

## Written evidence submitted by A Greener Festival

This evidence is specifically related to **how to help festivals reduce their environmental impact** submitted by sustainability experts and leaders on this subject, **A Greener Festival Ltd (AGF)**.

AGF is a not for profit organisation which since 2006 has worked with the festival industry and events sector to improve sustainability. We have worked with over 650 festivals in that time, trained over 300 AGF assessors in over 25 countries, and as well as delivering our own sustainable event management training we accredit university courses relating to sustainability and the creative industries. AGF Assesses and certifies festivals based upon the following areas:

- Local Ecosystems
- Local Area Impact
- Travel & Transport
- Power & Electricity
- Procurement
- Solid Waste & Recycling
- Water Usage, Waste Water & Sewage
- Legal Compliance & Management Systems
- Behavioural Change & Communication
- Social Impacts, Accessibility and Equality
- CO2 Analysis

47 festivals worldwide were assessed and awarded following our detailed assessments for A Greener Festival Award in 2019, 10 of which were [from the UK](#) including Glastonbury Festival, Manchester Pride Live, and Cambridge Folk Festival. Through this detailed analysis and advice AGF have identified there is a need for local authorities, transport, waste and power sectors to collaborate closely with festivals to allow them to enhance their own sustainability targets, but also to help boost the sustainability targets of the local authorities and UK as a whole.

Throughout 2020, we have been hosting fortnightly meetings with festivals from the UK, Europe and Internationally specifically to discuss the threats and challenges we face for maintaining and enhancing sustainability targets at festivals. We identified key areas of threat and opportunity:

- Local supply and artist networks
- Low carbon audience travel
- Water and sanitation and impact of cleaning products and sanitation
- Single use plastics and increased waste due to PPE
- Reusables and Hygiene
- Funding to maintain sustainability initiatives.

As above, AGF has identified that owing to the pandemic there are new threats to sustainability actions such as a return to cars from public transport and increased single use plastics usage through PPE. These are putting additional strain and expense on festivals and support is needed to help them to identify, navigate, and innovate the new normal to be a greener normal.

As budgets are skewed to cover the new health and safety and security measures, there is concern that the sustainability budgets will be adversely impacted. AGF calls upon the government to support festivals to communicate the safety benefits of sustainability. For instance, efforts to encourage the public to use public transport and reusable masks. If these sustainability objectives

align with the government's objectives, festivals can be an ideal communication and behaviour changing tool. What the festivals need are the funds to be able to deliver such campaigns and processes. For instance

- Subsidies for low carbon travel / coaches.
- Subsidies for pre-pitched camping, making campsites safer, better spaced and organised, and significantly reducing campsite waste.
- Collaboration with the HSE to verify the safety AND sustainability of reusables.
- Support to use the appropriate sanitation chemicals and materials that will not adversely impact the biological processes of water treatment and the quality of the water.
- Support to calculate and monitor emissions.
- Funding to trial and implement clean energy, low carbon travel, vacuum or compost toilets which are no or low flush (reducing water use and limiting "plumes" considered to risk CV19 spread according to WHO).
- Support for collaboration between local regenerative farms / organic and handmade / local producers and festivals to enhance sense of place for community and viability for local businesses.
- Support to ensure that recycling rates can be enhanced and maintained, as recycling centres have started to only accept large skips, this can cause recycling from smaller festivals to no longer be viable to be collected.
- Support for sustainable event management training especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have access or necessary funds.

The Dutch Government has been supporting their festival industry through funding and resources allowing them to be used as "living labs" towards the circular economy and green deal. This support and collaboration is urgently needed in the UK if we are to reach our climate and biodiversity targets.

Green Artist Riders have been developed by the industry and the collaborative efforts between artists and festival organisers on the topic of sustainability is increasing, for instance Paradigm Agency and AGF rider launched in 2019 at the Green Events & Innovations Conference, and the collaborative Green Artist Rider for the Electronic music and festival industry spearheaded by the Association for Electronic Music (AFEM). The artists and festivals play a crucial role in communicating sustainability and urgent topics therein to the public in a way that is engaging, understandable, and likely to lead to actual behaviour change. The festival industry needs to be supported to help bring this important and urgent topics to the public.

In summary the festivals of the UK are an extremely important part of bring sustainability to the public consciousness, and there are solutions for sustainable festival management available now on the market. The obstacle is that often such communications, systems, logistics and infrastructure require expenditure which until now has been born by those festivals who have gone above and beyond the legal requirements to make their events beacons of sustainability. With support of the government towards this shared goal, there is no reason that festivals in the new normal shouldn't be even more sustainable with better environmental credentials that ever before.

Statistics relating to festival impacts from detailed AGF site visits and data analysis can be found [here](#).