

# ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

A toolkit for fundraisers



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# FOREWORD

As an organisation we began thinking seriously about our role in the climate emergency towards the end of 2019, and decided we wanted to do more to support fundraisers and their charities to think about how it relates to their work too. We hope this resource will help you consider the kind of change that is right for your charity, and how you can bring it about at an individual and organisational level.

We know fundraisers and charities have a lot on their plate right now. The coronavirus crisis has put charities under immense pressure with fundraising and trading activities curtailed and the need for vital services greater than ever. Charities have responded agilely and creatively, adapting to new ways of working and overhauling plans in the initial weeks of the crisis. Many are now turning to the mid to longer-term, considering what we want our organisations, our sector and our personal legacies to look like when we emerge on the other side.

And crises can be vehicles for change as well as challenge. We have an opportunity now to think about how we can build back better, and that must include environmental considerations. We have been shown not only what is possible but also what is attainable, with carbon emissions and pollution down and the reliance on some toxic industries reduced.

Returning to normality does not, and should not, have to include a return to the status quo – the choices and decisions we make now have the potential to reshape our future for the people and causes we represent and serve. Whether it's in the choices we make about how we fundraise, the donations we accept or refuse, or through the engagement we have with millions of people who support and donate to charities, we can be part of the of the positive change that's needed.

All of us, the causes we work for and the people who rely on our organisations, will continue to be impacted by the climate emergency to greater or lesser degree, and as a sector we should be at the forefront of this change. At the Chartered Institute of Fundraising we've committed to doing our part and want to support you in doing the same; so, I hope that you, and the organisations you work for, will join us in trying to carry forward the outcomes and lessons from this experience.



**Peter Lewis**  
Chief Executive  
Chartered Institute of Fundraising

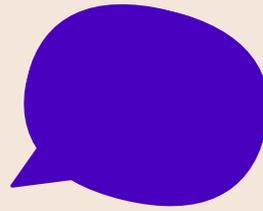
# INTRODUCTION

The climate emergency poses a risk to the communities that charities serve, which means that as a sector we all have a role to play in lessening its effects and minimising our environmental impact. The public have an expectation of charities to fulfil social good, so we need to think about how our choices can help us meet those expectations and, in many cases, further our charitable missions.

As we enter the last decade where we can take action to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we hope charities will decide to be at the forefront of the necessary change. To minimise our sector's collective environmental impact, every charity needs to make sure they are not only having these important conversations inside their organisations but acting on them.

Each charity will have different causes, capacity and resources, but all can aim to:

**1. Have the discussion at board level**



**2. Think seriously and strategically about divesting from fossil fuels (including in pension fund investments)**

**3. Understand and measure your organisational carbon footprint**



**4. Set targets for reducing your carbon footprint (travel, energy, waste, carbon, etc.)**

**5. Publicly acknowledge the climate emergency and the action your charity is taking**



**6. Assess your gift/donation acceptance policy with environmental factors in mind**

The climate emergency is far bigger than fundraising, but our actions contribute to the carbon footprints of the charities we work for, in the same way that making changes to our choices and internal influencing can reduce said impact.

Not all charities will be able to do everything – all face internal barriers and competing priorities. But putting the charity and mission first, and trying to reduce our environmental impact, are not mutually exclusive; instead, they can be coherent and complementary. It doesn't have to be a choice between one or the other.

Everyone can make change. This could be inside your organisation by promoting an environmental agenda, or externally by adjusting your fundraising practices. As an employee in a charity you can be an advocate on the inside that can constructively challenge business-as-usual.

**ONE THING  
IS CLEAR:  
DOING NOTHING  
IS NO LONGER  
AN OPTION.**

## **This toolkit is for all fundraisers, whether you:**

- know a little, a lot, or nothing at all about the climate emergency;
- aren't sure how climate change affects you and your work, or how you and your work can affect climate change;
- have been struggling to start a conversation at your organisation about the climate emergency;
- are already making change but want to do more.

We hope that if the environment hasn't been a part of your thinking or that of your charity, this guide will help to develop a mindset that considers the environment in everyday professional choices and actions, and offers a direction of travel to charities.

This guide will provide tools and tips to raise this issue inside your own charity as well as advice on the changes you can make in your own work as a fundraiser. It aims to increase awareness about the role charities can play in tackling the climate emergency and encourage individual actions in fundraisers' professional lives to help mobilise change inside charities.

# MAKING INTERNAL CHANGE

1



# WHY SHOULD YOUR CHARITY CARE ABOUT THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY?

It can be difficult to make the case inside your organisation for prioritising the climate emergency, particularly when charities are already managing competing priorities with limited capacity and resources.

To raise the profile of environmental issues in your charity, it can help to highlight the ways that action will add value, as well as the risks associated with inaction.

## Protecting your reputation and meeting the expectations of supporters



There are clear indications of shifting public expectations, a changing public mood. People place increasing value on transparency, which research shows is a key driver of public trust in charities. And we are all – as donors, beneficiaries, tax-payers – increasingly interested not just in what a charity achieves, but how it behaves along the way.<sup>1</sup>

— Charity Commission for England and Wales

1 <https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/15/how-do-charities-approach-investing-in-line-with-their-purpose-and-values-we-want-to-know-and-we-want-to-help/>

# 80%

OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC WERE  
'VERY' OR 'FAIRLY' CONCERNED  
ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Your charity should care about the climate emergency because the public do. According to a poll commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, in 2019 80% of the British public were “very” or “fairly” concerned about climate change.<sup>2</sup>

Charities depend on the support and generosity of the public, so are held accountable by them. Trustees are required to “avoid exposing the charity’s assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risks”<sup>3</sup> in their governance – with public opinion this conclusive, there is risk to trust and confidence in charities unless they are seen to be responding with public benefit in mind.

