

Bournemouth Arts by the Sea Festival

Environmental policy

This Environmental Policy and associated Sustainability Action Plan was developed using guidelines from Julie's Bicycle www.juliesbicycle.com

Who we are

The Arts by the Sea Festival is Bournemouth's annual outdoor combined arts festival which primarily takes place in public spaces including the town square, Bournemouth Gardens, pier approach, seafront and parks, in 2025 attracting around 120,000+ visitors. The festival started in 2010, is funded by BCP Council and Arts Council England and is produced by a BCP Council-led festival team, also contracting external staff for services including creative production and marketing. The 2026 festival is planned to run from 25th – 26th September 2026.

Our environmental journey

The Arts by the Sea Festival is fortunate to be able to host its cultural programme in Bournemouth's beautiful natural spaces and recognises the benefits to mental and physical wellbeing of taking part in creative activity in the natural environment. It also recognises the work already taking place to safeguard this natural environment and make Bournemouth a model of environmental sustainability. Bournemouth is recognised as a [Fair Trade Town](#), a [Sustainable Food City](#) and is the world's first [Sustainable Fish City](#). The conurbation has nineteen [Green Flag Awards](#) for its Parks and Gardens, eight [Blue Flag Awards](#) for its beaches and a Site of Special Scientific Interest amongst its nature reserves in [Hengistbury Head](#). In 2020, Bournemouth was one of 5 UK towns and cities praised as global climate leaders by carbon disclosure charity CDP on their '[Cities A-List](#)'.

Our motivation for creating this Environmental Policy and Action Plan

The Arts by the Sea Festival aims to build on the work already taking place, becoming more ethical, sustainable and reducing our environmental impact. We want to act as a model of sustainable behaviour and to use our experience to help other organisations do the same. We aim to encourage sustainable behaviour in our artists and suppliers, spark conversation about environmental concerns in our audience and promote a practical and positive environmental message to all. This policy applies specifically to the Arts by the Sea Festival, but we see it as a first step towards developing an environmental policy for all Council events.

The wider framework

The Arts by the Sea Festival recognises that it sits within a wider framework of policies relating to improving life for local residents. BCP Council works with Dorset Public Health, the NHS and other public-sector partners to identify local health and wellbeing needs.

On 16th July 2019 BCP Council declared a [Climate and Ecological Emergency](#), later incorporating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into its [Corporate Strategy](#). They pledged to make BCP Council and its operations carbon neutral by 2030, and to work with the wider community to look at how early the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole region can be made carbon neutral ahead of the UK target of 2050. Research shows that the quality of the local environment and access to green spaces is closely related to positive

physical and mental wellbeing. BCP Council have committed to lead communities towards a cleaner more sustainable future that preserves the areas outstanding environment for generations to come, and benefits physical and mental health by:

- Ensuring sustainability underpins all policies
- Protecting & enhancing the natural environment
- Developing an eco-friendly & active transport network
- Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
- Promoting sustainable resource management
- Maximising access to our high-quality parks and open spaces.

Arts Council England has set out its expectations for funded organisations in its new 10-year strategy Let's Create, expecting them to redouble their commitment to environmental responsibility by:

- Making plans to reduce their impact, and to measure, understand and report on their progress in doing so.
- Acting as leaders within their communities in terms of taking an environmentally responsible approach to running businesses and buildings: by lowering carbon emissions, increasing levels of recycling, cutting their use of plastic, and reducing water consumption.
- Promoting the need for environmental responsibility in the communities in which they work, through their partnerships and with their audiences.
- Awareness of the cultural sector's role in helping to lead change, and they should aim to be innovative and responsive in the choices they make.

The Arts by the Sea Festival intends to reflect BCP Council and Arts Council England's commitments to improving environmental sustainability and improving health and wellbeing for residents, by providing an exceptional cultural experience in Bournemouth's beautiful natural spaces, by raising awareness of our impact on the environment and the environment's impact on us, by encouraging healthy lifestyle choices and respect for the planet by showcasing the small changes we can action that make a real difference. We are committed to engaging and training our staff on environmental issues, communicating our goals to external stakeholders, and encouraging our partners and audience to share in our ethos.

Our main environmental impacts

As an organisation our main areas of environmental impact are:

1. Energy/ fuel use in the office, during production and through travel.
2. Materials use in office activities, production, and marketing.
3. Waste created through office activities, production, and marketing.
4. Carbon emissions from travel.

These impacts are created by the festival team, our artists, production team, suppliers, and audience.

Our key environmental commitments

In 2020 and due to the Covid-19 pandemic the effect of our environmental impacts changed. As an organisation the team worked from home and instead of travelling (nationally and internationally) for meetings, undertook most meetings by videoconference, drastically reducing the team's carbon emissions. Working from home also meant less use of materials in the office, and Covid-19 restrictions meant no physical marketing assets were produced saving a huge amount of paper normally used in production of the festival brochure. A change in the volume of artistic activity meant a decrease in carbon emissions from artists

and production team, and a change in festival format meant a drastically reduced live audience so a reduction in carbon from audience travel.

Since 2021 (with Covid-restrictions allowing), the festival has returned to its normal format as much as possible. However, BCP Council continues in its transformation journey, meaning the team will mainly be working from home and only attending office for essential meetings. We will be working with as many local artists as possible, reducing carbon emissions from artist travel, and we will continue to promote our three environmental commitments to audience – encouraging people to Reuse, Reflect and Travel Sustainably. It's clear from survey responses that our audience still wants a physical brochure, but we'll be reviewing the possibility and impact of this annually to help choose the most appropriate and environmentally sustainable option.

Our key areas of focus for reducing our impact remain:

1. Reducing our use of resources within the festival team (concentrating on energy and waste) and avoiding travel (using videoconferencing) or using zero or low-carbon modes of travel (walking, cycling, journey sharing, using public transport).
2. Working with our colleagues in the Council to identify actions to reduce our environmental impact across the whole festival.
3. Working with our Events team to integrate environmental and ethical considerations when choosing supplies and services, and to use the most sustainable equipment.
4. Working with our Marketing team to reduce the environmental impact of our printed materials (paper and inks), replacing printed with online communications where possible, minimising use of energy for storage, downloading, streaming and/or online reading for digital communications and reducing transport for printed materials.
5. Working with our artists to encourage the use of low-carbon modes of travel, reuse materials and items where possible, and support of environmentally friendly hotels and cafes/ restaurants.
6. Encouraging our audience to follow our three environmental commitments – Reuse, Reflect (on their attitudes and behaviours towards the environment) and Travel Sustainably – and to support local environmentally sustainable hotels and cafes/ restaurants, avoiding those who still use single-use plastics.
7. Advocating for all areas of environmental sustainability with the council when working with other departments and events, encouraging a step-change in attitude.
8. Sharing our knowledge and experience across the sector.
9. Raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging our audiences to 'reflect' by showcasing artistic work with environmental themes and hosting green partners in our Green Hub.

Responsibility for our environmental policy.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Arts by the Sea Steering Group and is updated by the Cultural Engagement Officer as and when necessary. The policy is supported by our **Sustainability Action Plan** where you can find full details of our targets, measurements and actions. The Action Plan is informed by our environmental monitoring and measurement and feedback from engaging with our internal and external stakeholders. It is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and approved by senior management.