



Environmental Sustainability Policy & Action Plan

Last Update: Feb 2025
Due for review: Feb 2026

Environmental Sustainability Policy 2023 - 2026

Policy Statement

Zoo Co is a multi-award winning theatre company based in Croydon. We make innovative, bold, electric live theatre for audiences across the UK and around the world. Zoo Co wants to respond to the climate crisis by making theatre in a sustainable way.

Zoo Co became an ACE NPO (Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation) in 2023. We continue our learning about ACE's commitment to Environmental Sustainability; it's one of their four key Investment Principles. Our current funding cycle runs 2023 - 2026, so this Policy is dated to match.

Environmental sustainability should inform every aspect of Zoo Co's work. Our aspiration is to address environmental issues creatively; we explore problems and how our community might work together to solve them. The principles of this policy will inform business planning and operational practice.

Disabled people and sustainability

Zoo Co employs and works with disabled people, and we aim to make our work as accessible as possible to disabled audiences. We acknowledge that disabled people are more acutely affected by the climate crisis than non-disabled people. We understand that we have a responsibility to minimise the scope and effects of climate change, so we don't compound the inequity already experienced by disabled people.

Young people and sustainability

Zoo Co makes work with and for young people, and runs regular projects in schools and colleges. We acknowledge that the climate crisis is something created by our generation and the generations before us, and that we will not miss this moment to put things right in any way that we can. We must pass on a liveable planet to the next generation.

The Theatre Green Book

The [Theatre Green Book](#) is a rich and practical resource for theatre venues and theatre companies. It is a key tool for us as we:

- evaluate existing behaviour
- set goals for improvement
- take practical steps to reach these goals

The Theatre Green Book has three volumes:

1. Sustainable Productions
2. Sustainable Buildings
3. Sustainable Operations

An outline of our operations

It's important that our stakeholders understand our business model; how we work affects the goals we can set.

Our home base is at Stanley Arts in Croydon, a heritage building built in 1903, also a registered charity, and an ACE NPO. The building is undergoing capital improvements over this period. We rent an office space, and we often hire additional space here for rehearsals, workshops and other events.

We tour our shows to other venues across the UK (we have also performed at Stanley Arts). We often co-produce with other theatres and theatre companies. We also partner with organisations outside the theatre sector to deliver shows and projects. We produce a new show about once a year, and sometimes remount existing work.

We aim for our work to be radically accessible, for our cast and creatives as well as for our audiences. All of our performances are Relaxed Performances so everyone gets to feel comfortable in a theatre. We strongly believe in the power of engagement and that everyone should be able to participate. We believe that theatre is better when everybody is invited. A lot of our work is accessible for deaf audiences, using Creative Captioning and integrated British Sign Language. Our casts and creative teams include artists who are deaf, disabled, neurodiverse, hearing, non-disabled or neurotypical.

We run weekly sessions with our young company of 14 - 18 year olds, YoCo, building towards a production each summer.

We are proudly based in Croydon, and are embedded in the cultural life of the Borough. We were proud partners in This Is Croydon (London Borough of Culture 23-24), driving access provision, delivering the Access Manifesto for the Borough, as well as producing work for Croydon audiences; we continue to deliver Borough of Culture legacy work through consultancy and maintaining the Access Library, thereby building a stronger cultural future for everyone in Croydon.

Working to this model, we know that Volume 1 of the Green Book is most relevant to us, with elements of Volume 3 and Volume 2 also important to our work.

Zoo Co Green Champion

Michelle Hudson

General Manager

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Zoo Co Sustainability Action Plan 2025/26

Goal	How to get there?	Who's leading?	Completion date	Notes on progress
Procurement				
<p>Produce a sustainability report for the tour of <i>Perfect Show for Rachel</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International dates at ILT Festival Aarhus, Denmark May 2025 A pencilled tour of midscale UK venues Autumn 2025 - Spring 2026 	<p>We will track:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials: where are they coming from (are they ethically produced? Second hand?), and how will they be disposed of. Travel: mode of transport and distance covered. We will use Stage Management reports to ascertain who was called on which days. Audience travel. We will survey one show per venue to gather high level data on audience travel. <p><i>Perfect Show for Rachel</i> is a reworking of an existing show, and we expect to reuse the majority of set, props and costumes.</p> <p>As the show goes out again and again, the carbon footprint of creation is spread across several years.</p>	<p>Production Manager, Designer, Project Administrator</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	<p>The online carbon calculator we've used before isn't working currently.</p> <p>This work might pivot to more narrative form.</p>
<p>Food supplied by Zoo Co to be at least 50% vegetarian, and 30% vegan.</p>	<p>When we occasionally order in catering (Board Away Day, Press events, crew lunches, young company snacks). We will order to match the dietary requirements of the group, and aim for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of options to be vegetarian 30% to be vegan 	<p>Exec Director, Artistic Director, General Manager</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	