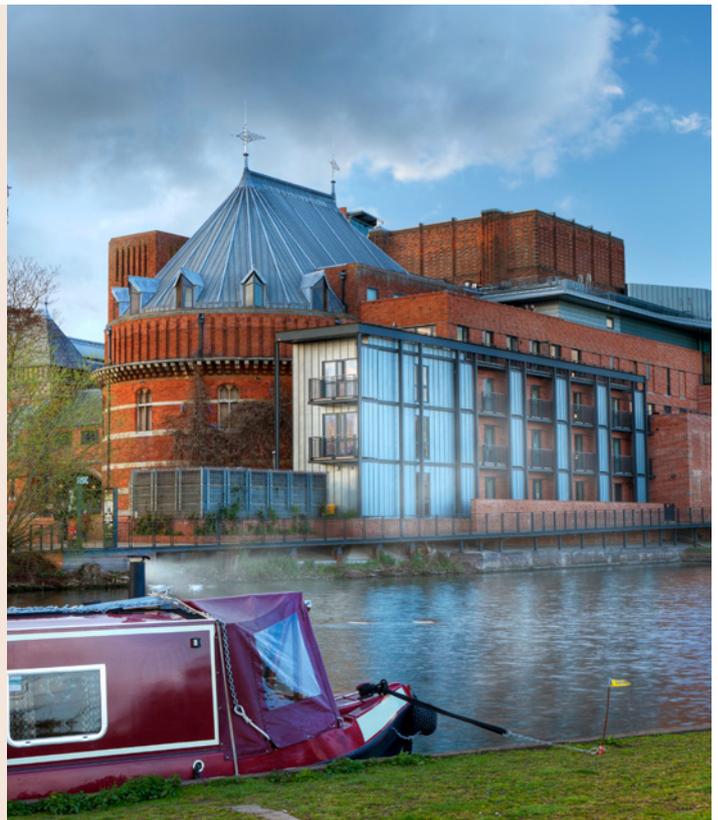
The environmental impact of your charity’s decisions can put your reputation at risk if you are not meeting the expectations of your supporters, which can ultimately affect the charity’s bottom line.

## Example 1: BP and the arts

In 2019, the Royal Shakespeare Company took the decision to end its sponsorship deal with BP following a campaign from artists and the public, with school climate protesters threatening boycott and Mark Rylance leaving his position because of the RSC’s links to the oil firm – showing the risk to charities of losing both support and talent.

Their statement said: “Young people are now saying clearly to us that the BP sponsorship is putting a barrier between them and their wish to engage with the RSC. We cannot ignore that message.”<sup>4</sup>

Similarly in 2019, hundreds of people occupied the British Museum to object to its relationship with BP, and trustee Ahdaf Soueif resigned in protest, stating that: “The British Museum is not a good thing in and of itself. It is good only to the extent that its influence in the world is for the good.”<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of 2020 the British Museum bypassed BP as a sponsor of its new exhibition.



2 <https://www.carbonbrief.org/guest-post-rolls-reveal-surge-in-concern-in-uk-about-climate-change>

3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do#s7>

4 <https://www.rsc.org.uk/news/we-are-to-conclude-our-partnership-with-bp>

5 <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2019/july/on-resigning-from-the-british-museum-s-board-of-trustees>

## Align with your values and mission

This is bigger than environmental charities. Charities should care about the climate emergency because it will affect our causes, beneficiaries and the capacity of our sector as a whole. Environmental degradation isn't a single issue; it intersects with other injustices and has knock-on effects for any numbers of causes and charitable purposes like health, housing, migration and refugees, and infrastructure.

People will be displaced both at a local level in UK communities and at an international scale, public services put under pressure, and community resources stretched or redirected to accommodate extreme weather occurrences and the effects of pollution.

**“ Are we unwittingly contributing ‘upstream’ to the problems which land on our doorstep ‘downstream’? It is vital for our credibility that, for example, a homelessness charity does not ignore the rising numbers of people likely to be made homeless by climate change; and a charity serving older people will be outraged by the numbers of old people who suffer or die during a heatwave.<sup>6</sup>**

— City Bridge Trust

### Example 2: Comic Relief

Comic Relief's board has banned investments in fossil fuels as part of a new ethical investment policy: "Trustees of Comic Relief will not sanction an investment in companies whose primary business is the extraction or manufacture of fossil fuels without reason that is aligned with the organisation's charitable purpose."<sup>7</sup>



6 <https://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Knowledge-1-Greening-the-3rd-Sector.pdf>

7 <https://www.comicrelief.com/annualreport2018-19/finance-and-resources/>

By making sure the actions and choices of your charity reflect your values and are fully aligned with your mission, you send a coherent message to current and potential supporters and give them another reason to support you. Not only this but reducing your environmental impact can be a way to actively further your mission; for example, by not only divesting from fossil fuels but actively investing ethically, your charity could achieve greater social impact than if only using the income you've generated.



**Charities are driven by a passion to make the world a better place in line with their purpose and values, so it is reasonable to assume that everything a charity does should reflect this.<sup>8</sup>**

— Charity Commission for England and Wales

## The business case

Prioritising the climate emergency can not only prevent you from losing support – whether volunteers, employees, or donors – but actively increase it.

# 49%

**NEARLY HALF OF CUSTOMERS  
CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT  
MORE THAN THEY DID  
10 YEARS AGO WHEN CHOOSING  
AN ORGANISATION**

The Institute of Customer Service found that 49% of those surveyed consider the environment more than they did 10 years ago when choosing an organisation, along with 33% who consider ethical reputation more and 30% who consider contribution to social good more.<sup>9</sup>

Research by the Chartered Institute of Fundraising and YouGov found that for 88% of people “working for an ethical, responsible employer” is important.<sup>10</sup> Projecting your values through your environmental efforts enables your charity to maintain its relevance in recruitment and retain talented staff.

8 <https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/15/how-do-charities-approach-investing-in-line-with-their-purpose-and-values-we-want-to-know-and-we-want-to-help/>

9 <https://ip.instituteofcustomerservice.com/hubfs/Trends%202020/ICS%20Service%20Trends%202020%20Web%20AW.pdf>

10 <https://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/research/public-perceptions/>

### Example 3: Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

The Scottish Charity Regulator has placed emphasis on 'value' rather than financial return: "It's not the case that charity trustees in Scotland have 'a duty to maximise financial returns.' An investment doesn't have to make money at any cost. It can provide both financial and non-financial returns but charity trustees have to consider all relevant factors and act in the interests of the charity at all times.

"Other investment options are available for charities, including investments that offer a social or environmental return as well as a financial one."<sup>11</sup>



# 50%

HALF OF OUR MEMBERSHIP SAID THEY HAD BEEN ASKED ABOUT THEIR ORGANISATION'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES BY STAFF

A survey of Chartered Institute of Fundraising members asked whether respondents had experienced stakeholders asking about their organisation's environmental policies or practices. 50% had been asked by staff, 24% had been asked by individual supporters/donors and 25% had been asked by funders.

Funders are increasingly asking to see environmental plans and policies before they give grants to charities, with some such as Arts Council England even including environmental requirements in funding agreements.



