The Land is *All* VIEW

Realising a Flourishing Future through Cultural Environmental Responsibility in Norfolk and Suffolk



A Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board report by Fern Culture

CULTURE DRIVES IMPACT

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Ness: An Audio Landscape. Photo: Will Green Photography



Cover: Snape Maltings sunset. Photo: Angus Cooke

What if instead of the sound of cars and traffic, the predominant sound was birdsong, the laughter of children and singing?

What if we didn't throw things away?

What if all waste could be fully recycled, reused, repurposed?

What if every heritage building was environmentally self-sufficient?

What if we didn't have 'news' and had stories instead?

What if everything ran on renewable energy?

What if we imagine low-tech solutions first?

What if sustainable infrastructure was more aesthetic?

What if power was decentralised and communities could generate it themselves?

What if skill sharing was commonplace and often used instead of money?

What if every car park was a meadow?

What if we didn't throw things away?

What if all cultural institutions were required to have designated outdoor nature spaces?

What if there was transformational funding for 'green culture'?

Questions from workshop participants, to inform the culture sector in Norfolk and Suffolk as it imagines a flourishing ecological future.[1]

1. This approach is inspired by Hopkins R (2025) *How To Fall In Love With the Future: A Time Traveller's Guide to Changing the World* London: Chelsea Green Publishing

FOREWORD

The coalition of cultural leaders that is the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board has several strands to its work in influencing the strategic place of culture and arts in our future economy and in the wellbeing of our communities in Norfolk and Suffolk. Cultural Environmental Responsibility (CER) is a keystone in that influence and the impact we can make in maintaining and building healthy places and unified communities.

This report arrives in the second half of the 'critical decade for climate action', as the world faces rapidly intensifying environmental threats. At a time of geopolitical uncertainty, the culture sector is facing increasing financial pressure, and often working in contexts of deepening inequality and political division.

Yet it is in precisely these conditions that the sector's leadership matters most. CER is not a 'nice to have': it is integral to long-term resilience and public value, and brings with it significant co-benefits in terms of health and wellbeing, economic stability and community connection. Norfolk and Suffolk's culture sector has a unique and powerful role to play in supporting communities to navigate this changing world, and fostering shifts in thinking in society more widely.

CER must sit at the core of organisational policy, and embed best practice across our buildings, operations and programmes. It must be a value shared by all in the cultural workforce, supported by practical tools and frameworks that empower everyone to take action. This is vital to ensuring the sustainability of our culture sector too: doing what we can to mitigate the negative impacts of a planetary crisis, and future proofing it for a changing climate.

The title of this report is taken from 'A Writer's Day Book', by much-loved Suffolk nature writer Ronald Blythe.[1] "The land is all view and I am all viewer," he wrote, describing his perspective on the East Anglian countryside, "soon the ecological patterns and colours not only spread before me but permeate me, and I become part of what I am seeing."

For us, his words evoke something of the sensibilities of this report. Because *The Land is All View*: *Realising a Flourishing Future through CER in Norfolk and Suffolk* invites us to broaden our view, using our creativity and cultural expression to envision the horizon we'd like to move towards. It reflects the way our relationship with the natural environment is shaped through culture and creativity. And perhaps it's a reminder that there's something rather special about this place we call home.

The message for our region's culture sector is clear. Step into leadership, embed CER at the heart of your work, and embrace your unique strengths in building a flourishing ecological and creative future.

Louise Jordan-Hall, Chair, Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board
June 2026

1. https://www.ntu.ac.uk/media/documents/online-store/A-Writers-Day-Book-eBook.pdf



Cromer Museum, Deep History Coast Project. Photo: Norfolk Museums Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Culture has a vital role in shaping a flourishing ecological future for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Across the region, cultural organisations sit at the heart of their communities: connecting people to place, to each other, and to the natural world. They are sites of inspiration about new possibilities, and where communities turn to learn about new ideas and process change. Artists and culture workers share the stories, sounds and images that help us envision where we're going; they are frontline workers holding space for joy, grief and everything in between.

At a time of accelerating planetary crisis, these strengths are urgently required. This report, commissioned by the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board, calls on the culture sector to embrace environmental responsibility; not only responding to the crisis, but acting as leaders within it.

Our definition of Cultural Environmental Responsibility (CER) is informed not only by the academic literature on how culture can have a positive impact in the context of the planetary crisis, but also by what the cultural community of Norfolk and Suffolk is committed to and sees as vital. It is, in our definition, '*an approach to culture and creativity that embeds environmental best practice at every level, both in how cultural activity is made and presented, and in how culture can inspire public engagement with the planetary crisis'.* For Norfolk and Suffolk, to embrace CER fully demands that a rigorous engagement with reducing environmental impact is married with a commitment to using culture as a driver of wider change.

The vision set out in this report is shaped by the regional context. Here, landscapes, coastlines and rivers are fundamental to identity and self-expression - a source of story and creativity. So it makes sense that nature connection and recovery emerges as a key driver of CER for Norfolk and Suffolk, and an opportunity for real leadership.

Similarly, the report recognises the significant role the region has to play at the forefront of the energy transition and environmental innovation. This offers new opportunities for collaboration and invention, while also profoundly reshaping communities and landscapes. Culture has a role to play in supporting communities to navigate the changes compassionately.

The foundation of CER is sustainability within cultural buildings, production and operations. Many of Norfolk and Suffolk's cultural organisations are already driving change in this area. This report indicates what best practice looks like in the sector, situating the region in a national network of relevant initiatives, and highlighting, particularly, how environmental responsibility can be embedded within cultural organisations.

Inevitably, in the years ahead, the culture sector will face the impacts of a changing climate, and will need to move beyond mitigation measures to adaptation: rethinking how it preserves heritage, building resilience and ensuring cultural expression remains accessible to all.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

■ Take the lead on environmental responsibility, embracing and championing culture's unique contribution to driving social and behaviour change on the planetary crisis

Go beyond reducing the impact of your own activities to become leaders in society's transition to a flourishing ecological future - acting as advocates, imagination activators, and a vital 'shop window' for the transition. This could include commissioning and programming relevant projects and programmes; using culture sites to exemplify clean energy solutions, reuse and nature recovery in action; and developing research around culture's role in driving change with academic partners.

■ Work together to find solutions to regional environmental challenges

Work as a consortium to address regionally-specific challenges: eg. visitor and audience travel, procurement, and the development of a regional circular economy for the culture sector. Co-ordinate on training opportunities for the cultural workforce, and pool resources to upskill the next generation of culture workers. Look outwards to align with and participate in national networks and initiatives, and benefit from existing resources and expertise.

■ Celebrate and prioritise biodiversity and nature recovery as an opportunity to demonstrate national leadership on CER

Foreground biodiversity and nature recovery in CER strategies. In a region where love of nature and place is a powerful marker of cultural identity, this is an innovative approach that will bring significant co-benefits in terms of health and wellbeing, inclusion and adaptation.

■ Work in partnership with academic institutions, conservation boards, nature charities and the energy sector on CER

Norfolk and Suffolk is a nexus of innovation on the environment, in terms of academic research, renewable energy and nature recovery. Build strategic links with partners outside the culture sector to develop new opportunities for projects and initiatives that demonstrate culture's social value in the context of the region's environmental drivers.

■ Get ready to adapt to climate change

Move beyond mitigation, planning ahead for changes in your estates, operations and work. Support your communities as they face the impacts, and record the story of change using your creativity.

ACTIONS FOR THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK CULTURE BOARD

Recruit a CER Change Maker

A new role leading on impactful CER initiatives for the region's culture sector, coordinating a regional CER network, developing templates and resources, and fundraising for joint initiatives.

Develop a reuse hub/circular economy initiative

Following precedents elsewhere in the UK and responding to a gap in the east of England, the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board could develop a circular economy hub: where materials are stored and made available for reuse, as well as a focal point for training opportunities, skill sharing and meet-ups.

Participate in regional climate partnerships

The Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board can act as an advocate for the important role of culture in delivering environmental policy in the region, particularly in the contexts of nature recovery, energy infrastructure and adaptation/resilience.



Out There Festival. Photo: Kat Mager

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was commissioned by the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board, in the context of the 2022 *Culture Drives Impact Manifesto*, which identified 'Environmental Responsibility and Activism' as a shared commitment.

It supports the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board's position on CER as it approaches a new regional strategy for culture, and builds on the strong priority expressed at the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board Summit in October 2024, attended by 150 representatives of the region's culture sector. That summit posed the following questions, which have also informed this report:

- **What can the culture sector uniquely do about the climate emergency?**
- **Where is the culture sector's power?**
- **How do we activate that power?**

The report is delivered by Fern Culture. Authors Lilli Geissendorfer and Amber Massie-Blomfield are creative climate consultants, with expertise spanning cultural policy, environmental strategy, cross-sector partnerships, creative leadership, and cultural production.

The work was overseen by Daniel Brine (Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Norfolk & Norwich Festival), and the Environment and Place Working Group, a regional network of cultural professionals engaged with environmental practice. Full details of membership of relevant groups are included in the *Appendix*.

Intended Audience

The report is for anyone working in, or alongside, the regions' culture sector, or in environment and sustainability. This includes practitioners in arts and heritage, local authorities, academia, conservation, and the energy and sustainability industries. It has been written with the aim of providing information and guidance to inform the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board's sector leadership.

Our definition of the 'culture sector' aligns with Arts Council England disciplines: Collections and Cultural Property, Combined Arts and Festivals, Crafts, Dance, Heritage, Libraries, Literature, Museums, Music, Theatre and Performing Arts, Visual Art[1].

We recognise that culture extends beyond these parameters. We hope this report supports a wider understanding of culture as interdisciplinary, permeable and woven through the heart of society's transition to a flourishing ecological future.

The report is relevant to those working at all scales - from major institutions to self-employed workers. It is supported by a practical CER roadmap.

1. While this report was being finalised, it was announced that digital arts will be supported as a distinct art form by Arts Council England from April 2026. While some of the research in the report will be relevant to the digital arts, it was not created with this cultural form in mind.

Methodology and Approach

Fern Culture conducted this research over six months (August 2025 - February 2026). Our approach brought the region's culture sector together around a shared vision for a flourishing ecological future, and used this to identify need and priority areas.

Engagement included:

- **Focus groups**
- **Interviews with relevant experts**
- **2 x day-long workshops**
- **A survey of 80 culture workers across the region, including self-employed, staff and senior leaders[2]**
- **Participation from cultural practitioners, local authorities, academics and environmental organisations**

We also reviewed national policy, academic research, and best practice from across the UK. Alongside this we visited cultural organisations in the region, witnessing environmental responsibility in action, and encountering the impacts of climate change.



National Centre for Writing. Photo: David Kirkham

THE PLANETARY CRISIS IN NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK



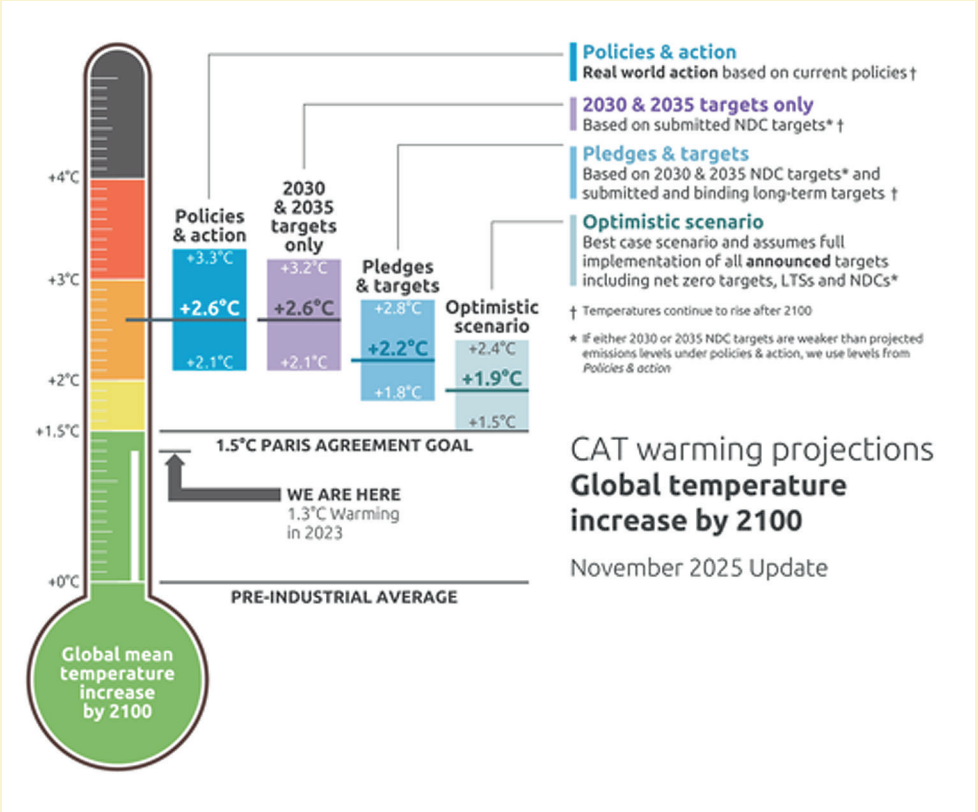
Jeroen Strijbos and Rob van Rijswijk, Signal on Sea, Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Photo: Malachy Luckie

Global and National Context

This report is published in the second half of what scientists have called the 'critical decade' for climate action. Current projections indicate that global CO2e emissions place us on a warming trajectory towards 2.6°c by 2100[1]; earth is on a dangerous trajectory "towards uncharted territory where there is a growing likelihood that several tipping points may soon be irreversibly crossed"[2].

Climate change sits within a broader planetary crisis. The planetary boundaries framework identifies climate change as one of nine critical global processes[3] that regulate the resilience and stability of the earth, illustrated on the diagram overleaf. As of 2025, seven of nine planetary boundaries had been crossed.

While climate change and decarbonisation have often been foregrounded in environmental policy, the disturbance of these interconnected processes requires holistic responses that address the systemic issues of how we extract, consume and care for earth's resources.

