

# #SHOW MUST GO ON

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
REPORT AND VISION  
FOR THE UK FESTIVAL INDUSTRY**

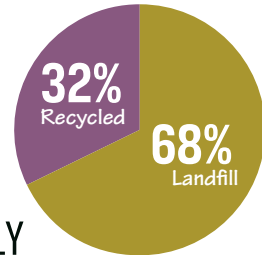


# FESTIVAL INDUSTRY IMPACTS BY NUMBERS



## WASTE

**23,500 TONNES** OF WASTE ANNUALLY



## FUEL

**5 MILLION LITRES**

The total litres of fuel used by the UK festival industry annually.

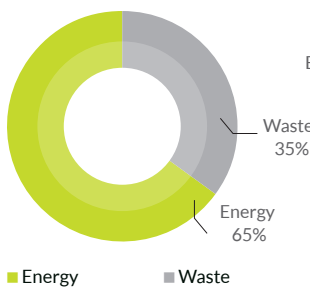


Average litres of diesel at UK music festivals  
**0.6 LITRES PER PERSON PER DAY**

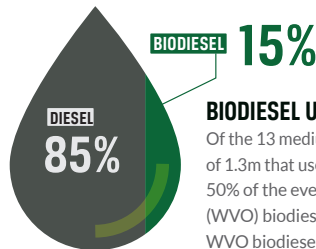
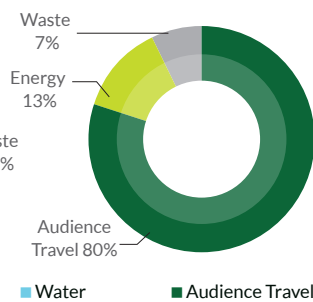


## FESTIVAL CARBON FOOTPRINT

**AVERAGE CARBON FOOTPRINT (ONSITE)**  
(CO<sub>2</sub>e)



**AVERAGE CARBON FOOTPRINT WITH AUDIENCE TRAVEL** (CO<sub>2</sub>e)



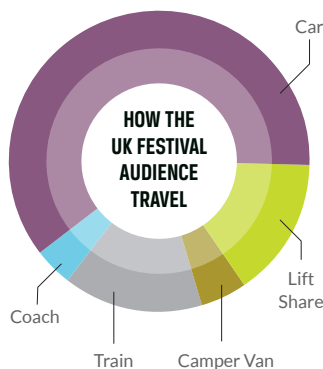
### BIODIESEL USE

Of the 13 medium to large events with a combined audience of 1.3m that used the Julie's Bicycle Creative IG Tool, over 50% of the events were using some waste vegetable oil (WVO) biodiesel with an average total consumption of 15% WVO biodiesel and 85% diesel.

## CARBON EMISSIONS



## TRAVEL \*



TRAVEL TYPICALLY CONSTITUTES AROUND

**80%** OF A FESTIVAL'S TOTAL KNOWN CO<sub>2</sub>e EMISSIONS\*

\*not counting artist/crew/service travel and transport



\*Please see [www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/vision2025/references](http://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/vision2025/references) for an explanation of the travel types breakdown and a full list of references from the report.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been funded and written by the industry think-do tank, Powerful Thinking, with significant support from Julie's Bicycle, Festival Republic, Kambe Events, and Plaster PR.

Many organisations have been involved in the journey that led to this report being written. Five years ago in Bristol a group of committed festivals and interested parties met to discuss energy management in the festival industry. They formed a group that became Powerful Thinking, which funds work to tackle shared issues in creating a sustainable festival industry and provides resources and advice to the industry in the spirit of Creative Commons.

Founding members include Julie's Bicycle, Kambe Events (Shambala Festival), Festival Republic, Bestival, Firefly Clean Energy, and the Association of Independent Festivals (AIF). More recently, A Greener Festival, the Production Services Association (PSA), the Association of Festival Organisers (AFO) and the National Outdoor Events Association (NOEA) have joined the group. De Montfort University and the Nationwide Catering Association (NCASS) have also contributed significantly along the way.

Special thanks go to Katie Maddison (formerly Bestival) and Laura Pando (Festival Republic) for their useful comments on this report, to Alison Tickell (CEO, Julie's Bicycle) for her mentorship and feedback, to other members of the Julie's Bicycle team; Chiara Badiali and Luke Ramsay, for their research, fact checking, data crunching and insights, to Livvy Drake, and Jenna Ansell (Kambe Events) and Ed Cook for their research support and contribution to content. Also to the industry consultation group set up for this report, who have already begun to get behind the vision: Tom Lawson at UK Festival Awards, Michelle Tayton at the Event Production Show, Tom Hall at Access All Areas magazine, Caroline Clift at Standout magazine, Johnny Lance at the Showman's Show and Greg Palmer at the ILMC; and finally to Bethan Riach for her copy-editing.

The lead author is Chris Johnson, co-founder and Chair of Powerful Thinking, co-founder and Operations Director at Shambala Festival, and the Associate for Festivals and Events at Julie's Bicycle.

## FUNDERS



ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

Julie's Bicycle  
SUSTAINING CREATIVITY



## SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Powerful Thinking was established in 2010 as a not-for-profit industry group focused on tackling energy-related issues at festivals. It has provided a forum to support research, explore issues and develop solutions, and has developed free-to-use resources which support festivals to reduce environmental impacts. The release of this report recognises a broader aspiration in the group to tackle other sustainability-related issues the industry shares. The group has representation from 273 festivals through membership organisations.

***The Show Must Go On* report was conceived as an industry response to the Paris climate change talks in 2015.**

**The report aims to:**

- Outline the environmental impacts of the festival industry in an accessible format.
- Provide a robust basis for an industry-wide approach to reducing environmental impacts.
- Promote action.

