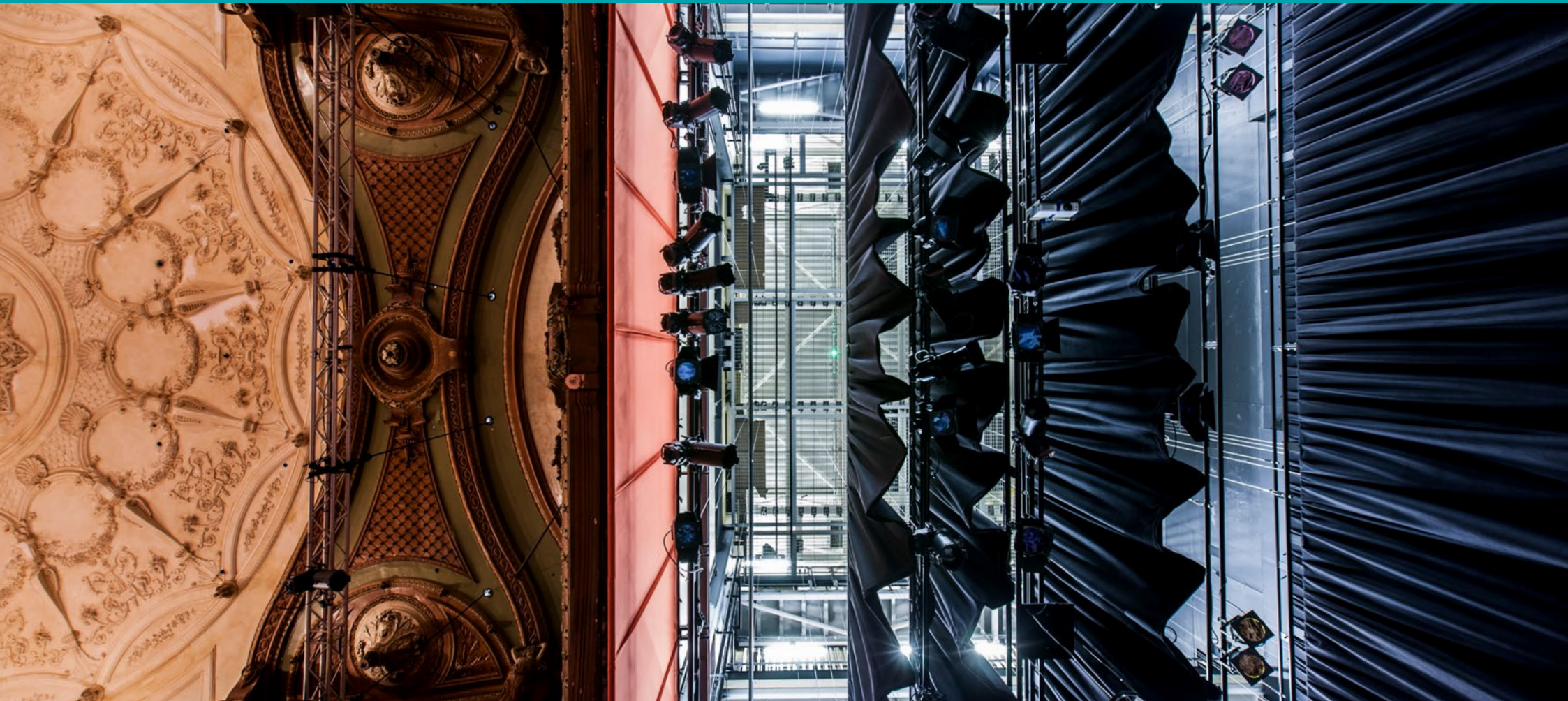


# Sustaining Great Art and Culture

*Environmental Report 2017/18*



# Foreword



**“[Arts and cultural organisations] show us by example how we can all take real action and drive change.”**

It's been more than ten years since Arts Council England started working with Julie's Bicycle – the leading global charity in helping the creative community act on climate change. Together, we have found practical and effective ways to help the sector reduce its environmental impact. Our collaboration led to a ground-breaking policy intervention in 2012, when the Arts Council became the first cultural body in the world to include action on environmental sustainability in our funding agreements with National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)<sup>1</sup>. These organisations have risen to the challenge, with a 23% reduction in energy consumption and a corresponding 35% reduction in carbon emissions since 2012/13<sup>2</sup>.

