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Arts Council of Wales

A Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts



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Introduction

Across the world, humanity is experiencing the devastating effects of climate change. We are living through times of startling and damaging change – with higher and record-setting summer temperatures, increased rainfall, more frequent and severe flood events, and rising sea levels. Nature loss, pollution and waste are also harming our environment and impacting the processes that support life, from the air we breathe to the food we eat. Unless we reduce global carbon emissions to as close as possible to zero by 2050, climate change is set to become catastrophic.

These damaging shifts to our environment and ecology – which disproportionately affect countries in the global south as well as impacting our communities closer to home – have the potential to worsen our health and wellbeing, increase the burden on public services, affect transport infrastructure, destroy homes and destabilise the economy.

Each of us knows that we have a part to play in stemming this tide of damaging change. In Wales, many communities, businesses, charities, and public bodies have been coming together over many years to respond to the climate and nature emergencies. As a nation we are committed through the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to reducing our carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. Everyone can do something to create the change needed to secure the future of our planet.

Arts Council of Wales (ACW) is committed to championing the important role of the arts in transforming our society and economy to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. And we recognise that climate change is about more than the environmental repercussions – it is about social justice and inequality. Together, as citizens of the world, we need to take urgent action to address the climate and nature emergencies, but we need to act with integrity and compassion. ACW strongly believes in putting equality and justice at the heart of our contribution, and we are confident that this approach also strongly reflects the immense commitment of the arts sector in Wales.

To that end, this document outlines our Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts (the Climate Justice Plan), which has been developed through a collaborative process as part of our [Creative Nature Programme](#) with Natural Resources Wales. Below, we set out how we have worked with people from across Wales to identify a vision, desired goals and shared beliefs related to how the arts can engage with climate justice, and we share a detailed series of positive actions that will see us making a tangible difference together.



Garden of the Unwanted Monument, Utopias Bach (Image: Lindsey Colbourne, 2021)

Setting the scene

Climate justice, Wales, and the arts

i. What is climate justice?

Friends of the Earth describes climate justice as:

“finding solutions to the climate crisis that not only reduce emissions or protect the natural world, but that do so in a way which creates a fairer, more just and more equal world in the process.”



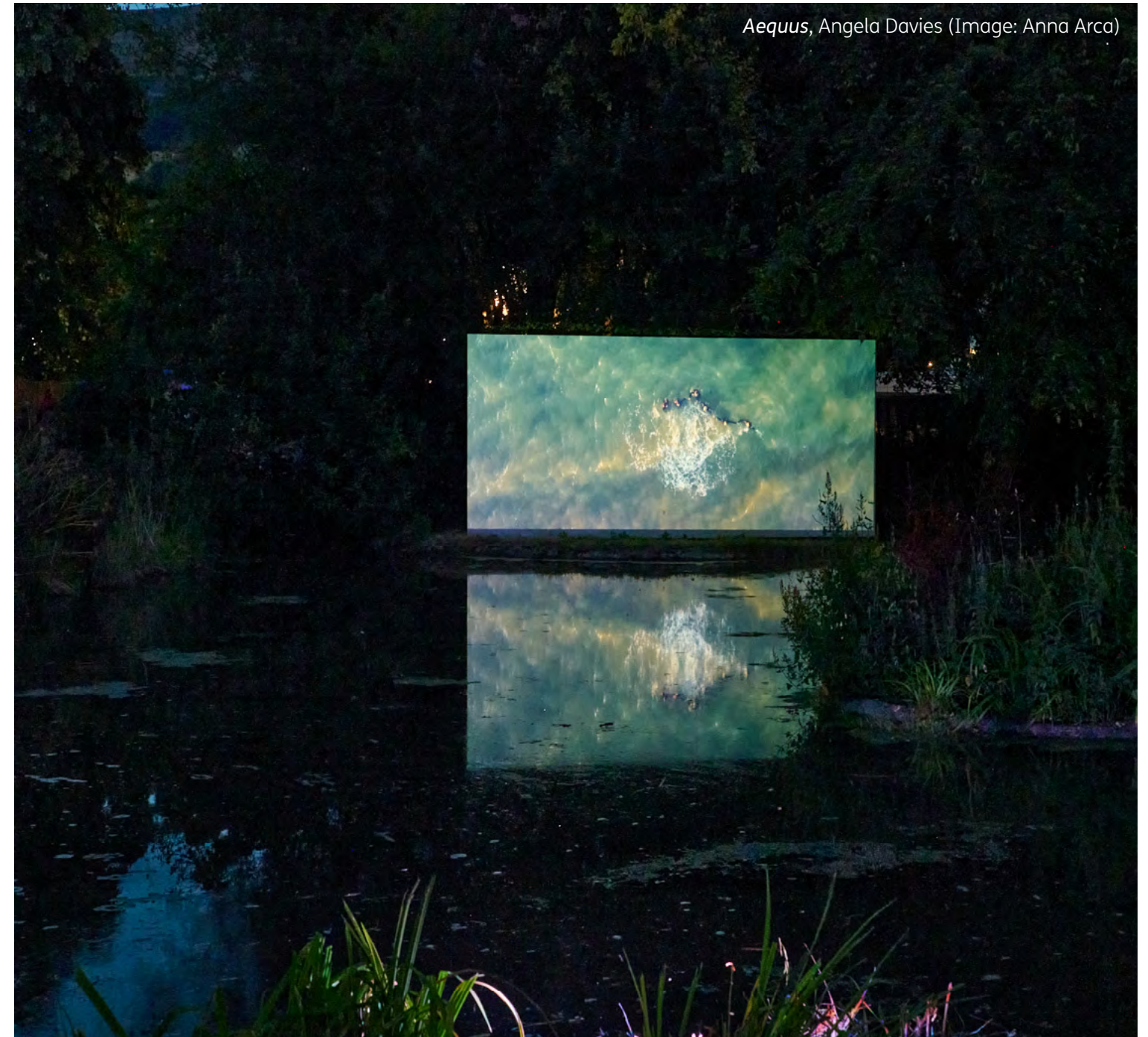
Inter/Tidal, Alison Neighbour and Vikram Iyengar (Image: Amlan Chaudhuri)

In other words, climate justice is about putting social justice and equality at the heart of addressing climate change, because climate change has been caused by an unsustainable economic model that has resulted in an unequal distribution of wealth and power in the world. It has political, social, and ethical ramifications. It hits hardest those people and countries who are the least responsible – such as those living in poverty and under

oppression. It disproportionately affects already marginalised groups, including women, children, culturally and ethnically diverse communities, migrants or displaced persons, older populations, those from a low socio-economic background, disabled people and the LGBTQ+ community. It leaves the most vulnerable struggling to cope with the physical and mental health impacts.

Further, there are also inequities in the sharing of costs and benefits of policy responses to climate change, and in the balance of voices in governance and decisions. For example, in the UK, low-income households contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions, but pay, as a proportion of income, more towards implementation of certain policy responses, while also benefitting less from those policies, and having less power to affect them. There is often not enough consideration by policy makers of the impact that these climate responses have on people and communities who are already vulnerable.

Therefore, in tackling climate change – there is both a crucial challenge, and an inspiring opportunity, to ensure that any response has social justice and inequality at its heart, and that it brings new hope to these disproportionately affected communities. This approach of thinking about social justice when developing responses to climate change is called ‘climate justice’.





Snow settles on the beach, delicate as lace
Sifting onto grains of sand, edges carved by the sea
The salt protests
How rarely we see this now, as winters warm
The crisp symmetry of snowflakes, myriad patterns
Unpredictable, beautiful, gifts from the sky, each unique

Sand in the lens of my microscope
fragments of rock, earth born
Sharp cut, mirroring those frozen falling flakes
Each crafted by wild forces
Carrying stories of change

We, too, are shaped by sea and sky
Distant though it may seem
Each one of us, different in our beginnings
and in our lived paths that bring us to today
Together, guardians of our shared world.

Dr Cathy Cole | Creative Response Co-design

ii. How does climate justice relate to the arts, and to Arts Council of Wales?

We believe that in the global effort to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and achieve climate justice, the arts can use the power of creativity to connect, inspire and imagine new futures, and create change.

This is why ACW has made climate justice one of the six principles of our Strategic Plan 2024-34, and why we have worked collaboratively to develop the Climate Justice Plan.

Biodiversity Carnival, Catrin Doyle and Lucie Powell, NATURponty (Image: Lucy Purrington)



In developing this plan, we have been guided and inspired by the excellent work on the climate and nature emergencies, climate justice and the arts that has been developed in Wales, across the UK and internationally over many years. In particular, the work of [Emergence](#) and their report '[Culture Shift: How Artists are Responding to Sustainability in Wales](#)', commissioned by ACW in 2014, and Watch Africa Cymru's report '[Smooth Seas Do Not Make Skilful Sailors](#)' for Wales Arts International in 2021 on decolonising our international work. Beyond Wales, we look to the important work of organisations such as Julie's Bicycle, SAIL and Creative Carbon Scotland, and the nearly 1,500 individuals and organisations from around the world who are asking the national governments who are parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement to adopt a '[Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action](#)' decision (JWD) at COP 30.

We are inspired by the international recognition of the role of the culture in tackling climate change and contributing to sustainable development more broadly. The important role of culture has been recognised by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), the leading international body for assessment of climate change, and Wales has been leading the way on global calls for culture to be recognised within the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#). These global goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

We are also guided and supported in Wales by a world-leading piece of legislation – [the Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). The Act places social justice and climate change at the forefront of the Welsh Government agenda and acknowledges the contribution that culture and language make to our society. It recognises that

social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being are all equally important pillars of sustainability, and places a duty on public bodies to consider the Act's [seven well-being goals](#) and its '[five ways of working](#)' in everything they do. It places a strong emphasis on the role of communities in decision-making, and on collaboration between public bodies. The Act is unique in its recognition of the huge contribution made by culture and language, and this is demonstrated in one of its seven goals – 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act therefore provides ACW with a clear direction for working together with public bodies, partners across all sectors, and communities. It also gives us the opportunity bring further positive impact to the people of Wales, by contributing to the seven well-being goals and putting climate, nature, and justice at the centre of all our decisions as an organisation.