With a view to meeting the UK national target of a 50% reduction in green house gas emissions by 2025, the report brings together all known UK research and analyses the most comprehensive datasets available on the environmental impact of festivals. It explores individual precedents and considers industry-wide scenarios for reductions.

The report, based on 273 UK summer music festivals, finds that the industry is responsible for approximately:

- 20 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e annually (onsite emissions)
- 100 kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e annually, including audience travel
- 23,500 tonnes waste
- 5 million litres of diesel consumption

Also that:

- Environmental responsibility is important to festivalgoers (according to audience survey data).
- 5% of UK festivals are formally engaged with an environmental certification scheme.
- Typical recycling rates are likely to be lower than 32%.
- Energy is typically 65% of a festival's onsite CO<sub>2</sub>e footprint.
- Waste is typically 35% of a festival's onsite CO<sub>2</sub>e footprint.
- When including audience travel, onsite emissions are typically 20% of total festival-related emissions and audience travel up to 80%.
- There are significant blind-spots for data on contractor and artists travel.

80% of festival organisers participating in the Industry Green Manifesto Survey (May 2015) stated that, 'they are committed to improving performance,' and that, 'the industry should work together towards shared standards.'

The top five priorities put forward by UK festival organisers, in order of priority are:

- 1 Sustainable approaches to energy.
- 2 Standard approach to serve-ware and packaging.
- 3 Use of reusable cups.
- 4 A standard approach to waste management systems.
- 5 Sustainable travel policies.

Through modelling carbon impact scenarios for different reduction measures, and exploring precedents, the report finds that the industry can realistically reduce its annual global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% within 10 years through incremental changes to:

- Reduce diesel consumption by 50%, through efficiency and alternatives.
- Achieve 55% recycling rates.
- Increase car occupancy and shared transport options.

Fear of increased costs, lack of internal resources and the time to make changes, along with lack of expertise in sustainable approaches are the three most common reasons for festivals not adopting sustainable practices. When asked what support would help festivals organisers to make changes, the three areas of focus put forward were:

- Training for the management team.
- Opportunities to share and exchange knowledge with other organisers.
- Case studies showing how practices have improved sustainability.

Festival Vision:2025 aims to galvanise the existing commitment in the festival industry to act together on climate change by setting out clear aims and the beginnings of a roadmap for action.

<sup>1</sup> Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) is a measure used to compare the global warming potential of different types of greenhouse gases (e.g. methane and nitrous oxide), using carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) as a reference.

Festivals can reduce their environmental impacts and play a valuable and inspiring role in shaping a positive future. This will be made much easier, more cost-effective, and successful if we work together as an industry, and begin to resource an industry body which can support and guide this process through:

- **Research, development and coordination of free-to-use resources — including support and partnerships with existing industry initiatives.**
- **The provision of objective and qualified advice and training to the industry on a not-for-profit basis**
- **Annual industry reports to track progress**
- **Nurturing the collective aspiration.**

The Festival Vision:2025 Pledge aims to bring together those festivals who wish to take action. Please consider joining the growing number of committed festival organisers by signing the Festival Vision 2025 pledge at: [www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/vision2025](http://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/vision2025).

This report and vision initiative will be included in a briefing on international creative responses to climate change, submitted along with a letter signed by cultural leaders and artists, to Christiana Figueras, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), at COP 21 in Paris 2015.

## Summary of recommendations from the report:

The report sets out a number of key recommendations which will enable festivals to meet the challenge of achieving 50% reduction in emissions compared to 2014 by 2025, these are summarised as follows:

### OVERALL

- Measure impacts and progress through robust reporting.
- Achieve an 8% reduction in GHG emissions per year until 2020, and 5% per year until 2025.
- Engage audiences and stakeholders in positive action on climate change.

### WASTE

- Reduce amount and number of types of waste
- Segregate materials onsite.
- Achieve a 50% recycling rate (of total materials present onsite).
- Accurate reporting on waste, supported by an industry-wide approach.

### TRAVEL

- Measure contractor and artist travel.
- Increase car occupancy and use of public transport.
- Consider carbon balancing initiatives to recognise unavoidable emissions.

### ENERGY

- Monitor energy as standard in contractual agreements.
- 50% reduction in diesel consumption.
- Diversification toward renewable sources.

### FOOD

- Source as locally as possible.
- Establish minimum standards based on credible certifications.
- Reduce food waste.
- Reduce meat and dairy consumption.

### OTHER

- Balance unavoidable emissions through credible carbon reduction initiatives.
- Work with the supply chain to share the journey toward reducing impacts.
- Reduce impacts from offices

# FOREWORD

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**AS FESTIVAL ORGANISERS WE KNOW HOW TO CREATE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES AND HOW TO INSPIRE PEOPLE. WE KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE IN CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WE ARE ACCOMPLISHED AT COMMUNICATING WITH AUDIENCES. THE EARTH IS LITERALLY ON THE VERGE OF ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE, AND IT IS WELL WITHIN OUR REACH TO TURN OUR INDUSTRY INTO AN EXEMPLAR OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY. IF WE CAN CREATE SPACE IN OUR BUSY LIVES, AND PULL TOGETHER AS AN INDUSTRY, WE CAN MAKE A VITAL AND SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO A FUTURE WE WANT OUR CHILDREN TO INHERIT. FESTIVAL ORGANISERS, WORKING WITH THEIR MANY AND DIVERSE PARTNERS, FROM CONCESSIONS TO THE SUPPLY CHAIN, CONTRACTORS, CHARITIES AND BRANDS, CAN PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR WHAT IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION OF OUR TIME. THE SHOW MUST GO ON...**

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*Chris Johnson, Chair, Powerful Thinking*