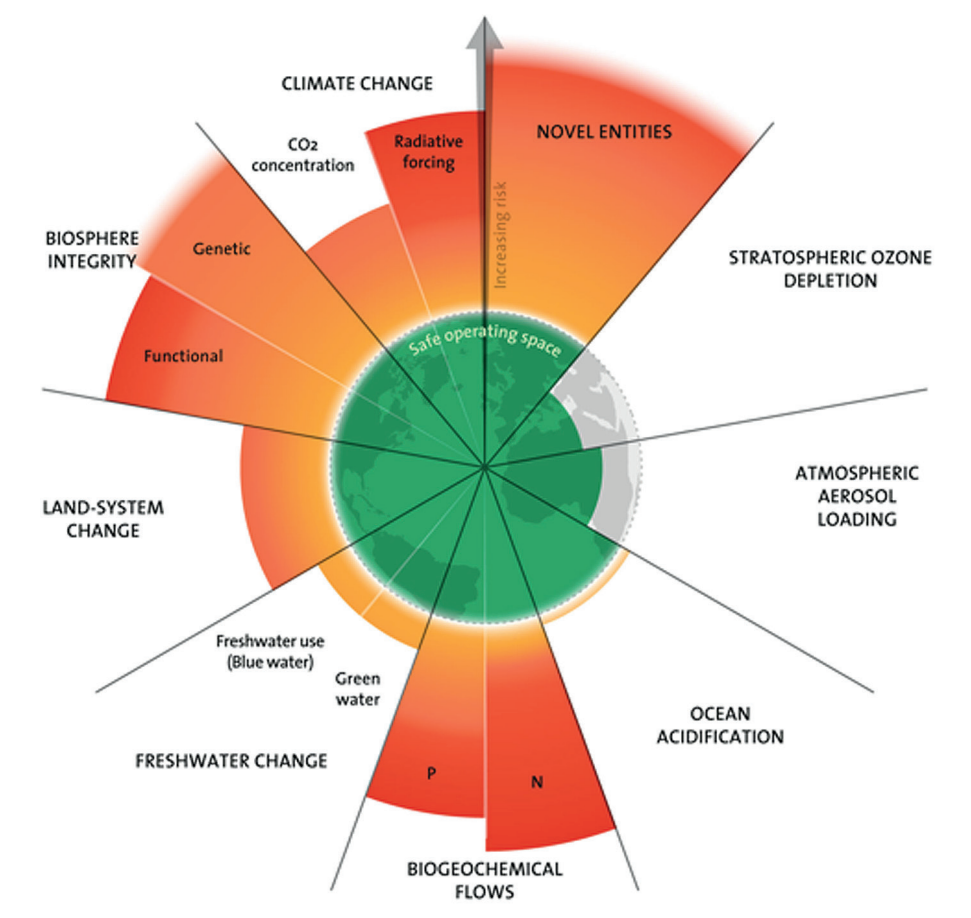


1. CAT Thermometer (2025) Available at https://climateactiontracker.org/global/cat-thermometer/ (accessed 6 April 2026)

2. United National Environment Panel (2025) Global Environment Outlook 7: A future we choose – Why investing in Earth now can lead to a trillion-dollar benefit for all. Available at https://wedocs.unep.org/items/bba44efd-7715-4054-8432-92b270ee9d67 (accessed 6 Apr 2026)

3. Stockholm Resilience Centre (2025) Planetary Boundaries The Safe Operating Space for Humanity. Available at https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html (accessed 6 April 2026)

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Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, based on analysis in Sakschewski and Caesar et al. 2025

Biosphere integrity - the health, diversity and functionality of earth's eco systems - has emerged as a key theme during the research for this report. Globally, biodiversity loss has seen average wildlife populations fall by 73% between 1970-2020[4]. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries on earth[5], with the UK Government's recent Nature Security Assessment on Global Biodiversity Loss, Ecosystem Collapse and National Security highlighting that 'every critical ecosystem is on a pathway to collapse (irreversible loss of function beyond repair)', presenting a threat to 'UK National Security and Prosperity'[6].

Policy Response

The Paris Agreement (2015), is a legally binding international treaty with the goal to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels." This will be achieved by limiting global emissions to net zero by 2050[7].

4. WWF (2024) Nature in Crisis: The Current State of Global Nature Loss. Available at https://livingplanet.panda.org/en-GB/ (accessed 6 April 2026)

5. State of Nature Partnership (2023) State of Nature. Available at https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf (accessed 6 April 2026)

6. HM Government (2026) Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/696e0eae719d837d69afc7de/National_security_assessment_-_global_biodiversity_loss__ecosystem_collapse_and_national_security.pdf (accessed 6 April 2026)

7. United Nations (nd) The Paris Agreement. Available at https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement (accessed 6 April 2026)

The UK Government (a signatory to the Paris Agreement) has been a global leader in responding to climate change. Policy frameworks include:

- **The Climate Change Act[8] (2008) - the first legally binding commitment on climate change for a major economy**
- **The Act was amended in 2019, establishing the legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050**

Progress has been meaningful. By 2024, UK emissions had fallen by over 50% since 1990, and renewables now provide over 50% of UK electricity. The current government has made clean energy one of its five national missions, with significant investment in renewables and nuclear power.

The Environment Act (2021) sets out national commitments on environmental protection, targeting air quality, biodiversity, water, and waste[9]. It identifies 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategy Areas, covering the whole of England. The UK has also aligned with the UN's '30by30' target, committing to protect 30% of England's land and marine environments for nature by 2030[10].

The UK's plan to adapt to climate change impacts is reflected in the Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3)[11], though the Climate Change Committee's recent independent assessment highlights significant gaps in preparedness[12].

During the writing of this report, the geopolitical situation has been volatile, with the ongoing Russo-Ukraine war and US/Israel war on Iran impacting climate policy. Energy security has come to the fore, highlighting our deep reliance on fossil fuels and its impact on the cost of living and food security in the UK. Paradoxically, this has both underlined the urgency of the shift to renewable energy - couched in terms of national resilience rather than decarbonisation - *and* has prompted new calls for the exploitation of oil and gas fields in the North Sea.

For many, the current phase represents a significant shift away from the "rules-based international order", marked by US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. Instead of unilateralism, the future of climate policy may be shaped by 'coalitions of the willing' - countries and states committing to stronger action together, in the face of weakening consensus. For example, in April 2026 the First International Conference on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels[13] took place, a summit for the 85 countries - including UK, Germany and Brazil - who wanted to commit to road-maps to net zero at COP30 but faced a veto led by Saudi Arabia.

8. HM Government (2008) Climate Change Act 2008. Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukga/2008/27/contents (Accessed 6 April 2026)

9. HM Government (2021) Environment Act 2021. Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30 (Accessed 6 April 2026)

10. HM Government (2024) 30by30 on land in England: confirmed criteria and next steps https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criteria-for-30by30-on-land-in-england/30by30-on-land-in-england-confirmed-criteria-and-next-steps (Accessed 6 April 2026)

11. HM Government (2023) The Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) and the Fourth Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ba74102059dc00125d27a7/The_Third_National_Adaptation_Programme.pdf (Accessed 6 April 2026)

12. Climate Change Committee (2026) A Well-Adapted UK Available at https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/a-well-adapted-uk/#publication-downloads (Accessed 26 May 2026)

13. Transition Away Conference (2026) 1st Conference Transitioning Away From Fossil Fuels. Available at https://transitionawayconference.com/home (Accessed 26 May 2026)

Taken as a whole, the policy landscape reflects real political commitment and measurable progress in some areas, **but the pace and ambition of change are not yet sufficient to meet the scale of the challenge.** As the policy landscape evolves, there is a real opportunity for the UK to build on its leadership role, driving ambition in the context of closer alignment with the EU and a wider international coalition of nations committed to action.

Norfolk and Suffolk

Norfolk and Suffolk is already experiencing climate impacts, and the region is among the most vulnerable in England for certain risks, such as flooding and coastal erosion. A warming climate will destabilise crop yields, grazing conditions and farm productivity – a major challenge for a region sometimes known as 'Britain's breadbasket'.

On current warming trajectories, significant parts of the region will fall below the annual flood level by 2050[14], as shown on this map.



Land projected to be below annual flood level in 2050. Climate Central Coastal Risk Screening Tool https://coastal.climatecentral.org/

14. Climate Central (nd) Land Projected to be Below Annual Flood Level in 2050. Available at https://coastal.climatecentral.org/map/8/0.4261/52.3999/?theme=sea_level_riseandmap_type=yearandbasemap=roadmapandcontiguous=trueandelevation_model=best_availableandforecast_year=2050andpathway=ssp3rcp70andpercentile=p50andrefresh=trueandreturn_level=return_level_1andrl_model=coast_rpandslr_model=ipcc_2021_med (Accessed 6 April 2026)

In 2023, the Environment Agency stated that "Norfolk and Suffolk have some of the fastest eroding coasts in Europe".[15] Areas particularly impacted include villages like Hemsby in Norfolk and Thorpeness in Suffolk, where many homes are already being evacuated and demolished.

In the years ahead therefore, Norfolk and Suffolk's culture sector will operate in the context of communities going through significant changes to their livelihoods, neighbourhoods, homes, and sense of identity. Climate change is a 'threat multiplier', deepening the impact of other forms of deprivation - as Earth.Org noted, 'Marginalised groups and minority communities have been hit harder than any other groups by the increasing effects of climate change.'[16]

In this context, environmental responsibility brings with it significant 'stacked' co-benefits, particularly in the areas of health and wellbeing: cleaner air reduces physical sickness and work absence; food system changes to plant-based can support healthier diets; active transport (wheeling, walking) increases exercise levels; time in nature contributes to improved mental wellbeing. Reducing reliance on fossil fuels reduces volatility and price spikes that drive fuel poverty, and should cut energy bills in the long term. **Ultimately, the planetary crisis is not an isolated issue, but a systemic one - and its solutions serve society more widely.**

Mapping Regional Climate Solutions

The region is driving real innovation and solutions.

As a hub of academic excellence, it is home to the University of East Anglia (UEA) - a global leader on environmental research - which encompasses the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, a partnership of universities bringing together expertise from across the scientific, engineering, social and natural sciences. The university also encompasses the Sainsbury Centre, an art museum which employed the UK's first dedicated Curator of Art and Climate Change. Elsewhere, Suffolk Sustainability Institute focuses on green infrastructure, energy and resource management, and sustainable and healthy communities. At Norwich University of the Arts, the Institute for Sustainable Worlds applies creative methods to acts of collective imagination.

Norfolk and Suffolk is a powerhouse for the renewable energy transition. The Southern North Sea hosts one of the world's largest offshore wind clusters, and substantial infrastructure plans are underway in Norfolk and Suffolk to power the energy sector by 2040. Further developments include Sizewell C, a major new nuclear power station on the Suffolk coast - this brings with it significant environmental and social disruption in the medium term, as well as sharp division over the role of nuclear as a 'climate solution'.

Jobs in the region are evolving to reflect this transition. The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan estimates around 180,000 FTE net-zero related jobs will be required by 2029.[17] In Lowestoft, PowerPark is a new innovation centre and business park, planned to be the hub for the East's renewable energy sector.

15. UK Parliament (2023) Debate on coastal erosion in Suffolk and Norfolk. Available at https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2023-0230/ (Accessed 6 April 2026)

16. Encompass HK (2022) How Marginalised Groups are Disproportionately Affected by Climate Change. Available at https://earth.org/marginalised-groups-are-disproportionately-affected-by-climate-change/ (Accessed 6 April 2026)

17. Norfolk Chambers of Commerce (2025) Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan. Available at https://norfolkchamber.co.uk/homepage/norfolk-and-suffolk-lsip/what-is-a-local-skills-improvement-plan/ (Accessed 6 April 2026)

Norfolk and Suffolk are active contributors to nature recovery in England. The region is home to a higher number of important habitats than the national average[18], with three national landscapes (Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape, Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape, and Dedham Vale National Landscape) and one national park (the Broads National Park). Cultural identity in the region is strongly tied to this natural landscape. Norfolk is the site of WWF's first pilot for the 'Wholescape Programme', which adopts an integrated approach addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and the need to support growing populations.

Norfolk and Suffolk Policy Context

SUFFOLK

All councils in Suffolk have declared a climate emergency, including Suffolk County Council which did so in 2019. Councils have committed to reducing carbon emissions for their own estates and operations by 2030[19]. The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan outlines the council's plan to achieve this[20]. Suffolk County Council aims to be 'Carbon Negative, Nature Positive', improving biodiversity across its estate by at least 30% by 2030.

Sustainable Suffolk is the county's collaborative initiative to deliver the plan. It involves all of Suffolk's councils, the police and public health services, working in partnership with local businesses, community groups and the public. They engage proactively with the culture sector, and are keen to explore more opportunities to work together.

"The culture sector should reach out to local council and district climate teams... engage with community networks and directly approach us with ideas - we are open to project proposals"

Emma Dixon, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Manager

18. Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Partnership (2025) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), Available at https://www.nsnrp.org/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs (Accessed 6 April 2026)

19. Suffolk County Council (2024) How the council is responding to climate change. Available at: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/climate-action/how-the-council-is-responding-to-climate-change#:~:text=The%20way%20that%20Suffolk%20County,be%20adding%20to%20climate%20change (Accessed 6 April 2026)

20. Sustainable Suffolk (2023) Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. Available at: https://sustainablesuffolk.org.uk/suffolk-climate-emergency-plan/ (Accessed 6 April 2026)

NORFOLK

Norfolk County Council is committed to achieving net zero for its own estate by 2030, and to 'work collectively, with regional partners, towards carbon neutrality within our wider areas, also by 2030'[21]. The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership brings together local authorities and other strategic partners to support implementation.

Both Norfolk and Suffolk published their **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)**[22] in October 2025, and the two authorities are working together via the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership to implement these. Part of the 2021 Environment Act, the strategies establish a shared framework for nature recovery in the region.

Devolution

Norfolk and Suffolk is one of six areas nationally prioritised for a **Mayoral Combined County Authority**. The Authority would have a strong role in delivering environmental priorities, supporting the clean energy mission, for example by supporting the region's energy markets and decarbonising local heat networks; it would also play a leadership role in implementing the LNRS.[23]

21. Norfolk County Council (2023) Climate Strategy. Available at: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39033/Climate-strategy (Accessed 6 April 2026)

22. Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Partnership (n 23)

23. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025) Establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority Across Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation (Accessed 6 April 2026)

What Power does Culture have on Environmental Responsibility?

"(Culture) should be one of the easiest ways for people to grasp the challenges around climate change and the measures they need to put in place."

Darryl Newport, Director of the Suffolk Sustainability Institute

"We regard the arts and culture as a vital lever for change... it's an absolutely critical way of reaching the climate majority."

Rupert Read, Norfolk based Director of the Climate Majority Project and Former Emeritus Associate Professor of Philosophy at UEA

"It's gone from a maths and science problem to an everything and everyone problem... That's why it's so important culture is involved... The arts do what science can't. They generate emotion"

Asher Minns, Executive Director, the Tyndall Centre

We all have our part to play in tackling the planetary crisis. The culture sector has a responsibility to reduce its environmental impact, and also a unique role to play in inspiring public action. We turn to culture to discover new ideas, to engage with stories that shine a light on the times we're living in. Culture can help us to find emotional and community resilience, and enable us to imagine new possibilities.

Cultural Environmental Responsibility

Defining CER was central to this project. Using feedback from Norfolk and Suffolk's culture sector, and informed by wider research into the ways culture can impact on environmental outcomes in academic literature, we developed a definition that is regionally relevant and demonstrates the sector's ambition.