No paper programmes produced for our shows and events	We will supply freesheets, no longer than 1 A4 piece of paper. These will include a QR code that links to a full online programme.	General Manager, Project Administrator	March 2026	
If new white goods are purchased, A+ or higher for energy efficiency should be sought.	We have a small stock of things like kettles and coffee makers for rehearsal rooms and projects, and a vacuum cleaner for our office.	General Manager, Executive Director	March 2026	
If IT equipment is bought, we will buy refurbished goods already in the supply chain. We will attempt to repair malfunctioning equipment before replacing.	We have a small stock of office computers used by staff, and a printer. Second-hand suppliers include: Backmarket, Vinted, Olio.	General Manager, Executive Director	March 2026	
Benchmark all stationery and office consumables used in 24/25	Use accounting programme to audit all the office consumables used in 24/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Stationery • Workshop materials See if we can reduce purchase of new items in 25/26	Project Administrator	Aug 2026	
Circularity, Sharing and Repurposing				
Lend out access equipment to 15 other organisations.	As part of our role as Access Leads for This is Croydon London Borough of Culture, we have created an Access Library of things you might need to make an event or	Creative Access Director,	March 2026	

	<p>rehearsal more accessible, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio Description kit • Things for rest areas and breakout spaces: Zed beds, blankets, bedding, cushions, blow-up beds, screens • Things that might support neurodivergent people: ear defenders, weighted blankets, fidget toys, colouring. <p>Other theatre companies don't need to buy their own if they can borrow ours.</p> <p>We will publicise our Access Library with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Makers and Creators • PAL (Participatory Arts London) network • Our mailing list 	Access Co-ordinator		
Source materials for <i>Perfect Worlds</i> in a sustainable way.	<p>'Sustainable approach' listed in key attributes for the Stage Manager role.</p> <p><i>Perfect Worlds</i> - some purchasing. Look at what's in our own store Look at hire and borrow Look at reuse sites like Olio and Set Swap Cycle Look at second-hand Look at local shops Only then look at online purchasing with fast delivery times.</p>		August 2025	
Give away 30 unwanted items via Olio, Set Exchange or professional networks.	In 25/26, we expect that the <i>Perfect Worlds</i> project will involve purchases of set and prop items - these will be bespoke to each participant.	General Manager, Exec Director	March 2026	

	We commit to disposing of these items in a responsible way.			
Sell 10 unwanted items.	via Ebay / Vinted / Facebook Marketplace.	General Manager, Exec Director	March 2026	
National Library of Things feasibility project	Use the Perfect Show for Rachel tour to assess feasibility of rolling out an 'Access Library of Things' model to regional partners, thereby establishing a national re-use model for access equipment	Creative Access Director	March 2026	
Staff, touring and audience travel				
Produce a report on business travel undertaken by Zoo Co in 25/26	Ask about business travel undertaken at one daily check-in per week. Business travel is not ordinary commuting to the office; it comprises additional journeys taken for business purposes eg. to meetings, to deliver equipment to events.	Project Administrator	March 2026	We collate and record business travel on a weekly basis.
Produce a report on audience travel undertaken by our <i>Perfect Show for Rachel</i> tour 25/26	Use our post-show Culture Counts survey to ask questions about how our audience travelled to us. Perhaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far did you travel to be with us for the show (a rough guess is fine)? • What was the main method of transport you used to reach us today? 	Exec Director	Aug 2024	
Offer a flexible return date for Denmark tour travel (cast and creative team)	We are obliged to fly cast and creatives to Denmark due to time constraints. Offering a flexible return date might allow some people to combine their work travel with	General Manager, Exec	May 2025	

	<p>subsequent leisure travel, reducing the carbon footprint of the individual.</p> <p>Some people may choose a return journey that links them up with more sustainable options like the Eurostar.</p>	Director		
<p>Promote active travel and travel by public transport to our shows and events, striking an appropriate tone that doesn't make disabled people who are limited in their travel choices feel stigmatised.</p>	<p>Create a Green Touring Rider, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We request that you and your ticket agent(s) make information available to audience members about public transport, cycling, and car sharing options and promote these wherever possible. Please also share this information with us as early as possible so we can pass it on to fans. Please provide secure bike parking for audiences at the venue. <p>Update our Vacancies / Contact Us pages to include information about bike racks, bus services and rail stations.</p>	Executive Director, Project Administrator	April 2024	
<p>Promote active travel and travel by public transport to staff</p> <p>Promote efficient travel options where carbon-neutral travel is not possible</p>	<p>Encourage carbon-neutral travel where possible - make it clear to staff that they can spend up to half an hour additional travel time in the working day if that opens up the chance to walk or cycle (own bike, hire bike, Lime bike) part or all of the way.</p> <p>Commit to not taking domestic flights.</p> <p>Where flights or non-carbon neutral travel is inevitable, encourage staff to double up on activities: Take holiday in-location when touring overseas Remote working for up to 2 weeks a year</p>	General Manager, Executive Director	March 2026	