Bogged Down,
Manon Awst, 2023



iii. Who can be supported by a climate justice approach – and how?

As noted above, many people are being disproportionately affected by climate change. This is not only happening globally, but also in our own backyard. Communities that are already marginalised or vulnerable are suffering again, as they find themselves more acutely affected than others by the climate and nature emergencies. The ACW's Climate Justice Plan is focused on supporting those who find themselves disadvantaged in this way, both here in Wales but also further afield, reflecting our commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goal of a Globally Responsible Wales.

Below, we describe the groups that are being disproportionately impacted by climate change or who are under threat of being adversely affected. These groups are not necessarily separate from each other, and people may belong to two or more communities. The linked projects demonstrate how Wales and the arts in Wales, via an incredibly strong sense of community and belonging, have already taken steps to make a difference.

Culturally and ethnically diverse communities

[According to a joint report in 2023](#), from Race Equality Foundation and New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), profound societal inequity – including systemic and historical health and economic inequalities – means that people from culturally and ethnically diverse communities in Wales are on average more affected by the climate and nature emergencies than white people. Air pollution and damage to the natural environment are among the biggest risks.

The Good Ancestors (Kenya and Wales)
(Image: Muruku Collective)



Making a difference through the arts

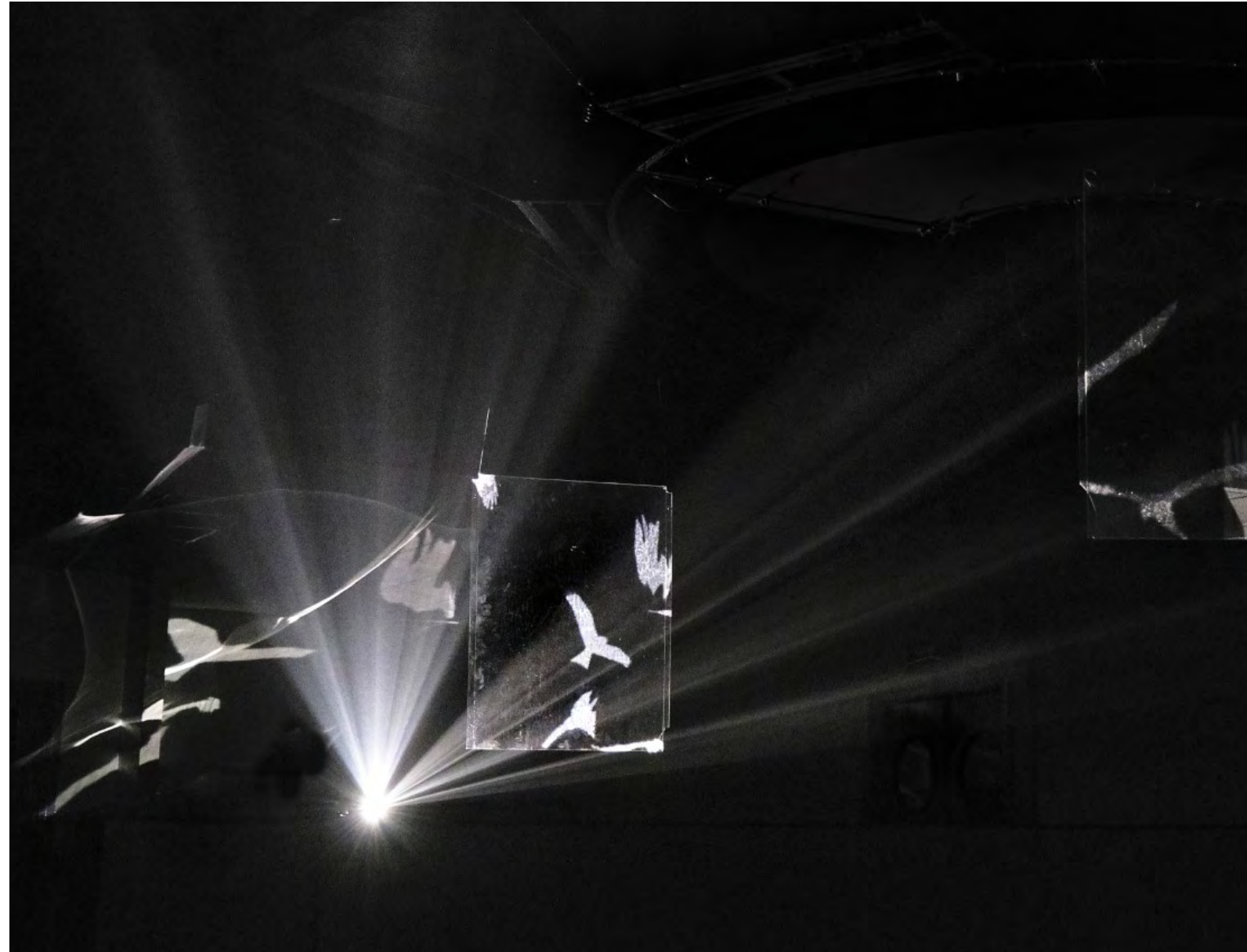
The Good Ancestors (Kenya and Wales) is a Black-led artist club, that acts as an activator/disruptor for creative, collaborative and decolonised activism funded by Arts Council of Wales. This artist club will explore climate and nature through an international lens, focusing on Wales and Africa.

The club wants to claim a central space in combating the nature emergency, using soft power to nurture Black-led creative and decolonised action.

[Climate Club \(ssap.org.uk\)](https://ssap.org.uk)

Disabled people

During extreme weather events caused by climate change – such as storms, floods and heatwaves – [disabled people face much lower chances of survival](#). According to Learning Disability Wales, challenges and inequality in accessing to information and resources are also expected [to worsen the impact on disabled people](#).



Making a difference through the arts

Nature's Algorithms by Giles W Bennett – Disability Arts Cymru, Fenis 10

Nature's Algorithms reflected on the fragility of the planet and our place on it, allowing people to see the world around them from a new perspective. With mentorship from international installation artists Ulf Pederson and Jony Easterby, Giles created a moving image, immersive, installation piece that communicated how he perceives the world around him through his neurodivergent perspective. Footage featured natural movement from the environment, which was collected by a variety of techniques including time-lapse and slow-motion as well as sound field recordings to create the piece.

[Nature's Algorithms: Immersive multimedia installation piece teaser \(youtube.com\)](#)

Nature's Algorithms, Giles W Bennett – Disability Arts Cymru, Fenis 10 (Image: Suzie Larke)

Women

The United Nations estimates that [women account for 80% of people who are forced to leave their homes by climate change](#). [Women and children may be 14 times more likely to die](#) or be injured in a natural disaster than men. Further, the Women's Equality Network (Wales) points out that disabled and trans women are also disproportionately impacted by climate displacement. In government net-zero discussions in Wales, there has been [a greater focus on more male-dominated industries](#), such as agriculture and heavy manufacturing.

The LGBTQ+ community

Social inequality, poverty, and high unemployment rates within LGBTQ+ communities are key factors in making them more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In particular, LGBTQ+ people experience discrimination and a lack of understanding during and after climate disasters, and have [spoken of facing sexism, homophobia and transphobia when accessing relief](#).

Future generations

Future generations will be among those most affected by climate change, because every child born will inherit a planet with more frequent extreme weather events than ever before. This group is more likely to be exposed and vulnerable to climate change and related risks, such as flooding, heat stress, water scarcity, poverty, and hunger. Children will be amongst those who suffer the most, as we are already witnessing around the world today.



NYTH at Coedwig Creu, Helen Malia / Coedwig Creu, Pontypridd Nature Reserve, Wales Millennium Centre, The River Music Project (Image: Helen Malia)

Welsh language communities

Welsh language communities may be affected by climate change in several ways. According to [research by Dr Lana St Leger](#), there are risks of rising sea levels, river flooding, coastal erosion, and consequential relocation.

Conversely, global and local migration into these communities, caused by global climate change risks will alter the proportion of Welsh speakers. Language use

across Wales will change if transport links between communities suffer through climate disasters, which may also prevent a fair and equal access for the people of Wales to cultural and heritage areas.

More specifically, the rich language for plants, animals and landscape may become obsolete in the face of biodiversity change, which will subsequently affect connection with folklore, stories and histories.

Making a difference through the arts

Dyffryn Dyfodol explored ways of collaborating with communities in rural Conwy to make things better. Bringing people together with the arts as a catalyst to explore, discover and plan for a positive future. The project aimed to find out about people's experiences, thoughts and ideas and to explore together what could be possible to change, challenge or enhance – in people's lives, environment, and communities, for everyone's benefit. They didn't claim to know how or have the answers – finding out together was what the project is about.

Dyffryn Dyfodol was a partnership between Ffiwsar, a creative production organisation based in Llanrwst, Natural Resource Wales and Cartrefi Conwy, who were collaborating with other organisations and projects in the focus area of the river Conwy catchment.

[Dyffryn Dyfodol – Ffiwsar](#)



Dyffryn Dyfodol Review, Jo Munton (Image: Jo Munton)

Older people

[Evidence suggests that older people – those over 65, but particularly people over 75 – consistently face more severe impacts from flooding and heatwaves.](#) This stems from a range of exacerbating factors, including a greater likelihood of being in ill-health, or of being less personally mobile, more socially isolated, or living on a low income.

People on low incomes

[Low income and poverty can affect people's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme weather events](#) such as heatwaves and flooding. Further, a low income may be tied to other causes of vulnerability that can exacerbate the impacts, such as being in ill-health, being socially isolated, or having a disability.