**Arts Council became the first cultural body in the world to include action on environmental sustainability in our funding agreements with National Portfolio Organisations... environmental action isn't just responsible, it makes economic sense. Many arts and cultural organisations report that they generate financial benefits as a direct result of environmental initiatives. In the last six years, participating organisations saved £16.5 million in energy costs.<sup>12</sup>**

— Arts Council England

11 <https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/3352/2018-11-19-investments-guidance.pdf>

12 [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Sustaining%20Great%20Art%20and%20Culture%202017\\_18.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Sustaining%20Great%20Art%20and%20Culture%202017_18.pdf)

# FIRST STEPS TO GET YOUR CHARITY ON BOARD

Charity Commission research<sup>13</sup> found that environmental activity was often driven by key individuals within the charity, pressure from service users/members, or staff. People within organisations can clearly mobilise action, but for conversations, commitments and changes to be lasting and strategic, staff at every level of the organisation need to buy into their importance.

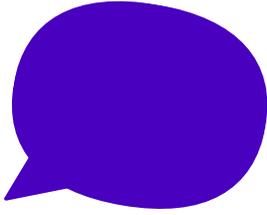
The case for prioritising environmental issues will be more persuasive if it comes from a collection of voices that can help create and maintain momentum – plus this can make it easier to communicate and coordinate with you and other staff.

One way to do this is to form a ‘Green Team’ or to establish eco advocates throughout the organisation. The size, nature and culture of your organisation will impact the barriers you face when trying to build internal consensus; some fellow staff will be more receptive than others and some organisations will have more avenues to organise, with internal staff newsletters or forums to communicate through. Equally, if you are part of the senior leadership team your channels of influence and the relationships you have will likely be different.



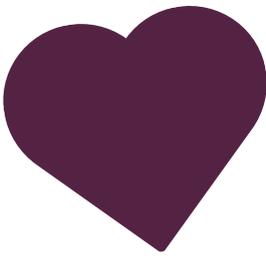
13 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/going-green-charities-and-environmental-responsibility-rs17>

Consider the following actions to build momentum:



## **1. Start a conversation with your management**

Regardless of your position in your organisation you will have relationships that it's vital to keep onside – your first conversations can set the tone of your activity going forward. To make sure you get off on the right foot, have a chat with your management about what you want to do and why; whether they are supportive or provide push-back it is important you try to be as collaborative as possible since change will involve the whole organisation.



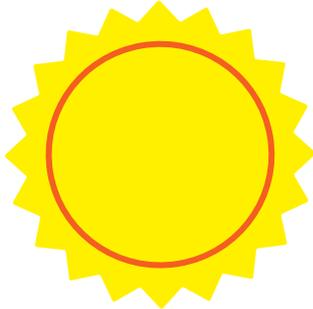
## **2. Talk to your colleagues**

Send an initial internal email to gauge interest and enthusiasm in forming a Green Team or speak to teams individually about becoming eco advocates. Ideally there would be a representative/champion from each team to give informed perspectives of where key changes might be made in each area of work. They can then act as conduit for any communications and encourage other colleagues to get involved.



## **3. Hold an initial meeting with interested colleagues**

This will enable you to get initial feedback and ideas about direction of travel, and allow people to raise any concerns or worries they may have. Sometimes internal activity can be driven by key members of staff, making it difficult to keep momentum up if staff changes. Ideally organised activity would have a plan and any group would have a structure: how frequently you will meet, where key responsibilities lie, timescales, the aims and objectives.



Think about what the key areas of environmental impact you'd all like to see change in – be careful not just to think about your organisation's external activities but the charity as a whole. Some will require more input and internal buy-in than others, depending on how many people a change will affect and who needs to sign it off.

## 4. Present your ideas and plans to colleagues

The climate emergency can feel insurmountable. Many of your colleagues might not have considered that they can make a difference in their professional lives or that they could get involved in this issue in a work-context, while others might not know much about it or how it might affect them. Bringing the issue to your fellow colleagues with a presentation can help close this knowledge and apathy gap.

Make the issue accessible by showing how climate change and pollution might affect them, their community, the charity or the beneficiaries. You can use this as an opportunity to raise awareness about the impact of small actions, to prime your audience for future activities, or to get more people involved, but ensure you make any actions achievable as this will lower barriers to participation: doing anything is doing something.

**Above all you will want to have an answer to “what can we do?”.**



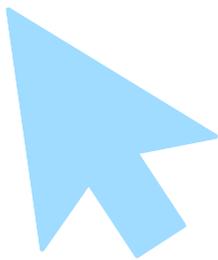
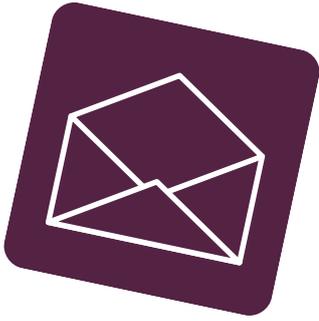
You don't need to be an expert on the climate and nature emergency, you can use content that already exists to engage colleagues. For example, the Carbon Trust<sup>14</sup> have staff engagement tools and resources that can be used internally, or you could include videos<sup>15</sup> to provide context.

14 <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/creating-an-awareness-campaign-guide>

15 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbUNXyOQr40>

## 5. Write to your senior leadership/ CEO/trustees

There is a lot of employee-led changes you can make to improve each department's carbon footprint (or if you're a smaller organisation, each area of work), but to influence the priorities of your charity and the decisions that get taken at the very top, you might need to more formally show your senior leadership just how important this is to their staff and the image the charity projects.



Depending on the size of your charity, how decisions are made, and where you sit within the organisation, your first port of call might be to raise this to your fundraising director, your CEO, or your trustees in a formal communication.

It's important to make sure that you are realistic, constructive and professional in how you try to make change.

To help you start that initial conversation, see the template on [page 19](#) that you can send to the decision-makers in your organisation in order to set-up a more structured meeting to discuss why the charity's environmental impact should be more of a priority and key asks you would like the charity to consider (see [page 20](#) for governance changes your charity might want to be thinking about). You can tweak this template as appropriate for your context, and if you have an established Green Team or eco advocates you can sign the communication off from those involved.

# Case study 1: Five lessons from taking part in workplace climate action



**Kelly Meissaar**  
Direct Marketing Executive

I don't work for an environmental charity, but I do work for a big one fighting social injustice. I realised that nothing will create more long-term societal inequality than the ecological and climate crisis, so I joined the Environment Champions at my workplace to commit our employer to a decent environmental policy. Here's what I have learned.