For the purposes of this report, we define CER as:

An approach to culture and creativity that embeds environmental best practice at every level, both in how cultural activity is made and presented, and in how culture can inspire public engagement with the planetary crisis

CER has two key dimensions:

1. Environmental Responsibility in Culture: reducing the environmental impact of cultural activity

2. Environmental Responsibility through Culture: driving public awareness, behaviour change, and culture shift

Environmental Responsibility IN Culture

In recent years, the culture sector has taken significant steps in reducing its environmental impact. Since 2012, Arts Council England has asked National Portfolio Organisations (those in receipt of regular funding) to report on energy use and emissions. Julie's Bicycle produces an annual report on Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility, based on this data[24]. Looking at emissions per impact area, they find that energy use (44%) and operational materials and waste (33%) are highest.

However these calculations do not include audience travel which are a significant impact area, but difficult to track and therefore tend to be under reported. A key challenge is highlighted by this: while audience behaviour significantly influences the total emissions, it is an area that organisations can influence but not directly control. In 2023, arts audience specialists Indigo ran a travel pilot with five organisations in the South East, encouraging sustainable travel, and showing that those using sustainable routes saved an average of 41% of carbon emissions compared to baseline figures[25].

Much of the action on decarbonisation has been self-initiated by the culture sector. Initiatives include the Theatre Green Book, the Bizot Green Protocol in the museums sector, the Albert Initiative in the TV and Film sector, Music Declares Emergency and Live Green in the music sector, Gallery Climate Coalition in the visual arts and Vision for Sustainable Events[26] for festivals and outdoor arts.

There is a growing interest in models that align new economic models with environmental responsibility. Circular economy principles - the idea that materials never become waste but instead are maintained, reused, refurbished, remanufactured, recycled or composted - have been an important response to the emissions caused by waste. This is supporting a wave of new reuse hubs across the country. Elsewhere, cultural organisations are experimenting with models like Doughnut Economics - a vision for economics that supports humanity to thrive in the 21st century, within social and planetary boundaries - or joining the Transition Towns movement, which fosters community-led, local economy solutions for the transition to a sustainable future.

Nationally, the heritage sector is leading the way on adaptation, no doubt driven by the particular demands faced by the sector in terms of preserving heritage in a changing climate. For example Historic England and National Trust have published ambitious adaptation plans, and the National Trust has called on the Government to introduce a Climate Resilience Act[27].

"Lead by example: if we do it, others will."

Survey respondent

24. Julie's Bicycle (2025) Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility Annual Report 2024-25. Available at: https://juliesbicycle.org/culture-climate-and-environmental-responsibility-annual-report-2024-25/ (Accessed 26 May 2026)

25. Indigo (2023) Audiences Act Green. Available at: https://www.indigo-ltd.com/news/audiences-act-green-new-pilot-project-combines-technology-and-communications-to-promote-sustainable-travel#:~:text=The%20project%20follows%20our%20Act,when%20it%20comes%20to%20sustainability. (Accessed 6 April 2026)

26. A full list of relevant resources is available in the *appendix*

27. National Trust (2025) How We're Adapting to Climate Change. Available at: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/our-cause/nature-climate/adapting-for-climate-change (Accessed 6 April 2026)

Environmental Responsibility THROUGH Culture

In the policy context, and with funders, there is a growing recognition of culture's vital role in driving an environmentally responsible society.

At COP30 in Brazil, culture took on a growing emphasis, appearing in the Action Agenda for the first time, with COP president André Corrêa do Lago writing *"To thinkers, spiritual leaders, artists, and philosophers, we call on you to help us transcend outdated mindsets whilst preserving shared values and innovating towards a new planetary renaissance."*[28] The role of culture in driving deep narrative shift on climate (as opposed to simply communicating information) is increasingly being recognised by funders like Joseph Rowntree Foundation, CIFF and Wellcome Trust[29]. In adjacent creative industries, such as advertising and film and TV, organisations including Creatives for Climate and Climate Spring are bringing skills in narrative change to bear in adverts, reality TV formats and soap opera plotlines.

But this turn towards culture by the climate sector has not yet been widely embraced. Our interviews with those working in environmental roles in Norfolk and Suffolk indicated an anecdotal understanding of culture's value, yet this rarely translated into strategic projects - it is seen as 'nice to have'.

Relatively little research into the efficacy of culture in driving behaviour change on climate exists - as AHRC's Cultural Value Report[30] identified, "little evidence of serious research into arts and climate change initiatives (exists)". **This suggests an opportunity for collaboration between the culture sector and academic partners in the region.**

What audiences and visitors want

Audiences and visitors want to see culture act on environment - both *in* and *through* culture.

The 2024 Indigo Act Green Report[31] found that:

- **86% of audiences are worried about the climate crisis**
- **72% think cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society about the climate emergency**
- **only 16% think cultural organisations place great importance on the role they play in the climate emergency**

28. Corrêa do Lago, André (2025) First Letter from the President of COP30, Ambassador André Corrêa do Lago Available at https://cop30.br/en/brazilian-presidency/letters-from-the-president/letter-from-the-brazilian-presidency (Accessed 6 April 2026)

29. A full list of funders is available in the *appendix*

30. Crossick G and Kaszynska P (2021) Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture Available at https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AHRC-291121-UnderstandingTheValueOfArts-CulturalValueProjectReport.pdf (Accessed 6 April 2026)

31. Indigo (2024) Act Green 2024. Available at https://www.indigo-ltd.com/resources/act-green-2024-report (Accessed 6 April 2026)

In 2026, Climate Outreach published a new report[32] on the appetite of British people for more cultural content on climate themes. They found:

- **Audiences want cultural leadership on climate change.** Across society, people want and expect climate to be talked about in what they watch, visit and enjoy
- **Most people want to see more climate content in culture -** especially if it focuses on solutions, community action and local benefits, and with less onus on individual action
- **Perfection is not required and honesty welcomed.** People agree that organisations, including museums, galleries and theatres, can and should show climate content - even if they're still on their own sustainability journey.
- **Local life, nature and health drive empathy.** People care most about climate impacts close to home that affect nature, health and the poorest households

This establishes a clear mandate for cultural organisations to do more in terms of CER, to share the story of their actions with the public in inclusive, positive language, and to offer diverse cultural programming on climate themes.



First Light Festival. Photo: Adam Barnes

32. Climate Outreach (2026) Culture and Entertainment. Available at https://climateoutreach.org/btc/2025/report/culture-entertainment/ (Accessed 26 May 2026)

NORFOLK and SUFFOLK - what's already happening

They may not have called it CER, but Norfolk and Suffolk's cultural identity has long been shaped by nature and environment. The skies, landscape and water have been captured by artists like John Constable, John Crome and Maggie Hambling; on the page, the region has been fertile ground for writers including George Crabbe, Roger Deakin, and WG Sebald. Musicians from Benjamin Britten to Brian Eno have responded to the place and its atmosphere, each in their own way a passionate advocate for environment and conservation.

That influence is felt just as profoundly in the present day, in Norfolk and Suffolk's thriving CER scene. As signalled by the commissioning of this report, the planetary crisis is taken seriously across the sector.

Almost all respondents in our survey (91%) are taking personal action on CER, while 69% saw themselves as proactive advocates or influencers, who are encouraging colleagues, sharing knowledge, and promoting investment in greener choices. A significant majority (60%) have already raised awareness through content and programming. Our case studies offer a flavour of what this work looks like on the ground, demonstrating the real innovation, creativity and ambition that characterise CER in the region.

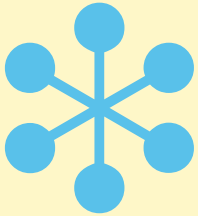
Our survey indicated a strong local ecosystem, good national connectivity and emerging partnerships between the culture sector and wider environmental and community sectors. The most common collaborations existed between culture sector and local peers, national networks, community groups and environmental charities. Collaborations with businesses and international peers were less frequent - a clear opportunity for the sector to do more.

This vibrant scene, in the context of a region being profoundly shaped by the planetary crisis, establishes the foundation for Norfolk and Suffolk's culture sector to play a true national and international leadership role on CER.

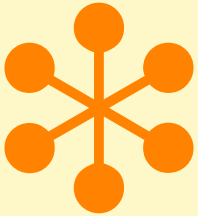
SIX KEY THEMES

Through our survey, interviews, focus groups and workshops, as well as wider research into the environmental impacts facing the region and innovations in the culture sector, six key themes have emerged as distinct drivers for the region's CER.

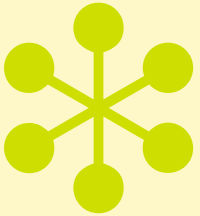




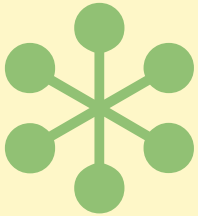
BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY



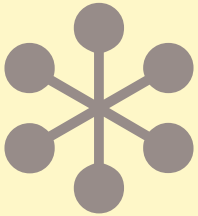
ENERGY AND POWER



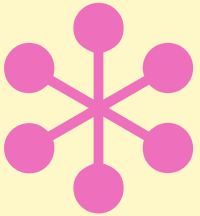
REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



GREEN ORGANISATIONS



ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE



PUBLIC IMAGINATION, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY

Ness: An Audio Landscape. Photo: Will Green Photography

"Nature recovery is so important; empowering communities to get involved in helping nature and supporting long term connections between communities and nature can also support health and wellbeing… there's so much potential where arts and culture can link in and amplify nature focused projects and initiatives, particularly around community connection and inclusion."

Lindsay Gardner, Lead Project Officer for Community and Environment, Norfolk County Council

Biodiversity and nature recovery represents the most distinctive contribution Norfolk and Suffolk's culture sector can make to CER nationally. The landscape and ecology of Norfolk and Suffolk, and the existence of newly established regional frameworks, create a specific and timely opportunity for leadership. This was a repeated topic throughout our interviews, focus groups and workshops - a theme that generated a sense of agency, creativity and hope.

Public concern for nature is the strongest opportunity for cultural engagement on the planetary crisis. Climate Outreach's research found that the public is most concerned about 'harm to nature and wildlife' as an impact of climate change, across all segments of society[1]. Most people feel that 'being in nature makes me very happy', while a small majority feel that we are 'part of nature.'

Meanwhile respondents to our survey identified 'place-based creative and ecological regeneration' as the second most important area for culture and heritage organisations to make a positive impact on the climate and nature crisis (selected by 50% of respondents).[2] Many are already working with environmental collaborators - nature and environmental charities ranked in the top five most common partners. Survey respondents draw inspiration from local nature initiatives, including community gardens, greening groups and coastal community walking programmes.

1. ibid.

2. See survey report in the *appendix*

Co-benefits are well evidenced. Research demonstrates that spending time in nature is consistently linked with positive mental and physical outcomes[3] - it improves mental wellbeing, supports physical health, enhances children's development, and reduces stress. The NHS's Green Social Prescribing Programme provided further evidence, linking environmental engagement directly to mental health outcomes.[4] This aligns with established commitments on Creative Health in Norfolk and Suffolk, reflected in the 'Mapping Creative Health' report[5].

In October 2025, the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership published its Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) for the region, providing a shared framework for action across local authorities, conservation organisations, and communities. The Strategies include Local Habitat Maps covering 40% of Norfolk and Suffolk, identifying existing nature-rich areas and priority sites for action. This provides a ready-made framework for cultural partnership and a clear basis for demonstrating social value.

Despite this, national cultural policy, including Arts Council England's Environmental Responsibility Investment Principle, has not typically foregrounded biodiversity and nature recovery. **There is clear space for the regions to lead.**

3. Natural England (2022) Links Between Natural Environments and Mental Health. Available at https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4973580642418688 (accessed 6 April 2026)

4. NHS England (2022) Green Social Prescribing. Available at https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/green-social-prescribing/ (accessed 6 April 2026)

5. Creative Lives (2024) Mapping Creative Health Available at https://norfolksuffolkculture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/mapping-creative-health.pdf (accessed 6 April 2026)

The culture sector should celebrate and prioritise biodiversity and nature recovery, demonstrating national leadership on CER. Alignment between CER strategy and the LNRS provides a clear, regionally specific opportunity to demonstrate measurable social value, supporting wider objectives on health and wellbeing.

Cultural organisations should:

- **Embed biodiversity and nature recovery in policy and decision making processes**
- **Actively contribute to the conservation and restoration of nature on their sites, where appropriate**
- **Establish partnerships with environmental and conservation organisations**
- **Integrate nature into programming, commissioning and public engagement**

"There's a real focus for us on activity inspired by nature... it's all about the inherent benefits of being in nature - the health benefits."

Melissa Matthews, Cultural Programmes Manager, Suffolk Community Libraries



Memory of Birds, Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Photo: Kat Mager

CASE STUDY

HEDGEROW AT THE FOOD MUSEUM

The humble hedgerow was the focal point for an ambitious project at the Food Museum, centring on the intersection of nature, culture, food and social history.

Hedgerow celebrated one of our most recognisable - but often poorly understood - natural assets, and helped to share ways to manage and protect hedgerows. Indoor and outdoor exhibitions and demonstrations brought together artists, poets, craftspeople, furniture makers, hedge layers, policy makers, farmers and historians to build a multifaceted picture of the hedgerow. Partners included People's Trust for Endangered Species, Hedgelink, and the project was used to promote the Great British Hedgerow Survey.

The project utilised The Food Museum's unusual role as both land manager and cultural organisation, with over a mile of new hedgerow laid as part of the project. Skills development came in the shape of hedgerow management training, led by local eco groups and volunteers, and participants learnt how to forage sustainably. Running at the same time, community exhibition *Every Garden Matters: How to Save the World One Garden at a Time* showed actions local people could take for biodiversity in their own garden.

A smaller version of the exhibition traveled to Parliament, supporting Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)'s call for the Government to increase hedgerow networks by 40% by 2050 - a pledge that was successfully secured. Jenny Cousins, Director of the Food Museum, recognises the powerful role that culture can play in the context of environmental advocacy: "Projects such as Hedgerow use culture as a way into difficult policy issues".



Hedgerow at the Food Museum. Photo: Food Museum

The Food Museum's Environmental Responsibility policy foregrounds biodiversity and nature recovery, and Cousins believes there is a real opportunity for cultural organisations to play a more active role as custodians of land. "The culture sector often owns buildings and land. Better management of our assets to create habitat is achievable and we should be engaging with the work that the nature conservation movement and charities are doing,' she says. She draws attention to the State of Nature Report - the most comprehensive report on the UK's current biodiversity - calling for more overlap between culture and conservation sectors. "Culture always has a role in making people more aware of the issues."

Elsewhere on site, the Food Museum has a long-running green social prescribing programme, supported on the NHS. The site also has 50 community allotments, and a project with Suffolk Master Composters to manage onsite waste. Their events programme has included free carbon literacy training and green skills events.

