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**CORNWALL|365**

# **SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR EVENTS**

**CHECKLIST**

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# SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR EVENTS CHECKLIST



As we all know, Cornwall is an amazing place to be with exciting and creative events happening all year round. But now, more than ever, we have to do our part to reduce the environmental impact of our work and protect our planet. We are thrilled to work with Livvy Drake (Sustainable Sidekicks/Kambe Events) who has produced this fantastic checklist for outdoor events. This document will provide a framework to help you discover sustainable solutions and make running green events both accessible and achievable.

This checklist can be applied to outdoor events of all sizes in all types of locations, use what is relevant for your setup. It contains practical steps as well as tips for behaviour change and communication, which are all necessary to maximise impact.

You don't have to do all of these actions, this is a guide to inspire you and your team. Change is achieved when everyone is involved so share this with your team, collaborators and suppliers.

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There is a checklist for each of these areas that covers:

- Energy
- Waste
- Travel & transport
- Procurement (purchasing)
- Food & drink
- Carbon footprint
- Communications

Each one is split up in terms of:

- Site requests
- Event design and planning
- Trader communications
- Audience communications
- Onsite behaviours
- Review

## USEFUL INFORMATION

For outdoor events main electricity is always the preference where possible, and ideally from a renewable energy source.

### Renewable energy providers

According to information from Ofgem and research by Which? and the Energy Saving Trust, the greenest energy tariffs are **Good Energy**, **Green Energy UK** and **Ecotricity**.

These companies increase the volume of renewables by directly financing new projects.

Other 'green energy' tariffs do not create more green energy in the grid, they just buy and sell renewable energy certificates (REGOs) from existing green providers, whilst their standard tariff uses more energy from fossil fuels.

The biggest impact of digital equipment e.g. computers, phones, audio recorders, and projectors is the production of these items, so using equipment that already exists either by hiring or borrowing is preferable.

### Generators and equipment

Diesel generators are not the only option for power on a site without mains electricity.

Available generators include:

- Hybrid generators that use a combination of power sources
- Pre-charged batteries
- Solar arrays
- Biofuel generators

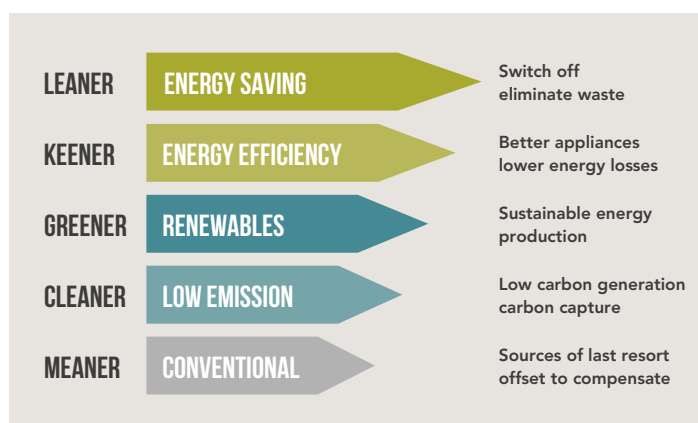
A generator should be running at between 60-80% of capacity. Oversized and idling generators are inefficient and use more fuel when operating.

Solar powered traffic signage is available.

LED lighting uses the least amount of energy.

### Further resources

- [Julie's Bicycle CG tool for recording your carbon footprint](#)





## CHECKLIST

### SITE REQUESTS

- ☐ Request mains electricity where possible and ask if they are on a renewable energy tariff.

### EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ Follow the energy hierarchy and build energy-saving and efficiency into your discussions.
- ☐ Brief suppliers, and contractors that energy reduction and efficiency is part of working with you.
- ☐ Work with providers to accurately spec energy and generators so they run efficiently and maximise fuel.
- ☐ If you are using battery operated equipment:
  - Choose rechargeable batteries or good quality long-life ones.
  - And/or have a policy for battery recycling.

### TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Request energy efficient equipment
  - LED lights
  - A/rated equipment
- ☐ Ask for accurate energy requirements for the site.

### AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ If you have taken measures to reduce your energy usage, share this information in your pre-event or onsite communications.

### ONSITE BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ Only power the site when people are there. Have an, on and off, policy for equipment and lighting, especially generators.