Young people

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) states that [young people will be adversely affected by climate change](#) in terms of their physical and mental health, and their education, development, and income. Those on low incomes in the UK are more exposed to air pollution and toxic chemicals, more likely to live in poorly adapted housing, less likely to have access to green spaces and less likely to bounce back easily after extreme weather.

Making a difference through the arts

The Natur Ponty Youth Forum engaged young people through a series of participatory arts interventions in reimagining Pontypridd as a nature reserve and empowering them to participate in environmental activism, promoting biodiversity and developing sustainable ways of living in their locale. Thus, the project was environmentally accountable and sought to empower people to address the global climate crisis and its impact locally (notably the recent flooding of the town) at a hyperlocal level.

[Fforwm Ieuenctid | Youth Forum – Gwarchodfa Natur Pontypridd – The Pontypridd Nature Reserve Project](#)



NATURponty workshop led by artists Anne-Mie Melis and Catrin Doyle, as part of NATURponty – the Pontypridd Nature Reserve Project.

People who are socially vulnerable

As with those on low incomes, people's [social vulnerability can also affect their ability to prepare and respond to climate events](#). Key contributory factors include age and health; environmental characteristics, for example, the availability of green space; and the social and institutional context, such as the strength of social networks and the cohesion of neighbourhoods.



Forest Comes to Pontio, Utopias Bach
(Image: Sarah Holyfield, 2023)

Making a difference through the arts

Utopias Bach involves experiments where artists and diverse communities work together to re-imagine the world on a small scale through interconnected, supportive, creative hubs in North Wales and beyond. The project gives people freedom not to have to think about the real world, and take a playful look at problems without consequence, to radically imagine. The activities have taken place in 7 geographic locations including community open air spaces, shop windows, and public indoor and outdoor spaces. Others took place online due to Covid.

The experiments range from geographical communities meeting together weekly to discuss ideas to dispersed networks sharing detailed observations to mini festivals and small-scale on-the-ground actions.

This project is counter-mainstream, counter globalisation, working small and local, and focuses on what the world will be like in future. Its nature is strongly collaborative, democratic, and non-judgmental. From the beginning, the local community has been involved in collaboration with Community Connectors.

The strength of the project is that it's not about failure or success, and that deadlines and 'outcomes' don't necessarily allow for deep, organic exploration of ideas, and can lead to weak or superficial solutions for problems.

[Treesense Experimental School - Utopias Bach](#)

Refugees and asylum seekers

[Climate and nature emergencies are forcing more people away from where they live](#), as extreme weather destroys livelihoods and communities and increases conflict.

Climate-related disasters are causing mass humanitarian crises; for example, as a result of the 2022 floods in Pakistan, 1,700 people were killed, 7.9 million were displaced from their homes and a further 33 million were impacted. Many of these communities live in areas that are especially vulnerable to extreme weather, and they have limited resources to enable them to 'bounce back'.

This is not just happening in countries in the global south. People living in Fairbourne in Gwynedd, North Wales are facing the very real prospect of becoming [the UK's first climate refugees](#), due to rising sea levels brought on by climate change.



Inter/Tidal, Alison Neighbour and Vikram Iyengar
(Image: Amlan Chaudhuri)

Making a difference through the arts

The **(Future) Wales Coast Path** is about our relationship to land and water. Public events ran throughout 2022 on the Gwent Levels in South Wales and on the Indian island of Sagar.

Inter/Tidal took place on Sagar Island in the Bay of Bengal, in association with Kolkata based arts company Ranan and funded by Wales Arts International. It built a personal connection between the two communities linked by the Lighthouses and their tidal data streams by co-walking and exchanging gifts, knowledge and observations across time and place.

[The \(Future\) Wales Coast Path – Alison Neighbour \(alisonneighbourdesign.com\)](#)

[INTER/TIDAL – The \(Future\) Wales Coast Path \(futurecoastpath.org\)](#)

[INTER/TIDAL \(youtube.com\)](#)



Process

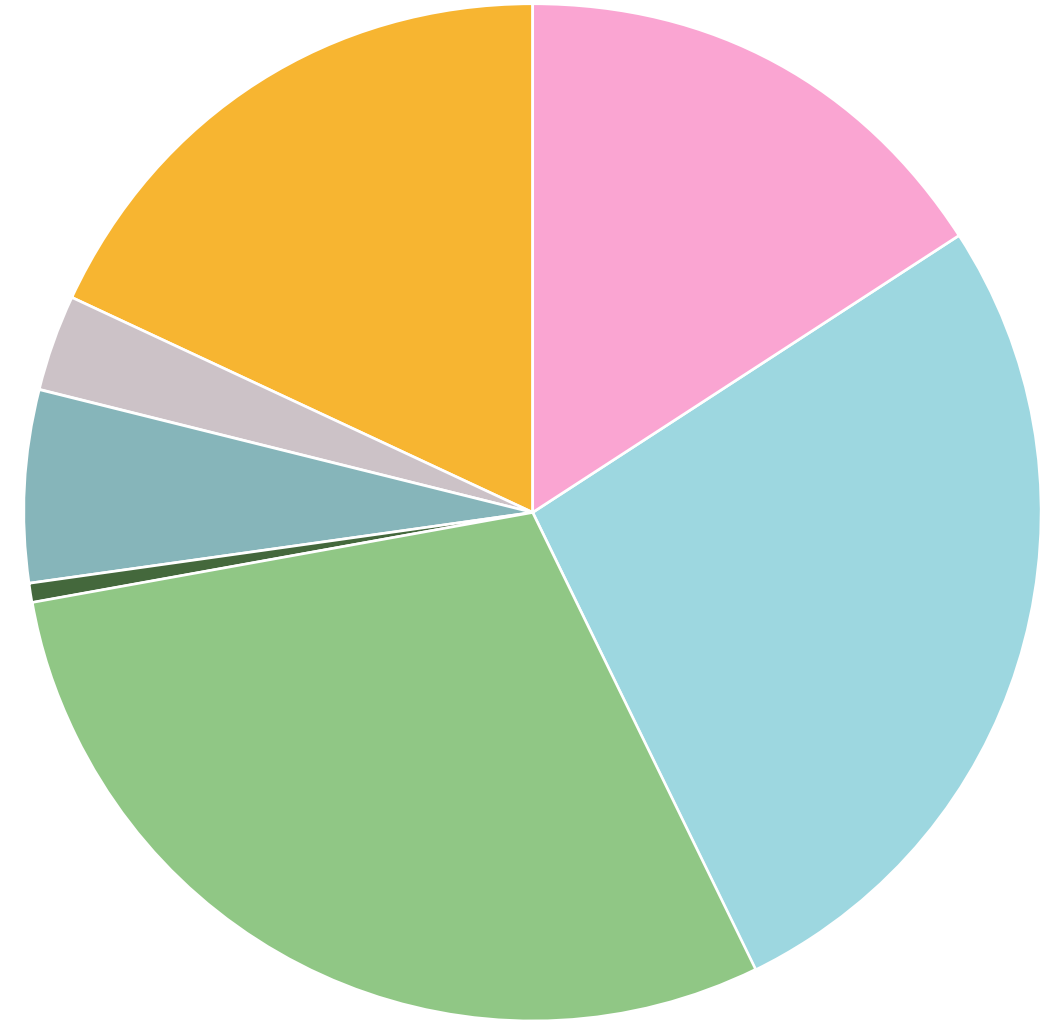
Building a vision for climate justice and the arts

As we described in our introduction, ACW is committed to playing its part in addressing climate change through a climate justice approach. But in responding, we do not wish to be an island. Therefore, in creating this Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts, we were keen to collaborate with people from across the arts sector and beyond in Wales, and to lead the way in bringing together views and experiences from across the spectrum.

We worked with the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain Innovation Lab to run a co-design process. 'Co-design' refers to a participatory approach in which all participants are treated as equal collaborators in the design process.

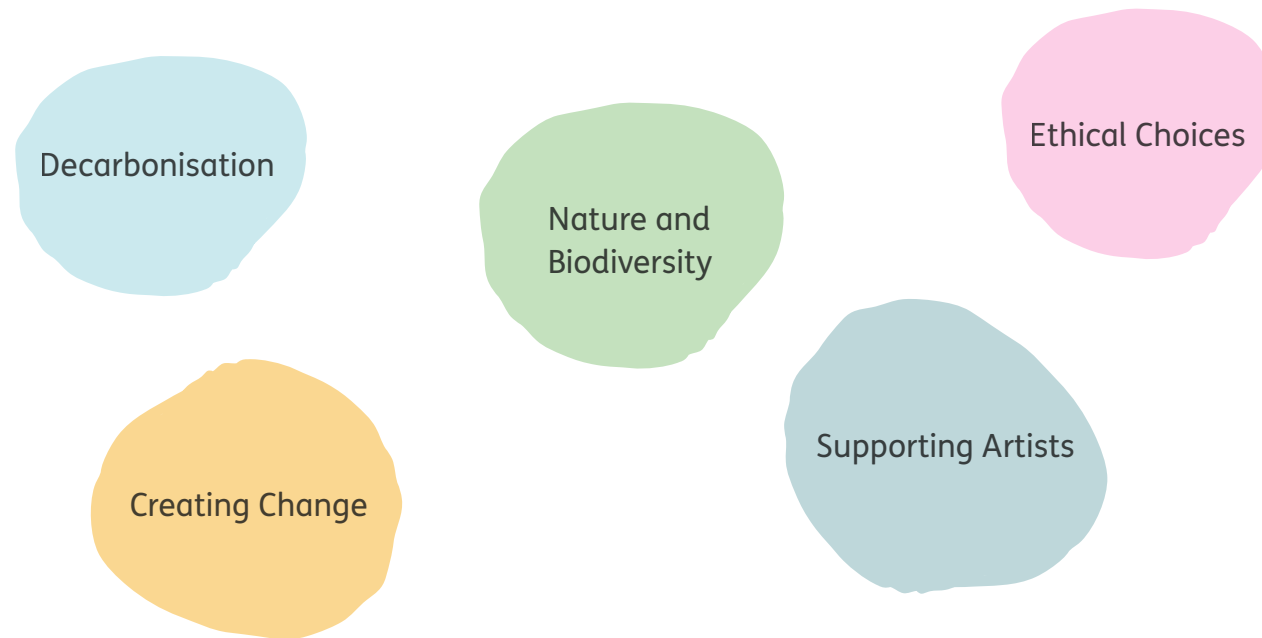
i. Who took part in the process?