One of our priorities at the Arts Council is to help improve the all-round resilience of arts and cultural organisations. As the findings of this Annual Report show, environmental action isn't just responsible, it makes economic sense. Many arts and cultural organisations report that they generate financial

benefits as a direct result of environmental initiatives. In the last six years, participating organisations saved £16.5 million in energy costs.

These figures only scratch the surface. Organisations can demonstrate significant benefits by embedding environmental sustainability into their business practice. These include improving staff engagement and motivation, encouraging more consistent building management and enhancing reputation in the eyes of audiences and stakeholders. They are also part of the new creative ecology, with suppliers responding to the demand for greener products and services. Nearly a quarter of the National Portfolio has now switched to a green energy tariff, helping to drive demand for clean energy across the UK.

Arts and cultural institutions, and the artists they work with, teach us about ourselves and our place in the wider world, delighting, stimulating and inspiring in equal measures. We need their influence now more than ever. In October, a landmark report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that “rapid far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” are required to limit global warming to 1.5C, highlighting the devastating difference between this temperature increase compared with 2C. The arts can help communicate the urgency of this message to the public, programming

work that engages with environmental issues and shifting social attitudes. By highlighting the steps that arts and cultural organisations are taking to become more sustainable, they show us by example how we can all take real action and drive change.

I am impressed by the lead that NPOs have taken. The Arts Council is also committed to reducing its own environmental impact and we've had some encouraging results from the Smart Working approach we are currently trialling. In our Cambridge office we have reduced staff travel mileage by 30% and paper use by 48%.

Changing the way things are done is never easy, but the Arts Council England Environmental Programme has shown that creative thinking and hard work can bring results. There is much more to be done, but I know the sector will continue to promote innovative ways that will help us to build an environmentally sustainable future.

**Sir Nicholas Serota**  
Chair, Arts Council England

<sup>1</sup> Including Major Partner Museums (MPMs). As of April 2018 we have fully integrated MPMs into the National Portfolio, so for the purpose of this report will be referring to all organisations as NPOs

<sup>2</sup> Based on a core group of 136 organisations who have consistently reported since 2012/13



# Introduction



**“Arts Council England’s policy intervention has prompted hundreds of creative organisations to demonstrate how a creative ecology can work.”**

This report is a concise review of 2017/18, and the end of a six-year policy intervention in climate action by Arts Council England, Julie’s Bicycle and an exceptional community of culture, arts and creative organisations. It’s a story anchored in hard data – environmental impacts, numbers, comparisons and scenarios. They help us to learn, to collaborate, to plan and to scale. The story tells how carbon literacy across a rich cultural community can yield so much more than carbon reductions. Starting from the basics – carbon footprints – this deceptively simple policy is demonstrating how a sustainable cultural sector might actually work; inspiring deeper exploration and connections between climate and social justice, investment and innovation, clean energy and new materials, empathy and biodiversity. Some may argue that focusing on impacts is missing the point, that environmental action across the arts is best served by focusing on artists and content. This is a misconception: we need both.

The programme has asked for annual data, policies and action plans from all National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs). To support this, Julie’s Bicycle has delivered a rich programme: guides, events, demonstrations, blogs, research, analysis, networks and knowledge-sharing, all of which has amplified and nourished sector collaboration.

The creative industries account for £92 billion of Gross Value Added (GVA) and two million jobs, and they are growing twice as fast as the economy as a whole<sup>3</sup>. The material impacts associated with an economy of this size are significant. Simultaneously, the UK low carbon and renewable energy (LCRE) economy grew by 5% to £42.6 billion in 2016 (from £40.5 billion in 2015) and continued to account for around 1 % of total UK non-financial turnover<sup>4</sup>.