**1 Raising awareness matters.** Most people have a limited understanding of the scope of the climate crisis, so raising awareness among your peers, friends, communities, is crucial. Connect the dots between the climate crisis and your local issues: "Is your home safe from flooding? Will it be insurable in 5 or 10 years?". To communicate and explain the news and science to my colleagues, I put together a presentation for a Lunch & Learn session, and the narrated slideshow is available online for all my colleagues.

**2 Make the climate crisis relevant to your charity's cause.** It will help you get buy-in from Senior Leadership; especially when you pose it as a solution to the organisation's problems. Many issues related to housing, human rights, health, etc will get worse as a result of the climate crisis, therefore it is easy to draw both direct and indirect links to it.

There are also reputational risks for organisations that support the burning of fossil fuels by signing partnerships with companies behind the industry. Less obvious support lies with investments of reserves and pensions – is your organisation clear where they are investing?

**3 Plan and manage this like a campaign.** Sit down with your group and take on the Ganz questions:

- What do we want?
- Who can give it to us?
- What do they care about?
- How can we influence what they care about?
- Therefore, how can we win?

Answer these questions in detail and do a power analysis. This will help you plan out how to achieve your goals and to identify different parties to approach for support.

We went straight to the top. I drafted an email inviting our CEO to discuss ways our charity can do its part tackling the environmental crisis. And it worked! As a result, our Environment Champions proposed quick wins and more long-term goals that we presented to the Senior Leadership team and Board. To engage colleagues, we launched a Climate Action Week where each day we emailed colleagues with information to raise awareness and encourage action – from deciphering climate science, to issues relating to consumption, fast fashion and future of housing.

**4 Taking action is a necessity.** And it is also an opportunity. Using environmental credentials to acquire new customers is a common marketing strategy. Non-environmental charities might find it difficult to make changes such as energy-efficient refurbishments or purchasing recycled goods, but the economic benefits are a great selling point; by upgrading the lighting system to smart controlled LED lights you can bring about massive savings on energy bills. Add to this a behavioural change programme, and the results are amplified! Make it clear how the upfront costs can become future savings.

It is also an opportunity to lead by example. Global and local companies are doing it – why shouldn't charities? It is an opportunity to get ahead of the game and stay on the right side of history. It is an opportunity for marketing. It is an opportunity to put pressure on suppliers, other charities, companies and the governments to improve their practices. It is an opportunity to create a better future.

**5 Be prepared for it to be a long process... especially if your organisation is large.** New ideas take time to implement and most non-environmental charities won't have an official environmental or sustainability team. This means that passionate individuals wanting to help their workplace introduce improvements need to find time alongside busy work days.

However long it takes, do not let your proposals slip off your Senior Leadership's agenda. Don't let it dampen your spirits. Keep raising awareness and suggesting ways to improve. Keep making an impact on people around you and celebrate little victories. A colleague saying they refused to fly to a meeting in Scotland and took the train instead, or an Events team changing to upcycled shirts for challenge events – it's all worth a celebration! Little steps lead to big changes... eventually.

# START THE CONVERSATION



New message



To:

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**Subject:** Workplace sustainability and climate action

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Dear <<Insert name>>

We would like to start a conversation about how our organisation can play our part in tackling the climate emergency.

We believe that we need to do more to keep up with our supporters' expectations of us and to make sure the choices we make internally are consistent with our values and mission. This is an issue not only important to your staff, but to the image we project as a charity.

We would be grateful if you could put aside some time to meet with us to discuss:

<<insert key asks relevant for your charity – see next page for ideas>>

Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

[Signatories/Green Team]

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Send

# WHAT CAN YOUR CHARITY DO?

Regardless of your role there will be changes you can make as an individual to contribute to reducing your charity's carbon footprint; but if your charity is looking for what changes it can make as an organisation to help integrate the environment into decision-making, then it can be useful to look to overarching policies and procedures.

The kind of asks included below will ultimately be for your board to discuss and decide on, so are unlikely to be quick wins if your charity is at the beginning of its sustainability journey. Instead think of them as changes your charity can strive towards in the longer-term that can help embed change and provide a strategic direction to your charity's sustainability work. Combining individual or departmental efforts with top-down changes can have a greater impact on culture.

## **Agree and sign-off your organisation's environmental policy/ carbon plan**



An environmental policy sets out an organisation's environmental direction, intentions and values. It can rectify wasteful or harmful current practices by providing a framework for action. You can offer to draft this as a Green Team, with key pressure points highlighted in different parts of the charity. Identify current activities or practices that potentially harm the environment and the actions your organisation can and will take to minimise their impact. Set targets and, importantly, measure and monitor (whether the amount employees travel, the percentage of waste you recycle, your carbon emissions etc.) so you can understand the changes to be made and track any progress.

Your building energy use, your office equipment, even infrastructure like cloud storage, can all impact your organisation's carbon footprint. Some might be out of your control (depending on your rent agreement for example) or may have become more or less relevant as a result of the impact of coronavirus, but by considering all areas of impact in your environmental policy you can establish a way of thinking about future purchases and decisions.



There are multiple organisations who provide eco-audits; Julie's Bicycle, for example, has established a method and tool for assessing your charity's environmental impact.<sup>16</sup>

## **Establish an ethical investment policy**

In 2016/17, the sector's net assets reached a new peak of £131.2 billion, and where these assets are invested can perpetuate and exacerbate climate change. To develop responsible investment policies which are consistent with charitable objectives your charity could divest from activities that may undermine objectives, or adopt pro-active ethical investment policies i.e. investing proactively in ways that further your mission. The first step is to assess your charity's investments and relationships with asset managers to work out whether they still fit with your priorities. Trustees can draft an ethical investment policy to offer a framework for future investment decisions.

Even if your charity doesn't have investments, it will have a pension fund – ask your charity to make the default fund that employees are automatically enrolled into ethical (i.e. it excludes investment in fossil fuels, along with the likes of tobacco and arms companies).

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.juliesbicycle.com/reporting/>

In January 2020 the Charity Commission launched a consultation on charity investments, stating:



**Trustees have a duty to maximise the financial returns generated from the way in which they invest their charity’s assets, but the Commission also encourages them to consider whether their investments are consistent with their charity’s aims. As public expectations and attitudes evolve, there are welcome signals that charities are thinking about how to reconcile achieving good returns with responsible investments that align with charity’s mission and purposes... as the regulator we want to understand what is holding others back, and give more charities the confidence to follow suit where possible.**<sup>17</sup>

— Charity Commission for England and Wales

## **Include the environment in risk assessments and risk management statement**

The Charity Commission includes “society and its attitudes” as a factor to be considered when assessing “the wider environment in which the charity operates”. Trustees might choose to consider the charity’s role in the climate emergency as something that impacts “environmental or external factors such as public opinion” and “could change the way trustees, supporters or beneficiaries might deal with the charity”.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, a discussion can be had around including environmental concerns in the charity’s risk framework for evaluating the potential courses of actions to manage said risk.

