not just fulfilled Arts Council England's reporting requirements, but many organisations have embraced environmental action as part of their organisational cultures, understanding that the benefits of action are numerous. Organisations like Freedom Festival Arts Trust, National Theatre, Blackpool Grand Theatre and many others are including environmental sustainability in business strategies too, stimulating new jobs, and supporting the circular economy and the increasing offer of sustainable technology and services in the sector.

This shift is also manifest in new collaborations and creative climate action reaching well beyond the portfolio with 28% of the portfolio already contributing to wider city or neighbourhood environmental policy and strategy.

Creative action has scaled and engagement is high. Creatives and artists play vital roles as climate leaders. Despite having the overwhelming majority of the global scientific community in agreement on the causes and risks of climate change, recent studies¹¹ show that only one in three people remember having a conversation about climate change, ever. What this suggests is that climate change is not a scientific, technical or political challenge, but it is fundamentally a cultural one. Here's where storytellers, art-makers, creatives and designers are building new narratives with two-thirds of NPOs already producing work exploring environmental themes.

What is happening across the country – in theatres, venues, festivals and museums, with artists, curators, green champions and chief executives – is a rich story that needs to be heard. Climate leadership is in the ascendant; creativity is combining with action to accelerate this exciting movement of change.