### REVIEW

- ☐ To understand the energy usage and carbon footprint, record meter readings from venues and generators:
  - As soon as the build begins.
  - When the event goes live.
  - When it ends.
- ☐ Calculate the carbon footprint from the energy readings with [Julie's Bicycle CG Tool](#).

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Waste management

The waste hierarchy is [EU Law](#), requiring all those that create waste to start with [prevention and reuse before recycling and disposal](#).

Diversion = composting or sending items for waste to energy. Neither of these practices are recycling.

Compostable single-use glasses and packaging [do not reduce the impacts of single-use materials](#), as most compost facilities can't compost them so they go to general waste.

[Event Cycle](#) offers a service to collect event materials and redistribute to local or national organisations who can use the materials.

Some suppliers offer take-back schemes to reuse or recycle difficult materials like Foamex and Carpet.



## CHECKLIST

### SITE REQUESTS

- ☐ Access to onsite drinking water.
- ☐ Multiple bins for segregated waste and recycling collections:  
Dry mixed recycling, food, glass & general waste.
- ☐ Waste collection to manage compostable packaging if available.  
There doesn't appear to be one around Cornwall, so using compostable packaging may not reduce waste.

### EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ Use the waste hierarchy to design out waste from your event:
  - See what sets and props you can re-use. What do you already own? What could you ask to borrow from others?
  - Design sets with reuse in mind for future events or other organisations.
  - Use recycled or upcycled materials for sets and props.
  - Avoid materials that do not have a recycling waste stream e.g. compostable packaging.
- ☐ Avoid hazardous paints and finishings that make materials non-recyclable.  
Choose water-based where possible.
- ☐ Explore if reusable bar cups and serveware is possible for your event.  
Can you or your bar company hire in from a supplier e.g. Green Goblet, Stack Cup.
- ☐ Build time into your planning to find a new home for materials that can't be stored or reused on site.

- ☐ Look for suppliers that offer take-back schemes for hard-to-recycle materials.  
E.g. can carpets or foamex be returned to the supplier?

### TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Minimise single-use items on site.  
E.g. by not selling water.
- ☐ Choose reusable options where possible.  
E.g. coffee cups, bar cups, crockery and cutlery.
- ☐ Provide a trader briefing on how waste should be segregated and managed to optimise recycling rates.  
Ideally do this in a group meeting as people don't always read documentation.

### AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Ask people to bring their:
  - Reusable water bottle.
  - Reusable coffee cup.
- ☐ Have clear messaging on the bins explaining which items go in each bin.
- ☐ Provide guidance where people bring their own food onsite.  
Discourage audiences from:
  - Bringing single-use packaging.
  - Putting everything in one carrier bag and throwing it away.
 Encourage audiences to:
  - Use the recycling facilities
  - Take packaging home for recycling

## CHECKLIST

### ONSITE BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ **Set up bins and skips for waste segregation.**  
Multiple waste streams and put together at all possible locations (people don't go looking for recycling bins).
- ☐ **Identify the waste streams being created on-site and create pictorial signage on bins and skips so people know what they should put where (people don't usually read information).**
- ☐ **Brief ALL staff and volunteers including catering teams on the waste streams.**  
Ask catering staff to segregate rubbish as they collect it by using multiple bin bags.
- ☐ **Spot check bins and waste management to address any issues and miscommunications.**  
E.g. bin sets together – are staff using these appropriately?

### REVIEW

- ☐ **Monitor and measure your waste stream data from your suppliers, reporting on materials reused, recycled, and sent to waste, energy and landfill.**  
Did waste stream management work (audience use)?

# TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

## USEFUL INFORMATION

Whilst audience travel is harder to impact, staff and collaborator travel is something you have more influence over.

In areas where public transport is poor, focusing on people travelling in full cars (4 or more people) is the best way to minimise travel carbon footprints.

