

# Julie's Bicycle

SUSTAINING CREATIVITY



## Sustaining Great Art Environmental Report

2012-2015  
Results and Highlights



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
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## Foreword

### Darren Henley OBE, Chief Executive, Arts Council England

The arts can delight, amuse, challenge and shock; they can show us alternative ways of living and thinking. And when it comes to the environmental agenda, the arts can do all those together.

The fact is that a growing population brings growing pressures on vital resources, on infrastructure and energy, on our housing and on our communities – and that includes arts and cultural organisations.

It is therefore one of the goals of our ten year strategy that we should support arts organisations, museums and libraries to become resilient and environmentally sustainable.

Three years ago we began a working relationship with Julie's Bicycle, the global environmental charity, and subsequently became the first arts funding body in the world to embed environmental sustainability into our major funding agreements.

This move was based on our conviction – shared by arts leaders – that a focus on the environment is no longer just 'nice to have' but an issue that is critical to good business.

Between 2012 and 2015, more than 700 regularly funded organisations were required to have an up-to-date environmental policy and action plan, and report on their energy and water usage. This result was the single biggest environmental dataset for the arts in the world.

This report explores the findings of these first three years. It contains some compelling data. Over the course of the programme, participation among our regularly funded organisations rose from 14% to 98%. And over the last two years there have been carbon savings of 12,673 tonnes worth £2.29m, an annual 5% decrease in absolute carbon dioxide emissions despite an increase in cultural activities. This report comes at a significant time. In early December, the UN Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) takes place in Paris. In the future, the issues of climate change will require all of us, including arts and cultural organisations, to take care in our use of resources, and to ensure that we do not pursue short-term gain at the expense of future generations.

Arts and cultural organisations can lead the way practically, but they can also help us to have a constructive dialogue about climate change and its effects on our planet and our people.

Over the last three years our partnership with Julie's Bicycle has produced not only a replicable reporting model but also a unique programme of environmental events, action research projects, network development, and support for arts and culture globally.

Reflecting on these last three years, we can see how far we have come. The 98% engagement statistic is evidence of great positive commitment. Let's continue the great work, and demonstrate leadership at organisational and sector levels. In this area, as in so many others, art and culture can make a huge difference to all our lives.

# Executive summary

In 2012 Arts Council England became the first arts funding body in the world to include environmental reporting in the funding agreements of its major programmes. The Arts Council partnered with Julie's Bicycle, an organisation specialising in environmental sustainability within the arts, to deliver this work.

The initiative had two clear aims:

- 1 To track environmental impacts from energy and water use, as carbon footprints, for the arts community over three years;
- 2 To inspire organisations to be more environmentally sustainable.

Julie's Bicycle was contracted to provide the technical tools and the supporting programme, and to spur the arts on to become more environmentally sustainable. Over 700<sup>1</sup> UK revenue-funded organisations, including theatres, galleries, museums, tours, festivals and concert halls, were required to report on energy and water using the Creative Industry Green (IG) carbon calculators. They were also asked to have an up-to-date environmental policy and action plan.

Julie's Bicycle provided the carbon calculators and learning materials, and ran two support strands: the technical training, analysis for the calculators, and policy and action plan development; and a national programme of events, networks, research and evaluation, case studies, guides and examples of arts practice.

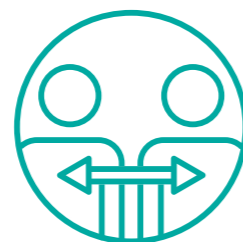
The first three years of the partnership are now complete. Have we achieved our aims? Emphatically yes, and much more besides. An overwhelmingly positive response from cultural organisations all over the country has provided plenty of evidence of success, both qualitative and quantitative. This report presents the results of the partnership, focusing primarily on the Arts Council's reporting requirements. (A summary of the accompanying events and resource programme can be found in the Appendix.) It headlines the response, data analysis, added value, and other notable findings, and concludes with key priorities for the coming three years.

*Pentabus produce original plays examining the place of the rural world in contemporary society. Pentabus achieved its target of a 10% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction in 2015 through a range of measures including using lower-carbon transport when touring, reducing business travel through increased use of Skype, and installing energy-efficient office lighting. Their audience travel survey has helped to promote lower-carbon travel options. The artistic director has encouraged the team to make use of existing stores, to borrow props and to form partnerships with local organisations such as the Shropshire Furniture scheme.*

“ We've found that embedding sustainability has bred ingenuity during the creative process. It is more of a challenge to create something within boundaries - something that can amaze an audience, but also save the environment and save money.

This challenge is the motivation, to walk down that road and be resourceful rather than to create something with unlimited materials and money. It pushes you to be better and think about things with a different logic, one that we are finding to be ultimately more rewarding.

Crayg Ward,  
Pentabus Green Champion



<sup>1</sup> Between 2012 and 2015 over 700 revenue-funded organisations, national portfolio organisations (NPOs), major partner museums (MPMs) and bridge organisations, were required to report on energy and water and to have an up-to-date environmental policy and action plan. National youth music organisations (NYMOs) joined the programme in 2013. 713 organisations in 2015: 683 NPOs, 16 MPMS (89 individual museums), 7 bridge organisations and 7 NYMOs. 704 organisations in 2013: 681 NPOs, 16 MPMS (96 individual museums) and 7 bridge organisations.