This co-design process involved 93 people from a range of groups and bodies across Wales, including:



ii. What was involved?

The co-design group took part in seven workshops, during which they considered five specific themes and how those themes could contribute to the role of the arts in climate justice. The themes explored were:



We also invited people to complete a survey published on the Arts Council of Wales website. We received 40 responses that were incorporated into the process.

iii. What was the output?

The result of the co-design process is a vision for climate justice and the arts, a set of goals and related objectives for achieving that vision, and a set of shared beliefs that underpin our shared approach. Subsequently, ACW, with the support and guidance of the co-design group, has built an action plan with clear outcomes, that outlines how we will respond.



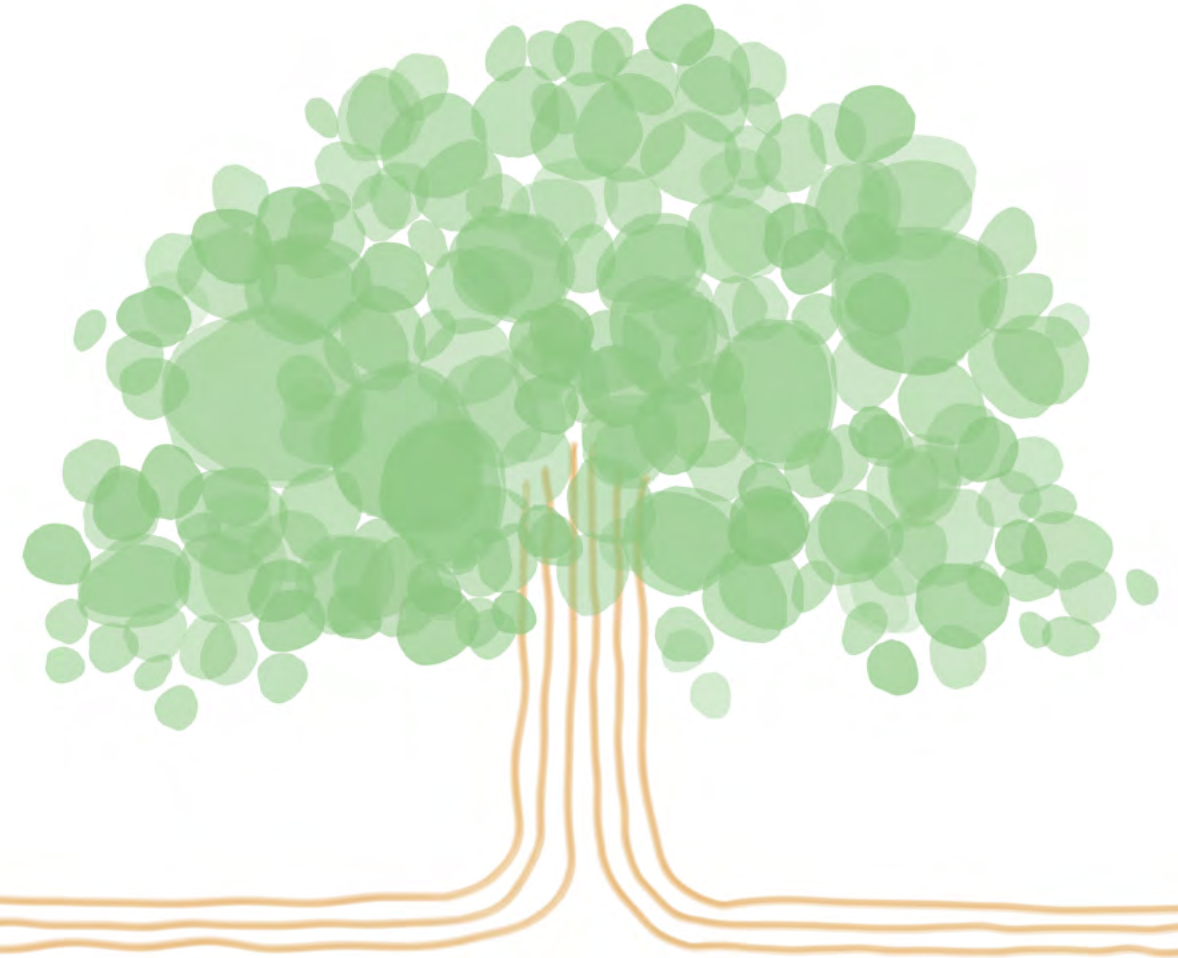
Strategy

The collective vision, goals, and shared beliefs

i. Vision

The discussion between the 93 people in the co-design group led to the vision that:

“The arts play a key role in inspiring the transformation we need to create a fairer world where people and nature can thrive.”



The group imagined this vision in the form of a tree, with leaves that breathe, branches that hold, and roots that nurture.

ii. Goals

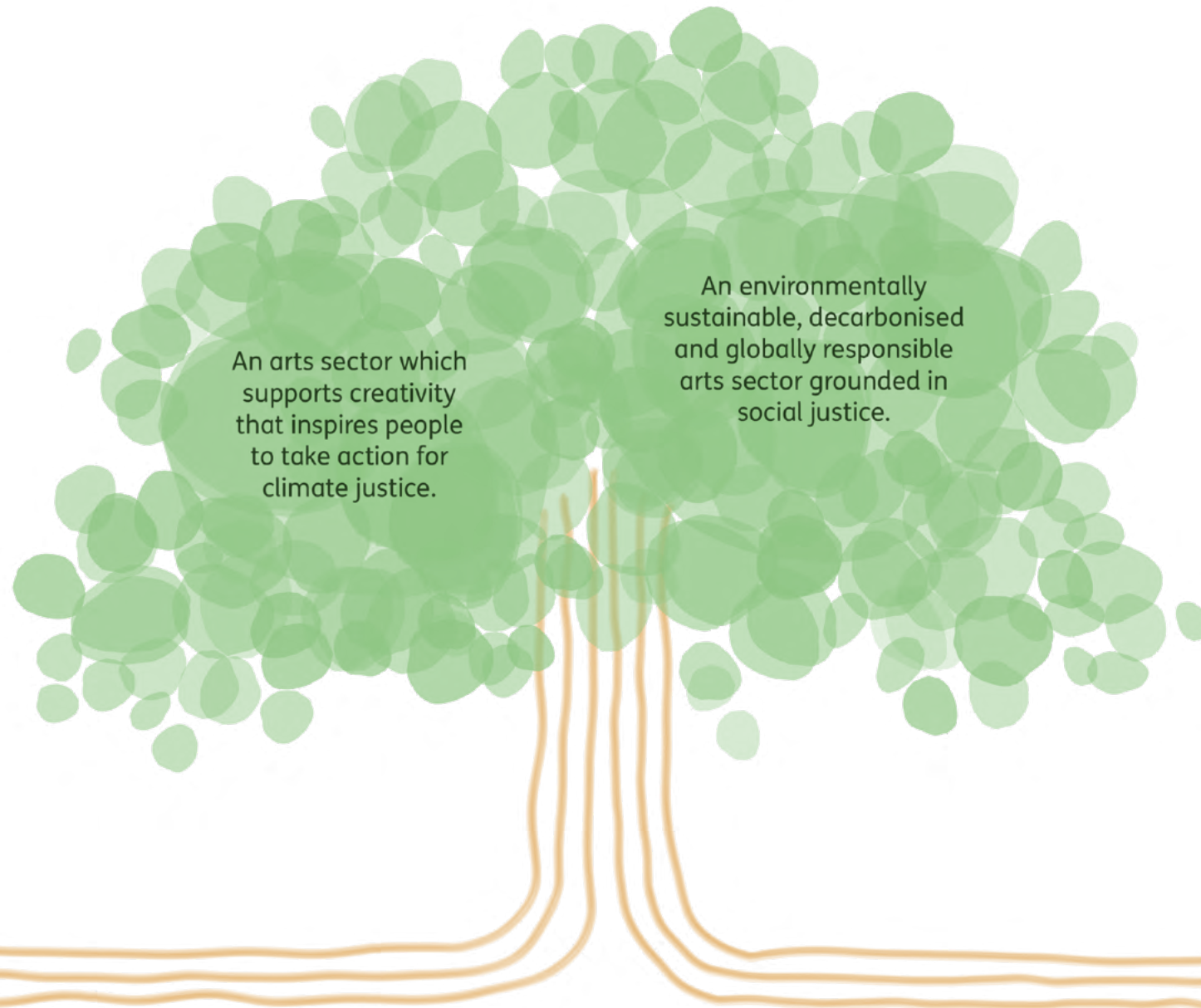
By imagining the vision in this way, the co-design group created and visualised two goals that everyone involved in the arts in Wales can work towards:

1. **An arts sector which supports creativity that inspires people to take action for climate justice.**

Just as the leaves of a tree need carbon dioxide to make oxygen, people need hope and inspiration to make change. This goal is about empowering the arts to inspire a shift in our society towards a fairer and more sustainable way of living, and about nurturing the wellbeing of artists and creative individuals.