Ultimately *Hedgerow* won the 'Sustainable Project of the Year' Award 2023 at the Museums and Heritage Awards, testament to culture's role in reshaping the public's relationship with nature - and the power of the hedgerow to inspire change.



Hedgerow at the Food Museum. Photo: Food Museum

CASE STUDY

HIGHTIDE'S *NESS: AN AUDIO LANDSCAPE* BY ZOË SVENDSEN AND CAROLYN DOWNING WITH CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIST ORANGE

Based on a prose poem by Robert Macfarlane and Stanley Donwood, *Ness: An Audio Landscape* was a site-responsive audio piece bringing to life the natural world that inhabits the former nuclear site at Orford Ness - now a nature reserve. Working with the National Trust, audiences were given specially designed headphones to explore the site. Around 200 different 'sonic zones', drawing on environmental data, were geolocated in the landscape, transmitted to audience's mobile phones as they passed.

"People reported back quite often that it made them look differently at the landscape - it retuned their attention," says co-creator and director Zoë Svendesen. Colonialism and climate justice surfaced as a theme, as the piece linked to the nuclear test sites around the world "that are designated as empty or peripheral, when of course they're far from peripheral - whether that's to people or ecosystems".

The National Trust supported the development of the work practically, for example providing office space for the team, and bringing in volunteers to help the team test and develop the technology. Funding came from Cambridge University Innovation Hub as part of its research into 'climate dramaturgy' - an approach that integrates climate consciousness into the entire process of making a performance, combining sustainable practice, climate justice and creative responses to the planetary emergency.



Ness: An Audio Landscape. Photo: Will Green Photography

"We embed climate dramaturgy in everything we're doing," explains Hightide's Artistic Director and CEO Titilola Dawudu. The approach, originated by Svendesen and Clare Slater at the Donmar Warehouse and further developed in Suffolk, has been adopted by a wide number of companies nationally and internationally, with workshops taking place in contexts including the National Theatre and the Culture for Future initiative in Prague. In spring 2026, a new series of *How To...* guides for producers, writers, dramaturgs and directors is launching, outlining how climate dramaturgy can be used to embed environmental practice holistically, across story, process and materials. The guides have been co-authored by Svendsen, in her role as an AHRC researcher with Hightide, and Lucy Wray.

More broadly, Hightide is undertaking bold action to become a decarbonised theatre company by 2030. Dawudu joined the company in May 2025, and through her leadership is placing an emphasis on climate justice themes. "A lot of the climate crisis is rooted in social justice issues and racism... it impacts most on those who are already marginalised," she says. "The central question is - can you live your life fully? We want to take it out of the academic space and bring it closer to people."



Ness: An Audio Landscape. Photo: Will Green Photography



ENERGY AND POWER

The energy transition is already reshaping Norfolk and Suffolk's landscape, economy and communities. Culture is well placed to make this transition visible and meaningful, while providing a forum for complex environmental and social questions. But culture is currently underrepresented in the conversation.

Our survey found that the energy sector is one of the lowest-frequency partners for the culture sector in the region - only 9% had collaborated with energy companies. Environmental and energy experts interviewed for this report noted that cultural initiatives are rarely factored into planning for new energy infrastructure, despite community engagement being a priority for developers. Some in the culture sector expressed hesitation about partnership in an industry where renewable and fossil fuel interests frequently coexist: a concern that illustrates the need for robust ethical frameworks to guide partnerships.

Handled sensitively, there are clear opportunities for culture to make the clean energy transition visible and meaningful, and ways that culture can contribute to community engagement objectives. Culture can be a 'shop window' where the public encounters new technologies and systems, and cultural programming can engage creatively with the potential of new approaches. Strategic collaborations with the energy sector could power the culture sector's journey to net zero, while driving public awareness of the energy transition.

National examples demonstrate the potential for collaborations between culture and energy sectors, including:

- **Integration of cultural institutions into low-carbon infrastructure (eg the Waterloo and Southbank Heat Network[1])**
- **Development of community energy models for the cultural sector (eg SAIL's feasibility work in Leeds on a community energy model for the creative industries[2])**
- **Long-term partnerships between energy providers and cultural events (eg E.ON Next's 15-year strategic energy partnership with Coventry City Council and funding of Godiva Festival[3])**
- **Artistic responses exploring energy systems (see case study)[4]**

Regionally, Sizewell C offers a live and complex example. Leaders have spoken to the arts' role in making the development 'more accessible'[5], and have founded the community arts programme Sizewell Creative. At the same time, groups including Together Against Sizewell C protest the project's landscape and wildlife impacts. This illustrates the need for considered, context specific engagement, and also points to the role of culture as a facilitator of dialogue, interpreter of transformation, and amplifier of community voice.

1. Lawrence I (2026) Inside the Plan to Use the River Thames to Heat Iconic London Land Marks. Available at: https://www.timeout.com/london/news/inside-the-plan-to-use-the-river-thames-to-heat-iconic-london-landmarks-020126 (accessed 6 April 2026)

2. SAIL (2025) Pioneering Community Energy for the Creative Sector. Available at: https://wearesail.org/pioneering-community-energy-for-the-creative-sector/

3. Clement H (2024) Coventry's Godiva festival's new sponsor makes event more sustainable Available at: https://coventryobserver.co.uk/news/coventry-news-coventrys-godiva-festivals-new-sponsor-makes-event-more-sustainable/ (accessed 6 April 2026)

4. A 'bank' of 'creative energy projects' is being compiled by Regen SW (nd) Energy and the Arts, An Ongoing Archive. Available at https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/6798bfee7da7f37163ec22fb/68b5a5b3e9fcf74bb0701584_Web%20Ready%20PDF%20Energy%20and%20the%20Arts%20-%20An%20ongoing%20archive.pdf (accessed 6 April 2026)

5. Raval A and Millard R (2025) Nuclear Plant Boss Julia Pyke: 'It's a tough gig, developing big infrastructure projects in the UK' *Financial Times*, 16 March 2025

The culture sector should be represented in key conversations about energy infrastructure in the region. Culture organisations should explore strategic partnerships with clean energy providers where appropriate, governed by clear ethical frameworks and aligned with organisational values.

Programming could engage creatively with the social and emotional dimensions of the energy transition; interpret and document change. Cultural organisations should consider how partnership with the energy sector could support their own journey to net zero.



Leviathan, SPILL Festival. Photo: Pine Agency

CASE STUDY

CASE STUDY: ARIEH FROSH AND ED COMPSON'S *THE NEW SCROBY SANDS OFFSHORE WIND FARM INFORMATION CENTRE* AND *HOTEL KITTIWAKE*

"What shift in imagination might be caused by the green industrial revolution?" This was, artist Arieh Frosh explains, the question that inspired him and collaborator Ed Compson to develop a series of works exploring clean energy technology, most recently focussing on North Sea wind turbines.

Having worked with school children in North London to envision the future of wind technology, an East Gallery Fellowship with Norwich University of the Arts offered an opportunity for the pair to dig deeper into this area of exploration. "We were specifically looking at the meeting of offshore wind turbines with Doggerland," Frosh says, referring to the prehistoric landmass connecting the east of England and continental Europe, before it was submerged by rising seas 10,000 years ago. The pair were fascinated by how new wind turbines being erected in the region connected the contemporary with the deep history of the submerged land.

Emerging from the residency was *The New Scroby Sands Offshore Wind Farm Information Centre,* a research-led exhibition using material from marine archaeological research and wind energy construction to explore the ocean across time, presented at the university in March - June 2025.



Hotel Kittiwake. Photo: Arieh Ed

The residency brought them into contact with *Living in Changing Landscapes,* a research partnership between Norwich University of the Arts and the Broads Authority, exploring climate impacts in the region with the communities who live there. Through this they joined a group of artists, curators and academics for a two day walk from Norwich to Yarmouth, and then on to a 36-hour voyage across the North Sea to Rotterdam, on a historic fishing boat built in Lowestoft over a century ago. The trip was organised by Sainsbury Centre's Curator of Art and Climate Change, John Kenneth Paranada, as part of the *Can the Seas Survive Us?* Exhibition. It was a way to draw links between the fragile coastlines of Norfolk and the Netherlands.

Their next work, *Hotel Kittiwake+*, responds to the measures being put in place by Hornsea Project 3, compensating for the risks posed to the Kittiwake population by the new infrastructure: three large, octagonal artificial nesting sites have been built offshore to house up to 1500 kittiwakes. "They're really compelling architecturally," Frosh says, "and they speak to something pivotal about how the North Sea might be partitioned, having places for infrastructure and then ecological compensation elsewhere". The project is in receipt of EU funding as part of the Tidal Arts initiative.

On the day we speak, they are about to run a role-playing workshop at the Battery in Lowestoft, through First Light Festival. Participants will be asked to take on a role as part of the 'more than human' ecosystem of the North Sea - they could be, for example, a shoal of herring - working collaboratively to design a marine hotel from their positions. Ultimately, they will create a sculpture on the beach as part of the festival. It is a work about "responsibility, repair, coexistence, and ultimately profitability".

"We've done a lot of workshops with people in the region over the last three and a half years," Frosh says. "Often just listening and hearing... the approach has been to sit with the complexity of it". They have approached relationships with the energy companies cautiously, and not approached them for funding.

"It's just about being able to have an independent artist lens, rather than saying 'we're doing this on behalf of the company'," Frosh reflects. But they have had useful interactions with the clean energy sector in the region, including meetings with a wind turbine technician, project managers from the sector, and visiting ORE Catapult's testing site for turbine blades.

Frosh and Compson see a clear role for culture to play in the context of the clean energy transition that is so profoundly reshaping the region - socially and ecologically. "It's the noticing, the tracing, the collecting, the gathering and representing in some way," Compson says. "Talking to the complexity".

REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



Leviathan Artist walk, SPILL Festival 2025. Photo Pine Agency

Reducing environmental impact is the foundation of CER, and a lead outcome set by the culture board in the Culture Drives Impact Manifesto. The region has access to established tools and frameworks; the priority now is collective ambition, shared infrastructure, and addressing specific gaps in provision.

Many culture workers and organisations are already engaged with sector-wide initiatives to reduce their environmental impact. While varying in scope, these initiatives (outlined in the *Appendix*) provide practical, collaborative tools shaped by sector realities. In Norfolk and Suffolk, GroundWork East's Carbon Charter, offers a clear, accredited decarbonisation and environmental pathway for local businesses, with free resources and Carbon Literacy Training through the Trailblazers initiative for tourism and culture sectors.

These initiatives support cultural organisations to 'reduce emissions as much as possible', in line with achieving a 'net zero' commitment. Nationally, some larger organisations are adopting the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) Net Zero Standard, considered the gold standard for corporate net zero credibility, with a maximum of 10% residual emissions against baseline. As advances towards 'net zero' become more grounded in practical reality, a 'one size fits all' target date is unlikely to be viable for all organisations. Instead, bespoke pathways informed by ambitious, transparent, and well-evidenced plans will be stronger drivers of institutional buy-in than generic commitments.



Circular economy principles are widely valued but difficult to administer in isolation. Creative reuse hubs are emerging nationally: ReStage connects 18 such hubs across the UK; SAIL's resource hub in Leeds demonstrates environmental, financial, and collaborative benefits; and Glasgow's Circular Arts Network offers a free plugin enabling peer-to-peer exchange of materials. Norfolk and Suffolk currently lacks equivalent provision: this is a clear gap and a clear opportunity. On procurement, useful national models exist, including South Ken Zen+'s Zero Emissions Nature Positive Supply Chain Charter[1] and Theatre Green Book's Supplier Sustainability Information spreadsheet, but a regionally coordinated initiative would have greater traction and relevance.

"We're excited by the idea of a regional circular economy. There are enough organisations here for us to achieve that"

Jacob Hewes, Creative Producer, Out There Arts, Great Yarmouth

Our survey identified the three most significant challenges to CER: travel and touring, funding and resources (addressed previously), buildings and energy use.

The East of England is fostering innovation on touring. For example the East Anglian Touring Consortium is a new partnership of seven theatres/theatre producers across the region, who are working together to make more theatre work locally - reaching new audiences, providing local employment opportunities, and reducing environmental impact. Elsewhere the Tyndall Centre worked with the band Massive Attack to reduce emissions for their tours and develop resources for the wider music sector, including a *Roadmap to Super Low Carbon Live Music,* which includes decarbonisation frameworks that may well be relevant to other live forms.

1. South Ken Zen+ (2025) The Supply Chain Charter. Available at https://www.southkenzen.com/programme-news/the-supply-chain-charter/ (Accessed 6 April 2026)

Audience travel was a particular concern for arts leaders we spoke to, acknowledged as a real challenge in a region that is heavily rural and geographically dispersed, with variable public transport provision. This is reflective of a challenge facing the wider sector: as Julie's Bicycle have found, accurately monitoring audience travel is difficult - less than 50% of NPOs reporting their carbon data included audience travel emissions - in spite of this, audience travel emissions still account for 39% of the combined total carbon footprint of reporting NPOs[2]. This is likely to be a growing concern as the culture sector progresses in decarbonisation, shifting focus from emissions that lie within their direct control towards the areas of emissions that lie within their influence. Initiatives experimenting with new approaches include Indigo's 'Audiences Act Green' pilot, which tested how the combination of messaging and digital technology could influence audience behaviour. Audience members who changed their travel plans as a result of the intervention reduced emissions by 41%.[3]

With a high concentration of heritage and historic buildings, decarbonising energy use in buildings is another challenge for the region. Cultural organisations often have to reconcile their ambitions to reduce environmental impact with the need to preserve historic fabric, protect collections, and maintain access - all within tightening financial pressures. Many also need to maintain energy-intensive environmental controls to preserve collections. Given the particular complexities it faces, the heritage sector is at the forefront of solutions - for example National Trust is headed for net zero across its estates by 2030[4], and Historic England recently published new guidance on the decarbonisation of historic buildings.[5]

2. Julie's Bicycle (2026) Culture, Climate and Environmnetal Responsibility: Environmental Report 2024-25. Available at https://juliesbicycle.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/ACE-Environmental-Report-2024-25.pdf (Accessed 6 April 2026)

3. Indigo (2023) Audiences Act Green: New Pilot Project Promotes Sustainable Travel. Available at https://www.indigo-ltd.com/news/audiences-act-green-new-pilot-project-combines-technology-and-communications-to-promote-sustainable-travel/ (Accessed 6 April 2026)

4. National Trust (2025) People and Nature Thriving. Available at https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/binaries/content/assets/website/national/pdf/national-trust_transitionplan_june_2025_-1.pdf (Accessed 6 April 2026)

5. Historic Buildings (2026) Culture and Heritage Sector Decarbonisation. Available at https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/advice/decarbonisation/decarbonisation-plan-guidance-template/ (Accessed 29 May 2026)

This presents a picture of widespread experimentation, innovation and practical solutions being developed regionally and nationally, to reduce the environmental impact of the culture sector's activities. **The culture sector should work collectively on regionally specific challenges, particularly in circular economy, procurement, and audience travel, rather than attempting to solve these in isolation. Organisations should align with and actively participate in national networks, benefitting from existing frameworks and expertise. Pathways to net zero should be published, and best practice shared. Developing joint funding bids and resource-sharing initiatives would both reduce cost and increase impact.**

A further, underacknowledged opportunity lies in finance. The Make My Money Matter Campaign found that the pension footprint of FTSE100 companies is typically seven times higher than that of their direct operations[6]. **Ensuring that cultural organisations' investments and pensions are in ethical, fossil-fuel-free funds could be among the most significant actions available to the sector.**

"We want to say to people, look, there are becoming fewer excuses for not doing the right thing sustainably. We must try all the schemes. There is money out there. You can get this done."

