

# Sustaining Great Art

Environmental report

YEAR ONE

**results**

AND HIGHLIGHTS

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ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

# Foreword

Artists straddle the worlds of imagination and industry. Art challenges our ways of thinking and shows us alternative ways of living. This is what the Arts Council's environmental reporting programme is about.

Last year we introduced environmental policy and action plan requirements for more than 700 of our revenue funded organisations.

It's one of our criteria that the work we invest in must be resilient and sustainable in the social and business senses – and that it demonstrates an awareness of the general environmental context. To help our organisations implement this, we formed a partnership with Julie's Bicycle, and this report summarises the first year's work. It shows some truly encouraging results – 90% of organisations engaged with the programme and nearly 400 provided enough data to identify savings in energy and water use.

Among the latter figure were 62 cultural buildings that provided sufficient information to point to £810,000 combined savings from energy use. There are some 16,000 cultural buildings in the United Kingdom – which gives an idea of what our sector could contribute to the environmental agenda, and how many of our resources are currently wasted, a serious consideration given the alarming rises in utility bills.

The report highlights the issue of scale – nearly half the carbon footprint identified was generated by

just 28 organisations. While large organisations may be the biggest users of resources, it's easier for them to make savings. The majority of organisations we work with are small or medium scale, and many work on the road or operate across multiple venues. It's hard to reduce a transient footprint. So through Julie's Bicycle, we will be continuing to help these smaller companies, offering advice and workshops and further developing the Industry Green Tools.

At Arts Council England, we know that we ourselves have a lot to do. We have been going through a period of reorganisation that has seen us cut our administration costs by half and close several regional offices. In the New Year, we will be moving our head offices from Great Peter Street to more efficient premises in Bloomsbury. When the dust has settled and the boxes are unpacked, we will be looking at the size of our footprint and considering how we can implement an environmental policy across the new structure.

Public bodies must show the way: the actions of Arts Council England have raised interest world-wide. Oxford City Council has introduced environmental reporting requirements for its cultural organisations; from next year Creative Scotland will be implementing environmental reporting and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies is mapping out environmental engagement among its members to see how it can take a lead.

It would be wonderful if across the world, arts organisations came together to show what is possible, in what we say – and in what we do. We are communicators, and we can influence the public mood. Effective change will take the combined efforts of many organisations – change needs the momentum of organisational machinery. But that momentum is driven by individual voices and choices; we can all think how we can loosen our reliance on fossil fuels, ameliorate the effect and cost of our consumption and protect precious natural resources for our children and grandchildren. It looks like a daunting challenge, but we should be optimistic that we can make a difference: history shows us that when humans work together they can move mountains.

## **Alan Davey**

Chief Executive,  
Arts Council England

# Executive summary

In 2012, Arts Council England became the first arts funding body in the world to embed environmental sustainability into the funding agreements of its major programmes. This move was based on its conviction – shared by arts leaders – that environmental sustainability is no longer a ‘nice to have’ but a business critical issue and an essential building block for a resilient arts and cultural sector. For the three years from 2012/13, **704 National portfolio organisations, Major partner museums and Bridge organisations<sup>1</sup> are required to report on energy and water and to have an environmental policy and action plan.** Arts Council England partnered with Julie’s Bicycle to provide tools, resources and support to the reporting organisations. Julie’s Bicycle was able to build on work already underway with 99 National portfolio organisations.

In the first year there was an impressive response: **90 per cent of all 704 organisations engaged** in some capacity with the environmental reporting programme, using the Industry Green Tools (carbon calculators) and online resources, creating environmental policies and action plans, and/or attending Julie’s Bicycle workshops or webinars<sup>2</sup>. This was the first year of capturing energy and water data in this way for the majority of

organisations and it was challenging for some. Despite the high response, of the 615 organisations that registered on the Industry Green Tools, **397 provided energy and water data of sufficient quality for reliable analysis<sup>3</sup>** – that is 63 per cent of all engaged organisations (635) and 56 per cent of the total 704 organisations (301 cultural buildings and 231 offices including multi-site companies). It is entirely usual to have a wide range of data quality and these numbers, particularly in the first year, are outstanding.