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17 <https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/15/how-do-charities-approach-investing-in-line-with-their-purpose-and-values-we-want-to-know-and-we-want-to-help/>

18 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-risk-management-cc26/charities-and-risk-management-cc26>



## **Include key environment accountabilities in your annual report and publish your investments**

This will help your organisation be accountable and also demonstrate its commitment and responsibility. A public statement of intent or making sure the broad strokes of your environmental policy are published on your website can take this further by making sure you put your values front-and-centre.

## **Reassess acceptance and refusal policy through environmental lens**

When thinking about accepting or refusing a donation, charities should take into account any factors relating to the environment that might affect their reputation and trust of supporters. If trustees think that this might lose donations, volunteers or current and potential staff, and that this outweighs the positive benefits of a donation, then they can refuse to accept the money in line with their charitable objectives.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A FUNDRAISER?

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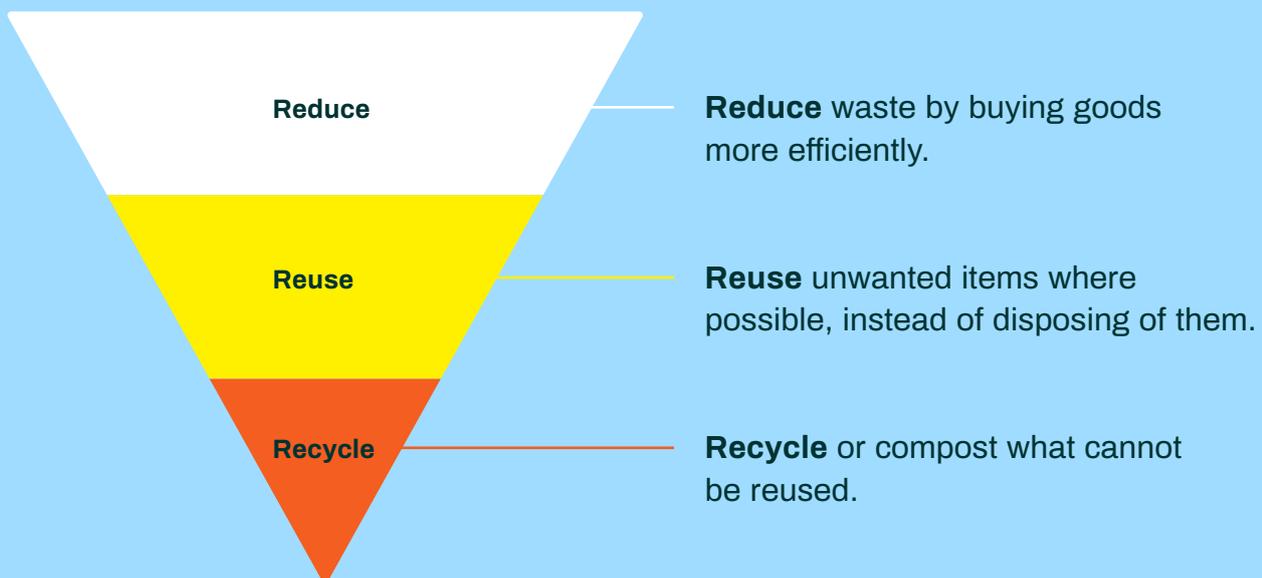
There are plenty of things you can do to encourage sustainable behaviours in your own work as a fundraiser – changes you can make today. Fundraising is one of the primary ways that the public interact with charities, making it very visible. This can mean that fundraising with an obvious environmental impact can put supporters off, but equally, fundraising that is environmentally-conscious can be a vehicle for projecting your charity's values to a broad audience.

As a fundraiser, you make hundreds of tactical choices which can all feed into a wider strategic approach. You can have a climate mindset whatever the area you work in.

### Reduce, reuse, recycle

It can be tricky to keep up-to-date with which choices are the least harmful to the climate because of the number of products being marketed with environmental claims ('greenwashing'). To help your decision-making it is worth bearing in mind the hierarchy of the three 'Rs'.

For example, if there are no alternatives to the plastic item you are using then make sure it is reusable or recyclable. Different decisions will be right for different charities – it's about finding what is the most sustainable way your charity can continue to achieve its mission.



## **I'm a digital marketer – surely there's not much I can do to reduce our environmental impact?**

The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of digital infrastructure are estimated to be bigger than global air traffic – but naturally there will be limitations to how much control you can have over your charity's digital impact. Think about:

### **Can you influence ICT procurement decisions?**

The data centre your charity chooses to use, for example, can be a huge contributor to the carbon footprint of an organisation.