Tim FitzHigham, Creative Director of the Guildhall of St George and Creative Hub and Cultural Officer of the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, leading revival of St Georges' Guildhall (on the venue's net zero ambitions)

6. Make My Money Matter (2025) Available at https://makemymoneymatter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Green-Pensions-Guide-2025.pdf (Accessed 6 April 2026)

CASE STUDY

REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND ADDRESSING FLOODING AT BRITTEN PEARS ARTS

On a cold evening in February, musician Alice Boyd shares a work in the Jerwood Kiln studio, using field recordings to capture the changing sonic landscape of a bluebell wood over the last 50 years. Combining contemporary recordings with those captured by audio naturalist Martyn Stewart in the 1970s, her music offers a sensory encounter with what the stark loss of birdsong over the period really means.

The work is performed in the remarkable setting of Snape Maltings: an arts complex and heritage destination set on the bank of the River Alde, where Benjamin Britten established a world renowned concert hall in 1967. A place of deep connection between nature and creative expression, the venue is facing significant threats in a changing climate.

As they prepare to launch a new strategic vision, Britten Pears Arts' CEO Andrew Comben explains: "environmental responsibility is in every part of it, acknowledging the relationship between art and the natural world, and our particular existential threat here, because the site is at a 1 in 20-year risk of flooding".

Working with environmental consultant Joel Gustaffson, the organisation is on a journey to net zero. A major capital programme is transforming Britten Pears Arts' estate. Working in partnership with Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, and East Suffolk Water Board, flood defences will be raised; carbon emissions will be significantly lowered through the installation of roof insulation, the use of photovoltaic panels, and connecting music buildings to a watersource heating system - harnessing heat from the River Alde.



Snape Maltings. Photo: Angus Cooke

Julie's Bicycle resources and Theatre Green Book are essential tools in Britten Pear Arts' environmental responsibility planning, and staff participate in East Suffolk Council sustainability forums. Through the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation, they are part of an active conversation around tourist travel.

Looking ahead, priorities include tackling procurement and audience travel to what is a remote rural location - "hard nuts to crack", Comben feels, but a strong opportunity for sector collaboration. "We have challenges in terms of how we access stuff, and how we move people around... we could have a real impact if we act collectively".

These steps will prove vital in preserving a setting with a unique place in the nation's cultural heritage, which was the source of so much of Britten's work and has continued to move musicians and artists in the generations since. "If you are a musician and you come here, you see it and hear it at the same time - you can't fail to be inspired", Comben says.



Open Session with Alice Boyd. Photo: Britten Pears Arts

GREEN ORGANISATIONS



The Edge of the Land, Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Photo: Kat Mager

Delivering CER requires the right skills, structures and policies. Culture workers in the region are strongly motivated to act on climate. But motivation is not translating into systemic action, because the organisational structures, policies, and resources are not in place to support it. Closing this gap must be a priority.

Survey respondents rated climate change as important to very important (averaging 88% of the maximum score), with this consensus consistent across all artforms and role types. Yet the sector's own level of priority was rated 'moderate', with only 7.5% of respondents believing cultural organisations currently place 'great importance' on it. This reveals a clear gap between ambition and capacity, and is a mandate for culture organisations to go further in empowering their teams to act.

The structural picture is striking: while most (91%) of respondents take personal sustainability actions in their roles, only 40% have sustainability referenced in their job description. 46% lack, or are unsure of, a dedicated sustainability role in their organisation. While 53% have an environmental policy and/or action plan in place, only 11% find it 'extremely useful', with 25% finding it only 'a little useful' or 'not at all useful'.

Organisational culture and the absence of visible senior leadership were identified as the most significant barriers to progress. Self-employed culture workers face particular challenges, lacking the institutional standing to advocate for greener practices within the organisations they work with.

"Leadership says it's important but doesn't act on it."
"Without senior buy-in, change feels impossible."

Survey responses

On skills, there is a strong baseline: 52% of respondents have undertaken climate training, and literacy on key terms is high. But demand is for applied, sector-specific support and peer learning, including practical tools, templates, case studies, and networks for sharing practice, rather than more introductory content. The most significant barrier to training by some margin was a lack of awareness about what's available - suggesting the need for greater sign-posting and access around training opportunities.

As in so many areas, funding and resource constraints are one of the primary challenges in delivering CER overall. Yet the picture from survey comments was not simply one of insufficient money, but of CER failing to be treated as a core organisational priority within under-resourced institutions. Addressing this would support the prioritisation of resources.

"We simply don't have the resources to prioritise sustainability."
"Everything is stretched - there's no time or budget for the extra work."

Survey responses

CER must be embedded in organisational governance, not treated as a 'nice to have'. This means: co-creating environmental policies with staff and self-employed workers; embedding CER responsibilities in job descriptions across all roles; and sustaining engagement through training, staff initiatives, and partnerships.

At the regional level, coordinated provision of accessible training programmes (on the model of SAIL's free online resources in Leeds or GMAST's carbon literacy offer in Greater Manchester) would support a shared foundation of climate capability across the sector. Shared templates for job descriptions and policy documents would reduce the burden on individual organisations. Academic partnerships offer a route to external funding for joint research and to embedding CER in the training of the next generation of cultural workers.

"I would like to feel part of a community of like minds."
Survey response



Creative Socials, Creative Arts East. Photo: Anita Staff

CASE STUDY

NORFOLK & NORWICH FESTIVAL GREEN TEAM

Mark Denbigh, Head of Production and Programming at Norfolk & Norwich Festival, has just come from a meeting at Woodforde's Brewery. "They've made us a festival beer," he explains, "and they were putting it in the cans at 9am this morning".

Sourcing beer locally is the latest step in the festival's vision, expressed in their environmental responsibility policy, "to be recognised nationally as a leader of exceptional environmentally responsible practice in our work with artists and delivery of an annual regionally based arts festival". Since 2023, their Festival Gardens site has been powered by a renewable mains source; other key achievements include 0% of waste sent to landfill, 100% meat and fish free catering, compost loos, and 15,000 single use plastic cups avoided to landfill annually.

The festival's Green Team is the engine behind environmental responsibility, bringing together representatives of all departments for regular meetings, ensuring commitments are well understood and embedded across the organisations. The team reports to the Green Champion on the board.

Representatives of the Green Team also participate in sector initiatives including Julie's Bicycle, Theatre Green Book and Vision for Sustainable Events.

Denbigh participated in Julie's Bicycle's Accelerator programme. "It was amazing," he says. "It inspired me to create opportunities for other people in the sector, particularly with production managers". He has since joined the industry steering group for Vision for Sustainable Events, in his capacity as Environmental Champion on the board of outdoor arts network Without Walls, and has co-founded, with Cheltenham Festivals, the Urban Sustainability Arts Network, exploring how insights from the music festival sector can be applied to city-based festivals.



Roots to Rise, Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Photo: PINE Agency

During festival time, a team of over 100 volunteers give their time to make the event a success. They are key advocates for the festival's environmental goals: each year, they are provided with a 'snapshot document', with key stats on how sustainability is being embedded. Denbigh credits them as crucial to the success of the waste reduction scheme.

This approach has engendered a real excitement about environmental responsibility among the festival team. "We now have an incredibly light impact site... the power is sorted, the toilet is sorted, the water is sorted," Denbigh explains, "and everyone keeps saying: 'ok, what are we doing next?'.

In terms of next steps, Denbigh is energised by the opportunity to "celebrate what we've got in the region, and how things are produced and consumed". Woodforde's festival beer is one great example. "That beer is going to travel 20 minutes down the road and be served at the festival. The water comes from two wells they have on site. We want to talk about it - to work with great local partners and celebrate their stories". A great example of how embracing environmental best practice within cultural operations can become a way to inspire public imagination.



Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Photo: ETT Photography

CASE STUDY

SUFFOLK COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

Working in buildings you don't own - and have no control over, in terms of how they are powered and insulated - can be a real stumbling block for CER. But Suffolk Community Libraries saw this as a provocation to think more widely and inventively about their approach. "With so many factors predetermined, we had to think about where we could really influence change," explains Melissa Matthews, Cultural Programmes Manager at Suffolk Community Libraries.

With 400 frontline staff across 45 libraries, they recognised that how they upskilled and empowered their teams was central to how they could shape day-to-day impact, as well as influence the public. A robust training programme was developed with Julie's Bicycle, that all staff received as part of the new starter process.

Ongoing support for staff includes CPD for executive and library managers; mental health first aid training; and nature connectedness training, delivered by The University of Derby and Natural England. Staff are encouraged to get involved with Green Libraries Week, an annual celebration led by the Chartered Institue of Library and Information Professionals highlighting the role of libraries in climate action. The organisation has an Environmental Sustainability Focus group in place with Terms of Reference, KPIs and action log.

Seeking to empower those with a real passion for environmental responsibility, they introduced a microgrants scheme, inviting project ideas from their staff. Projects commissioned had to address two priority areas: 1. conservation or biodiversity - which had been identified as a key potential impact area for Suffolk Community Libraries 2. Mental health and wellbeing (Suffolk Community Libraries is one of the only library services in the UK with a dedicated wellbeing service).



Page Against the Machine - City of Literature Weekend, Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Photo David Kirkham

The range of projects that emerged is inspiring. From simple interventions like setting up bee watering stations and swift boxes, bird habitats and 'insect highways', to projects like Lowestoft Library Garden Project, which focussed on growing food as a way of highlighting the connection between nature, health and cost benefits, in a community that ranks among the most 20% deprived in England.

"There's something really inspiring about how connection with nature has inspired all of these offshoot programmes," Matthews says, "responding to people's individual passions, as their own entry points to engaging with nature."

Partnership working has been vital in "working smarter not harder", and collaborators have included Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Info Link, Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance, and Greenlight Trust, as well as locally based partners - St Elizabeth Hospice and The Felixstowe Swift Group are among the organisations she names.

Suffolk Community Libraries transitioned from being an independent charity to being part of Suffolk County Council in 2025, and the environmental programme has been pivotal in demonstrating how their work can "meet multiple aims". In this setting their work responds to the *Green and Blue Space* Joint Strategic Needs Assessment[1], published in August 2025, which makes the case for the importance of green and blue space in relation to health.

In Spring 2026, the libraries ran their 'Pollinate and Create' Intensive week with six artists, to 'explore the role of libraries as places at the intersection between environmental action, creativity and wellbeing (and) highlight the East of England as the hub for CER and creative health innovation.' The idea was, Matthews says, to "bring the creative workforce in early to unpick this with us". Following the residency, artists are given a commission pot to develop their ideas.

Matthew's vision for the potential of libraries and cultural spaces across the country to be drivers of environmental action is compelling. "What could it look like if we reclaimed land around libraries to become almost a high street hedgerow, and connected it to a community building?" She asks. "It's the concept of radical generosity".

1. Suffolk JSNA (2025) Green and Blue Space Profile. Available at: https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/asset-library/JSNA/Blue-and-Green-Space-August-2025.pdf (accessed 6 April 2026)

ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE



Leviathan Artist Walk, SPILL Festival. Photo: Pine Agency

"we're very vulnerable as a community to coastal erosion, and to some of our Lowestoft community it feels that we've been left out of the conversation"

Jo Leverett, Project Manager, First Light Festival

"Support local resilience - culture is the glue."

Survey respondent

The culture sector's CER agenda has, to date, primarily focussed on mitigation: reducing emissions and environmental impact. As climate impacts intensify, adaptation and resilience are becoming equally important themes. The culture sector faces direct risks including flooding, heat, power disruption and supply chain instability; and has a distinct role to play as social infrastructure, supporting resilient communities through climate turbulence.

Our survey highlighted growing recognition of these risks, with respondents identifying heritage preservation as a significant concern. Respondents recognise that climate impacts pose risks to collections, historic buildings, and cultural memory. Protecting heritage is seen not simply as a matter of conservation, but as safeguarding regional identity and intergenerational cultural assets. The region has a long-standing history of climate driven landscape change, for example at Doggerland, Dunwich and the Norfolk Broads. This offers space for the public to process current impacts and learn from how people have dealt with change in the past.

Cross-sector initiatives are already building the infrastructure for culture's role in resilience - for example the ARISE Initiative (Advancing Resilience and Innovation for a Sustainable Environment)[1], which is delivering place-based interventions along the Norfolk-to-Kent coast.

All cultural organisations should understand the climate risks they face, and develop plans to adapt. Measures may include:

- **Climate risk assessments**
- **Building upgrades and resilience planning**
- **Collection protection and emergency preparedness**

Beyond this, culture can act as a community anchor at times of disruption, by:

- **Providing spaces for reflection and dialogue**
- **Helping communities process change and loss**
- **Strengthening social connections during times of disruption**

"We're really interested in how we work with people and communities, and we'd love to be involved with what you're trying to do."

Darryl Newport, Professor of Energy and Sustainable Development and the Director of the Suffolk Sustainability Institute at the University of Suffolk, ARISE leadership team

"A specific area of concern and potential arts engagement is the mental health of flooded communities, where the arts could offer a powerful platform for people to gather and hear relevant stories."

Emma Dixon, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Manager

1. UEA (2024) ARISE: Advancing Resilience and Innovation for a Sustainable Environment. Available at https://devresearch.uea.ac.uk/project/arise-advancing-resilience-and-innovation-for-a-sustainable-environment/ (accessed 6 April 2026)

CASE STUDY

THE WHITING'S ON THE WALL'S *WHEN THE TIDE COMES*

On the coastline in Hemsby, climate change is not a distant threat but a lived reality - 30 homes have been lost in the past decade due to coastal erosion, including 20 demolished in early 2026. "Things have progressed at a far greater rate than I ever expected," says Kate-Anne Whiting, founder and artistic director of The Whiting's on the Wall theatre company, who has been working with the local community for over a year to develop a new documentary theatre piece based on their experiences.

In partnership with communities, scientists, local creatives and museums, *When the Tide Comes* explores the human cost of the climate crisis through a hyper-local lens. "We wanted to humanise the story of what is happening here," she explains, "we hear a lot about it in the press, but we don't really hear from the people. So the idea was to create a platform for the voices of the people of Hemsby."