Environmental impacts from energy and water use, waste and travel are commonly expressed in terms of carbon<sup>4</sup>. Julie’s Bicycle has estimated a **carbon footprint of 94,000 tonnes from the 397, or 56 per cent of the total, organisations that submitted energy and water data of sufficient quality for reliable analysis, representing an energy spend of £21 million** (£17 million electricity, £4 million gas). Based on this and other data, it was also possible to estimate a **total carbon footprint of 121,000 tonnes for all 704 organisations<sup>5</sup> representing an estimated total spend of £26 million<sup>6</sup>.**

These results constitute the **biggest single dataset from arts organisations globally** and provide a robust starting point for years to come. This dataset has enabled Julie’s Bicycle to establish Arts Council England’s specific energy and water use benchmarks for cultural buildings and offices.

**782 million litres of water** were used in 2012 – 13<sup>7</sup>, the equivalent of 40 million regular baths<sup>8</sup>. As a slice of the overall carbon impact it is negligent, representing a mere 1% of the footprint, but this belies the true significance of water. Moving rapidly up the political agenda, water – scarcity, quality, depletion rates and availability – is an issue of growing public concern.

Larger organisations, prompted by higher utility costs and regulation (primarily the UK’s Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme<sup>9</sup>) tend to be more advanced, helped by greater staff capacity and a more visible level of public accountability. Year one data analysis shows that four large organisations generated 21 per cent of the 2012/13 carbon footprint, and 28 (including the four largest) generated 50 per cent. While a small number of leading organisations are included in the top 28, there is still significant potential for overall improvement.

<sup>1</sup> 681 National portfolio organisations, 16 Major partner museums and seven Bridge organisations.

<sup>2</sup> Seven workshops in four regions with 241 participants and 18 webinars with 154 participants.

<sup>3</sup> The following data was excluded from the data analysis: venues and office data covering less than a 12 month period; estimated home office data; and data which was more than double or less than half compared with Julie’s Bicycle and Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers benchmarks.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix 1 for further detail.

<sup>5</sup> Julie’s Bicycle combined carbon and expenditure data for 397 organisations to work out an average carbon emissions per £1,000 unit of expenditure – 81 kilogrammes. Applying this average to all 704 organisations, assuming similar behaviours, would result in a total carbon footprint of 121,000 tonnes of carbon.

<sup>6</sup> Assuming 121,000 tonnes of carbon breakdowns the same as for the 94,000 tonnes - ie 56% electricity, 44% gas, under 1% water - a total energy spend of £26 million is estimated: £17 million electricity and £9 million gas.

<sup>7</sup> This excludes bottled water.

<sup>8</sup> Nice & Serious and Waterwise <http://everylastdrop.co.uk>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/crc-energy-efficiency-scheme>

## Key observations are:

- larger organisations and cultural buildings have the greater impact with just 28 generating 50 per cent of the 2012/13 carbon footprint. While in general these organisations find it easier to meet reporting requirements, some are in the early stages of taking action and offer good potential for improvement, others are making rapid progress, while some are outstanding
- the greatest potential for improvement still lies with those organisations that are in the early days of acting on environmental sustainability
- levels of engagement and reporting have generally been higher for theatre, Major partner museums and visual arts as compared with literature, dance and music. Museums and theatres in particular have already been targeted by specific environmental initiatives, something which has not been the case for the other art forms
- data quality varied across artforms. For example, all data provided by Major partner museums<sup>10</sup> was of sufficient quality for inclusion in the analysis compared with just over a third for literature. **143 organisations were unable to provide data** for reasons beyond their control. **150 organisations went beyond Arts Council England requirements** and reported on energy, water, travel, waste, tours and productions

- **62 cultural buildings provided more than one years' worth of data and of these, two thirds reduced carbon emissions overall (from energy use only). Their combined 20 per cent energy use reduction over two years generated savings of 4,000 tonnes of carbon<sup>11</sup>, a cash saving of £810,000<sup>12</sup>**
- if, with another year's good data, we assume that **301 cultural buildings manage to achieve the same level of performance it would represent a total 13,000 tonnes carbon saving and a £3 million energy bill reduction** on current tariffs. Both energy and water tariffs are set to rise providing more incentive to take action. There are an estimated 16,000 cultural buildings in the UK<sup>13</sup>. This is a major opportunity to leverage latent capacity into creativity and culture.