2. **An environmentally sustainable, decarbonised and globally responsible arts sector grounded in social justice.**

Just as the branches of a tree need to be strong to support its weight and protect it against the wind, the arts sector needs to be strong to support the artists that work within it. This goal is about helping the arts sector to become environmentally sustainable and globally responsible.



iii. Our shared beliefs

A set of shared beliefs can act as the roots that reach into our communities, bringing the nutrients that people need. The co-design group felt that the approach to climate justice and the arts should be based on the following shared beliefs:

- **Our voice travels far:** The arts have the power to engage our emotions. We can use this power to change the narrative around the climate crisis, improve our relationship with nature, and empower us to imagine and create positive futures.
- **This work is difficult:** There are huge inequalities in how climate change and the cost-of-living impact people. We need to find ways to care for and listen to each other, as we work together towards climate justice.
- **We need time, space and resources to do our best work:** The full contribution that the arts can make to climate justice cannot be realised without proper investment. We know that this will not happen overnight, but being able to think and plan long term is important.
- **We are stronger together:** By being better connected to each other, we can share our skills, knowledge and resources.
- **Every voice is important:** We can learn about ways to change by listening to people and communities throughout Wales and from around the world; the knowledge we need to make a difference can be found within many diverse traditions and cultures.
- **Everyone who wants to access the work should be able to do so:** Our work on climate justice must be accessible to those with whom we work, as well as to others who are working for climate justice.
- **Wales is a special place:** Wales is leading the way in thinking about future generations and cultural sustainability, both locally and nationally. We can set an example, through the arts, for others to follow.

The Re-imagining, Cheryl Beer

I was there the day our carbon cousins remembered their place. Of course, I was just a sapling back then. We needed humanity as much as they needed us, but unlike us, they had forgotten.

You see, having once been acorns, lain bare upon the forest floor & from there, growing, for centuries, into magnificent oak trees, we held all the lessons that humans needed to learn – but they chose not to listen.



Cân y Coed Rainforest Symphony, Cheryl Beer

We thought there was hope when they finally caught onto the idea of a worldwide web, just like the underground network we've had for centuries, keeping each other safe and well, but bless them, instead, they used theirs to make money – & the funny thing is, they made their money out of us! Yes, can you believe it, from trees! They forgot that the true economy of Gaia lay way beyond coins, paper notes & plastic.

But on the day that they awakened, all changed. Humanity recognised itself as part of the biodiversity it was trying to save – they thought they were saving us but realised, that actually, they were saving themselves.

It all began with the artists, the creative ones, the musicians, the dancers, the singers, actors, writers, painters, who were almost extinct

themselves. They came together under one archway and worked equitably to create themselves as The Re-imagining. With their lead, like the pied piper, slowly at first, the rest followed. Finally, our carbon cousins remembered, and in that remembering we became One again. Not Nature vs Humanity but Nature as Humanity.

Of course, they are still getting things wrong. Such is the nature of nature! ... but now, all organisms share one voice, we are all heard, from the tiny microbes to the killer whales, from the rising sun to the sprawling ocean, one ecosystem, one Earth.

And you know, all it took to re-imagine this beautiful Now, was an acorn of inspiration, planted in the hearts, minds of memory of human-kind(ness).

Action Plan

Arts Council of Wales's Action Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts

The vision, goals and shared beliefs set out above are the result of the many suggestions and observations made during the co-design process, about how the arts sector can collectively place climate justice at the centre of ways of working. These key elements have been welcomed by Arts Council of Wales as the foundations and framework for our commitment to climate justice and the arts.

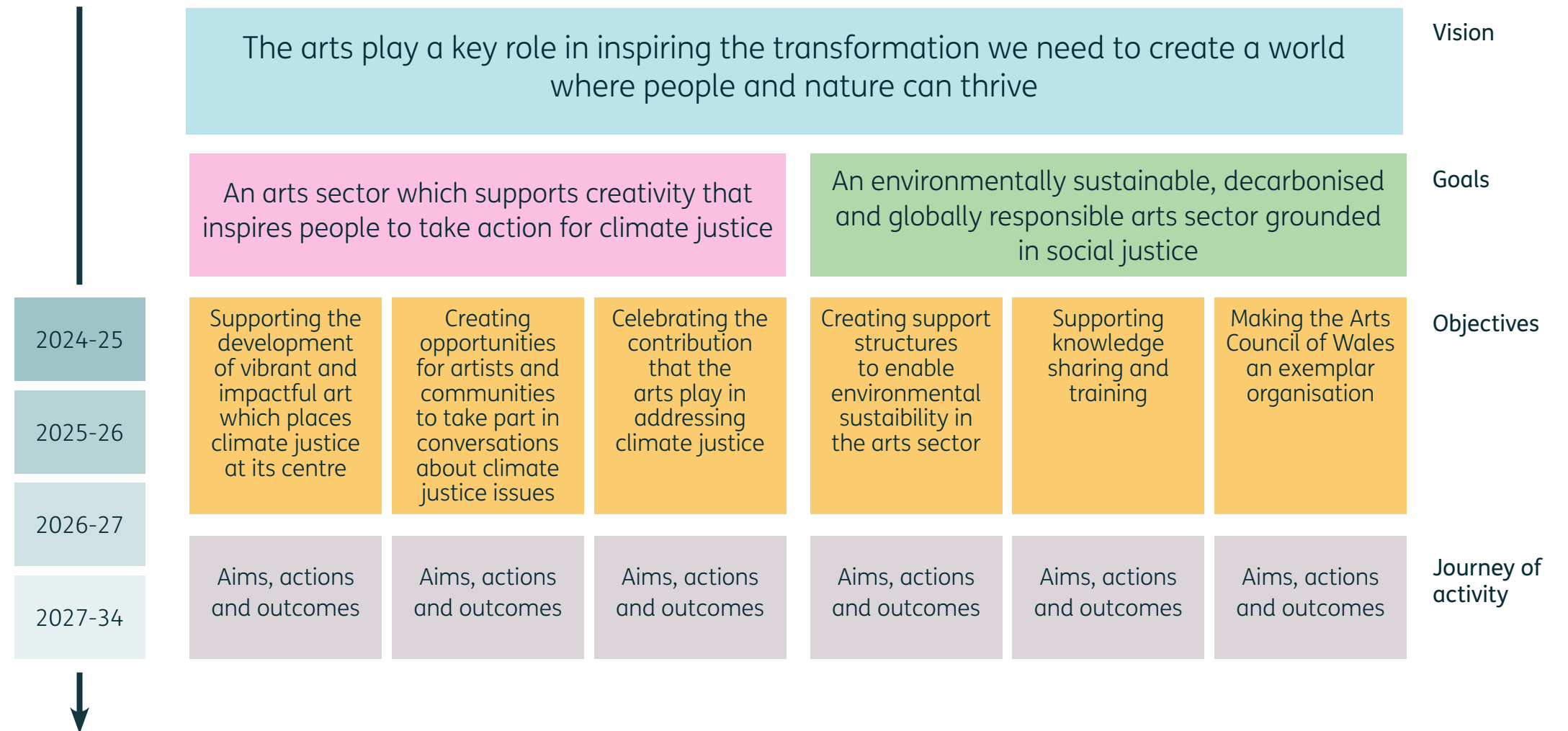
The action plan, outlined below, describes our response to the vision, goals and shared beliefs. In creating the Climate Justice Plan, we have thought very carefully about which actions should be most urgently prioritised, which of those are within our remit, and whether we have the resources and capacity to tackle them. We have kept hold of the ambition and energy felt through the co-design process, and funnelled this into setting outcomes that we can realistically deliver within the next 10 years.

We know that the scale of climate and nature emergencies demands more action than we have outlined so far, and we will continue to review the plan to ensure that it is as bold and ambitious as it can be. At the same time, we are advocating for more resource for the sector to enable greater prioritisation of these crucial issues.

A high level view – translating vision and goals to action

This diagram shows how we plan to progress from **the vision** and goals developed with the co-design group, to the detail of our own activity.



We have broken each of the **two key goals** into **three objectives**, and to reach each of these, we have plotted a **journey of activity** for the next ten years. The journey of activity is where specific aims, actions and outcomes are defined.



Goal 1: An arts sector which supports creativity that inspires people to take action for climate justice



Objective 1: Support the development of vibrant and impactful art which places climate justice at its centre

On this journey, we aim to ensure that all diverse perspectives and lived experiences are represented in art and creativity which engages with the climate and nature emergencies. This means ensuring representation for all Welsh language communities, Indigenous peoples, D/deaf and disabled people, young people, people facing social-economic disadvantage and culturally and ethnically diverse communities. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	<p>Hold internal conversations to review how the climate justice principle intersects with activities in the Widening Engagement Action Plan, in the Creative Learning through the Arts Programme, in international strategy and in related strategic arts development programmes. We will also review how it aligns with the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the seven Well-being Goals (particularly 'A More Equal Wales').</p>	<p>Hold conversations with our Welsh Language Enabler to identify ways to review the intersection between the Climate Justice Plan and the Welsh Language Plan, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide creative opportunities to explore how the relationship between language and land can create a closer relationship between people, nature and the Welsh language. • ensure that the Welsh language is central in creative activity which inspires people to take action for climate justice.
2025-26	<p>Deliver identified actions and continue to review and refine how the climate justice principle intersects with other programmes of work.</p>	<p>Implement actions identified to provide creative opportunities to explore how the relationship between language and land can create a closer relationship between people, nature and the Welsh language.</p> <p>Implement actions identified to ensure that the Welsh language is central in creative activity which inspires people to take action for climate justice.</p>
2026-27		
2027-34		


...all with the desired outcome that diverse voices and perspectives are represented in the climate narratives told through the arts in Wales.