### **Do you get to choose the digital suppliers your charity works with?**

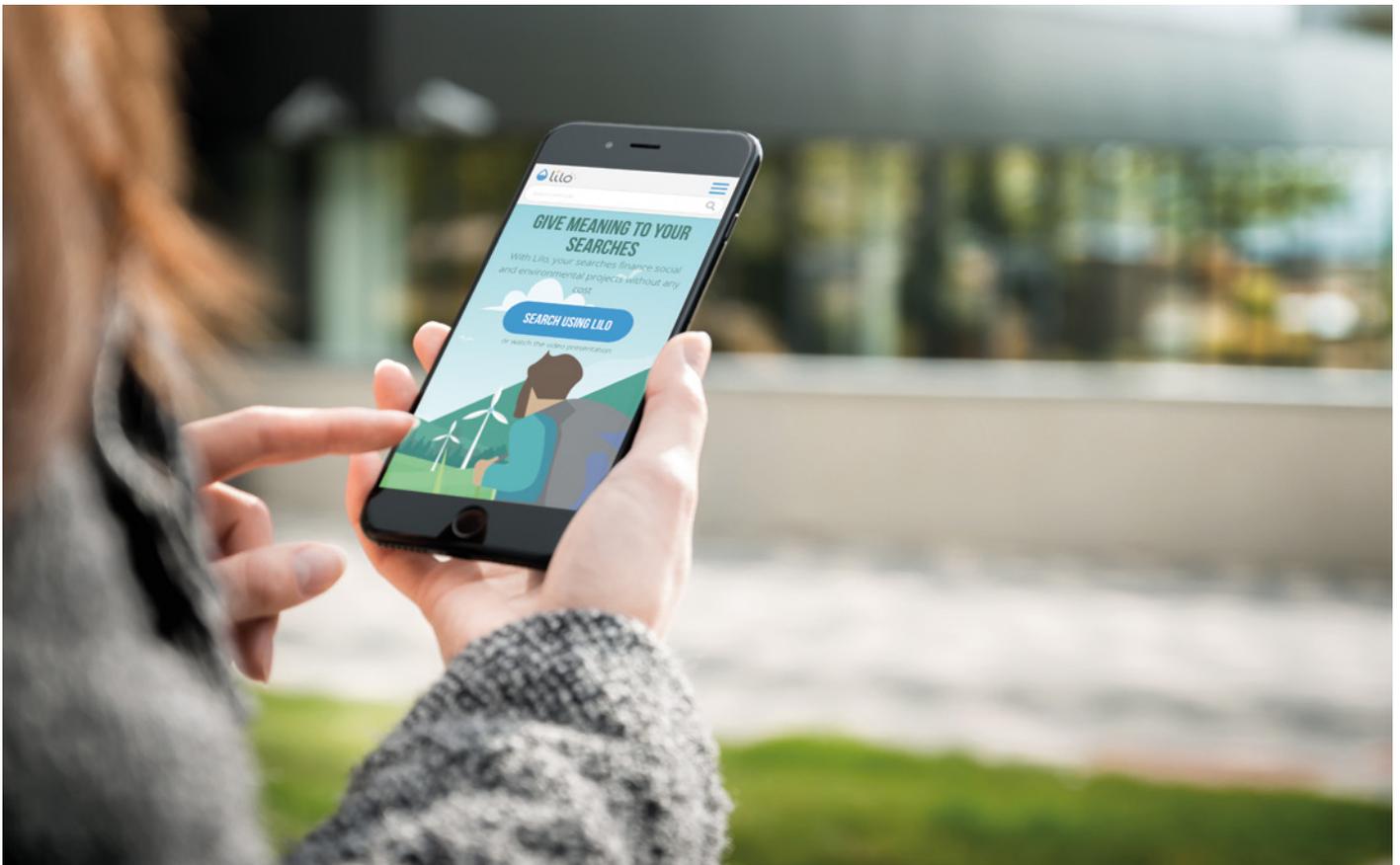
If so, can you include environmental considerations in assessing who to establish relationships with? If assessing new CRMs, for example, could you consider a supplier that uses carbon neutral servers?

# 50G

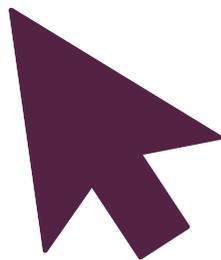
THE AVERAGE EMAIL EMITS  
4 GRAMS OF CARBON –  
AN EMAIL WITH A BIG ATTACHMENT  
CAN EMIT UP TO 50 GRAMS

### **Do you clean your data and try to target your audiences as much as possible?**

The average email emits 4 grams of carbon – an email with a big attachment can emit up to 50 grams! Consider whether you can reduce the size of emails (without sacrificing your supporter's experience) by lowering the resolution of and compressing the size of images, avoiding large HTML elements, and linking to information online rather than adding an attachment.



Try using eco-responsible search engines, such as Lilo<sup>19</sup> or Ecosia,<sup>20</sup> to reduce your carbon footprint.



19 <https://www.lilo.org/>

20 <https://www.ecosia.org/>

# TRUST FUNDRAISING

## I'm a trust fundraiser – what can I do?

You can hold your funders accountable by asking where their money is invested. This doesn't mean turning down grants if the trusts and foundations you are applying to aren't divested from fossil fuels, as every charity will be depending on this income. Simply asking the question about where they get their money from can serve to show funders the importance of this issue to the charities they have relationships with, and encourage greater transparency around investments.

If even 20% of grantees asked this question, it would allow grant managers to more easily make a case internally for ethical and transparent investments.

# 20%

IF EVEN 20% OF GRANTEES WERE ASKED WHERE THEY GET THEIR MONEY FROM, IT WOULD ALLOW GRANT MANAGERS TO MORE EASILY MAKE A CASE INTERNALLY FOR ETHICAL AND TRANSPARENT INVESTMENTS

Check which of your funders are currently signed up to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change,<sup>21</sup> and if they are not you could consider asking if they intend to become a part of it. The undersigned charitable foundations are committed to learning about climate change, putting resources towards addressing it, updating their own processes, priorities and investment strategies, decarbonising and reporting on their progress. Those that are signatories are also more likely to fund green projects.

Lastly, if the funders you are applying to still request postal applications and information, consider asking them whether they would accept digital versions.

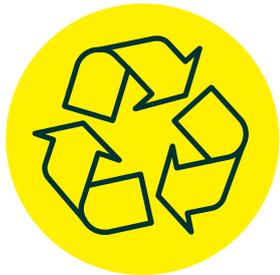
### Coronavirus caveat

The economic effects of coronavirus will have impacted foundation investments and the demand that funders are trying to meet. With that in mind, it is worth thinking about when the right time for this conversation is and how to be sensitive to the individual context of your funder.

21 <https://fundercommitmentclimatechange.org/>

# DIRECT MAIL

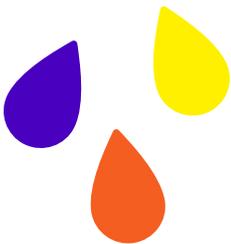
## Nine things to consider for reducing the environmental impact of your direct mail campaign



**1** Are you using FSC certified or recycled paper?

**2** Do you include the recycle symbol on all mailings?

**3** Do you regularly clean your data and employ good targeting techniques? Targeting your campaign carefully and cleaning and suppressing your data can minimise wastage



**4** Does your direct mail use biodegradable inks?

**5** Can you replace your window envelopes with an alternative?

**6** Are you avoiding the use of single-use plastics as enclosures?



**7** Does your print partner have ISO 14001 Certification for Environmental Management?

**8** Can you ask your supporters if they would prefer email/download to post?

**9** Can you use the space on your paper more wisely?

# WORKING WITH THIRD PARTIES

## How can you include environmental considerations when working with third parties?

When you work with a fundraising agency or corporate partner, or even when you engage a supplier in a procurement process, you associate your brand and values with another organisation. Your charity is answerable for the campaigns carried out in its name and the products that are used for those campaigns or to represent those relationships, so it's important to be sensitive to how either might be received.

