



Environmental Sustainability Policy & Action Plan

Last Update: Feb 2024
Due for review: Feb 2025

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 d/Deaf, disabled, neuro-diverse, hearing, non-disabled or neuro-typical.

We run weekly sessions with our young company of 15 - 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're involved in This is Croydon (London Borough of Culture 23-24), driving access provision as well as producing work for Croydon audiences. We are involved in ensuring the legacy of Borough of Culture means 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 2024/25

Goal	How to get there?	Who's leading?	Completion date	Notes on progress
Procurement				
<p>Produce a sustainability report for the production and touring of <i>Perfect Show for Rachel</i>.</p>	<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. <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. We are keen that the show has a future life beyond 24/25. This will spread the carbon footprint of the show across several years.</p>	<p>Production Associate, Designer, Project Administrator</p>	<p>Aug 2024</p>	<p>In 23/24, we produced a report for <i>Night Shift</i>.</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 25</p>	<p>In 23/24, we achieved:</p> <p>Board Away Day: 48% veggie, 43% vegan, 52% contained meat.</p> <p>Cast and crew lunch during <i>Night Shift</i>: 100% vegetarian, 33% vegan Cakes and crisps for Press performance: 100% vegetarian, 65% vegan</p> <p>Snacks for YoCo (our Young Company), bought weekly: 100% vegetarian.</p>
<p>No paper programmes produced for our shows and events</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>General Manager, Project Administrator</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	
<p>If new white goods are purchased, A+ or higher for energy efficiency should be sought.</p>	<p>We have a small stock of things like kettles and coffee makers for rehearsal rooms and projects, and a vacuum cleaner for our office.</p>	<p>General Manager, Executive Director</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	
<p>Circularity, Sharing and Repurposing</p>				

Lend out access equipment to 15 other organisations.	<p>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 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"> • Culture Croydon organisations • PAL (Participatory Arts London) network • Our mailing list 	Creative Access Director, Access Manager	March 2025	In 23/24, we lent kit out approx 15 times, to 13 different organisations.
Give away 10 unwanted items via Olio, Set Exchange or professional networks.	24/25 will involve a reconfiguration of our storage units - we expect we will find that some items will no longer be needed.	Production Associate, General Manager	March 2025	
Sell 3 unwanted items.	via Ebay / Vinted / Facebook Marketplace	Production Associate, General Manager	March 2025	
Staff, touring and audience travel				
Produce a report on business	Ask about business travel undertaken at one daily	Project	March	We collate and record

<p>travel undertaken by Zoo Co in 24/25</p>	<p>check-in per week.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Administrator</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>business travel on a weekly basis.</p>
<p>Produce a report on audience travel undertaken by our <i>Perfect Show for Rachel</i> audience in May/June 2024</p>	<p>Use our post-show Culture Counts survey to ask questions about how our audience travelled to us. Perhaps:</p> <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? 	<p>Exec Director</p>	<p>Aug 2024</p>	
<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>	<p>Executive Director, Project Administrator</p>	<p>April 2024</p>	
<p>Finance and Digital</p>				

<p>Improve our website from an E grade to a C grade on Ecograder.</p>	<p>Project Administrator to spend dedicated time weekly 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>	<p>Project Administrator</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>From Jan 2024, time each week on the website, and meetings with an ACE Digital Champion.</p>
<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>By April 2024, Co-op will be our main bank account.</p> <p>Zoo Co needs more than one bank account to manage risk.</p> <p>Our other account is currently with Metrobank, who do not rank highly for ethical banking. In the first half of 24/25, we will research ethical options for a savings / secondary account, open one, and switch funds into it.</p>	<p>General Manager, Exec Director</p>	<p>Aug 2024</p>	<p>Co-op account opened Dec 2023.</p>
<p>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>	<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</p>	<p>General Manager, Exec Director</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Last reminder to staff Sept 2023.</p> <p>Payroll size: 5 people. 1 staff member volunteered that they had switched based on this advice. 3 other staff members volunteered that they had already switched.</p>

	our role only to outline the range of options).			
Zoo Co work to be run through the Ecosia browser	Encourage staff to download and use Ecosia web browser, on Zoo Co machines and on personal laptops and phones.	General Manager	July 2024	
Staff trained in digital footprint / digital hygiene	<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. • 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. 	Potential Trustee Jen Pearce at Board Away Day?	July 2024	
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 clean our own office once a week.</p> <p>In 24/25, 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>	All office staff, Stage Managers	March 2025	

	<p>We will find out which recycling contractor is used. Look at available information on 'what goes where' - 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. 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 streamlined 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>Exec Director</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	
<p>Networking and ideas-sharing</p>				
<p>New staff to receive Carbon Literacy Training bespoke to the theatre sector.</p>	<p>As new members join the team, we will look for opportunities for them to join a Carbon Literacy Training course held elsewhere, to bring their training into line with the main staff body at Zoo Co.</p>	<p>Exec Director</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Dec 23: Artistic Director, Creative Access Director, General Manager, Project Administrator, Access Manager, freelance</p>

				<p>Production Manager and freelance Support Worker all attended Carbon Literacy Training.</p> <p>We also offered places to Stanley Arts and Talawa staff.</p>
<p>On <i>Perfect Show</i>, set and reiterate the collective goal to work to Green Book Baseline Standards.</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 weekly Production Meetings.</p>	<p>Production Associate, General Manager</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	
<p>This Policy and Action Plan available to download on our website.</p>	<p>Show a public commitment to sustainability by having this document available to download on our website.</p> <p>This will:</p> <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. 	<p>Project Administrator, Exec Director</p>	<p>April 2024</p>	
<p>Energy Management</p>				
<p>Understand more about our electricity and gas supply.</p>	<p>Stanley Arts aren't currently able to tell us the type of electricity and gas contracts the building uses (supplier, fuel mix, renewal dates etc). But they are able to tell us</p>	<p>Exec Director</p>	<p>Sept 2024</p>	

	<p>usage, which we can apportion by floor area of our office.</p> <p>They have offered the install of radiant electric heating in our office space; this would replace the two gas central heating radiators in our office. Discuss this with them further, and assess costs, deciding on whether works should take place in Summer 2024.</p>			
<p>Establish a 'power off' culture in the office, and amongst creatives and crew</p>	<p>Part of sustainability briefing when creatives and crew join us for <i>Perfect Show</i>.</p> <p>Twice yearly emails to staff reminding them that a full power off for devices like laptops is more energy efficient.</p> <p>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)</p> <p>Stickers on sockets saying 'Unplug me!'</p>	<p>General Manager, Exec Director</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	
<p>Manage extremes of temperature before switching on electrical items.</p>	<p>We know these things work well temperature-controlling our office.</p> <p>In hot weather: Open sash windows at the top as well as the bottom, to let air circulate.</p>	<p>All office staff</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	

	<p>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>			
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