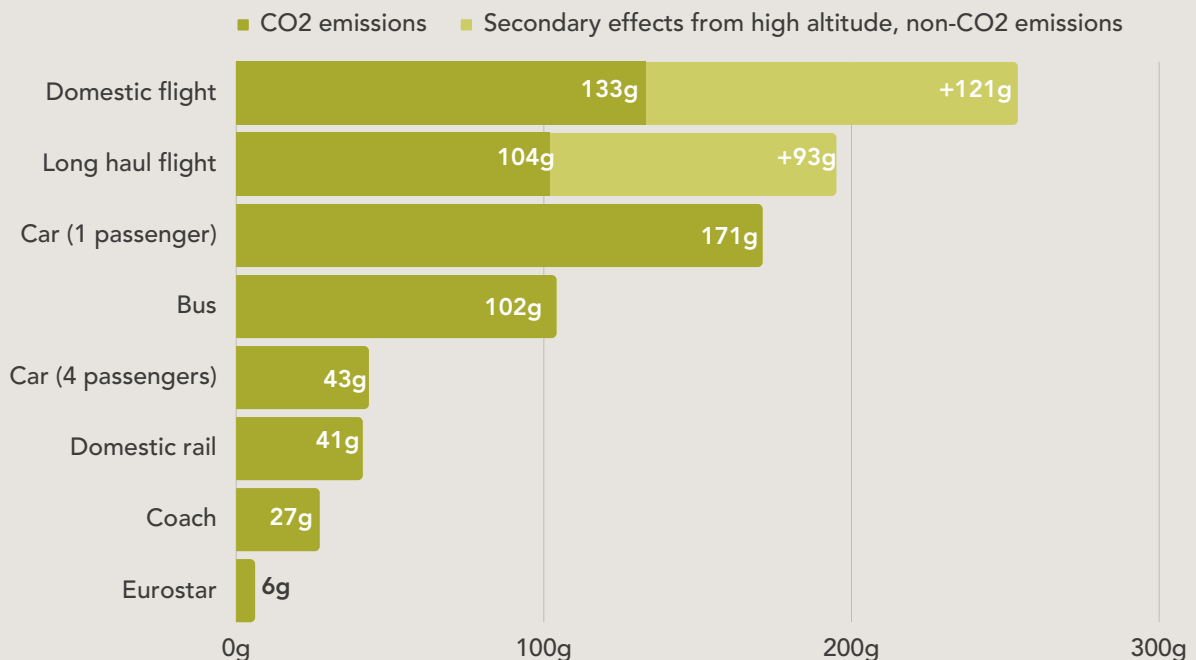
### Further resources

- [Liftshare](#), [GoCarShare](#) and [BlaBlaCar](#) are liftshare platforms that can manage event journeys.
- [Ecolibrium](#) is an app for festivals and events to offset their travel emissions.



## EMISSIONS FROM DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORT

### EMISSIONS PER PASSENGER KM TRAVELLED



Note: Car refers to average diesel car.

Source: BEIS/Defra Greenhouse Gas Conversion Factors 2019



# CHECKLIST

## SITE REQUESTS

- ☐ **Bike racks and electric charge points (where appropriate).**  
Provide details on the nearest electric charging points (for staff/crew/audience use).

## EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ **Put in place a travel policy covering:**
  - Team travel: ask people to choose low carbon options i.e. lift-share, cycle, and public transport if possible.
  - Artist travel: ask people to lift share or get public transport if possible.
  - International travel: ask people to book local accommodation to reduce car journeys.

- ☐ **Prioritise working with local suppliers over the cheapest.**

- ☐ **Work with suppliers to minimise journeys.**  
For large-scale events, ask suppliers from similar locations to collaborate on deliveries so full vehicles rather than multiple half-full ones are used.

- ☐ **Where relevant, build low-carbon travel into the event experience e.g. a walking bus where people walk together to the location.**

- ☐ **If working with European providers make train or boat journeys default where possible if within 4 hours of the UK.**

- ☐ **Consider charging for car parking / car parks to encourage lift sharing.**

## TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ **Request traders and their staff car pool and lift share as much as possible.**

# TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

- ☐ **Require traders to provide theirs and their staffs transport.**

## AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ **Publicise and promote the most appropriate low-carbon transport options through social media.**  
E.g. a lift sharing scheme. If bike racks and electric car charging points are available mention these.

- ☐ **Frame low carbon travel in terms of individual health and air quality benefiting the local community.**

- ☐ **Carry out a post-event travel survey with audience members to understand travel options.**

## ONSITE BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ **Request staff choose low carbon travel for any errands.**  
Use pedal, e-bikes and electric buggies for onsite travel rather than diesel or petrol buggies.

## REVIEW

- ☐ **Require traders and contractors to supply their event travel data to you post-event.**

- ☐ **Understand and reflect on audience travel habits from survey data.**  
In future could you organise buses from key locations where your audience is coming from?

- ☐ **You can calculate the carbon footprint of audience travel.**  
Use the [Ecolibrium](#) calculator.