- Do you have a procurement policy that outlines minimum ethical and environmental standards? A sustainable purchasing policy can help guide your choices.
- Can you switch to local suppliers to reduce carbon emissions?
- Have you identified environment as an area of risk when you conduct due diligence? Have you thought about your exposure? If you are entering a three-year sponsorship deal with a company you have environmental concerns about, the level of risk will increase over this period given evolving public opinion.
- Do you ask to see the environmental policy of third parties or for other assurances? Asking questions like this of your suppliers and partners can help put this issue on their agenda.
- Have you thought about the kind of reports, evidence and quality assurance systems you will want in place to be confident your partner is complying with your environmental standards?
- If you're making a formal arrangement, have you included environmental standards in the KPIs that you would like third parties to meet?
- Have you considered whether any current or future corporate partners might fund your charity's sustainability efforts?



**Magic Breakfast recently launched a partnership with a large national restaurant chain with an emphasis on staff fundraising. We realised early on that in order to provide restaurant sites and a large number of employees around the UK with the fundraising materials that are usually expected, we would need to produce thousands of T-shirts, balloons and plastic collection tins which would inevitably have an unjustifiably short lifespan.**

**As fundraisers we have a responsibility not to sacrifice that state of our planet in the name of our own cause, so for this partnership we are doing things differently in order to make this a truly sustainable partnership in every way. To start with we are championing cashless fundraising, utilizing digital resources instead of producing disposable or plastic branded materials, and encouraging fundraising activities that produce minimal or no waste and make the most use of existing resources.**

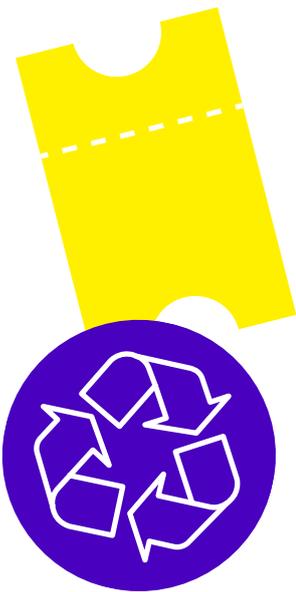
**Though still in the early stages, our aim is to make this an exemplary partnership whose benefits will go beyond Magic Breakfast's core mission and values, whilst simultaneously tapping into the restaurant's sustainability goals and hopefully doubling employees' motivation to fundraise.**

**— Laura Colgan, Corporate Partnerships Manager, Magic Breakfast**

# EVENTS

With lots of charities running events, from galas to conferences, this is one of the biggest and most visible areas where charities can review their environmental impact. To help prioritise, consider first what is in your direct control and secondly what you may be able to influence. Other considerations might be the potential for visual impact or the potential for cost savings.

## Five things to think about when planning an event:



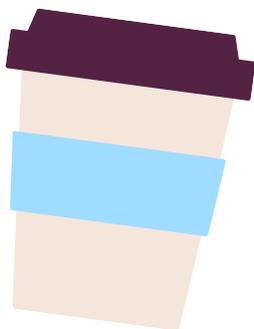
**1 Event materials:** Can you switch to digital tickets and handouts? Are you asking attendees to return name badges after event? If you need print outs are you using recycled paper? Have you looked at alternatives to single-use plastics for your merchandise?

**2 Food and drink:** Have you considered making your event vegetarian? Or even opting for local produce which is more likely to have a lower carbon footprint? Are you using reusable (rather than disposable) utensils? Are you offering water refill points? Are you buying items individually packaged? Have you considered closed-loop procurement to minimise waste?

**3 Venue:** Does the venue have adequate recycling facilities? Does it have an environmental policy?

**4 Communication:** Can you offer free tea or coffee to whoever brings a reusable cup? Communicating these kinds of nudges before the event can set the tone and project your values, but make sure that any information is clear and available at the event too.

**5 Travel:** Are you providing travel information to attendees about how they can get to the event with the least impact? Have you tried to make sure your event is accessible by public transport? Is it possible to put on dedicated coaches if not?



## Challenge events

Think about the kinds of events you're running. If your fundraising portfolio includes international challenge events this will have a huge impact on the carbon footprint of your fundraising – an economy-class return flight from London to New York emits around 0.67 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger, or equivalent to 11% of the average annual emissions for someone in the UK.

Can you opt for domestic events instead? If you do, make sure you work closely with land managers and other interested parties to ensure the impact of the event on the environment is minimal, and brief participants about the environmental and land management issues of the route.



**To any fundraiser thinking about how to make their fundraising greener, remember that simply wanting to make a change means that you are starting on the right foot. Having an open discussion with teams or colleagues to gather thoughts and willingness is a good starting point. You also don't need to radically overhaul your fundraising to make a difference, every small change will help.**

**Here at Cats Protection we have started with a few small changes and plan to gradually overhaul all our resources and processes.**

- **We banned future purchases of balloons and no longer offer these as resources to our staff and volunteers.**
- **We banned future purchases of banger sticks although we are using up current stocks of these as to simply throw them away would also have an impact on the environment.**
- **We email all volunteer cheerers a brief before events and have included considerations around greener travel, journey sharing and not bringing single-use plastics with them.**
- **We reuse all our signage.**

— Rebecca Worth, Fundraising Events Manager, Cats Protection

# COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Volunteer fundraising is a vital way of involving people and communities in your cause, but the very fact it is voluntary means that you might not have the same influence over, or knowledge of, each fundraising effort. For that reason, how you communicate the environmental intentions of your charity is key.

Create digital resources to support your fundraisers to make greener choices; for example, explaining why you'd prefer they avoid certain kinds of fundraising like sponsored skydives. Think about what promotional materials or branded collateral you're sending out and whether you can do this differently; instead of sending out T-shirts could you offer bibs or sashes that can be sent back to the charity? Or could you offer tips in your resources about how supporters might 'DIY' their own materials in your brand colours?