Whiting has taken time to build up trust with the community, returning regularly, and it is important that she comes from Norfolk and her family have holidayed in Hemsby "for generations". She has developed a relationship with grassroots organisation Save Hemsby Coastline, and the plan is to end the play with an invitation to the audience to join the action they are taking. "Sometimes people are only given 24 hours' notice to hand over their property for voluntary demolition. Then they are put on the housing register, like anyone else would be."

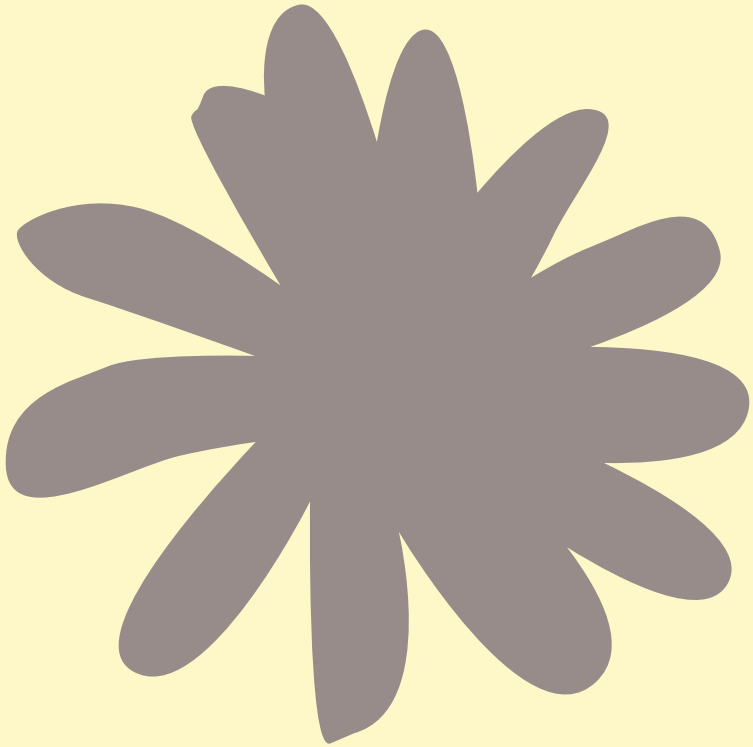


When the Tide Comes. Photo: Amber Massie-Blomfield

Grief has emerged as a key theme during the process. “There is this word, solastalgia,” she says “it refers to a kind of ‘homesickness’ experienced when you witness environmental impacts on the place where you’ve always lived”. As an associate artist of Eastern Angles she connected with local playwright James McDermott, who is running grief cafés as part of his new play *It Comes In Waves.* “We said grief is very relevant to these communities, because they haven’t just lost one person, they’ve lost their entire communities… So now he’s going to extend his grief cafés into Hemsby as well.”

Through their RandD process (funded by Arts Council England) the company has run further community engagement sessions at Time and Tide Museum, and presented an exhibition. The play is being developed at Norwich Theatre for a sharing in April 2026, and the plan is to tour it to underserved, rural locations in the Eastern region in Autumn 2026, before taking it on a national tour.

Ultimately, Whiting believes deeply that the arts can bring about real change. “We’re desperately in need of a bridge between scientific and governmental jargon and communities,” she says, “to do the thing that artists can, and that’s repackage the information into something audiences will connect with on an emotional level, which will drive them to change”.



PUBLIC IMAGINATION, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS



First Light Festival. Photo Mykola Romanovsky

It's got to be positive and it's got to show people an inspiring way forward... when people encounter the work of the artists we support they are energised by it - that's the point"

Veronica Sekules, Director, Groundwork Gallery

Survey respondents identified 'shaping public imagination' as culture's single most important contribution to environmental action. Across artforms and roles, respondents returned consistently to the power of storytelling, performance, visual culture, and collective experience to help the public form emotional connections with the planetary crisis and envision possible futures. 59% of respondents placed it in their top three most important ways culture and heritage sectors can contribute to the climate and nature crisis. Representative responses included: *"we can change hearts and minds through storytelling"*; *"use creative work to make climate personal and human"*; *"help communities imagine better futures."*

With growing interest from the climate space in the role of storytelling and cultural expression as a driving force in shaping public imagination and driving social and political change, there is a strong opportunity for cultural organisations in the region to work in partnership with academic partners to develop research that provides an evidence base where there is a current lack.

Cultural advocacy also ranked highly in our survey. It was the third most important contribution, selected by 36% of respondents. Respondents emphasised the sector's civic role: its convening power across communities, policymakers, businesses, and media, and its ability to keep climate and nature visible on public and political agendas. As one respondent put it: *"(we should) use our convening power to push for systemic change."* Crucially, respondents noted that culture reaches people who may not otherwise engage with environmental themes at all, making it a uniquely broad channel for climate communication.

A growing pool of research and free resources is available to support impactful climate communications that engender a sense of agency among audiences[1]. Often these emphasise on moving away from technical language and 'climate jargon', and promote human narratives at the heart of climate communications, as well as underlining the importance of hopeful visions of the future.

Interestingly, when asked about climate language, workshop participants indicated that - while jargon should be avoided - they weren't particularly concerned about exact terminology. Instead, the emphasis should be on action.

Public imagination, advocacy and communications are the culture sector's real strength, and this must not be ignored in setting CER strategy. This means commissioning and programming work that engages substantively with climate and nature; being explicit about the civic role of cultural institutions in keeping these issues on public and political agendas; telling the story through communications channels, and actively seeking to reach audiences who are not yet engaged with environmental themes.

"I would like people to imagine brighter futures that move away from the capitalistic exchanges that have got us into this mess in the first place. And whether that's imagining cleaner rivers and happier communities and more biodiverse landscapes in which to live, I think people need that hope if they're going to engage with it."

Dr. Andrew Burton, playwright and academic

1. See *appendix*.

CASE STUDY

SAINSBURY CENTRE'S CURATOR OF ART AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2019, the University of East Anglia joined forces with organisations around the world to declare a climate and biodiversity emergency, setting targets including to be 100% net zero by 2045 or earlier. As a world leader on climate change science and research, and the base for the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research - a partnership of universities bringing together climate change expertise from a variety of disciplines - the university is uniquely well placed to develop groundbreaking approaches as they pursue their net zero commitments.

John Kenneth Paranada's role is one such innovation. He is the inaugural Curator of Art and Climate Change at the university's art museum, the Sainsbury Centre. Funded by John Ellerman Foundation for three years, his role is described as 'the first role of its kind within a UK museum, now recognised internationally as a model for sustainable and regenerative curatorial and museological practice'. "My role is a collaboration between the Tyndall Centre and the Sainsbury Centre," Paranada explains, "they have a climate and communications hub, exploring how we approach communities to talk about the transition (to net zero)."

The Sainsbury Centre adopts a distinct curatorial model through its 'Big Question seasons", with each major exhibition posing an urgent, global question to visitors and presenting artworks that can help them find the answers. Examples include: 'How do we adapt to a transforming world?' Can the seas survive us?' and, most recently, 'Can we stop killing each other?'. The centre describes this as 'a radically new approach that understands art as alive and capable of engaging people with the fundamental questions of life'.



Ackroyd & Harvey, *Beuys' Acorns*, 2025 in the Sainsbury Centre Sculpture Park. Photo: Kate Wolstenholme

Paranda meets scientists at the Tyndall Centre weekly. “We integrate their research into what we’re doing at the centre,” Paranda says. “There’s always a climate angle”. Examples of the artworks commissioned during his time in the post include Ivan Morison’s *The Reapers,* a series of sculptures co-created with East Anglian farmers out of hemp, straw, beans and tomatoes, sourced from local, seasonal harvests. “The sculptures compost over time, and eventually returned to local farms as fertiliser”.

The Sainsbury Centre Sculpture Park also hosts a circle of seven oak saplings, a living sculpture by the artists Ackroyd and Harvey, as part of their artwork *Beuys’ Acorns* - one of many circles being planted in public spaces in partnership with cultural organisations. The oak trees are germinated from acorns collected by the artists from the landmark environmental artwork *7000 Oaks: City Forestation instead of City Administration* by artist Joseph Beuys.

The programme is backed up by a commitment to reducing the environmental impact of exhibitions, in line with the university’s net zero commitments. With an international focus, there can sometimes be tensions between the need to reduce impact and the imperative to platform artists from around the world. “The first question is always - is it sustainable?” Paranda says. The centre works with the Bizot Green Protocol, and collaborates with the Gallery Climate Coalition, looking for ways to minimise environmental impact - for example seeking permission from photographers to print their work in house rather than transporting photos internationally, or prioritising work by the artists they wish to profile that’s already within the UK or Europe.

More broadly, the centre is implementing steps such as embracing modular design in their gallery spaces, ensuring structures can be reused again and again, and sustainable procurement processes to ensure suppliers are genuinely committed to reducing the impact of their operations. The team are excited by the idea of a regional reuse hub - “that’s a really inspiring idea,” Paranada says, and his colleague, gallery technician Helle Tvibergsays: “This is what we’re lacking in this area. Everyone has so much scrap material - if we can set up ways to connect and share those for reuse, it would be absolutely fantastic”.

In April 2025, Norfolk Museums appointed Dr Leanne Melbourne in a brand-new role as Senior Curator of Climate Change and the Dynamic Coast. Her work includes using the museum’s collections to engage the public in relation to climate and coastal change, and promoting the understanding of coastal erosion in affected communities.

This suggests Paranda’s role as a precedent that may see wider take-up, inspiring similar posts across the sector, as the important role of culture in communicating and inspiring the transition to a net zero, regenerative future is better understood and enacted.

CASE STUDY

GROUNDWORK GALLERY

It's no surprise that Veronica Sekules, founder of Kings Lynn's GroundWork Gallery, started her career with Friends of the Earth. She soon moved into working in the arts, but her time with the environmental charity proved foundational - "I learned all about campaigning, about networking," she tells me. "How you have to address people from their own perspective."

After spending over 30 years as curator, and then head of education and deputy director at the Sainsbury Centre, in 2016 she founded GroundWork Gallery "on a shoestring". Set on the banks of the Great River Ouse, the gallery is subsidised by holiday rental income from the penthouse apartment on the top floor - Sekules describes herself as being in the hospitality business, laughing as she tells me that she spends as much time laundering sheets as she does planning exhibitions.

The reach and impact of GroundWork's programme - dedicated to art and environment - belies this humble context. The gallery has shown work from established names such as Richard Long, herman de vries and Kabir Hussain, as well as offering a platform to emerging talent. For the last five years, the gallery's residency programme has focussed on the issue of extractivism, offering development space for artists like Rebecca Faulkner to explore sand mining, and Sophy King to look at how natural systems reclaim industrial spaces. Recently, Sekules has founded the GroundWork NetWork, a community of practice with more than 90 members 'promoting creative practice which shapes our attitudes to the environment in ever clearer, more positive and more powerful ways'.



Out of the Depths exhibition, GroundWork Gallery. Photo: Andi Sapey

Drawing on her experience with Friends of the Earth, Sekules has built an extensive network of partnerships, ensuring that the artworks she presents have real impact. She cites examples including the local authority, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Buglife, the Civic Trust, XR and Culture Declares Emergency. “The idea is to be something of a campaigning organisation”.

Now, the gallery is developing *The Power of the Local,* a major new project focussed on The Wash Estuary - Britain’s largest estuary system and one of its most remarkable landscapes. In the years ahead, this low-lying landscape is likely to face significant change as the impacts of rising sea levels are felt, and difficult decisions about its future will be made. Sekules believes that arts and creativity have a vital role to play in enabling conversations about the cultural impact of these decisions. As publicity materials for the project put it, the conversations “involve questions about what kinds of landscapes people value, how communities wish to live, and what futures they want to create.”

The Power of the Local brings artists together with environmental organisations, heritage groups, community organisations and creative partners to explore the many ways people connect with this landscape, placing them in residency in settings around the Wash. Partners include RSPB, Lincolnshire and Norfolk Wildlife Trusts and Joseph Banks Museum.

The project epitomises Sekules’ approach to making artistic projects engaging with the environment. “It’s bringing people something they can get their teeth into, that’s about their identity,” she says. “It’s got to be positive and show people an inspiring way forward.”

“I would like people to imagine brighter futures that move away from the capitalistic exchanges that have got us into this mess in the first place. And whether that’s imagining cleaner rivers and happier communities and more biodiverse landscapes in which to live, I think people need that hope if they’re going to engage with it.”

Dr. Andrew Burton, playwright and academic



GroundWork Gallery. Photo: Andi Sapey

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ROADMAP

This sets out our recommendations for CER in Norfolk and Suffolk.



We highlight how cultural organisations can reduce the environmental impact of their work and embed environmental practice across their organisations. Rather than presenting detailed decarbonisation pathways, we signpost to established sub-sector initiatives - enabling organisations to align with tested frameworks already familiar to workforces. We underline how the culture sector can harness its unique strengths - creative expression, communication, community leadership and custodianship - to respond to the planetary crisis.

Our Guiding Principles reflect the values that have emerged repeatedly through our survey, interviews, workshops and focus groups, as drivers of CER. They are an important lens, ensuring that CER is inclusive, systemic and impactful. We encourage the culture sector to review CER plans through the frame of these principles, ensuring they are a golden thread running through strategic planning and practical implementation.

We highlight three Key Actions for the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board, to deliver real benefit to the region's culture sector - these are practical levers where a collaborative place-based intervention will propel CER forward. Each is informed by what the sector tells us it needs and our research into relevant interventions elsewhere.

The Core Recommendations are written primarily for organisations. Dedicated guidance for individuals working in the culture sector both as employees and self-employed is also set out. Not all recommendations will be relevant to everyone, but the framework is designed so that everyone can identify meaningful steps for their own context.



Our Days Out, Creative Arts East. Photo: Anita Staff

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Place Based

Norfolk and Suffolk is both highly vulnerable to climate impacts, *and* at the forefront of solutions. A place-based approach is rooted in this context, informed by the region's characteristics, and responding to the specific challenges and opportunities in the area. It recognises that the most significant impact we can have on climate and nature is often in our own communities and locale - an approach that thinks globally, while acting locally.

Imaginative

Culture has a vital role to play in sparking imagination, helping society to imagine what a flourishing ecological future could look and feel like. As storytellers, image makers, curators, and creators of shared values, culture can bring to life hopeful visions of thriving nature, cleaner environments and a more just, resourceful society. It draws on the past to help us make sense of our current realities, and to inspire our sense of possibility.



Together

A just and equitable transition ensures that historic injustices are redressed, and seeks to share the benefits of society's transition to a flourishing future fairly. CER with climate justice at its heart celebrates the joy of community, and recognises that those worst impacted by the planetary crisis - both in the region and internationally - are often those systemically disadvantaged in other ways: it places these communities at the heart of decision-making, and holds space for their voices and experiences.

