

Gate Theatre Green Gate Policy and Action Plan, 2018/19 - 2022



Overview

At the Gate Theatre, we recognise that we have a vital part to play in changing attitudes and approaches to environmental sustainability and climate change. We tell stories that help us question and imagine who we are as individuals and as communities, our social responsibility, and our future. We are passionate about ensuring that our programming is underpinned by a recognition of this responsibility. The Gate was founded in 1979 to present ground-breaking international work, and so the narrative around climate change is intrinsic to the work we make and how we run our organisation: global equality, conflict and the natural world are inextricably linked, and an essential component of a theatre with an international outlook.

The Gate's environmental impacts

Our commitment to environmental sustainability has been a key element of our Business Plan since 2015, and the 2018 – 2022 plan outlines our continued aspiration to keep our work aligned with local, national and international developments surrounding climate change.

In line with the work of COP21¹ and the Creative Climate Coalition, the Gate pledges to work in such a way as to strive to keep global temperature rise below 2 degrees celsius, this century, and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further, to below 1.5 degrees celsius. In order to do this, we must take action ourselves to make our work more sustainable and to reduce our carbon footprint; to speak out, using our voices to accelerate positive change; to support one another through sharing campaigns and knowledge; and to use our creativity to contribute to finding solutions.

We were delighted to be awarded 4* on our Creative Green report from Julie's Bicycle in 2017/18 for our Green Gate activity and commitment to environmental sustainability. We will strive to improve our score year on year, with the view to achieving 5*.

Our environmental commitments

Our ambition is that the Gate must have an impact larger than its scale as a small company. Whilst we recognise that we have limited financial means and limited control of our buildings, we are committed to ensuring our work contributes to collectively imagining, and building a more positive future, and a more sustainable present.

We will continually reassess our environmental impacts across these key areas:

- Buildings: energy, water use and waste in our theatre, office and storage facility
- Production: materials, energy use and waste
- Office activities: printing, IT, supplies and services, waste
- Travel: business travel, audience travel

¹ COP21 refers to the 2015 Climate Talks: the term 'COP' stands for Conference of Parties. 'Parties' is a reference to the (now) 196 signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC, as it is called. The Climate Change coalition is spearheaded by Julie's Bicycle, this coalition originated as a call to action for the Creative Industries represented at COP21

- Artistically - The role of telling stories that can either promote or ignore the context of climate change in all social, political, and economic debate

We acknowledge that sustainability is integrated into every aspect of our lives and that changing cultures, belief systems, and habits is hard and takes time. We also acknowledge that by focusing and addressing smaller problems, over time will instigate radical changes to the implementation of sustainable practices across all our work.

Below are our six core aims for 2018 – 2022, which strive to promote and engage with the important reality of climate change.

a) Continually assess our ongoing position and to reduce our environmental impacts and carbon footprint as much as is practical, ensuring compliance with environmental legislation as an absolute minimum

Over the last 4 years, we have invested time and resource in to reducing our carbon footprint and energy use. Often, the changes we make are small, but we recognise that over time, these incremental steps make fundamental changes to our way of working and on our impact.

To continue this journey, we will –

- Strive to improve our Creative Green score year on year – *achieving 80 points by 2022*
- Calculate figures for end of year energy use, water use and waste and upload on IG tools as per ACE requirements.
- Explore and review opportunities to reduce and offset our carbon footprint, particularly when considering business and staff travel
- Update our Green Gate Policy and Action Plan each year, including target figures for reduced energy use, water use and waste
- Keep up to date with current initiatives and legislation, through LTC green meetings, What Next? Julie’s Bicycle and other networks

b) Reduce energy use and water consumption within our control

We have seen a 15% decrease in energy related emissions between 2012/13. Furthermore, we have seen a 15% decrease in energy use related emissions per performance between 2012/13 and 2017/18. Through the implementation of steps pointed out in section a – we expect to make small changes and improvements year on year that will have a long term and lasting impact across all three of our sites. We will continue to strive to reduce our energy consumption by 30% and water consumption by 10% by the end of 2022.