## Headline findings

### Response: engagement, guidance

- From a near standing start, almost all of over **700 organisations** are engaged and taking action.
- **98%** of reporting Arts Council funded organisations (699) were involved by 2015 compared to **14%** in 2012.
- **90%** (642) have an environmental policy and **86%** an environmental action plan.
- Almost all of those who can report are now reporting.
  - **69%** (492) reported.
  - **23%** (164) were unable to report. These comprise organisations who typically don't own or rent a building; are unable to access energy and water invoices; or have impacts which are too sporadic or small to measure meaningfully.
  - Only **8%** didn't report at all.
- **40%** have gone beyond the Arts Council's reporting requirements.
- **80%**<sup>2</sup> now consider themselves engaged or very engaged with environmental sustainability.
- There have been many imaginative and solutions-driven responses evidenced in the case studies, workshops, exchanges, action-research and new initiatives.
- ~**2000** participants attended one or more events and **41 case studies** were provided by arts organisations.

*Liverpool Everyman's new building, opened in 2014 after a £27 million investment, acts as a creative hub, enabling the Everyman to realise its artistic, accessibility and environmental vision. The building uses a range of low-carbon energy sources, and has energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, materials and lighting. Most of the materials used in the building are recycled, reclaimed or sustainably sourced, and the building also features a number of water and biodiversity conservation measures. The building has been acclaimed by audiences and critics alike, and has won various awards including the 2014 RIBA Stirling Prize.*

### Results: tracking impact and reducing emissions

Between 2013 and 2015:

- **12,673** tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e and **£2.29m** was saved with an average **5%** decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions each year, despite growth of the sector.
- **99%** of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions reductions resulted from energy savings. Water use remained stable overall.
- Two thirds of organisations reduced their energy use.
- Scaling these results up across all cultural buildings in the UK would see savings of **£15m**.<sup>3</sup>
- In the first year of reporting (2012), it was also possible to track savings of 748 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e and £176,000 from a sample group which already had data on energy and water use for 2011.
- The IG Tools have generated a robust dataset, the single biggest environmental dataset for the arts globally.

### Added value: money, morale and reputation

There have been clear benefits for the organisations themselves.

- **51%** reported financial benefits.
- **67%** reported team morale benefits (rising to **71%** for engaged and very engaged organisations).
- **43%** reported reputational benefits.
- **70%** found their environmental policy useful when applying for funding and **69%** when engaging with stakeholders.
- **92%** found having an environmental action plan helped to manage and reduce environmental impacts.
- **85%** found the plan useful for communicating actions.

*In 2014, 'Human Nature' brought together artists, horticulturists, architects and choreographers to create new work focused on the growing seasons and nature, drawing from the choreographic roots of **Siobhan Davies Dance**.*

<sup>2</sup> 80% of 253 respondents to 2015 evaluation survey i.e. 202 organisations.

<sup>3</sup> £15 million potential total industry savings has been calculated by applying a 3% reduction on an estimated annual electricity spend of £86.4m and a 15% reduction on an estimated gas spend of £37m in the 2013/14 financial year and a 4% and 9% reduction respectively in the 2014/15 financial year, based on original research by the Oxford Environmental Change Institute, estimating the energy spend of the 16,000 buildings constituting the cultural sector in the UK.

### Cultural shifts: a global movement with momentum

- This initiative has reinforced a sustainability movement in culture with far-reaching potential.
- Much of the progress has come from the middle rather than the top of organisations.
- Despite this, a number of key Arts Council organisations have positioned sustainability at the centre of their organisational leadership.
- The initiative has generated a comprehensive and internationally referenced resource library charting the diversity and range of creative responses. It is widely seen as a model of outstanding practice. This is important in the context of international policy and global trends, particularly in the run up to the critical 2015 climate talks in Paris, COP21.
- The theatre and visual arts communities are the most proactive in all areas of environmental sustainability but they consider themselves to be doing the least<sup>4</sup> revealing an evolving maturity about the scale and complexity of the issues.
- There are clear priorities for the next three years of the partnership.

### Other key findings

- 17 organisations produce **50%** of the sector's carbon footprint.
- Organisations unable to report are not uninterested but are hampered by the nature of the Arts Council reporting requirements.
- Average annual savings of about **5%** are mainly being achieved through zero- or low-cost measures.
- The internal culture within the Arts Council is gradually shifting, with greater environmental and carbon literacy and engagement across the organisation.
- Almost all (**96%**) of the 33 relationship managers who contributed to the Arts Council evaluation believe that the programme has made, or can make, a positive difference to their portfolios, and some Relationship Managers (RMs) are well informed and committed.

### Key conclusions and priorities for 2015-18: creating a stronger cultural sector together

The weight of material gathered over the last three years proves that the business case and the creative case for cultural engagement with sustainability work best when they work together. The partnership approach, fundamental to the initiative's success, has generated confidence and ambition, key components of leadership. The framework for such leadership will be developed in the coming months, with specific resources for boards, governing bodies and executives; an emerging cohort of Arts Council funded organisations with sustainability leadership built into their funding agreements; and a series of leadership events. Arts Council England will focus on strategic leadership internally and across the portfolio between 2015 and 2018.

Reporting requirements and support are being better tailored to the diversity of the sector in 2015 - 18.

To date, savings have mainly been achieved through zero- and low-cost measures but a small number of organisations are already investing in lower carbon buildings and we expect to see the results of these investments in the next few years. Investment will be essential to achieve reductions beyond business-as-usual.

The combined results of the last three years give us much more than data on carbon. Fresh perspectives on the arts have prompted many organisations to commit their time, investment and creativity into exploring environmental sustainability. The success of the partnership has important lessons for policy: the combination of light-touch funding requirements; relevant and tested practical resources; regular events; networks and team support; expertise to hand; and the critical leadership from the sector have all contributed to make it work. Building environmental sustainability into the fabric of the arts not only delivers on its promise, but adds inherent long-term value to organisations and the sector as a whole.