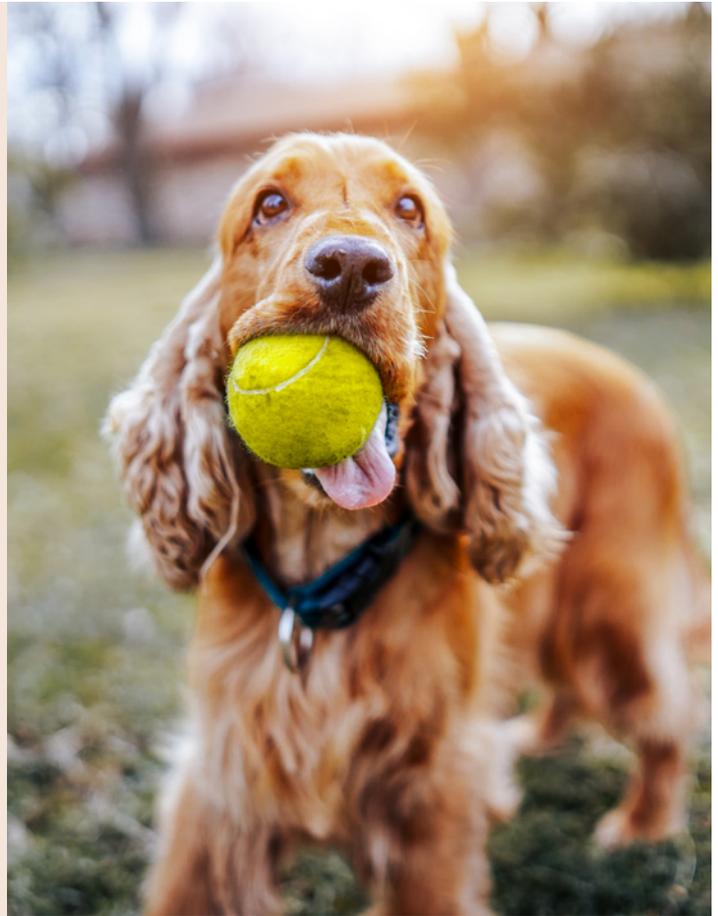
#### Example 4: Dogs Trust

Dogs Trust include guidance in their pack for community fundraisers on how to go green: “At Dogs Trust we are concerned about the climate emergency. We want an environment that can be enjoyed by both humans and canine companions, so we are encouraging supporters to fundraise with us in the most sustainable way possible.” Tips include:

**Plastic free:** Plastic is bad for the environment, particularly to animals. Aim to eliminate any single-use plastics from events, such as straws, water bottles and cutlery. There are many recyclable alternatives to these items.

**Incentives for going green:** Reward your guests for green initiatives. Those who car share can get priority parking, or a free raffle ticket for everyone using public transport.

**Paper free:** Try to avoid using laminated items where possible as this means they can't be recycled. And use signage without specific dates so they can be reused in future.



Make sure you include strong messaging in resources about your charity's commitment to green fundraising – you want to make sure supporters understand why you might be giving them difference promotional materials, thank-yous or rewards. You still want them to feel as supported and valued as they always have been. And shout about what efforts volunteers have made!



Instead of using clappers and bang sticks, consider alternatives like wooden percussion instruments that will last, or clap-banners that serve as a handheld banner and noise-maker in one.

## Case study 2: The London Marathon



**Kenneth Foreman**  
Head of Charities  
London Marathon Events

We believe we run the best mass participation events in the world, and we want to match that by leading the world in mass participation event sustainability. We are at the start of our journey but have already achieved a huge amount in the last year. In 2018 London Marathon Events established a team to develop new environmental initiatives and practices and commissioned a full review of its environmental impacts.

We partnered with Environmental Resources Management (ERM) a world leading sustainability consultancy, to help create an Environmental Policy, Environmental Management System and Environmental Impacts Register to understand our impacts and embed sustainability within the organisation. Throughout 2019 we have delved into every aspect of our events to build a comprehensive picture of all our environmental impacts.

In addition to embedding environmental protection within the organisation in 2019 we have trialled some truly innovative initiatives to reduce our impact including:

- Introduced a closed loop recycling project for plastic bottles used in the Virgin Money London Marathon. Bottles used in Tower Hamlets, Greenwich, Southwark and Canary Wharf were collected and returned directly to Buxton and Lucozade and recycled into new bottles.

- Reduced the number of drinks stations on the Marathon route from 26 to 19 and eliminated more than 215,000 plastic bottles from the course.
- Trialled a new bottle belt made from 90% recycled materials. This initiative also monitored how much water a runner used and found runners wearing belts used nearly half as many bottles as runners without belts.
- Ran the largest ever trial of Ooho seaweed edible and biodegradable capsules – following a successful trial of 10,000 at The Vitality Big Half, 30,000 were used at the Virgin Money London Marathon.

Prudential RideLondon became our first plastic water bottle free event with riders refilling on route.

We know we can't achieve everything in one event, in one year, but the changes and the trials we introduced this year have the potential to change how mass participation events are delivered in future.

But this is not something we can do alone and everything that has been done so far has been delivered with the support, help and enthusiasm of our partners, participants and staff.

Our aim is to empower, enhance and encourage the desire for change and improvement. When people come together, we can make the changes needed to ensure mass participation events are making a positive contribution to tackling the climate emergency.



# RESOURCES

## **Charity Commission for England and Wales**

*Environmental responsibility for charities*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-responsibility-for-charities>

*Going green: charities and environmental responsibility*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/284703/rs17text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284703/rs17text.pdf)

*How do charities approach investing in line with their purpose and values?*

<https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/15/how-do-charities-approach-investing-in-line-with-their-purpose-and-values-we-want-to-know-and-we-want-to-help>

## **City Bridge Trust**

*Greening the third sector*

<https://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Knowledge-1-Greening-the-3rd-Sector.pdf>

## **WWF**

*Top 20 tips to help turn your workplace into a sustainability champion in 2020*

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/top-20-tips-workplaces-sustainable>

## **Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator**

*Charity investments: guidance and good practice*

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/3352/2018-11-19-investments-guidance.pdf>

## **Chartered Institute of Fundraising**

*Fundraising focus: environmentally-friendly fundraising*

<https://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/library/fundraising-focus-environmentally-friendly-fundraising/>

## **Bates Wells**

*Call for landmark judgement on responsible investment*

<https://bateswells.co.uk/2019/03/call-for-new-landmark-judgment-on-responsible-investment-join-the-coalition-and-sign-up/>

## **nibusinessinfo.co.uk**

*Environmental performance of your business*

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/environmental-performance-your-business>

## **Arts Council England**

*Sustaining great art and culture: environmental report 2017/18*

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/sustaining-great-art-and-culture-environmental-report-201718>

## **Julie's Bicycle**

Eco-audit

<https://juliesbicycle.com/reporting/>

## **City Bridge Trust**

Eco-audit

<https://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/grant-making/what-we-fund/connecting-the-capital/eco-audits/>

## About the Chartered Institute of Fundraising

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising is the professional membership body for UK fundraising. We support fundraisers through leadership and representation; best practice and compliance; education and networking; and we champion and promote fundraising as a career choice. We have over 600 organisational members who raise more than £10 billion in income for good causes every year, and over 6,000 individual members.

[institute-of-fundraising.org.uk](https://institute-of-fundraising.org.uk)

[🐦 @loftweets](https://twitter.com/loftweets)