



The Barn

Environmental Policy and Action Plan 2025-28

“We also recognise your work to use influence to reduce the impact of others. We urge you to continue to nurture the collaborations developed through your Becoming Earthly programme and to keep sharing content that make audiences and artists consider their own impact. Additionally, since you are really leading on this use of influence, we would really encourage you to share your experiences and future plans with other organisations to inspire them to follow your example. You are doing some really great work here and we look forward to seeing how it progresses.” Creative Carbon Scotland Environmental Reporting Feedback 2022-2023

Our Commitment

As Aberdeenshire’s largest multi-arts venue, the Barn is aware not only of its role as a key contributor to the cultural landscape in North East Scotland but also of its carbon footprint. We are committed to minimising the ecological impact of our operations and activities and since inception, have demonstrated a leading role within the Scottish arts sector in championing sustainable energy and environment principles.

We have a track record of Art and Ecology projects and environmental awareness work that also inform our programme. The changing climate is at the core of our programming and projects i.e., our community projects The Far Orchard and Plenty? Festival, our artist programme Becoming Earthly, our youth programme Convergence, our craft programme Crafted, our community general programme and forthcoming Walled Garden project with its focus on soil.

In alignment with Scotland’s pathway to achieving Net Zero by 2045, the Barn is committed to implementing various measures to continue to significantly reduce our carbon emissions and to contribute to the broader environmental goals of our organisation and the region, including influencing our audiences, the people we work with, our landlords and other Woodend at Crathes tenants.

The Talk

Meeting these targets requires the Barn to operate in an as environmentally sustainable way as possible, prioritising:

- The reduction of emissions resulting from energy consumption and utilities, including water use
- The reduction of emissions resulting from travel (staff, artists, freelancers, contractors and audience travel) in line with the Scottish Government's commitment to reduce car kilometres travelled by 20% by 2030
- When no further emissions can be eradicated, consideration of how best to balance residual emissions through accredited programmes
- The eradication of waste sent to landfill and the adoption of the circular economy, ensuring waste is recycled and food waste separated as appropriate, including waste resulting from specific projects and private hires
- The defining and reduction of emission boundaries generated through the procurement of goods and services in supply chains
- The reduction of emissions from our digital assets, including our website and data storage
- Expanding the Green Team from one Green Champion to include staff, Board and volunteers to develop strategies for reducing our carbon footprint and to effectively monitor and measure our impacts
- Diversifying the Board to include environmental sector representatives and actively participating in collaborative initiatives through relevant networks and working groups.

The Walk

To date, we have;

- Invested in the installation of biomass heating to provide sustainable energy efficiencies within our building, one of the earliest cultural organisations to do so
- Established over 110 garden allotments adjacent to the Barn for local people to practice horticulture, developed a wild garden for the diversification and preservation of plants and wildlife and for the enjoyment of many, and additionally, started plans for a walled garden using a derelict site leased from Leys Estate which will be redeveloped as a space to deliver creative engagement opportunities with a focus on soil upon which all life is dependent
- Carefully planned and meticulously researched infrastructure developments building in environmental considerations at all stages ensuring any enhancements to the Barn's structure and physical environment respect the natural surrounds/landscape
- Made information available on our website to our audience members about public transport, walking, cycling, and car sharing options and promoted these elsewhere wherever possible. Provided secure bike parking for audiences at the venue
- Switched communication methods from paper to digital, implemented a paperless ticketing solution and limited print runs for programmes