The programme results show we are ahead of the game: strong year-on-year reductions in energy use across the National Portfolio – and the resulting £16.5m financial savings created since 2012/13 – is evidence that this is working. Together, the creative and the green economies could be exponentially powerful agents of change. The figures alone do not capture the detail of change, the daily acts of commitment: tour planning, procuring for exhibitions, concessions for festivals, communicating to audiences, recycling decisions,

energy use, biodiversity, packaging, food sourcing and merchandise, and much else besides. The application of sustainability principles is continually extending, generating valuable new knowledge that helps drive a sustainable cultural economy readying for change.

Midway through the programme, in late 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted by almost 200 countries; in June 2017 the USA stated its intention to withdraw. While 195 countries remain committed to it, citizens and cities have pushed ahead of national governments to meet its targets – Leeds, Liverpool, London and Manchester are part of a major global city resilience movement organising and scaling together. Big science has become citizen action: *Blue Planet 2* gave voice to the outrage of plastic pollution, leading to business, government and manufacturers pledging to act; it is remarkable how quickly once ubiquitous plastic straws are disappearing. This shows how a cultural intervention with impeccable timing, a cool and trusted advocate, and a clear message can change everything.

But it isn’t enough.

Coming between the landmark Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-deal/creative-industries-sector-deal-html#fn:1>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/finalesimates/2016>

Global Warming, launched on October 8th<sup>5</sup>, and the COP24 talks in Poland<sup>6</sup>, this report is a rallying cry for greater ambition. The IPCC assessment calls for direct action from governments and citizens, with just 12 years in which to stabilise global warming so that it does not exceed 1.5 degrees. Climate change and the environment are moral issues that require visible and tangible responses.

In uncertain times, arts and culture become even more important. As we experience climate change unfolding around us, arts and culture can intervene, disrupt, generate new knowledge and foster cultural practice that illuminates pathways through the complexities of climate and the environment. So much has been achieved in the last six years. As anthropologist Margaret Mead said in 1978 as she received her Planetary Citizen Award for her contribution to culture:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.”

The stakes are high. What will we achieve in the next four years?

**Alison Tickell**

Director, Julie's Bicycle

“

**It's wonderful to see the collaboration between Julie's Bicycle, the Arts Council and the creative sector succeeding in bringing together so many different cultural organisations to transform the public conversation on climate change, while tackling their own impact as well. Thank you for all your commitments so far and let's keep blazing the trail, this work has never been more important.**

”

**Christiana Figueres**

*Founding Partner, Global Optimism and  
Former Executive Secretary, UNFCCC 2010-2016*

## The Arts Council England Environmental Programme

Arts Council England's 2012 policy intervention requires National Portfolio Organisations to annually monitor their environmental impacts using a carbon foot-printing tool developed by Julie's Bicycle and to have an environmental policy and action plan. Organisations are supported with an ongoing programme of events, training, advice, resources and community-building provided by Julie's Bicycle.

### The 2017-18 programme has aimed to:

- help Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations meet their funding requirements of impact measurement and action-planning
- encourage 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

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/session48/pr\\_181008\\_P48\\_spm\\_en.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/session48/pr_181008_P48_spm_en.pdf) – calls for renewed urgency and action on climate to keep global temperatures at 1.5 degrees Celsius warming (below the landmark Paris target of 2 degrees)

<sup>6</sup> <https://unfccc.int/katowice>



# Achievements

## Energy efficiency and carbon reductions

**23%**

decrease in energy use between 2012/13 and 2017/18

**35%**

decrease in energy use emissions (based on electricity and gas) from 67,600 to 44,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> between 2012/13 and 2017/18<sup>7</sup>

**7%**

average annual reduction in energy use emissions (based on electricity and gas) since 2012/13

## Increasing resilience

**£16.5m**

saved by the reporting portfolio since 2012/13 due to year-on-year reductions in energy use<sup>8</sup>

**75%**

of organisations find their environmental policy useful for supporting funding applications

## Signs of a new creative ecology

**1/4**

of NPOs are now either on a green tariff or purchase their energy from a 100% renewable supplier

**78%**

of NPOs find their environmental policy useful for business planning

**43%**

of organisations find their policy useful for new partnerships and collaborations

## Carbon literacy is creating wider benefits

**65%**

of organisations are producing creative work with an environmental theme

**70%**

of organisations feel the programme positively impacts staff wellbeing

<sup>7</sup> This reduction is partly related to the UK's grid decarbonisation as fossil fuel energy generation is phased out and replaced with renewables.