Aside from the figures the programme has stimulated ideas, debate and learning and prompted a huge increase in the number of cultural organisations taking environmental action. The results of the first year evaluation survey show that **79 per cent of respondents (354 in total) agreed or strongly agreed that 'Arts Council environmental reporting has made or can make a positive difference to our organisation'** and **86 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that '(it) has made or can make a positive difference to the arts sector as a whole'**.

Reporting levels correspond to the accessibility of data. Hence cultural buildings provided the most comprehensive datasets, followed by offices, while events struggled, reliant as they are on complex supply chains, short term contractors and a nascent energy measurement industry.

Environmental action can be challenging for smaller organisations with less spare capacity or housed in shared buildings, especially when dependent on landlords or other tenants for data. But there are numerous examples of smaller organisations, naturally nimble, driving environmental change by using their creativity and focusing on the activities where they can make a difference, whether that be production design, artist or audience engagement or tour planning.

Artistic responses have proliferated around sustainability. The relationship between creative content and the organisational – or cultural – context in which it is made is intimate, the context often framing the content. It can be surmised that the flourishing of creative invention around sustainability is intimately connected to flourishing confidence, expertise and literacy evidenced across the creative community.

<sup>10</sup> While all 16 Major partner museums reported, the partnerships cover 96 individual organisations and reporting did not cover all 96.

<sup>11</sup> The majority of the 62 buildings reduced energy use, but for some, energy use remained constant or increased. The calculated savings are gross savings (ie based only on those which achieved reductions), and not net (ie all reductions less all increases).

<sup>12</sup> Based on actual energy use data and the Department of Energy and Climate Change's average energy tariffs.

<sup>13</sup> Association of British Orchestras (2011), <http://www.abo.org.uk>; British Phonographic Institute (2001), <http://www.bpi.co.uk/default.aspx>; First Step, UK Music Industry Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 2007, Julie's Bicycle (2007) and Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University, Oxford; Moving Arts, Managing the carbon impacts of our touring, Volumes I, II and III. Julie's Bicycle, London (2010); Green Visual Arts, Mayor of London (2010) and Greater London Authority, London; National Arenas Association (2011), <http://www.nationalarenasassociation.com>; Theatres Trust database, <http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk>



## ENGAGEMENT



90% of 704 organisations engaged



79%

Environmental reporting  
has made or can make  
A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE  
TO OUR ORGANISATION



86%

Environmental reporting  
has made or can make  
A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE  
TO THE ARTS SECTOR

## CARBON & CASH SAVINGS



Energy reductions  
of 62 cultural  
buildings saved



savings of  
£810,000



Similar reductions by  
301 cultural buildings  
would save



savings of  
£3 Million

## RESULTS

year 1

2012-2013

• ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING •

## CARBON IMPACT



=

£21  
Million  
energy spend

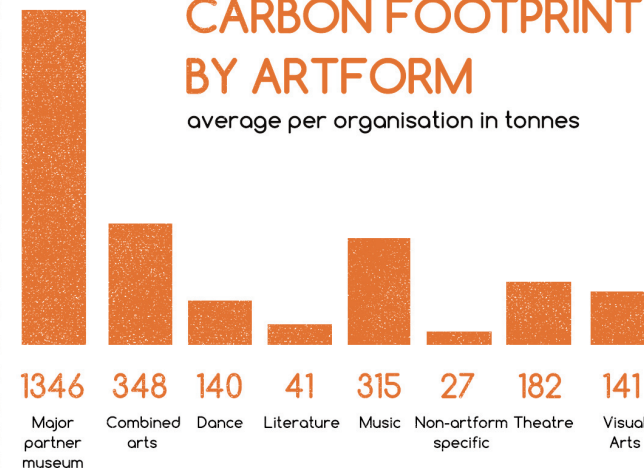
based on the energy and water use of 397  
organisations = 56% of total



estimated for 704 organisations based on average  
carbon per £1,000 unit of expenditure for 397 of 81kg