On this journey, we aim to increase support for artists and creative individuals in developing work which engages with climate justice. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Collate baseline data on the amount of work that we currently support.	Complete delivery of the Creative Nature Programme 2023-25, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of Future Wales Fellowship 2023-25 • delivery of Arts, Health and Wellbeing Fund – Nature strand • contribution to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Natur am Byth Arts Engagement Programme • continued work of the Creative Nature Steering Group. 	Secure the Creative Nature Programme 2025-27, including identifying and securing additional partners.
2025-26	Continue to monitor our levels of support for work that engages with climate justice and its impact and use this data to inform future development. Review how the climate justice principle is embedded across all our Lottery funding streams.	Evaluate the Creative Nature Programme 2023-25 (Future Wales Fellowship, Arts, Health and Wellbeing Nature Strand, Natur am Byth), and conversations between cultural sector and organisations that manage land).	Deliver the Creative Nature Programme 2025-27 (including continuation of Arts, Health and Wellbeing Nature Strand).
2026-27	Continue to monitor our levels of support for work that engages with climate justice and its impact and use this data to inform future development.	Secure the Creative Nature Programme 2027 onwards including identifying and securing additional partners.	
2027-34		Delivery of the Creative Nature Programme 2027 onwards.	Evaluation of Creative Nature Programme 2025-27.

...all with the desired outcome that people across Wales have the opportunity to engage with climate justice through creativity.


On this journey, we aim to create opportunities for artists, creative individuals and arts organisations to collaborate with other sectors on climate justice, and to share knowledge and expertise. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Convene a series of conversations to draw together individuals within different organisations who have been creating opportunities for artists and creative individuals working on connection to nature. The series will join up the cultural sector, environmental sector and organisations that manage land.		
2025-26	<p>Establish a focus group for artists and creative individuals with diverse lived experience, as well as organisations in the cultural sector and environmental sector, and organisations that manage land, to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for impactful climate justice and nature collaborations, between the arts and other sectors • the spaces and resources that could be made available for artists whose work connects to nature and climate justice themes in Wales. • initiatives for artists and creative individuals to be actively involved in decision-making processes related to the climate and nature emergencies at local, national and international levels. 		
2026-27	Develop and implement partnerships, with other environmental, cultural and public organisations, to deliver the actions identified by the focus group of artists and creative individuals with diverse lived experience.	Identify and support the development of other funding opportunities for creative work (e.g. within the environmental sector, both third and private) which engages with climate justice.	
2027-34	Deliver a series of conversations about how art can inspire social and economic transformation and climate justice, and bring together a focus group of artists and creative individuals with diverse lived experience with representatives from the arts sector and other sectors. Use the conversations and the focus group to formalise a strategic approach for cross sector action on transformational change.		Deliver a series of conversations about connecting people with nature through the arts, and bring together a focus group of artists and creative individuals with diverse lived experience with representatives from the environmental, health and cultural sectors and the creative industries.

...all with the desired outcome that that people across Wales have the opportunity to engage with climate justice through creativity.

On this journey, we aim to create international opportunities for diverse artists living in Wales to develop their work in a way that is fair and equitable to people and planet. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Embed Wales Arts International's impact framework, which includes indicators on climate justice, into ACW's international work.
2025-26	Deliver Wales Arts International's programme of work which supports the development, promotion and implementation of sustainable practice and climate justice.
2026-27	
2027-34	



...all with the desired outcome that the arts sector in Wales learns from, and collaborates with, the international arts sector and its communities, and that artists and arts organisations in Wales adopt more sustainable practices and behaviours, and create work which engages the public with the climate and nature emergencies and climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to work with the arts, the higher education sector, and other sectors to gather evidence on how art can best inspire the societal and economic transformation needed to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25		
2025-26		
2026-27		
2027-34	Gather data about how audiences are engaging with work relating to the climate and nature emergencies, in order to identify gaps and improve provision.	Develop a research partnership to inform future routes for development.

...all with the desired outcome that evidence is gathered on how art can best inspire the societal and economic transformation needed to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

Goal 1: An arts sector which supports creativity that inspires people to take action for climate justice

Objective 2: Create opportunities for artists and communities to take part in conversations about climate justice issues

On this journey, we aim to use the arts to support people experiencing eco-distress, and safeguard the wellbeing of artists and staff working on themes relating to climate justice. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Share learning from the Future Wales Fellowship 2022 internally and externally.		Work with Creative Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner's Office to deliver the Freelancer Pledge, which is a commitment that public services can make to involve creative freelancers in their work.	
2025-26			Help organisations to adopt the Freelancer Pledge when working with the arts on themes of climate justice.	
2026-27		Commission a baseline review of support structures, and activity that safeguards the wellbeing of artists, that currently exists in arts organisations.		
2027-34		Identify opportunities to build on existing support structures identified within the baseline review.		Hold conversations with existing partners in the health sector to explore how social prescribing, and nature and well-being initiatives, can support people experiencing eco-distress through the arts.

...all with the desired outcome that support exists for the wellbeing of artists, creative freelancers and staff who are working on themes of climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to help create safe and inclusive spaces for continuing the conversation about climate justice and the arts, and provide opportunities for a diverse range of people to take part in these conversations. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Build on Wales Arts International's Gwrandu programme, as part of the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages, by actively listening to and learning from endangered languages and communities around the world.		
2025-26		Hold conversations with our Welsh Language Enabler to identify opportunities for creative discussions on the impact of the climate and nature emergencies on Welsh language communities and cultures.	
2026-27		Work with community and arts partners to commission a series of creative discussions on the impact of the climate and nature emergencies on Welsh language communities and cultures.	Map existing projects, funded by Arts Council of Wales, that are creating listening and sharing spaces.
2027-34		Evaluate the impact of creative discussions to inform next steps and deliver the actions identified.	Based on mapping, support the future development of opportunities that create listening and sharing spaces to talk about climate justice.

...all with the desired outcome that people across Wales have the opportunity to engage with climate justice through creativity, and that artists and creative individuals are able to develop practices centred on climate justice.

Goal 1: An arts sector which supports creativity that inspires people to take action for climate justice

Objective 3: Celebrate the contribution that the arts make in addressing climate justice

On this journey, we aim to advocate for the role and value of the arts in contributing to climate justice, as demonstrated by its ability to imagine new narratives to create a positive future. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Undertake international advocacy through our support for Wales' arts and culture within international relations, including raising the profile of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and inclusion of culture as a pillar of sustainability.	Advocate in the Senedd and across key Welsh Government departments, for the contribution of the arts to climate justice, and contribute to Welsh Government research on climate and culture.	Continue to work with UK and international colleagues to amplify the voice of the cultural sector (for example, via the Creative Industries Council's Creative Climate Charter).
2025-26	Continue to undertake international advocacy.	Identify opportunities to advocate for the value of the arts within a well-being economy, that is, an economy designed to serve the well-being of people and planet.	Build on work with UK and international colleagues to amplify the voice of the cultural sector.
2026-27	↓	↓	↓
2027-34			

...all with the desired outcome of increased awareness among the public, stakeholders and decision makers, of the role and value of the arts in contributing to climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to develop and implement a communications plan to help inform and engage stakeholders with ACW's work on climate justice. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Develop, and begin delivery of, a communications plan for the Action Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts, as part of stakeholder engagement and communication of ACW's overall Strategic Plan 2024-34.	
2025-26	Continue to deliver the communications plan.	
2026-27	Hold conversations with environmental and community organisations to develop and improve awareness and understanding of ACW's work around climate justice.	
2027-34	Hold conversations with partners to increase recognition of climate justice work and promote climate justice work and initiatives through various platforms.	

...all with the desired outcome of increased awareness among the public, stakeholders and decision makers, of the role and value of the arts in contributing to climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to celebrate the positive actions being taken by artists, creative individuals, arts organisations and communities across Wales in relation to climate justice. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Identify key strategic opportunities and relationships to highlight positive actions and build them into Communications Plan. For example, Conference of the Parties (COP).	Collate and share stories and case studies of positive actions from projects and programmes funded by ACW, and of impactful climate justice collaborations between the arts and other sectors, in order to advocate for the value of the arts in helping the environmental sector to achieve their goals.
2025-26	Build on strategic opportunities to highlight positive actions identified in 2024-25.	Continue to collate and share stories and case studies of positive actions from projects funded by ACW.
2026-27		
2027-34		

...all with the desired outcome of increased awareness among the public, stakeholders and decision makers, of the role and value of the arts in contributing to climate justice.

Goal 2: An environmentally sustainable, decarbonised and globally responsible arts sector grounded in social justice

Objective 1: Create support structures to enable environmental sustainability in the arts sector


On this journey, we aim to support the sector to pilot new, more sustainable ways of creating and sharing art. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Meet with Ffilm Cymru, Media Cymru, the British Film Institute and other creative industries organisations to discuss opportunities for collaboration. This has been identified as a priority within our Memorandum of Understanding with Creative Wales.		
2025-26	Explore opportunities to partner with other cultural agencies to share learning and best practice.		
2026-27		Identify existing initiatives within the sector which are already piloting and sharing sustainable ways of working.	
2027-34		Support the development of pilot programmes looking at sustainable ways of working across different artforms.	Support the arts sector to evaluate the impact of pilot programmes and share learning. Support the sector to integrate new ways of working into operational practices.



...all with the desired outcome that the arts sector is supported in using its creativity to find new ways of working which are environmentally sustainable and globally responsible.