<sup>8</sup> Based on results from applying the 5% average annual reduction achieved by the core group on energy spend to the whole portfolio (based on 2012/13 electricity and gas of 469 organisations)

# 2017/18 Engagement

**The arts and cultural sector is connecting with climate change and the environment through the programme.**

**87%**

consider themselves **engaged or very engaged** in line with engagement since 2012/13

**88%**

agree environmental reporting has or can make a **positive difference** to the sector

**77%**

agree environmental reporting has or can make a **positive difference** to their organisations

**58%**

of organisations have been using their environmental data to **inform decision-making**

An average of

**81%**

of organisations use their environmental policy and action plans for **business-planning, funding applications and developing new partnerships**

An average of

**71%**

of organisations say action plans bring about recognisable **positive change**

“

**Midlands Arts Centre has a strong commitment to environmental sustainability across the organisation. As well as practical initiatives, we recognise the important role that the arts has to play in increasing environmental awareness. MAC's Green Group continues to demonstrate that it is possible to have a relatively large impact with a little effort and imagination.**

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**Lizzie Moran**

*Head of Technical Resources,  
Midlands Arts Centre*



# Looking ahead



**“The sector’s ambition has been raised, and so has ours.”**

As of April 2018, Arts Council England embarked on a new four-year contract with Julie’s Bicycle, considering how we can support organisations going even further to improve their environmental sustainability. Over the years we have seen carbon literacy and environmental action plans become the new normal for arts and cultural organisations, who are imbedding sustainability across all elements of their business. The sector’s ambition has been raised, and so has ours.

In May, we launched the [Accelerator Programme](#), which will see two cohorts of ten organisations or consortia work with Julie’s Bicycle to advance their sustainability practice. Julie’s Bicycle will help these organisations develop their ambitious ideas into deliverable projects, encouraging enterprise, innovation and creative perspectives on climate and the environment.

We also want to ensure our efforts are achieving the greatest possible impact. Data collated by

Julie’s Bicycle shows that a small proportion of organisations with large infrastructures generate over half of the portfolio’s total emissions. In response, we are rolling out a new dedicated scheme for these organisations – the [Spotlight Programme](#). On the programme, organisations will work with Julie’s Bicycle to set achievable, yet ambitious, Environmental Impact Reduction Objectives, resulting in a significant change to the sector’s carbon footprint.

These new programmes will complement the incredible achievements already being made by arts and cultural organisations, who have shown substantial enthusiasm and dedication over the past six years. The results of their hard work – as demonstrated by this report – highlight tangible benefits to the organisations, their audiences, the sector and to society. Looking ahead, we are excited to keep championing their efforts and are committed to helping the arts and cultural sector become leaders in environmental sustainability.

## **Francis Runacres**

Executive Director, Enterprise & Innovation  
Arts Council England



# About Julie's Bicycle

Climate change is a consequence of a global economic system predicated on the over-exploitation of natural resources which doesn't account for – nor fully understand – the implications of large-scale environmental destruction. We need positive and inspirational action that respects the planetary systems upon which humanity relies, and which builds our sustainable future.

Julie's Bicycle, a London-based not-for-profit, is dedicated to encouraging, accelerating and amplifying the cultural response to climate change and environmental sustainability. We believe that the creative community is uniquely placed to imagine, create and communicate the changes that will transform our world. Culture will play an exponentially influential role in the climate change challenge.

We run a rich programme of events, free resources, consultancy, training, community-building and advocacy. We are deeply embedded within the creative and cultural community, working alongside organisations and artists across the UK and internationally to inspire creative responses and positive action.

[juliesbicycle.com](http://juliesbicycle.com)

## Acknowledgements

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Written, edited and produced by Julie s Bicycle on behalf of Arts Council England. We are committed to being open and accessible. We welcome all comments on our work. Please send these to: Executive Director, Advocacy & Communications, at the Arts Council England address above.

**Above:** Passage for Par by Rosemary Lee, commissioned by CAST for Groundwork, a season of international art in Cornwall, summer 2018. © Graham Gaunt