No individual or organisation has the power to solve the planetary crisis alone. The crisis calls on the sector to work together: bringing diverse skills, passions and resources to the challenge. Collaboration beyond the sector is vital to realising culture's potential and achieving impact at scale.

Systemic

The planetary emergency is a systemic issue, shaped by long-standing extractive models. Culture has a unique role to play in enabling a broader transformation. Effective responses must go beyond isolated intervention to support wider cultural and social change. Technological and operational solutions are most impactful when accompanied by shifts in values, behaviours and practices.

Action Focussed

There is no time to waste in building a better world. The sector should not let 'the perfect is the enemy of the good'. Instead adopt an iterative approach - acting, learning from action, acting again - will enable the sector to move forward with pace and confidence. Embrace best practice from peers and identify opportunities to innovate.

ACTIONS FOR THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK CULTURE BOARD

The Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board has a track record of using its collective power to deliver change, and is best placed to leverage action that individual organisations cannot achieve alone. To deliver the recommendations set out in this road map, its role is as: - a convenor, aligning plans across organisations, artforms and region; - advocate, ensuring culture's interests are represented regionally and nationally; and enabler - through shared resources and tools.

We have identified three Key Actions the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board can undertake to embed CER in the region:

1. Recruit a CER Change Maker

A new role leading on impactful CER initiatives for the region's culture sector. Key focus areas include: coordinating a regional CER network; developing templates and resources (such as template job descriptions and policy documents); signposting and sector support; developing training opportunities and the reuse hub; and fundraising for joint initiatives. An outline of responsibilities is included in the *Appendix*.

2. Develop a reuse hub/circular economy initiative

Following precedents elsewhere in the UK and responding to a gap in the east of England, the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board could develop a circular economy hub. Initially an online, centralised platform for the sector to source second-hand materials and to offer materials for reuse, with time (and appropriate funding) this could become a physical hub where materials are stored and made available for reuse, as well as a focal point for training opportunities, skill sharing and meet-ups.

3. Participate in regional climate partnerships

The Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board can act as an advocate for the important role of culture in delivering environmental policy in the region, particularly in the contexts of nature recovery, energy infrastructure and adaptation/resilience. Relevant partnerships are signposted in the *Appendix*.

CORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CULTURE SECTOR

GREEN ORGANISATIONS

■ Put your mission at the heart of environmental policies

Why? Mission-led environmental policies connect climate action to an organisation's purpose, expertise and communities. While no single organisation can solve the planetary crisis alone, each can act within its sphere of control and influence. This approach embeds environmental responsibility across organisational culture and decision-making.

What it looks like Mission-led policies address both:

■ Environmental responsibility *in* culture: reducing the environmental impact of operations, buildings and activities.

■ Environmental responsibility *through* culture: using creativity, cultural programmes and communications channels to inspire wider change.

Co-create policies with staff and relevant stakeholders, ensuring commitments are widely understood and supported. Develop clear action plans to deliver policies, with measurable targets and an annual cycle of planning, delivery and evaluation. Appointing a board-level 'environmental champion' can help ensure accountability and momentum.

■ Make policies publicly available

Why? Publishing your policies and action plans helps stakeholders understand the work you're doing. Transparency builds trust and helps to establish new norms for the sector, inspiring others with what's possible.

What it looks like Policies use clear, accessible language and design, and are easy to find on your website. Share progress updates through newsletters, blogs or social media; tell the story of what you learn along the way.

■ Embrace climate literate leadership

Why? For CER to be prioritised by everyone in the organisation, it needs to come from the top, and be recognised as a value regularly articulated and embodied by senior leadership. Leaders play a critical role as communicators, both within their organisations and as advocates for the role of culture in society's response to the planetary crisis. Climate literacy empowers leaders to play this role.

What it looks like Leadership undertakes relevant training in areas such as carbon literacy, new economic models, communicating climate and nature connectedness. Leaders stay informed by joining sector networks and regional climate partnerships. They make CER part of their day-to-day communications with staff, demonstrating that environmental responsibility is a core value.

Relevant resources are signposted in the *Appendix*.

■ Take part in key sub-sector initiatives

Why? A number of sub-sector specific initiatives provide practical support, tested frameworks and shared learning to help organisations reduce environmental impact more quickly. All members benefit from shared resources and learning.

What it looks like Senior representatives join initiatives like Theatre Green Book, Gallery Climate Coalition and Music Declares Emergency, adopting established frameworks, leading on the development of new resources. Share developments with peers in the region, and identify where regional expertise can contribute to national frameworks, particularly where there are currently gaps in provision.

Relevant initiatives are sign-posted in the *Appendix*.

WORKFORCE AND SKILLS

■ Reflect specific environmental responsibilities in job descriptions

Why? The planetary crisis is everyone's responsibility, and CER suffers when it is limited to specific roles and individuals. Instead, environmental responsibility should be reflected across the workforce, including self-employed team members. Shared responsibility means the importance of the environmental policy is understood and supported at every level.

What it looks like Include environmental responsibilities within job descriptions and contracts. Brief on them during induction and revisit regularly during line management and appraisals. Create a 'green team' or 'green champion' role to support implementation across departments, and to signpost resources, networks and training opportunities.

■ Offer everyone relevant training opportunities

Why? Training builds a shared foundation, ensuring the workforce starts from the same place and can communicate effectively to partners and public. This investment in people supports their capacity to take informed action.

What it looks like Carbon literacy training is a good foundation. Consider extending this to cover climate justice and nature connectedness. Where possible, offer your regular self-employed staff free or subsidised places for relevant training opportunities.

■ Offer opportunities for workforce to connect with, and learn from, peers

Why? Staff can be supported through a number of existing networks, where they can share challenges, ideas and solutions with others in similar roles.

What it looks like Encouraging participation might include signposting opportunities, enabling participation during working hours, or providing space for meet-ups.

Relevant networks are signposted in the *Appendix*.

■ Enable workforce to engage with climate themes through creativity and culture

Why? Creativity and culture are key drivers of awareness and behaviour change. Your workforce is no exception. Supporting your workforce to maintain a live, curious engagement with environmental themes through creativity and culture can deepen understanding and motivation.

What it looks like This will look different for each organisation, but could include, for example:

- **A climate book/film/culture outing club**
- **Opportunities to take 'climate leave', to join in positive actions for the environment**
- **Away days and creative workshops on environmental themes**
- **Talks from artists working around environmental themes**
- **Support to begin their own environmental initiatives - for example creating a new pollinator-friendly garden or clothes swap café**

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Measure impact on decarbonisation and wider environmental impact

Why? Clear targets on decarbonisation are crucial to measure progress and align with regional, national and international policy commitments. Setting targets on wider environmental impact ensures that action plans address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

What it looks like CER action plans include measurable targets on decarbonisation, waste reduction and biodiversity and nature recovery. They focus on the areas where the greatest reductions in impact are possible, and 'quick wins' where change is visible and easy to deliver. Data is recorded consistently and has a clear purpose in shaping action plans. Meaningful, incremental targets are in place.

Larger organisations commit to a net zero target date, supported by a clear, viable pathway.

Monitoring tools are highlighted in the *Appendix*.

Embed circular economy principles

Why? Material use is one of the largest impact areas of the culture sector, and one of the clearest opportunities for the sector to work together to reduce the impact of its activity. A resourceful, collaborative approach is central.

What it looks like Normalise planning for reuse within design processes and at the outset of new projects. Follow the waste hierarchy. Support and use reuse platforms, and share information about them with staff, self-employed workers and partners. Plan for the onward life of materials you use at the outset, prioritising their reuse within your communities and networks. Build time into project timelines to allow for materials to be sourced more slowly, and stored/rehomed considerately. Set incremental targets on the % of materials being reused.

Relevant resources are signposted in the *Appendix*.



Gressenhall Earth Day. Photo: Norfolk Museums Service

■ Be environmentally 'generous'.

Why? Rather than treating 'net zero' as an end goal, cultural organisations can go further by aiming to become 'net positive', or environmentally 'generous'. Cultural organisations set the ultimate goal of actively removing more carbon than they produce and empower the wider transition of their place and communities.

What it looks like This could include:

■ Creating more energy than you use

■ Planting trees that sequester more carbon that you produce

■ Sharing resources from your site

■ Supporting circular economy hubs and repair cafés

■ Proactive participating in nature restoration in your wider community

■ Try bold approaches to transform visitor travel

Why? Visitor travel is one of the most complex challenges the sector faces, demanding inventive approaches to prompt behaviour change.

What it looks like Collaborate with peers to learn from best practice. Capture data on visitor travel to understand the impact of action. You could:

■ Install EV charging points and bike parks

■ Partner with travel companies to offer subsidised public transport fares

■ Signpost visitors towards more sustainable travel options

■ Provide your own transport to key events, for example an electric shuttle bus

■ Connect visitors with one another to car pool

■ Tell the story

Why? One of the most impactful roles the culture sector can play is inspiring public imagination about the possibilities of the transition to a clean, flourishing future. Culture can be a 'shop window' for this transition - embracing its role as a place audiences and visitors come to discover new ideas.

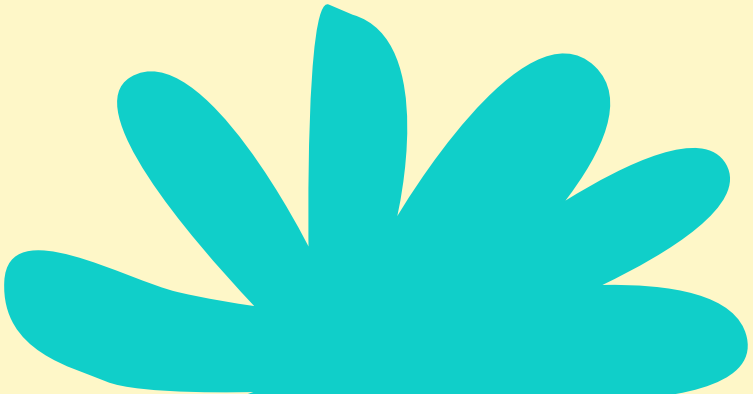
What it looks like You could:

■ Use social media channels to highlight the installation of new solar panels or the journey of an artifact being moved slowly

■ Display signage about the action you're undertaking

■ Invite the public to sharing events about your environmental responsibility journey

■ Engage with peer networks to ensure everyone benefits from what you learn



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY

Connect with Local Nature Recovery Strategies

Why? Nature recovery is a driver of environmental policy in the region, and an appreciation of nature links to Norfolk and Suffolk identity. While language like 'net zero' feel distant or too technical, nature connection brings people together.

What it looks like Build an understanding of how Local Nature Recovery Strategies are relevant to your organisation. Identify Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity or ways you can restore biodiversity in your estate or local community. Action could look like:

- **Partnerships with local conservation organisations**
- **Programmes inspired by local nature**
- **Becoming a 'guardian' of a local natural feature like a river or hedgerow**
- **Supporting staff in nature service activities**
- **Restoring biodiversity on your own site**

Embed nature into governance structures

Why? Formally embedding nature recovery alongside decarbonisation in policies ensures it stays visible and accountable at the highest level.

What it looks like Give equal weighting to biodiversity and nature recovery in environmental policies and action plans. Consider going further by appointing a formal 'nature proxy' on your board - a representative of the natural world in your decision making.

INTEGRATE CULTURE INTO THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Follow new developments in the energy sector

Why? The energy landscape of the region is changing fast. Norfolk and Suffolk are at the forefront of the UK's renewable energy infrastructure - offshore wind, hydrogen and nuclear all playing a role in the region's future. A place-based approach to CER recognises the significant changes this means for communities in the region, and the role that culture can play in negotiating these changes.

What it looks like Participate in relevant partnerships and groups - for example, Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, Greater South East Energy Hub, Regional Energy Strategic Planning - to stay informed about new developments. Where relevant, explore opportunities to develop partnerships with clean energy providers that align with your organisation's values, testing new technologies in your own context, or participate in local community energy schemes.

Support communities to understand change

Why? Many communities in the East of England will face significant changes to their energy provision in the years ahead, as well as witnessing the impacts of new energy infrastructure on the landscape. This will bring with it changes to employment and business in the region. Cultural organisations are well placed to support people through these transitions.

What it looks like Consider the role your organisation could play in facilitating important conversations about the energy transition, as well as recording and archiving the cultural impacts for future generations. Develop programmes that make space for local communities to share their perspectives and experiences of the clean energy transition.

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

■ Undertake environmental risk assessments

Why? Whatever mitigation measures are in place, scientists are clear that we face growing climate impacts in the years ahead. Understanding risks is responsible and action focussed.

What it looks like Identify and plan for the most significant climate risks facing your organisation and cultural heritage in your care. Develop mitigation strategies, implementing appropriate measures. Review and update risk assessments regularly.

■ Support communities through climate impacts

Why? Cultural organisations are a crucial part of the social infrastructure. As communities face the impacts of climate change - flooding, temperature extremes, power outages etc - cultural organisations have an important role to play in providing support.

What it looks like Identify climate risks facing communities you regularly work with, and consider how you can support them. This could include:

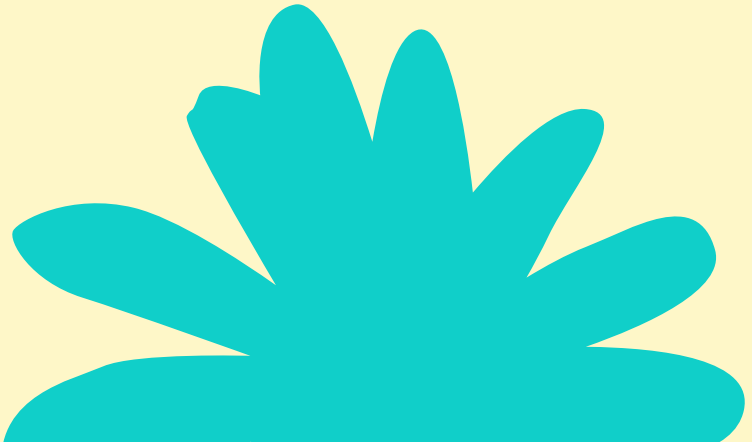
- **Providing warm or cool space**
- **Sharing expertise on adaptation approaches**
- **Recording and archiving the stories and artifacts from communities facing change**
- **Creative programming that supports climate anxiety and grief**

PUBLIC IMAGINATION, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Why? This may be the culture sector's most important role: empowering people to envision a flourishing ecological future, and shifting how they feel, think and act in relation to the environment.