On this journey, we aim to develop support structures to enable ACW-funded arts organisations (multi-year and project funded) to understand and measure the impact of their work on climate and nature. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	<p>Advocate that Welsh Government develops and resources a support structure for the cultural sector that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creates systems for monitoring, evaluating and measuring carbon emissions in the sector. helps the sector to understand and measure the impact of their work on climate and nature. 	<p>Commission research based on the Welsh Government cultural and climate research to help shape the recommendations, specifically around the needs of the arts sector.</p>
2025-26	<p>Support Welsh Government to establish a structure which will support organisations to understand, measure and report on their carbon emissions, and to help set their reduction targets for meeting net zero. There will be a requirement to report back to ACW on sector progress.</p>	<p>Use the annual survey, multi-year funding agreements and end of project reports to gather qualitative data about the impact of climate change on cultural organisations, practitioners, and activities.</p>
2026-27	<p>Work with the support structure to develop a carbon budget with a trajectory to net zero by 2050; build in funding criteria, guidance, and monitoring requirements.</p>	
2027-34	<p>Maintain support structures for organisations.</p>	

...all with the desired outcome that the arts sector has access to the support structures it needs, in order to take action for climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to develop systems which support asset sharing, a circular economy and sustainable procurement practices. (A circular economy is a system where materials never become waste.) Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Support Creative Wales in its engagement with suppliers related to their role in tackling sustainability.		
2025-26	Host a conversation between the arts sector and partners from other sectors to identify opportunities for circularity and reuse.	Host a conversation with the visual arts sector about current approaches for asset sharing between organisations, artists and communities; use the conversation to explore the potential to build on this, working in partnership with a sector advocacy body or network.	Develop a consortium with Welsh Government and the theatre and screen sectors, to commission research exploring whether the development of a national inventory and storage space for theatre sets, props, costume, materials and equipment would be a sustainable solution and save carbon.
2026-27	↓	Build on actions identified in conversation with the visual arts sector.	↓
2027-34	↓	↓	Support the implementation of a national inventory and storage space for sets, props, costume, materials and equipment.

...all with the desired outcome that the arts sector functions as a circular economy.

On this journey, we aim to build links and facilitate discussions between the arts sector and sectors which are carbon heavy, such as the food, energy and transport sectors, to support improved infrastructure for accessing the arts, and inclusion of the arts within infrastructure development. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	
2025-26	
2026-27	Carry out an analysis of stakeholders in the food, energy and transport sectors.
2027-34	Build relationships with key stakeholders, such as Transport for Wales, and aim towards developing partnerships and cross-sectoral relationships.

...all with the desired outcome that the needs of the arts sector and audiences accessing the arts are considered within the transition to a more sustainable infrastructure in Wales.

On this journey, we aim to support arts organisations (multi-year and project funded) to develop and deliver individual plans to reach net zero and adapt to the changing climate. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Analyse the funding agreement data to better understand which organisations currently have plans to reach net zero. Create report that demonstrates the impact of budget reductions, to act as an advocacy tool.
2025-26	Facilitate a training and support package for organisations to enable them to develop plans for net zero and adapt to climate change.
2026-27	↓
2027-34	Support the development of dedicated environmental sustainability roles and/or staff capacity within the arts sector.

...all with the desired outcome that arts organisations in Wales are net zero and adapted to climate change.

Goal 2: An environmentally sustainable, decarbonised and globally responsible arts sector grounded in social justice

Objective 2: Support knowledge sharing and training

On this journey, we aim to support better connectivity between those artists, creative individuals, networks, communities, organisations and initiatives that support climate justice across Wales. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25		
2025-26		
2026-27	Map existing local, national and international networks, communities, organisations and initiatives that support environmental sustainability and climate justice.	Pilot approaches for diverse voices from the arts sector to contribute to discussions on ways to include the arts within infrastructure development.
2027-34	Identify strategic interventions that can be funded, e.g. Sharing Together, to address gaps in the accessibility and provision of networks.	Deliver the actions identified from the pilots, to develop routes for diverse voices from the arts sector to contribute to discussions on ways to include the arts within infrastructure development.

...all with the desired outcome that that artists, creative individuals and arts organisations working on the theme of climate justice are connected with each other and can collaborate and share knowledge.

On this journey, we aim to provide accessible and inclusive training, mentoring and coaching for artists and creative individuals. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	
2025-26	Work with partners to identify funding to provide training, mentoring and coaching opportunities for artists and creative individuals.
2026-27	Pilot training, mentoring and coaching for artists and creative individuals.
2027-34	Support the delivery of training for artists and creative individuals.

...all with the desired outcome that the arts workforce has the right skills and knowledge to take action on climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to collate links to best practice, case studies, tools and resources relating to sustainability and climate justice, and make it easy for people to find them. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25

Develop a Climate Justice section on ACW's website to signpost to existing tools, resources, research and best practice in a way which is easy for people to find.

2025-26

Facilitate opportunities to raise awareness of availability of tools and resources in the sector.

2026-27

Work with resource providers to adapt tools and resources for a Wales-specific context.

Work with five nations partners to identify any gaps in provision of tools and resources and opportunities for co-commissioning.

2027-34

Continue to update tools and resources.

...all with the desired outcome that the arts workforce has the right skills and knowledge to take action on climate justice.



Lan(d)guage, (Image: Kate Aster)

Goal 2: An environmentally sustainable, decarbonised and globally responsible arts sector grounded in social justice

Objective 3: Make the Arts Council of Wales an exemplar organisation

On this journey, we aim to put mechanisms in place to ensure that ACW can deliver on the commitments made in this plan. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Introduce responsibility for the Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts into the terms of reference of the Future Generations Committee.	Introduce responsibility into the job descriptions of all Arts Council of Wales directors, portfolio managers and Council members to ensure leadership on climate justice across portfolios.	Establish a Climate Justice Working Group within ACW, with members from Arts Development, Research, Finance, ICT and Facilities teams.	Research and develop avenues for income generation, such as other Welsh Government departments or academia, to secure future resourcing for the Plan's delivery.	Develop and implement a process for evaluation and review of the Climate Justice Plan, through dialogue with the arts sector, to ensure plan remains adaptive and dynamic.
2025-26	Conduct an audit of the capacity and skills required for ACW to undertake the successful implementation of the Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts.	Introduce responsibility for contributing to the Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts in all staff job descriptions, performance review systems and work plans.	Maintain the Climate Justice Working Group within ACW, with members from Arts Development, Research, Finance, ICT and Facilities teams.	Continue to develop avenues for income generation to secure future resourcing for the Plan's delivery.	Review of the Climate Justice Plan on an annual basis.
2026-27	Recruit a Climate Justice Team to join Arts Council of Wales to ensure the delivery of this Plan.		↓	↓	↓
2027-34	↓		↓	↓	↓

...all with the desired outcome that commitment to climate justice is embedded within the governance, management and resourcing of ACW.

On this journey, we aim to undertake internal communications and advocacy work so that all staff understand what climate justice means and feel empowered to put it at the heart of their work. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Survey existing staff attitudes to, and understanding of climate justice, in order to inform staff training needs.		
2025-26		Create discussion spaces to explore with staff how they can put climate justice at the heart of their work.	Develop and deliver bespoke training, for ACW staff and Council members, in carbon literacy, mitigation and adaptation, and climate justice, including how they relate to culture and ACW's work.
2026-27			Assess further staff training needs and deliver top up training as required.
2027-34			

...all with the desired outcome that ACW staff understand and are invested in our commitment to climate justice.

On this journey, we aim to develop and deliver a clear plan for ACW to reach net zero by 2030. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	<p>Hold conversations to align our approach with other public bodies in Wales, and with national (in particular, the UK and Ireland arts councils) and international partners, to identify common frameworks and areas where we can work together.</p>	<p>Recruit an expert consultant to help us plan and deliver this work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defining the boundary of ACW's own emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3) identifying priority areas for action helping to shape an ACW action plan for net zero developing a carbon budget and setting emissions reduction targets for ACW for 2025-2030 set an air travel carbon budget for ACW, with appropriate allocation and monitoring protocol. 	<p>Assess what we are already doing and what additional data is needed to fully understand ACW's own emissions beyond what's already reported. Identify mechanisms to start gathering data on areas of our carbon footprint that we are not already measuring, i.e, Staff (home working and commuting); Procurement, supplies; Technology (IT equipment, digital footprint); Finances (banking, pension fund, insurance).</p>		
2025-26		<p>Start to implement ACW's net zero action plan.</p>		<p>Review ACW's environmental policy.</p>	<p>Develop a sustainable transport plan for the organisation, including a clear travel hierarchy, with justification required for domestic air travel.</p>
2026-27		<p>Continue to implement ACW's net zero action plan.</p>			
2027-34					

...all with the desired outcome that ACW is a net zero organisation.

On this journey, we aim to review all Arts Council of Wales processes, policies, and strategies to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute towards the aims of the Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25		
2025-26	Develop a process and prioritisation plan for reviewing our processes, policies and strategies.	Provide input for the development of the new ACW Capital Strategy and funding criteria, to strengthen their consideration of carbon impact and climate risk and embed mechanisms for measuring the carbon impact of our capital investments.
2026-27	Review identified priority processes, policies and strategies.	
2027-34	↓	↓

...all with the desired outcome that commitment to climate justice is embedded within the governance, management and resourcing of ACW.


On this journey, we aim to review our evaluation frameworks, to make it easier to access and share the learning about climate justice from artists supported through our funded projects, and to capture evidence about the contribution of the arts to climate justice. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Hold a conversation to draw together ongoing work around Outcomes Based Accountability, WAI Impact Framework and Monitoring Processes to inform a joined-up approach to evaluation.	
2025-26		Hold a series of conversations with key colleagues leading on ACW strategic arts development programmes, to inform collective learning, identify actions to take forward and identify opportunities to share these with the sector.
2026-27		Develop and deliver ways to share learning about climate justice with the arts sector and other stakeholders.
2027-34	Develop a research contract to analyse the economic, environmental, social and cultural value of the arts to climate justice.	↓

...all with the desired outcome that ACW is a learning organisation.




