



Hay Festival Sustainability Report 2023

"The thing I love about Hay Festival is that Sustainability has always been part of the part of the scene and a very serious attention paid to these big questions of global sustainability. The rest of the world is catching up with Hay Festival and I can't help thinking that this is due in large part to the forum that Hay has provided for those ideas over those many years." – Tony Juniper, Environmentalist and Chair of Natural England - May 2018

Sustainability is core to Hay Festival, both on stage and in the development and management of the Festival as an organisation and we have been engaged in a programme of managing and mitigating our environmental impact since 2007.

We have focused on three key areas: our own direct impacts; the impacts of our audience, and the programming of events that will stimulate debate and discussion about key issues.

Management of Direct Impacts

The area we have most control over and where we can gain both environmental and financial benefits is from minimising our own direct impacts. We have focused on the core areas of energy, waste, transport, procurement and venues.

Waste

In 2018 Hay Festival was the first festival to trial a new, reusable hot drinks cup that resulted in a reduction in waste – from 350 wheelie bins full of disposable coffee cups to 2023 when we didn't fill a single wheelie bin, an astonishing 99% reduction in coffee cup waste and meaning that 27,912 reusable cups were sent for washing and reuse.

- Compostable coffee cups:
 - 2017 : 350 full wheelie bins
 - 2018 : 25 full wheelie bins = 92% decrease.
 - 2019 : 11 full wheelie bins = 56% decrease.
 - 2023 : 0 full wheelie bins = 99% decrease
- Plastic and cans for recycling
 - 2017 : 1000 full wheelie bins
 - 2018 : 850 full wheelie bins = 15% decrease
 - 2019 : 479 full wheelie bins = 44% decrease
 - 2023 : 290 full wheelie bins = 71% decrease.
- The Cup Scheme along with a tougher regime on waste generation in general led to a reduction in 2023, to 250 wheelie bins of plastic and 40 wheelie bins of cans – a 71% reduction compared to 2018.

As part of our plans to reduce single use plastics, we also banned our traders from providing plastic straws and stirrers on site. Whilst these items have a limited overall impact on plastic use, they are symbolic of the problems facing us and also have very good alternatives. Across the board all traders are using sustainable, recycled, compostable and biodegradable packaging and cutting back or cutting out plastic packaging and the use of plastic bottles.

- Recycling 85% of the waste produced on site
- Composting 6 tonnes of food waste and other compostables.
- Recycling 5 tonnes of glass.
- Good Energy are our supplier of mains electricity to the site and is generated from 100% renewable sources.
- 10 water standpipes across the site for people to fill their own bottles and a big promotion to encourage action.
- Local reuse and recycling destinations were found for a wide range of materials: with excess food being taken to a Primrose Community Centre and Shrewsbury Food Hub, seven bags of textiles to a charity shop and crates going to a community garden project.

Transport

By far our biggest indirect impact is caused by people visiting the Festival via their transport and accommodation etc. While this has a huge benefit economically, we look for ways in which we can reduce the environmental impacts.

Examples include:

- We provide a public bus service from our nearest train station, Hereford, to the Festival site which runs ten times a day in conjunction with partners First in the Midlands, and in 2023 carried 2634 passengers a 15% increase on 2022. We also have a connecting service from Worcester Crown Gate Bus Station to Hay for the duration of the Festival. Due to the unsustainable financial costs of running the local village minibus service that linked Festival-goers with local B&Bs and the surrounding villages and towns, we have been unable to continue providing this.
- For the past 10 years we have also teamed up with a number of car-sharing firms to promote car-sharing for visitors to the Festival.

We continue to use BS8901 and ISO 20121 as our management tools to help us in assessing the direction we take.

Production

- All site, stage, festoon, venue and decorative garden lighting, is LED.
- All generators were run on bio fuel.
- A drinking water station is installed and available before the build encouraging the site crew to stop bringing drinking water in plastics onto site during the build process.
- We invested in cable bungees for the bookshop to eliminate using PVC tape for cables.

