

Kilkenny Arts Festival - Sustainability Statement & Policy

Our aim for Sustainability:

Our ambition is to make KAF a more sustainable festival. This statement reflects the activation of our sustainability policy development in line with our overall strategy including efforts to be informed and proactive about sustainability. As of early 2023, the KAF Executive Leadership is engaged in a number of new, more structured sustainability initiatives to understand and affect change in our carbon footprint including exploring reduction and offsetting options.

KAF is also committed to its civic role in raising awareness of sustainability in the arts, as well as sustainability globally through its programme.

Our Objectives:

1; Understanding the sustainability landscape - in order to achieve our aim of a more sustainable festival we will continue to build on our initial work of understanding our environmental

impact. We are committed to:

- Engaging with external consultancy to consider carbon costs and how to offset
- Exploring practical steps to reduce waste such as reduced printing materials in Marketing assets and Volunteer Programme, e.g T-Shirt recycling and reuse through the development of a core brand without annual dates to maximise reuse
- Being mindful of unintended consequences of our actions, e.g. energy use in digital alternatives
- Using solar/hybrid generators instead of diesel wherever possible
- Continuing to work with the Local Authority in accessing public power supply to reduce use of generators – including advising and assisting with a city wide low energy lighting plan with accessible points for public realm activities
- Managing the festival infrastructure disposal/ recycling after the event in a sustainable way and finding imaginative ways to reuse materials
- Continuing to share production and light infrastructure resources with sister festivals (e.g. Carlow Arts Festival, Cork Midsummer Festival) to reduce waste
- Investment in core outdoor branding without dates, mixed with annual assets to ensure balance between reuse of large collateral and annual marketing information
- Understanding the implications for travel by artists and strive for less short term hotel use within budgetary constraints and partnering with sister festivals nationally
- Securing EV and EV/Hybrid vehicles for our volunteer drivers for artist collection/hospitality.

2: Partnering for sustainability success - we will work with national and local organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors to be a more sustainable

festival. We are committed to:

- Exploring how KAF can support national and local government sustainability initiatives as they relate to the arts, the festival ecosystem and tourism
- Exploring how we can link in with local environmental groups as part of the arts festival - Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, local water refill stations etc.

3: KAF sustainability policy and programme focus - we will continue to develop and monitor our sustainability policy throughout the lifetime of the KAF Strategy 2024-28 to progress the work in this area to date.

4: Clearly communicate our sustainability activity - we will update our stakeholders regularly across audiences, artists, funders and media partners on our activities in this space.

Actions to dates:

Energy:

Kilkenny Arts Festival is making notable progress in energy management. The Festival is part of the 'Naturally Wild Festival' pilot project to develop environmental policies and a carbon calculator in order to measure their carbon footprint. As part of this, they are also partnering with Lough Graine Nature Sanctuary, who offset the Festival's carbon emissions through rewilding and tree planting. In order to reduce waste, KAF have been moving towards replacing printed materials with QR codes, and aim to reduce the amount of printed programmes by 60% by 2026. For outdoor installations and within venues, KAF is using more LED lighting to increase energy efficiency; and uses public power supply points wherever possible, green diesel generators where mains power supply isn't possible.

Travel and Transport:

Kilkenny is a city accessible by various public transport options such as buses and trains. KAF encourages festival goers to either travel to the festival by public transport, or to carpool, in order to reduce the amount of cars in the city. For events taking place outside the city, the festival has provided private bus services to and from the city, to reduce the amount of individual cars travelling to and from the venue. KAF has a number of festival drivers in place over the festival period to transport artists from airports and venues etc – and are ensuring that at least 50% of cars used are fully electric, to reduce the amount of emissions over the festival. KAF are also promoting and partnering with 'Bolt' - a mobility company that allow pay-as-you-go electric bike rental in Kilkenny City. This reduces the amount of cars (and in turn, emissions) in the city during the festival.

Materials and Waste

In order to reduce waste, KAF have been moving towards replacing printed materials with QR codes, and aim to reduce the amount of printed programmes by 60% by 2026.

Since 2024 we have halved the printing of music notes, with QR code access making up 50% of the use of programme notes. They aim to move completely away from single use plastics in 2025, and have already introduced cardboard water cartons instead of plastic, and use compostable cups in venues. KAF also encourage the use of reusable water bottles in venues with water points.

Water

KAF ensures artists are aware of water points if available in a venue, and are encouraged to use them with reusable water bottles. Occasionally, portaloos are in use at outdoor events at the Festival – the wastewater is properly managed and disposed of by a certified and licensed contractor.

Nature and Biodiversity/Urban Planning

KAF aims to delve into the topic of Nature and Biodiversity in programming 2024-2025 and beyond, to include panels and workshops, as well as incorporating artistic responses to nature, biodiversity & climate change into our larger-scale installations such as Light Up The Castle, and co-produced shows such as Neon Dusk.

Measurement:

KAF does not currently have the capacity to measure water consumption but energy consumption is monitored closely wherever possible i.e. within our own control or in partner organisations/venues. Our waste management plan also includes measuring general and recycled waste.