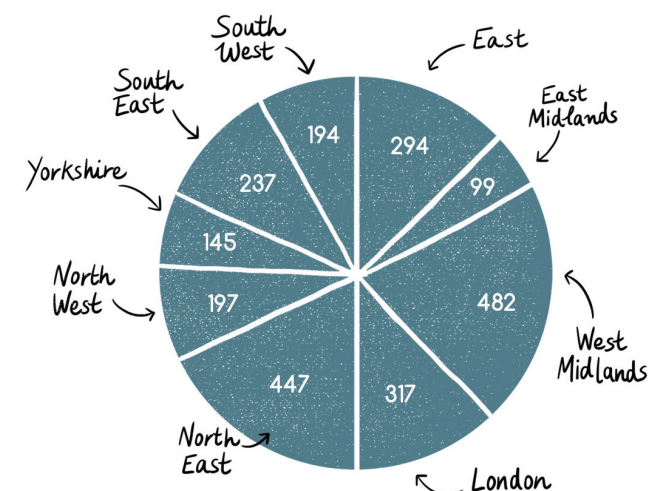
## CARBON FOOTPRINT BY ARTFORM

average per organisation in tonnes



## CARBON FOOTPRINT BY REGION

average per organisation in tonnes



## Key recommendations

### A differentiated strategy for year two and beyond

A distinct approach is needed for smaller organisations, offices and events unable to provide meaningful energy and water data, and for organisations whose primary activity is touring and events, for whom reporting on other sources of environmental impact, such as transport and waste, may be more meaningful. Julie's Bicycle will explore options with the Arts Council for tailoring support and resources to different levels of readiness and need. Julie's Bicycle is developing support for different artforms in the form of tailored resources and events to complement the environmental reporting programme.

### Collaboration and information exchange to accelerate good practice

There is plenty of evidence from collaborations such as the London Theatre Consortium, Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues and Manchester Arts Sustainability Team to prove that exchange and collaboration across the arts and culture can catalyse scaled change and accelerate learning. Further opportunities to collaborate have been requested throughout year one. Identifying the key characteristics for effective knowledge transfer using the hundreds of stories and resources already gathered would yield exponential benefits for the creative community across the UK.

### Sign posting and supporting investment

While initial scepticism has largely evaporated, some organisations are still concerned about how environmental performance will be linked to future Arts Council England funding. Communicating if and how environmental performance will influence funding assessment criteria would preempt and allay these concerns.

Arts Council England's integration of sustainability requirements into large and small capital grants is already proving an important driver and stimulating longer-term investment in sustainable infrastructure. Specific sustainability expertise for those applying for these grants and signposting to other environmental financing opportunities would leverage greater skills and investment into the sector and reinforce the overall commitment from Arts Council England to environmental resilience.

### Stretch ambition, extend practice and communicate with confidence

Year one has created a baseline for the majority of the organisations funded by Arts Council England. It has also witnessed a huge range of imaginative responses that far exceed reporting requirements from many organisations all over the country. Encouraging and reinforcing the widespread commitment to sustainability by reinforcing and celebrating good stories will deepen ambition and build confident communications.

### Consider now the types and scales of investment and competencies that the creative sector will need beyond 2016

The arts and cultural community are as subject to external forces as any other. Some of these forces, such as climate change, are compromising the capacity of our total infrastructure to cope and, in the interests of long term resilience, have made it necessary to widen the parameters upon which decisions are made.

These parameters stem from our custody of the environment: the sourcing and control of energy, cost and availability of commodities and raw materials, land and the built environment, and the organising of human and technological solutions. A holistic approach to arts and culture, intent on shoring up strength and wellbeing over the coming decades, will consider the likely systemic changes already influencing mainstream thinking and put environmental sustainability and innovation at the forefront. This thinking should start now.

***'This move by Arts Council England brings environmental sustainability into the mainstream, making it an important business issue within the sector.'***

**David Joseph**, Chairman and CEO,  
Universal Music UK