Programming and Communications

Green Hay Events

One of the major benefits we can offer is to programme a wide range of speakers, projects and events that discuss, challenge and explore the environmental issues currently facing us. Our Green Hay programme is an environmental and sustainability-focused series of events throughout the 11 days of Hay Festival in Wales, exploring current issues, new developments and technical advances. On the Festival's opening day, we hold a Green Hay Forum bringing this year, 4 events, sponsored by Keystone Positive Change Investment Trust and focusing on the way we produce, supply and package the food we eat, the impacts those processes have on our planet and the ways in which the narrative is decided. Speakers included Louise Gray,



Kimberley Wilson, Jake Fiennes, Gareth Wyn Jones, Mark Lynas, Solitaire Townsend and Martin Wright.

Within the main programme during the Festival, we hosted an amazing selection of speakers including:

- Johan Rockstrom, Laleh Khalili, Henry Dimbleby, Gaia Vince, Sadiq Khan, Tim Spector, Minette Batters, George Monbiot, Emily Shuckburgh, Tristan Gooley, Isabella Tree, Vincent Doumeizel, Tim Smedley, Katherine May, Juliet Davenport, and Tony Juniper.

Through all of our programming we hope to inspire change such as the campaign for Ashton Hayes to become Britain's first Carbon Neutral Village -

<http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/ashton-hayes-celebrates-10-years-10755503>

Planet Assembly

A new initiative – Planet Assembly – was launched in 2023. A forum for discussion and debate, Planet Assembly proved successful in bringing together environmental experts and the public over eight days to workshop solutions to today's climate crisis. Eight sessions across the Festival focused on energy, health, food, mobility, water, fashion, biodiversity and housing. These culminated in a ninth, 'call to action' session led by Tony Juniper (former director of Friends of the Earth and currently chair of Natural England), and Emily Shuckburgh (academic and director of Cambridge Zero).

Hereford Art College

We arranged for Hereford Art College students to meet with Andrew Simms from the Badvertising Campaign which highlights the approach of fossil fuel companies, car companies and airlines who spend billions each year advertising their high carbon products - despite growing public concerns over air pollution and climate breakdown.

The students were set the challenge to come up with their own animated adverts to show the true impacts of these products helping to tackle high carbon advertising and supporting a shift in social attitudes away from these products and towards a cleaner, sustainable future.

Hay Festival Caterers and Exhibitors Sustainability Awards

Celebrating, promoting and sharing the best ideas and practices amongst our caterers and exhibitors.

Exhibitors:

GOLD

- Sissoo - Conscious clothing brand, based in Frome, Somerset, specialising in sustainably produced, organic, hand-block printed and naturally-dyed clothing.

SILVER

- Claire VaughanDesigns Ltd -Unique gifts, botanic art and a wide range of homewares.
- Field and Found - An independent clothing brand housed in a small off-grid studio in rural Herefordshire, UK

BRONZE

- Rebound Books by L'Arche - Notebooks made out of recycled books in Brecon
- Cwtch Soaps - Natural, sustainable beauty products from Mid-Wales
- Jane Williams Silks - Slow fashion, eco printed and painted silk scarves, and clothing

Caterers:

GOLD

- Coaltown Coffee - Planet, People and Profit are at the core of their business.

SILVER

- Fritter Shack - Vegan and gluten free food from Mid-Wales
- Good Slice - Social enterprise pizza company. Ethos is eat good, do good

BRONZE

- Yellow Turban Thali - Vegan, gluten free Southern Indian street food

Sustainability also includes financial and social impacts and a few examples of these are:

- Free tickets for students in tertiary education
- Free loan of our thermal imaging camera for local communities to assess heat loss from buildings.
- We purchase from local businesses where feasible and encourage our contractors to do the same.

Our entire Hay on Earth programme is a journey not a destination. We are in a privileged position to be able to run these Festivals and we therefore have a responsibility to ensure that positive impacts are felt in the wider community and that any negative ones are minimised.

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