	Inform staff that taking 2 hours of extra time to plan personal holidays travel around touring is allowable work time if focussed on sustainable options.			
Promote hybrid working to reduce emissions	Encourage staff to work from home 1-2 days per week to reduce travel emissions			
Finance and Digital				
Improve our website from an E grade to a C grade on Ecograder and Website Carbon .	<p>Project Administrator to watch this Supercool webinar on reducing a website's carbon footprint.</p> <p>Spend dedicated time monthly updating the website, and implementing recommendations from our Ecograder report. We know we need to work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page weight (by removing unused Javascript) • UX design (by lengthening cache lifetimes, and setting width and height on images) <p>Our website is hosted with Wix, which powers its servers with renewable energy</p>	Project Administrator	March 2026	
<p>No Zoo Co funds to be invested in fossil fuels, arms or tobacco.</p> <p>Zoo Co funds to be invested in projects which support sustainable, community and charitable initiatives</p>	<p>Continue to bank with Co-op and Charity Bank. If switching becomes desirable or necessary, choose banks with similar ethical standards.</p> <p>Leave blog post up explaining why we bank in the way we do.</p> <p>We use Soldo for pre-paid cards / petty cash, so a small amount of our money is with that financial org.</p> <p>Advocate for sustainable banking when working with</p>	General Manager, Exec Director	Aug 2024	

	producing partners and other associate companies.			
Ensure staff and freelancers are aware that there are ethical options for investing their pension pot (funds with no investments in fossil fuels, arms or tobacco).	<p>We will email our staff twice yearly to remind them of the different investment opportunities within NEST (our auto-enrolment option).</p> <p>At the start of each rehearsal process, we will remind Equity members that they have the option to select a sustainable fund for their pension pot.</p> <p>We will describe the impact of sustainable pension pots to one's personal carbon footprint.</p> <p>(we understand that as employers we cannot advise employees to invest in any particular fund, and that it is our role only to outline the range of options).</p>	General Manager, Exec Director	May 2025	
Zoo Co work to be run through the Ecosia browser	<p>Encourage staff to download and use Ecosia web browser, on Zoo Co machines and on personal laptops and phones.</p> <p>Advocate use of Ecosia with visiting cast and creatives.</p>	General Manager	May 2025	As of March 2025, amongst office staff: 33% use Desktop 33% use laptop 16% use phone
Staff trained in digital footprint / digital hygiene	<p>Find out the footprint of our Drive: https://workspaceupdates.googleblog.com/2023/08/Google-Workspace-Carbon-Footprint-Report.html</p> <p>Reminders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every email has a carbon footprint of 4g. In-person, phone call or GChat instead. Reduce 'thanks' emails. 	General Manager, Exec Director, Environmental Champion Trustee	July 2025	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send links in emails rather than attaching large files / work to keep the size down through zipping or compression. • Switch to eco-friendly search engines like Ecosia. • Camera-off Zooms reduce carbon footprint by up to 96%. • Clear old files off the Drive when no longer needed. • Unsubscribe from email lists and delete emails you don't need anymore. 			
Manage use of AI tools like Chat GPT.	<p>Zoo Co does sometimes use AI tools like Chat GPT to make our comms more accessible. eg. to simplify a document, ensuring we are using plain English.</p> <p>We know that these AI tools use huge amounts of energy and water; one Chat GPT query uses 10 - 25 times the amount of carbon of a Google search. Writing a 100 word email using Chat GPT uses nearly 500ml of water.</p> <p>We will consider use of DeepSeek as an alternative with a lighter carbon footprint.</p>	General Manager, Exec Director	March 2026	
Waste and recycling				
Zoo Co staff, creatives and visitors understand 'what goes where', and feel motivated to recycle where possible.	<p>Currently General Waste, and Dry Mixed Recycling dumpsters are available at Stanley, but there aren't designated bins around the building.</p> <p>We have a bin for recycling and a bin for general waste, and we put these in the correct dumpster when we</p>	All office staff, Stage Managers	March 2026	