What it looks like You could:

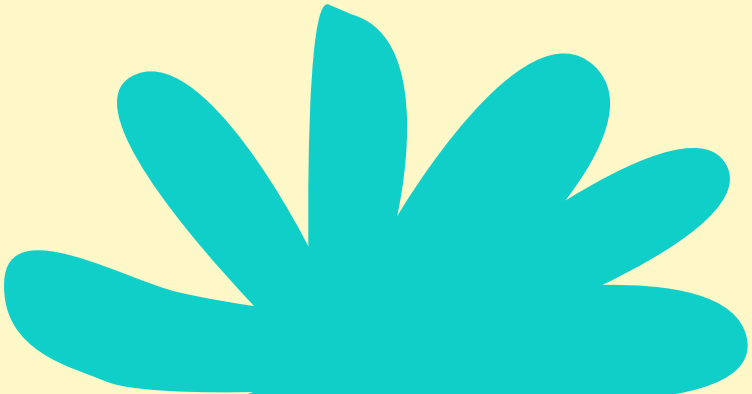
- **Commission and programme work that shape imagination possible futures**
- **Explore new expressive forms that challenge dominant narratives**
- **Centre the voices of those on the frontline of climate impacts**
- **Draw on cultural artifacts from the past that speak to the current crisis**
- **Offer a platform for communities to share their stories and experiences**
- **Advocate for and support relevant environmental campaigns**
- **Use communications channels to tell stories from your own environmental practice, or your wider community**



CORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYED CULTURE WORKERS

Environmental responsibility belongs to all of us.
Here's how you can play your part, whatever your role.

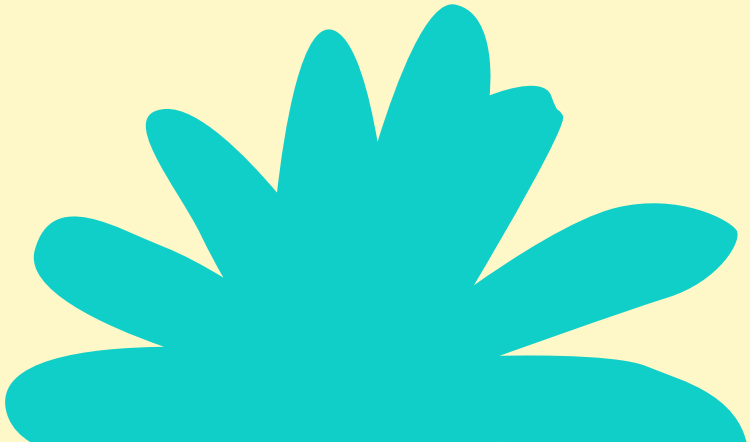
- **Understand your organisation's environmental policies and action plan.** Ask to see the documents if you haven't already, and request they are kept somewhere you can easily access them
- **Play your part.** The environment is everyone's responsibility - understand what CER means for your role, looking both at personal actions you can undertake and where you can have a wider influence. If these responsibilities aren't already reflected in your job description, you could request that these are updated
- **Find your environmental passion.** Can you go beyond the responsibilities in your job description to play a more proactive role in environmental responsibility in your organisation? This could look like taking on a role in a dedicated green team or setting up a climate book club; perhaps you could research great plant-based cafes in the area or set up a lunchtime clothes swap
- **Connect with peers.** Discover the environmental networks relevant to your work (signposted in the *Appendix*)
- **Undertake relevant training.** Seek out training opportunities and ask your line manager to support your journey to learn
- **Add environmental responsibility to agendas and bring it up in meetings.** Share your environmental wins and what you learn along the way
- **Move your pension to an ethical provider**
- **Cultivate your curiosity about climate.** Read, watch films, go to exhibitions, start conversations...
- **Discover your climate super power.** What does the planet need? What are your skills? What brings you joy? The centre of this venn diagram is your powerful place to act



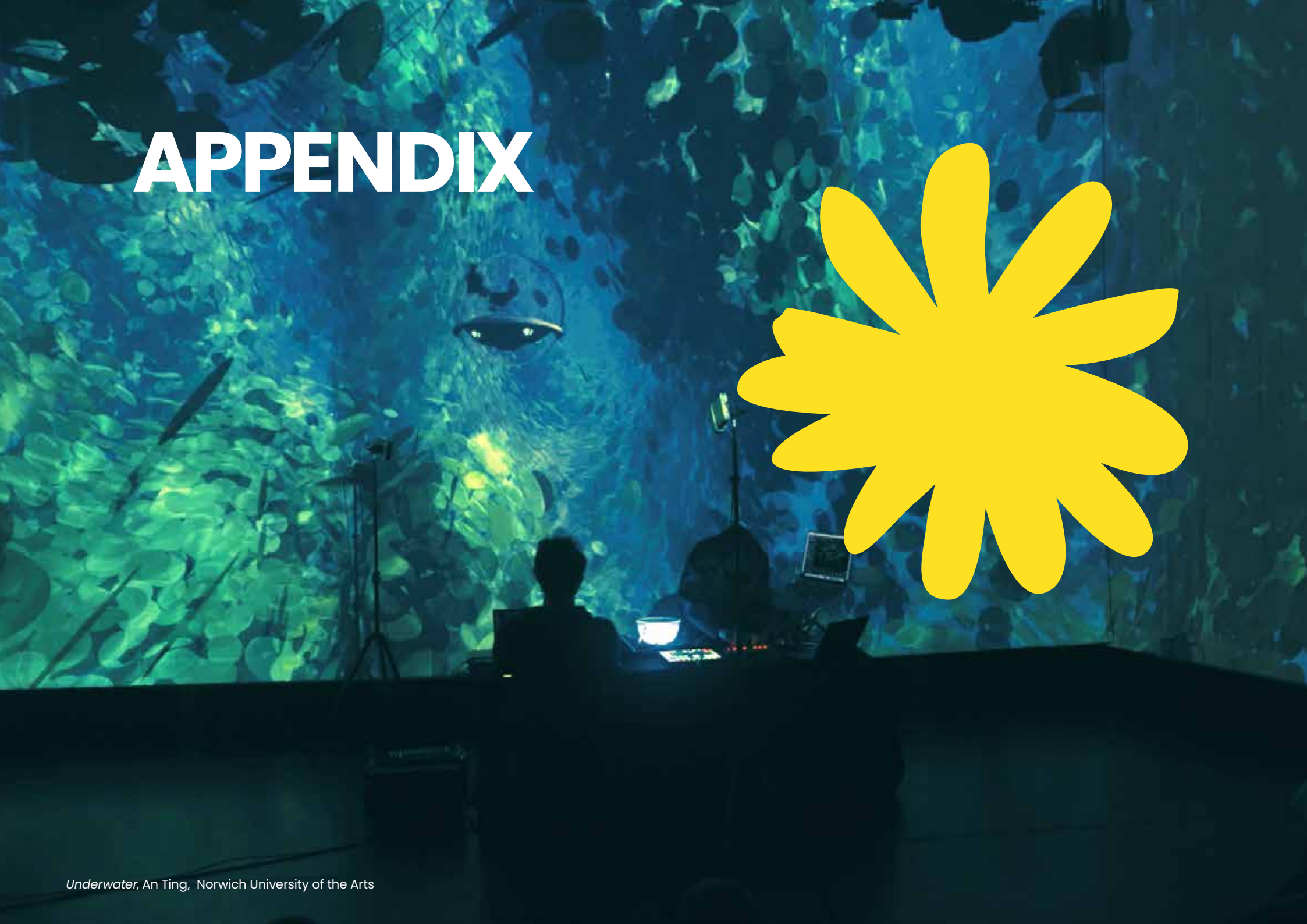
CORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SELF-EMPLOYED CULTURE WORKERS

As a self-employed culture worker, you move between organisations - and that makes you one of the most valuable carriers of ideas and best practice in the sector. Here's how you can use that power:

- **Establish your own environmental principles for your work.** This might include the space you work in, how you travel, waste reduction, your digital footprint
- **Identify the areas where you can have the greatest impact in reducing your environmental impact, or any quick, simple changes you can make to your practice**
- **Chart your progress year-on-year, and focus on building up long-lasting, sustainable changes over time**
- **Include environmental responsibilities in your contracts.** You might consider adopting a 'green rider' or 'green handshake' as standard in new working relationships
- **Make your environmental commitments clear in early meetings, and ask to be empowered to make environmentally responsible choices**
- **Ask to see the environmental policy, and ask questions about any aspects you don't understand**
- **Take advantage of any free or subsidised climate training**
- **Advocate for environmental responsibility and share what you know.** As you move between organisations, you have a hugely valuable role to play in transmitting ideas and best practice
- **Understand how climate change may impact your work and any communities you're connected with, and consider any steps you can plan ahead for to adapt**
- **Connect with peers.** Discover the environmental networks relevant to your work (signposted in the *Appendix*)
- **Move your pension to an ethical provider**
- **Cultivate your curiosity about climate.** Read, watch films, go to exhibitions, start conversations...
- **Discover your climate super power.** What does the planet need? What are your skills? What brings you joy? The centre of this venn diagram is your powerful place to act



APPENDIX



Underwater, An Ting, Norwich University of the Arts

1. Biographies

Fern Culture is a newly established organisation dedicated to empowering the culture sector to take decisive climate action. Our work is delivered through two strategic pillars: firstly, providing mission-led climate consultancy and training to foster creative environmental strategies; and secondly, supporting the cultivation of ambitious creative projects centered on climate and nature, rooted in contemporary ecological research. Our recent portfolio includes collaborations with the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board, Richmond Council, Shakespeare's Globe, Climate Spring, Creative Crawley, Havering London, tiata fahodzi, Headlong Theatre, Icon Theatre, and The Paper Birds. In every partnership, we anchor our inquiry in a single, fundamental question: "What future are you dreaming of?" www.fernculture.org

Amber Massie-Blomfield is the founder and director of Fern Culture. An award-winning executive producer specialising in performance works centered on climate and nature, she was recognized in The Stage 100 (2024). Formerly the Executive Director of Complicité, she has also held leadership roles at Actors Touring Company and Camden People's Theatre, and collaborated with prestigious institutions including the Barbican, Bristol Old Vic, English National Ballet, Southbank Centre, and the Royal Court. A 2024/25 Clore Leadership Fellow, her research into cultural leadership during the climate crisis served as the catalyst for Fern Culture. She is the author of the "Sustainable Stages" column for The Stage and has published two acclaimed books exploring the transformative power of the arts.

Lilli Geissendorfer has recently been appointed Director of Strategy at Glass Castle Foundation, a new philanthropic organisation focused on enabling artists and the ecosystem that support them to develop and thrive. When she started this project she was an associate of Fern Culture and a prominent strategist working at the nexus of culture, climate, and systemic change, including as Director (UK) of the Theatre Green Book - the sector's primary tool for ecological transformation. During her tenure as Director of Jerwood Arts, she oversaw the distribution of £10m to over 1,000 early-career artists while pioneering inclusive, climate-responsible funding frameworks. Her extensive experience includes roles as Deputy Director of the Creative Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) and leadership positions at Paines Plough and Arcola, alongside five years as Producer for the Almeida Theatre. Lilli currently serves as Chair of Fuel Theatre, a Trustee of Projekt Utopia, and is a member of the Mayor of London's Cultural Leadership Board.

Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board (NSCB) is a coalition of culture leaders working together to build the cultural economy in the area, increasing investment, accelerating inclusive growth, enhancing health and wellbeing, and championing sustainable development. Originally established in 2012, the NSCB operates independently, working strategically with partners within and beyond the cultural sector. As we have evolved, we have remained committed to facilitating exchange and building fresh relationships wherever our work is most urgent and the positive impacts of culture can be felt most significantly. https://norfolksuffolkculture.co.uk/

2. CER Change Maker Responsibilities

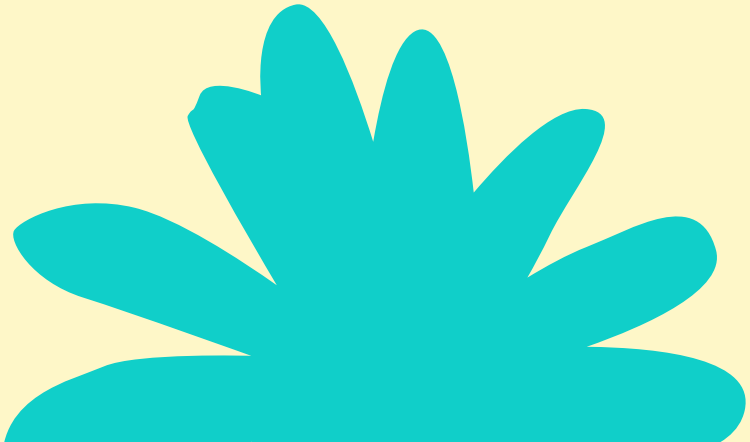
A draft set of suggested responsibilities for a new role, reporting to the Culture Board.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Maintaining key resources and tools
- Arranging workshops and events
- Offering guidance and support
- Create and signpost to relevant frameworks and templates

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

- Encouraging and facilitating peer networks of those in similar roles in the region to meet and share best practice
- Connect culture sector with local authorities, conservation groups, academic partners
- Advocate for the role of culture in climate policy with policy makers, commissioners and funders
- Represent the region in regional environmental partnerships/ national climate conversations



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Develop a platform for region's culture sector to share and reuse materials
- Explore the viability of a physical reuse hub for the region

FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

- Designing and implementing a finance and fundraising strategy to support activity
- Managing budget

RESEARCH AND MAPPING

- Develop a procurement database identifying environmentally responsible suppliers in the region
- Mapping cultural provision against climate impacts and the LNRS

MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Establishing key metrics for the impact of work
- Reporting regularly to the culture board on impact
- Create evaluation reports for stakeholders

3. List of relevant sector initiatives, partnerships and resources

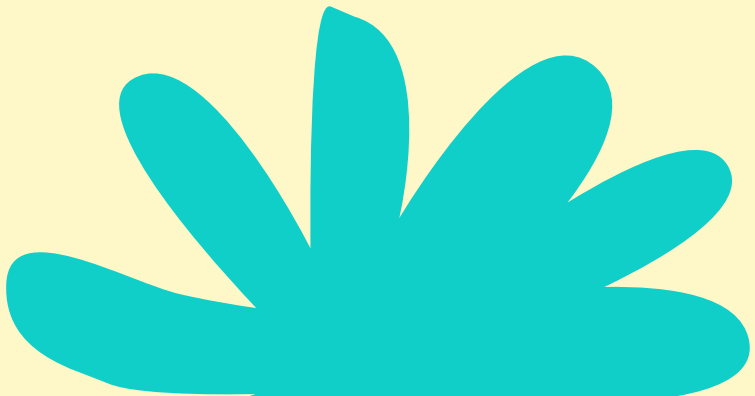
Available here

4. List of relevant funding sources

Available here

5. Full Survey Report and Analysis

Available here



6. Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals who have supported and contributed to the development of this report.

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And to all our survey respondents.

The Land is *All* VIEW

Realising a Flourishing Future through Cultural Environmental Responsibility in Norfolk and Suffolk

A Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board report by Fern Culture

Funded by Arts Council England and managed on behalf of the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board by Norfolk & Norwich Festival

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

NORFOLK & NORWICH FESTIVAL

FERN CULTURE