- Implemented the use of completely compostable, Scottish-made, take away cups and lids (Vegware)
- Provided clearly labelled recycling facilities for cardboard, paper, cans, plastic and glass, and bins to collect biodegradable waste/compost
- Continually considered the ethical and ecological consequences of all purchases, use environmentally friendly cleaning products where possible and local suppliers first
- Made capital improvements to improve efficiencies; completed the £20k Phase 1 of the £60k LED upgrade project (2020); installed other energy efficient LED lighting; upgraded utilities meters including timed switches for car park lights to improve efficiency; improved insulation and draught-proofing (2023) by fitting 3 new steel fire escape doors (£6,750) and insulating the roof-rafters backstage (£3,694) and replaced electrical systems with more efficient models
- Been a member of the **Green Arts Initiative**, a network of 400+ cultural organisations, since 2015 and embraced their principals. Run by Creative Carbon Scotland, the Green Arts Initiative supports Scottish arts organisations to be at the forefront of growing an environmentally sustainable Scotland
- Been the driving force behind North East Scotland's **Springboard** climate hub events in 2022/3, delivered in collaboration with Creative Carbon Scotland and Aberdeen Performing Arts to inspire connection, collaboration and relationship-building and to explore how cultural organisations and practitioners can help communities understand the impacts of a changing climate.
- Presented at the **Creative Degrowth Network Scotland** session June 2023
- Co-developed and signed the **Green Arts Charter** in 2023, a collaborative charter designed for and by cultural organisations within the **Green Arts Initiative**. The charter outlines four environmental and sustainability pledges that we are committing to, as well as a framework of milestones that organisations can use to guide their action planning
- Developed a **Sustainability Rider** in 2024, that forms a component of our contract asking all partners (agents, artists, workshop leaders, private hirers) to consider our sustainability aspirations
- Joined the Creative Carbon Scotland **Adaptation Learning Set** in 2024, working with other cultural organisations to consider how we weave adaptation plans into organisational planning. The group will review the Cultural Adaptations toolkit between March-June 2024 by introducing it within their own organisations, and collaborate to identify how it could be improved, and how it works within their own organisation
- Ensured the Barn's creative programme continues to be informed by its environmental, ecological and social focus.

The Way Ahead

- We continue to strive to lower our emissions, but the fabric of our buildings (low efficiencies) and our semi-rural location (travel) remain a challenge for us
- Recruit environmental expertise to our Board - researchers, academics and activists working in the fields of climate justice, particularly in areas of soil restoration, climate change, gardening/growing and climate resilience/adaptation
- Expand the Green Team to include a Sustainability and Adaptation Lead to manage carbon reduction and data collection activities and adaptation processes
- Establish quarterly meetings for the Green Team of staff, board members and volunteers to develop and implement innovative and creative ways to reduce our carbon footprint ensuring diversity exists in this team to avoid increasing inequalities through environmental work
- Implement annual review of our environmental policy and associated climate action goals with staff, our board and advisors
- Continue to progress opportunities for environmental and climate justice related programming and investigate all aspects of access
- Review how we use film trailers and our website, promotional emails and ticketing to share information about our sustainability aspirations
- Increase environmental training by reviewing the Arts Green Book and Theatre Green Books with the venue team to see how other changes could be made within our buildings
- Progress discussions with landlords, Leys Estate Group and other Woodend at Crathes partners/users, about Electric Vehicle Charge points and composting machines suitable for food waste recycling
- Continue to explore ways to increase biodiversity around our buildings and the new Safe Route to School path (green roofs, green walls, capturing rainwater and landscape planting) and advance discussions with our landlords to implement this
- Investigate working with Sustrans or Paths for All for advice on how to ensure the broad usefulness of improving infrastructure for low carbon travel to the Barn also benefits people from lower income backgrounds
- Investigate 'cycle to work' promotions
- Renew/update the Zero Waste Scotland audit of our buildings, carried out during the pandemic and abnormal operating time (2021). Review the benefits, costs and financing of any suggested improvements from all surveys to prioritise actions to be taken in the 2025-28 period.
- In line with our Carbon Management Plan, apply for funding to implement the LED lighting upgrade (potential savings of 3700 kgCO₂e) and installation of solar PV (potential savings of 2700 kgCO₂e)
- Research and learn about digital emissions, to enable us to assess the emissions from our digital assets (website and storage of data and files) and explore ways to increase digital sustainability using tools recommended by Creative Carbon Scotland. Create a

sustainable digital policy explaining steps we are taking to reduce the impact of our digital emissions

- Participate in more local initiatives and develop partnerships with local groups to engage with the local decision-making process to become more climate ready
- Speak to elected officials about specific local issues and our thoughts and ideas on how to address these
- Join Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN)
- Continue to expand our knowledge and that of our audiences on degrowth and what it means for Scotland and deepen our understanding of and relationships to post-extractive futures
- Continuously monitor the actions we have pledged to in the Green Arts Charter to deliver the climate action needed to achieve transformational change in the sector
- Continue to develop and implement long term adaptation strategies and practical responses to lessen current risks and those risks projected to increase under climate change. This will be informed by the Cultural Adaptations toolkit and risk assessment work