



Environmental Policy

*Last Reviewed March 2021
Effective until March 2022*

Background and Ethos

Rural Arts' vision is creativity at the heart of every community in North Yorkshire. Rural Arts is a registered charity that delivers inspiring and inclusive creative opportunities that enrich lives and connect communities. We provide over 400 events and activities each year at our community arts centre in Thirsk, which is also home to an award-winning café, a gallery shop and rooms to hire. We programme 70 performances per year in rural venues and lead a range of wellbeing and employment programmes to support vulnerable people.

Rural Arts was established in 1992 and is a member of Arts Council England's National Portfolio.

Rural Arts recognises the negative impact that business and their operation can have on the environment, as well as the responsibility to minimise and, where possible, eradicate this impact. Rural Arts also recognises the responsibility to actively protect the environment and promote sustainability, whether through projects and productions or operational best practice.

Environmental Impacts

Rural Arts acknowledges that its impact on the environment encompasses a wide range of resources and activity. This includes but is not limited to:

- Energy procurement and consumption
- Water and waste
- Travel, transport and touring – staff, companies and audiences
- Office and operational equipment, storage and hired facilities
- Supply chains, goods and service procurement
- Production materials
- Venues and other organisational partners

Embedded Practice

All Rural Arts' workers – base and freelance staff, volunteers and placements and subcontracted services – hold a stake in reducing the company's environmental impact. Commitment by base staff is ensured by the delegation of Action Plan responsibilities across all departments and levels of staffing. New staff, project workers and creatives are given a comprehensive environmental induction.

Rural Arts works with a number of partners each year across a range of industries and geographies. Rural Arts aims to share its environmental policies with each partner and encourages other organisations to think proactively about minimising the environmental impact of the relationship or collaboration.

It is also important to recognise our geography and very mission in regard to our environmental impact. Being a small, rurally isolated charity that serves a geography eight times the size of Greater Manchester, some impacts will be greater than those in urban centres: almost all staff will need to use cars, both during as well to/from work, and audiences will often travel greater distances to access cultural opportunities. Our location also presents opportunities as well as challenges, however, for example video meetings, exploration of community transport.

Consideration should be given to the need to travel for work and the option to work remotely should be considered where appropriate and desirable. Listed below are activities or behaviours aligned to reducing environmental impact that are already embedded in the organisation's working practice:

The Courthouse / Office

- Recycling paper, glass, tins and composting food waste
- Turning off lights and other electrical sources when not in use, supported by the building's energy management system
- Favouring natural heat and ventilation
- Digital marketing encouraged with limited print runs
- Walking incentivised for local travel
- Keeping up to date with industry and wider best practice

Projects

- Where possible, maintaining the same environmental principles and policies as in the Rural Arts' office
- Using recycling facilities where provided (advocating for improvements where necessary)
- Favouring public or community transport for participant travel (where practicable and excepting reasonable adjustment)
- Using venues with active and actioned Environmental Policies and Plans

Touring

- Considering company's geographic base or touring schedule when booking
- Favouring accommodation close to venues
- Advocating audiences walk or take public transport to performances
- Support community venues to develop and deliver Environmental Policies and Plans
- Advocating environmental vehicle usage (no idling, no usage for walkable journeys etc.)

Environmental Action Plan

Rural Arts recognises that in order to continually reduce our impact on the environment, we must have action plans with set and measurable targets. We have created an Environmental Action Plan – encompassing The Courthouse as well as office, project and touring activity – created in consultation with [Julie's Bicycle's](#) guidelines and documentation.