# PROCUREMENT (PURCHASING CHOICES)

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Circular economy principles

1. Designing out waste and pollution.
2. Extending the useful life of products and materials.
3. Regenerating natural systems:  
i.e. not just protecting but also improving the natural environment and society.

### Procurement policies to request from suppliers

- Third-party auditing of factories
- Freedom of association (unions)
- Modern slavery, child labour, H&S policies
- Living or fair wages and fair working hours
- Renewable energy contracts
- Sustainability/environmental policies
- Waste policy



### Further resources

- [2030 Calculator](#) provides the carbon footprint of many materials.
- [Introduction to a circular economy](#) from The Ellen McArthur Foundation.



# PROCUREMENT (PURCHASING CHOICES)

## CHECKLIST

### SITE REQUESTS

- ☐ Provide a list of local and sustainable suppliers where possible.

### EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ Have a procurement policy and hierarchy for people to follow that includes:
  - Minimum standards.
  - Certifications to look for.
  - Weighting towards suppliers who have strong sustainability credentials that meet your requirements.
  - End of life considerations.
- ☐ When making procurement decisions, ask yourself four questions:
  - What is it made of?
  - Where is it coming from?
  - What is it doing?
  - Where is it going?
- ☐ Minimise purchasing single-use materials. Consider the end-of-life when making purchases:
  - Can it be reused or repurposed by the organisation or another body?
  - Do we have a recycling stream for it?
  - Will the supplier offer a take-back scheme?
- ☐ Buy local where possible.
- ☐ Work with local suppliers to meet your sustainability standards.

### TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Provide your purchasing criteria to suppliers and contractors, in good time, so they can adopt it.  
Discuss at the beginning of the contract how you can work together to meet your aspirations and targets.

### AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Tell people about your sustainability considerations and the provenance of your goods (their origin) with signs/notices at the event and in your pre-event communications.

### ONSITE BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ For last-minute purchases, remember your purchasing policy and commitments and brief staff to follow them.

### REVIEW

- ☐ Reflect on your purchases
  - What worked well, and what wasn't used as expected?
  - What would you do differently in future?
- ☐ If you are interested in the carbon footprint of certain materials you can find out with [The 2030 Calculator](#).

## USEFUL INFORMATION

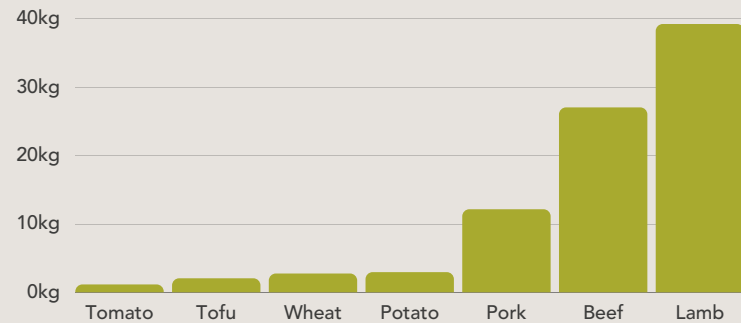
### Plant-based meals

A study from Cambridge University found that if 2 in 4 menu items were plant-based it increased their purchase rate by between 40-80%.

### Food waste

If global food waste was a country, it would be the third-largest greenhouse gas emitter after the US and China.

Carbon footprint of what you eat



Food Waste

Billion tonnes CO2 equivalent



### Certifications to look for

- Fairtrade
- Seasonal
- Locally sourced
- Organic ([Dirty dozen](#))

The Fairtrade certification is good for people and the planet. It works on fair wages and prices for products as well as championing organic and climate change adaptation with farmers.





## CHECKLIST

### SITE REQUESTS

- ☐ Provide composting facilities for food waste so it doesn't contaminate other waste streams.

### EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ Work with local food vendors where possible.
- ☐ Have a food and serveware policy for all traders to follow with minimum standards and certifications considering:
  - The % of vegan and vegetarian/plant-based meals on the menus.
  - Certifications such as Fairtrade coffee and tea, Organic milk.
  - Standards such as locally grown, seasonal or European fruit and veg.
- ☐ Require staff catering to follow the same standards, set for traders, to lead by example.
- ☐ For smaller events without food traders consider the above points for your food choices. As well as looking for ways to minimise packaging by buying in bulk or from local wholesalers and suppliers.
- ☐ Ensure all packaging ordered has a corresponding recycling stream.
  - Ban the sale of single-use plastic water bottles.
  - Don't order compostable food serveware if your waste supplier can't process it.

### TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Work with traders on your minimum purchasing standards and require them to meet them.
- ☐ Organise to vet traders to ensure they meet your minimum standards.  
You can link this with an award for those that go above and beyond your minimum standards.
- ☐ Require traders to display the standards and origins of food and drinks provided, on boards and signs.
- ☐ Brief traders and bar contractors on how your reusable serveware scheme works.

### AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Communicate with the audience about standards, certifications and food targets in advance framing it with enticing, mouthwatering language.
- ☐ Tell people about your provenance and sustainability considerations with signage around your food service areas.
- ☐ Advocate attendees bring a bottle for water.

## CHECKLIST

### ONSITE BEHAVIOURS



Work with vendors and suppliers to reallocate surplus food to the local community.

E.g. sealed and in-date products collated and delivered to a local organisation like FareShare.



For last-minute purchases, remember the standards and certifications you are following, if possible.



Make sure catering staff are trained to separate waste and recycling streams when clearing dining areas.



Make sure catering and bar staff are trained to communicate all reusable serveware initiatives.

### REVIEW



Report back to audiences and traders on food successes and challenges.

# CARBON FOOTPRINT

## USEFUL INFORMATION

Everything has a carbon footprint. In order to address the climate crisis organisations need to go beyond just offsetting to address their footprint.

**Net-zero** refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere, through decarbonising.

**Carbon neutral** means that the footprint has been measured and the carbon has been offset with a scheme.

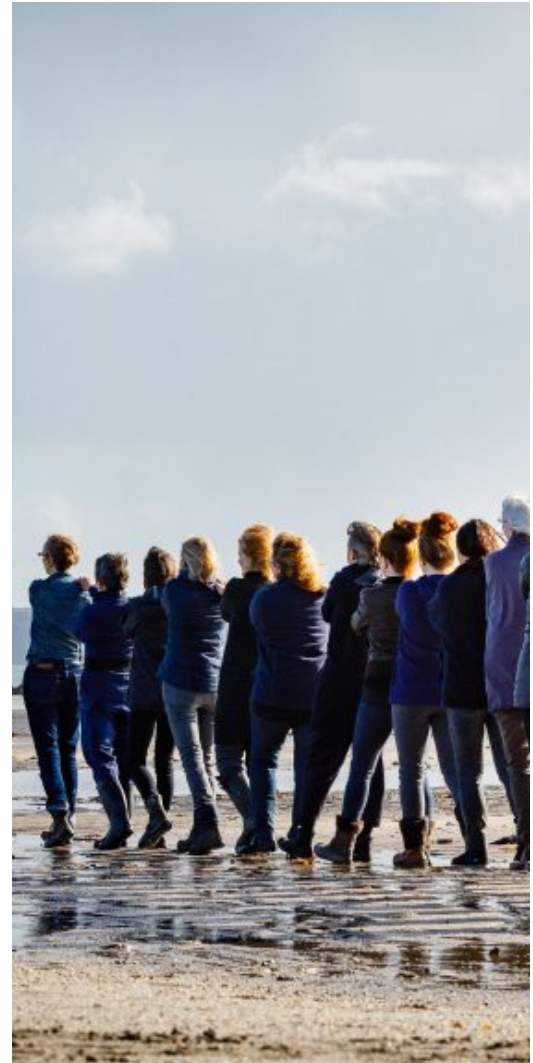
**Decarbonising** is the priority as this is looking for low carbon alternative ways of working.

### Decarbonising includes:

- Following the energy hierarchy (Energy section).
- Reducing, reusing and following the circular economy (Waste section).
- Increasing plant-based options and reducing meat (Food section).
- Increasing the efficiency of travel and choosing low carbon transport (Travel section).

### Further resources

- You can calculate the carbon footprint of your event using the [Julie's Bicycle](#) CG tool which has been designed for arts and events.



# CHECKLIST

## EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ Work with teams to set targets to reduce the carbon footprint of their area.
- ☐ If capacity is limited look at areas that can have the biggest impact and focus on these e.g. energy and travel.
- ☐ Work with stakeholders on your carbon targets:
  - Suppliers
  - Traders
  - Audience
- ☐ Make carbon reporting a contractual requirement for suppliers.

## TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Communicate how they can contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of your event by:
  - Increasing plant-based options.
  - Reducing food waste.
  - Lift sharing and carpooling.

## AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Tell audiences what you are doing to reduce the carbon footprint.
- ☐ Tell audiences how they can reduce their carbon footprint and the benefits to the wider community and their health.

# CARBON FOOTPRINT

## ONSITE BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ Work on conserving resources i.e. energy, waste and materials, as all of these have a carbon footprint.

## REVIEW

- ☐ To understand your carbon footprint use the free [Julie's Bicycle](#) CG tool. The basic areas to track are:
  - Energy
  - Waste
  - Travel
  - Water usage



## USEFUL INFORMATION

Behavioural science highlights that people, who are not motivated by environmental issues, will still change their behaviours if they think it's what everyone else is doing.

Focusing on the negative behaviour e.g. 'Don't drive' reinforces and encourages that behaviour. Instead, communicate the preferred behaviour e.g. 'Thanks for walking'.

People suffer from inattention blindness so communicating behaviours to people at the right moment is essential. For instance, telling people to bring a water bottle a few days before rather than 2 months before.

Talking about giving things up or being meat-free will activate loss aversion aka FOMO (fear of missing out).

There are many non-environmental reasons for doing behaviours that can be communicated instead of saying we are doing this to 'save the planet' e.g. health and social benefits.



## CHECKLIST

### EVENT DESIGN AND PLANNING

- ☐ Weave your sustainability messages into your event concept so it is integral and not an add-on.
- ☐ Plan your communications with the target audience in mind.  
Not everyone is motivated by environmental issues. But you can still achieve pro-environmental actions by framing the messages in a way that is relevant to the target audience, e.g. choosing active travel for their health (health benefits) or to improve air quality (community and social benefits), or because everyone else is doing it (social norming).
- ☐ Make bin signage clear and relevant to the waste streams at your event.  
The terms 'General Waste' or Dry Mixed Recycling are meaningless or mean different things in different counties which be confusing.

### TRADER COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Focus on how they are part of a collective of organisations working together, and how collectively your actions will make a difference.
- ☐ Set targets for people to work towards, where possible, as these are motivating.

### AUDIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Share regular social media posts about sustainability projects.
- ☐ Use positive behaviour change language for pro-environmental communications:
  - The desired behaviour NOT the undesirable one e.g. 'Bring a Bottle' NOT 'Don't use plastic'.
  - 'Recycle your materials' NOT 'Don't litter'.
  - Talk about what others are doing to reinforce the social norm, e.g. 80% of our audience come by public transport.
  - Avoid reinforcing the negative social norm e.g. 80% of people drive - this is demotivating for people who will do what others do.

### ONSITE BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ Ensure messaging is situated where the audience may be carrying out a behaviour e.g. bin messages on top of the bin, not on the bottom.  
This addresses inattention blindness.

### REVIEW

- ☐ Review communications and initiatives to see what was most impactful.
- ☐ Communicate back to audiences about the impact their collective actions had on making a difference.



# CORNWALL|365

We are a creative consultancy which promotes Cornwall as a year-round, sustainable cultural destination. Since 2014 we have built a network of over 1,000 businesses from the creative and tourism sectors who work together to spread the word about Cornwall's distinctive cultural offer to visitors and residents alike. From our language to contemporary art, from festivals to food - we have our fingers on the pulse of the rich events scene in Cornwall and are expert cheerleaders for venues, creative producers and communities. Our skills and network-building activity works in partnership with our listing and events platform Cornwall 365 What's On, providing free and cost-effective ways to reach new audiences.

[www.cornwall365.org.uk](http://www.cornwall365.org.uk)



Creative business support for creative businesses. Cultivator is a business development programme that supports the creative sector in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. It's a project run by Creative Kernow and works in partnership with the University of Plymouth, Real Ideas Organisation, Cornwall College and Cornwall Development Company. To support creative businesses, we provide one-to-one consultations with specialist advisors, as well as a range of funding opportunities, employment bursaries, skills workshops and networking events to help you grow your business and connect with the right people.

[www.cultivatorcornwall.org.uk](http://www.cultivatorcornwall.org.uk)

Cornwall 365 and Cultivator are both part of Creative Kernow, one of Cornwall's key creative industries organisations.

**Interreg**  
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