We recognise that these targets can often be impacted by external factors outside of our control, so to achieve them, we will continue to -

- Review our energy supplier when we are due to renew in September 2019, to ensure we are working with the most efficient / renewable provider
- Continue to use energy efficient equipment and systems across the Gate’s Buildings, such as LED lighting
- Move to energy efficient heaters in the theatre and office
- Use “hippos” in our toilets to reduce waste water

c) Reduce waste from our activities and productions by increasing reuse and recycling across our activities

Recycling is now part of our day-to-day practice and it has made a big impact on reducing our waste. We will strive to reduce our waste by a further 8% by 2022.

As standard practice, we will -

- Include our Sustainable Production Guidelines in contracts for Lighting Designers, Set Designers and Production Manager, to ensure that reducing energy consumption remains on the agenda for creative teams working at the Gate

- Encourage all freelance Directors to engage with the Green Gate and encourage directors to consider sustainable choices, and to promote this to the creative teams that they work with
- Seek to recycle or re-use our sets and costumes through Set Exchange
- Monitor our weekly waste and recycling, with the view to reducing our overall waste
- Use the Gate's Procurement Policy to ensure that all providers align with our Green Gate objectives to reduce their carbon footprint and endorse sustainable activity
- Introduce a detailed itinerary of all materials and existing set and prop items within our store, with visual aids, to provide to creative teams at the beginning of a project, and to be available to other venues to borrow.

d) Engage and train staff and our Board on environmental issues and sustainable practices

To succeed in our goals to become a more environmentally sustainable organisation and make climate change part of our daily conversation, our staff and creative teams must share a sense of investment and engagement with the issue. The Theatre Manager spearheads our Green Gate agenda, but we ask the whole staff team to actively contribute to the success of Green Gate. We hope that when our teams move on from working with us they take with them a commitment to environmental sustainability and continue to implement the changes and steps that they began or shared with us, in the wider field and their daily lives.

We will -

- Make Green Gate an organisational priority that is spearheaded by the Artistic Director and Executive Director, endorsed by the Board and invested in by all team members
- Continue with our monthly Green Gate challenges – motivating staff, audiences, Board and supporters to engage with best environmental practice
- Include commitment to Green Gate practice in all staff and creative contracts and inductions, with specific duties listed for key staff members, such as Technical and General Manager
- Include the Green Gate checklist in staff inductions – encouraging staff to improve their Green practice across their working practice
- Include Green Gate in appraisals, so opportunities for training and development are explored
- Explore professional development opportunities – such as training or guest speakers – to motivate and inspire the team around Green issues
- Include Green Gate as a standing agenda item at the weekly staff meeting
- Include Green Gate as part of FOH briefings

e) Communicate with and engage the Gate's audiences on environmental issues

We ask ourselves and our audiences to think more about our place in, and responsibilities towards, our world and environment. Sharing our commitment and encouraging others to do the same will form a key part of our overall communications strategy.

We will -

- Involve Green Gate as part of our wider communications strategy – promoting our work and values around environmental sustainability
- Feature Green Gate as a section on the website, and include monthly features and articles on our blog, in our emails and on social media
- Display signage throughout the theatre and office buildings, encouraging positive action
- Each department to have a conversation about sustainability and lay out our principles across all audiences, supporters, and suppliers we work with, helping to broaden the conversation

f) Programme work that is underpinned a belief in the importance of equality, community and an optimistic imagining of the future.

We believe that theatre has the power to question and nurture a changing world, and to change the people who watch it. Our productions and our work will share a common theme: they will imagine a different, better future and consider our responsibilities towards our world, our environment and each other.

This Green Gate Policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Gate's Board, and updated as and when necessary. This Policy is supported by a Green Gate Action Plan that outlines our SMART objectives and a Green Gate Checklist, which outlines all steps that we take as a company to fulfil our Green Gate goals. This document is managed by the General Manager but owned by all members of staff.