<p>Stanley's waste contractor is Veolia.</p>	<p>clean our own office once a week.</p> <p>In 25/26, if we use rehearsal rooms at Stanley, we will acquire additional bins, and label them clearly, so creative teams have clear options to recycle.</p> <p>Look at available information on 'what goes where' on Veolia website website. Look for template bin signage. Look for information on what happens to the different streams - how are they processed after they leave this building?</p> <p>Create accurate signage for our offices.</p> <p>Offer to share this signage with other offices in the building, and communal areas.</p>			
<p>Encourage Stanley Arts to introduce food waste recycling / composting.</p> <p>Encourage Stanley Arts to position more clearly labelled bins for different recycling streams around the building.</p>	<p>At formal and informal meetings between Stanley and its residents, make it clear that streamed recycling is important to Zoo Co, and that the addition of food waste recycling / composting would be an important step in reducing the building's carbon footprint.</p>	<p>General Manager, Exec Director</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	
<p>All printer cartridges, batteries, lightbulbs, and WEEE (electrical items) to be recycled.</p>	<p>Items like these will be taken to Croydon Recycling Centre periodically.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to bring similar items to the office from home for recycling, if recycling options are not accessible where staff live.</p>	<p>Exec Director</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	
<p>Networking and ideas-sharing</p>				
<p>Carbon Literacy Training</p>	<p>Carbon Literacy Training session booked for 30 April</p>	<p>Exec</p>	<p>June</p>	

<p>offered to creatives ahead of <i>Perfect Show</i> UK touring.</p>	<p>2025. Attendees include: Artistic Director Exec Producer at Improbable (Lead Producer on PSFR) Exec Director at Improbable LX / Video Tech Set Designer</p> <p>Offer spaces on the course to other Croydon cultural organisations.</p> <p>Attended Carbon Literacy Training Dec 23: Artistic Director Creative Access Director General Manager Project Administrator (left Aug 2024) Access Co-ordinator Freelance Production Manager Freelance Assistant to the AD (left June 2024)</p> <p>Certified: Exec (2021) Access Co-ordinator, Creative Access Director, General Manager, Producer (2024)</p>	<p>Director</p>	<p>2025</p>	
<p>On <i>Perfect Show</i>, set and reiterate the collective goal to work to Green Book Baseline Standards.</p>	<p>Green Production Agreement part of creative contracts.</p> <p>Hold a sustainability briefing with <i>Perfect Show</i> creatives and crew ahead of main purchasing decisions.</p> <p>Hold a 'green card' meeting as part of the white card presentation.</p> <p>'Sustainability wins and losses' a standing item on</p>	<p>Production Manager, General Manager</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	

	weekly Production Meetings.			
This Policy and Action Plan available to download on our website.	Show a public commitment to sustainability by having this document available to download on our website. This will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show our stakeholders we are committed to working sustainably, and what our plans are for this year. Provide a resource to other theatre companies looking for ideas on how to work more sustainably. 	Project Administrator, Executive Director	April 2025	Available from April 2025 here: https://www.wearezooco.co.uk/about-us
Energy Management				
Establish a 'power off' / 'power down' culture in the office, and amongst creatives and crew We rent space at Stanley Arts, and do not have access to electricity / gas contract information. Our usage is calculated as a %age of floor space.	Part of sustainability briefing when creatives and crew join us for <i>Perfect Show</i> . Twice yearly emails to staff reminding them that a full power off for devices like laptops is more energy efficient. Signage by the door reminding people to switch off, power down and unplug (heaters, computers, chargers, fans). We will switch off lights, though we know the flouros in our office hold an A+ rating (https://www.cromwell.co.uk/shop/electrical-and-lighting/fluorescent-tubes/t5-longlast-high-output-fluorescent-tubes/f/66048) Stickers on sockets saying 'Unplug me!'	General Manager, Executive Director	March 2026	
Manage extremes of temperature before switching	We know these things work well temperature-controlling our office.	All office staff	March 2026	Part of the 'What it's like to work at Zoo Co'

<p>on electrical items.</p>	<p>In hot weather: Open sash windows at the top as well as the bottom, to let air circulate. Keep the office door open to benefit from the cooler air in the hallway. Lower blinds to filter direct sunlight. Remind visitors to wear cool clothing. Our flexible working policy allows people to work from home / another space in excessive heat.</p> <p>In cold weather: Two electric blankets / heating pads available to 'heat the person not the room'. Remind visitors to wear layers. Our flexible working policy allows people to work from home / another space in excessive cold.</p>			<p>available to download on our website.</p>
<p>Assess and improve sustainability of other workspaces</p>	<p>Develop a 'home office sustainability checklist' and test with staff, to minimise the overall carbon footprint of our workspaces. Offer body doubling sessions with staff, freelancers and partners to work through sustainability checklist.</p>	<p>General Manager</p>	<p>March 2026</p>	