On this journey, we aim to review our investment and procurement processes, in order to strengthen sustainability requirements and ensure that our commitment to climate justice is extended to third parties with whom we work; this ranges from the banks and pension providers in which we invest our money, to our wholesalers and suppliers. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25	Review our procurement processes, templates and standard conditions of contract to strengthen requirements around sustainability.		Work with the ACW Pension Plan trustees to inform Plan members of its approach to ESG.
2025-26	Identify the top 10 ACW procured goods and services by cost or carbon and develop individual procurement action plans to support the identification, evaluation, and monitoring of low carbon options.	Ensure sustainability and ethics are key factors in the procurement of banking services, ahead of our existing contract coming to an end in 2027.	
2026-27			
2027-34			



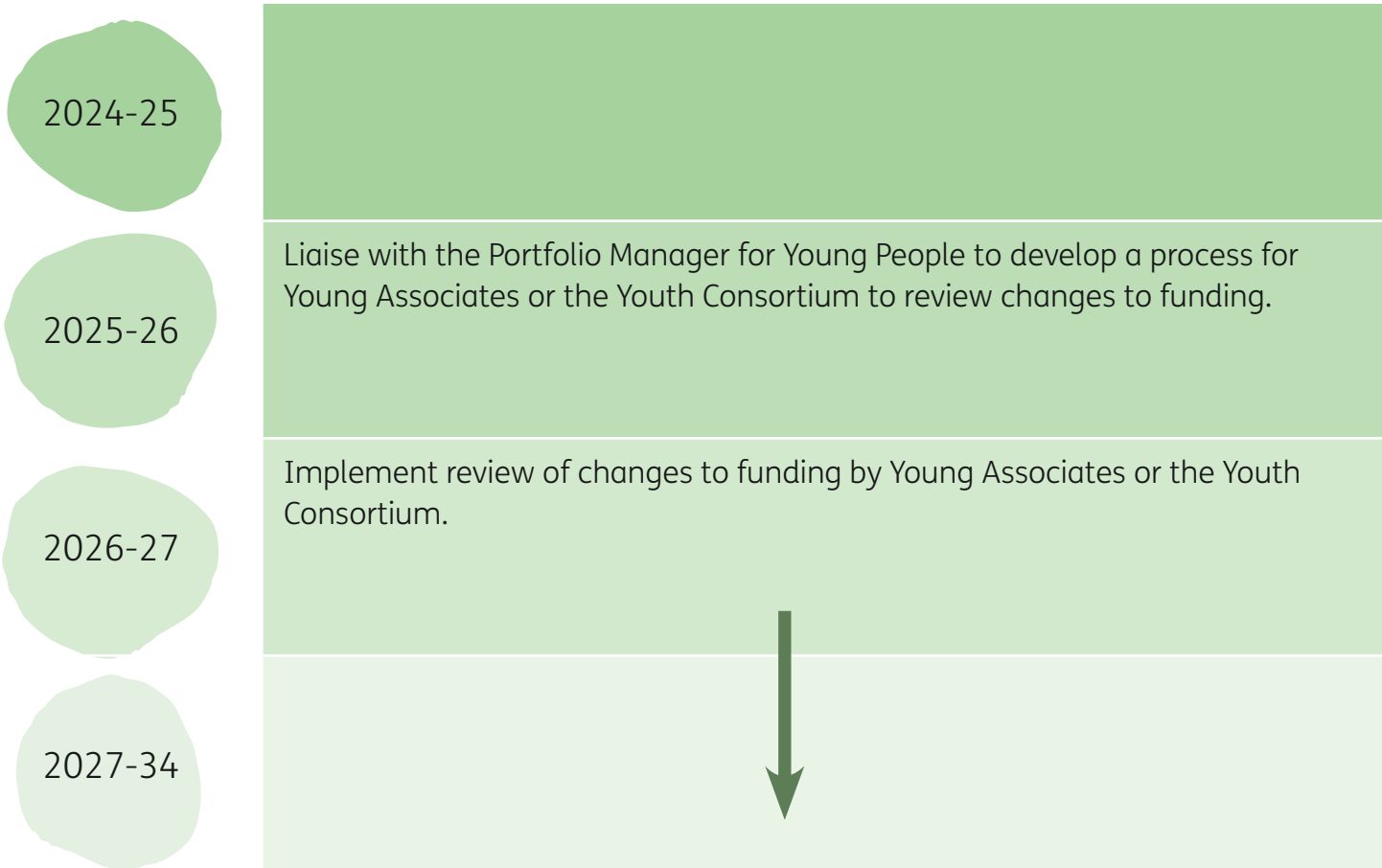
...all with the desired outcome that ACW is a globally responsible organisation which operates within the principles and values of the well-being economy and Well-being of Future Generations Act.

On this journey, we aim to define ACW’s approach to climate justice, including understanding the cultural shift that is needed within ACW to operate according to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the principles of a well-being economy. Therefore, in the following years, we will...

2024-25		Input into ACW strategic planning processes to align the Climate Justice Plan with broader ACW strategic aims to improve artists’ working conditions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocating for a Universal Basic Income pilot for artists and creative individuals • advocating for a 4 day working week • advocating for longer term funding settlements.
2025-26	Hold a series of conversations with key colleagues to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the need for an intersectional approach and explore how to embed this within ACW’s ways of working • recognise the need for reparative justice; discuss how best to explore, with communities, what this could look like within the remit of ACW • recognise the need to slow down; explore how to do this within ACW’s ways of working, along with the Five Ways of Working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. 	
2026-27	Deliver actions identified through conversations. 	
2027-34		

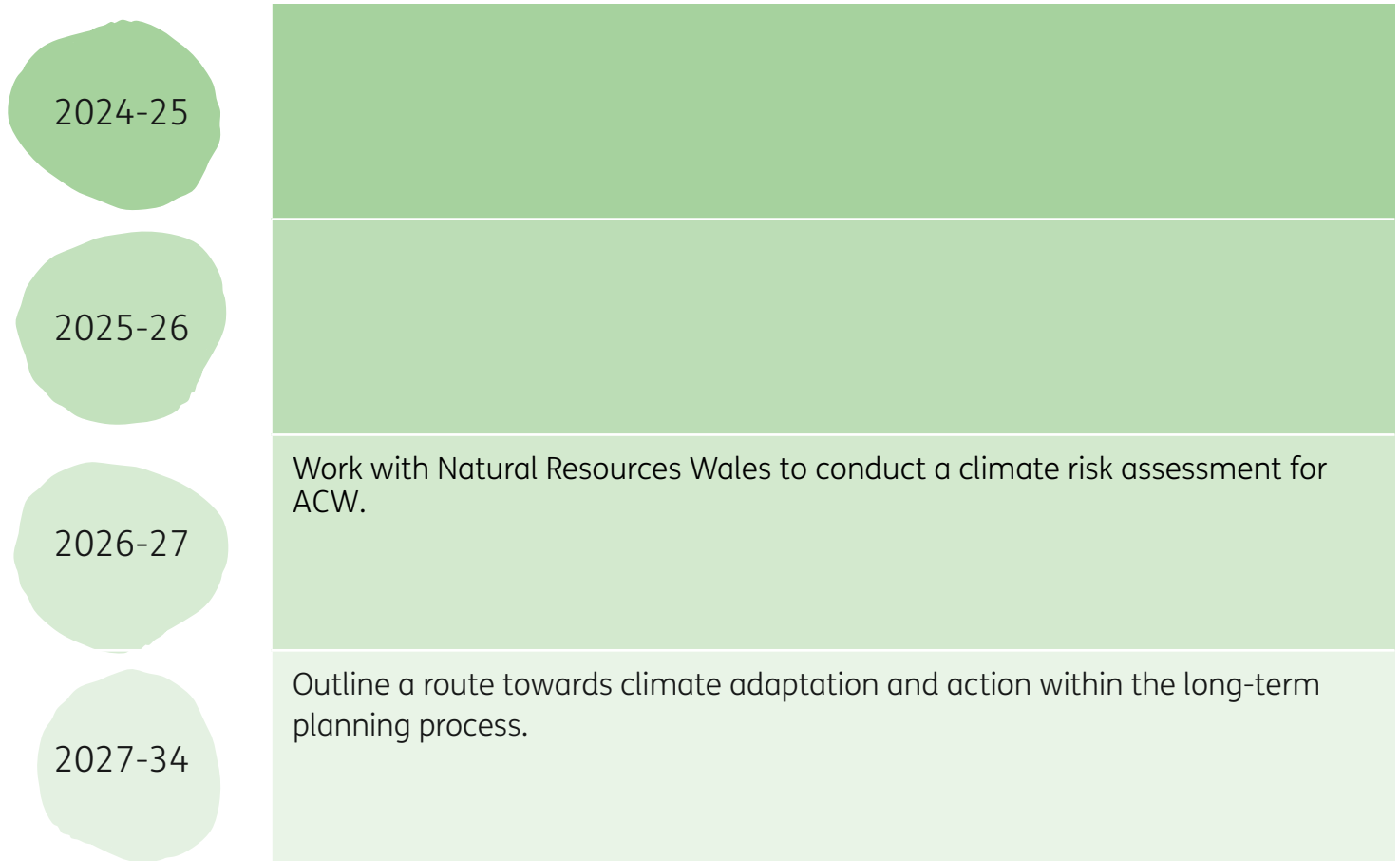
...all with the desired outcome that ACW is a globally responsible organisation that operates within the principles and values of the well-being economy and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

On this journey, we aim to involve young people and people with diverse lived experiences in reviewing the potential impact of any revisions to the existing funding framework, criteria, guidance, applications and awards, and in the creation of any new funds. Therefore, in the following years, we will...



... all with the desired outcome that young people and diverse communities are involved in decisions that affect them, helping to address procedural justice, while fostering the development of more resilient communities and ensuring that decisions do not disadvantage vulnerable communities.

On this journey, we aim to develop climate adaptation capabilities within ACW and a climate adaptation plan for the organisation. Therefore, in the following years, we will...



... all with the desired outcome that ACW is sufficiently prepared and able to adapt to climate change.

Acknowledgements

Arts Council of Wales and Natural Resources Wales would like to thank the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain Innovation Lab and the 93 individuals whose collective contribution through the co-design process has created this plan, as well as the 40 people who contributed by responding to the survey.

Accessibility

Arts Council of Wales is committed to making information available in large print, easy read, braille, audio and British Sign Language and will endeavour to provide information in languages other than Welsh or English on request.



MIST, Sébastien Préchoux / Migrations (Image: Keith Morris)