



Glasgow Women's Library - Environmental Policy

We recognise that global climate change has serious consequences, and that its detrimental effects are disproportionately experienced by women. We believe that individuals, organisations, agencies and institutions must have a clear and embedded focus on environmental issues to redress the negative impact of climate change.

Our collections are built on donations, and an ethos of sharing and lending is at the heart of our work. We have always worked with an awareness of our environmental responsibilities and instil these values and working practices throughout our Board, staff and volunteer team.

Our Green Creative Cluster, a team of staff, board members and volunteers, meets regularly to develop and implement innovative and creative ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

We are committed to minimising waste, working towards maximum energy efficiency, and to re-using and recycling resources.

We also believe that as a library, museum, archive and arts organisation, we have a role in influencing our visitors and the wider community, and we are committed to fulfilling this role through the implementation of our Environmental Policy.

Travel

Staff and volunteers always consider travel options which minimise carbon emissions i.e. public transport, cycling, or car-pooling if the use of a car is inevitable. If possible and appropriate, video conferencing is considered as an alternative to travelling to a meeting.

We support green travel (by public transport, walking and cycling) by:

- Providing clear information about green travel in our printed programme, and on our website.
- Maintaining our Cycle Friendly Employer requirements:
 - encouraging Next Bike hire
 - providing access to a secure bike shelter
 - refunding staff and volunteers cycle mileage and reviewing this rate annually
 - promoting cycling events such as Cycle to Work Day and our Women's Heritage Bike Ride
 - monitoring numbers of staff and volunteer cycling through the annual Big Count
- Offering at least one free Women's Heritage Bike Ride or Walk in each programme and continuing to develop the learning activities promoting walking and cycling.
- Promoting the use of our bike shelter.
- Monitoring staff travel for a quarter each year (in line with Creative Scotland requirements).

Suppliers and Equipment

As a public building with a busy programme of events, space hires and increasing library use, we require various supplies and equipment in order for the library to function efficiently. We meet the demands of the organisation while minimising our environmental impact by:

- Engaging in dialogue with our regular suppliers to look at possible ways of minimising waste and emissions.

- Grouping orders and ordering in bulk to reduce the number of deliveries.
- Using Fair Trade suppliers.
- Considering local suppliers first and trying to balance price, quality and sustainability.
- Purchasing equipment and materials that are second hand or recycled (including paper and furniture).
- Where possible and practical, borrowing equipment or furniture required for events from other organisations.
- Using environmentally friendly cleaning products where possible in the library.
- At catered internal events, providing vegan and vegetarian food only.

Printing and Office Equipment

As a Library, Museum and Archive with a seasonal programme of events, workshops and exhibitions, it is necessary to promote what's on at GWL, and we do this using printed programmes and flyers as well as online. We require various supplies and office equipment in order for the library to function efficiently. We meet the demands of the organisation while minimising our environmental impact by:

- Switching off electronic equipment when not in use.
- At the end of the working day, the last staff member to leave the office checks equipment to ensure that all computers are shut down and all printers are switched off, unless otherwise labelled.
- Choosing double-sided printing and multiple pages per sheet whenever possible to minimise paper and ink, and only printing documents and correspondence when strictly necessary.
- Avoiding printing in colour.
- Using paper free systems such as Dropbox and electronic documents where possible.

Utilities and Energy Efficiency

Our premises are in a Grade B listed building, so we always seek a balance to find a balance between protecting the library's heritage and reducing its environmental impact. We minimise energy use by:

- Using E-billing services where they are offered by utility suppliers to save paper wastage.
- Only heating and lighting spaces when they are in use. This policy is enforced by all library staff and includes checking all equipment, lighting and sockets are switched off at the end of every day.
- Continuing to use a Building Management System in order to schedule the heating system to run only during the times it is required, and adapting the set points as required throughout the year.
- Monitoring our use of electricity, gas and water usage.
- Using energy efficient lighting and energy saving devices where possible.
- Investigating secondary glazing options and costs to improve heat retention.

Programming

We always aim to work with sponsors and organisations that align with our environmental ethos and we programme environmentally-themed events throughout the year. We also highlight our Environmental Policy to all partners (whether individuals or organisations) and work with them to minimise the carbon emissions linked to their work with us by:

- Encouraging them to travel to GWL according to our guidelines on travel.

- Video conferencing where possible.
- Using recycled or environmentally friendly products and materials, and minimising waste as much as possible.
- Asking organisations (whether partners or not) to leave no more leaflets or brochures at GWL than required.

Hires

When hiring out our space for use by other organisations, we highlight our Environmental Policy and encourage organisations to think sustainably in advance of the event. We work to encourage the minimisation of waste and reduced carbon emissions by:

- Using a local caterer.
- Providing mugs and cups for events over disposable take-away cups.
- Aiming to provide food that does not require disposable cutlery, and using recyclable paper plates.
- Providing information on green ways to travel to our building.
- Minimising food waste by under-ordering, and providing paper bags to encourage attendees to take away leftovers.
- Ordering vegetarian and vegan food unless specifically requested otherwise.

Waste

Some waste is unavoidable, but we take as many steps as possible to recycle, reuse and minimise our waste by:

- Monitoring our levels of waste (recycling and landfill) on a weekly basis.
- Recycling as many waste materials as possible, including paper, cardboard, ink cartridges, glass and plastic.
- Providing recycling facilities in all the public zones of the building which are well signposted and clearly state which materials can be recycled in each.
- Providing paper sandwich bags at catered events so that visitors can take any leftover food away.
- Providing china teacups rather than disposable cups at all our events and hires.
- Where possible, recycling furniture/equipment that is no longer required.
- Reducing landfill waste by encouraging the use of materials which can be recycled or that are compostable, eg. Biodegradable plates.
- Printing double-sided wherever possible, and printing flyers and posters on demand to prevent waste.
- Using recycled plastic bin liners in all our bathrooms and ordering refillable containers of environmentally friendly cleaning products where possible to reduce plastic waste.
- Providing washable handtowels or hand dryers instead of disposable paper towels in bathrooms or kitchens.

Publicity

We sometimes need to print publicity materials, but we minimise the environmental impact by:

- Keeping this to a minimum and carefully managing the amounts of printing we do.
- Using FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) 100% recycled paper where possible.
- Working with our designer to minimise the length of our programme and use of inks.
- Encouraging subscribers to opt into email, e-newsletter and social media communication in preference to paper mail outs.
- Printing our seasonal programme with a local carbon neutral printer.
- Publicising events outwith GWL digitally to avoid excess flyers/posters. If organisations would like us to promote their events, we prefer to display one poster rather than take flyers

- Including a recycling encouragement on our printed materials, and highlighting our commitment to reducing waste and carbon emissions by the inclusion of the Green Arts Initiative logo on our printed programme

Communication

We foster a culture within the organisation which considers our impact on the environment, by:

- Making this policy available on our website with shorter summaries aimed at particular audiences (such as hires, partner organisations or creative, and volunteers)
- Emphasising this policy in the induction of staff, volunteers, board members, interns and students of placement
- Identifying and promoting training and other learning opportunities for staff and volunteers to develop their understanding of environmental issues e.g. Meat Free Mondays, Cycle to Work Day etc
- Highlighting our membership of the Green Arts Initiative by including the logo on the website, in publicity, and around the building
- Programming events which highlight environmental issues to educate and empower women to play a role in reducing carbon emissions and their impact on the environment
- Reviewing annually the Green Action Plan in consultation with the whole staff team
- Reviewing this policy bi-annually
- Highlighting our environmental work and other examples of good practice in the cultural sector on social media and via our website

Date of next review: August 2020