TOWARDS ZERO WASTE FESTIVALS

Overcoming Current Challenges in Sustainable Waste Management at UK Greenfield Events

Executive Summary of Report









BACKGROUND

The annual Outdoor Event Industry Green Survey, published by Vision:2025 since 2015, has consistently shown that, though festival organisers are motivated to prioritise waste management and reduction, they face common challenges. This has led Vision:2025 to focus on this topic to support improved understanding and efficiency of waste management practices at events.

Resource Futures, a national waste and resources consultancy, was commissioned in 2022 by Vision:2025 and Julie's Bicycle to help understand the challenges and opportunities for sustainable waste management at UK greenfield festivals, and provide solutionsfocused recommendations for events and the industry.

The report is the result of a literature review, in-depth stakeholder interviews, specialist knowledge from Resource Futures, and input from an industry working group.



Acknowledgements

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Julie's Bicycle **Manchester City Council** Sustainable Sidekicks **Native Events National Eisteddfod of Wales Festival Republic/Live Nation**

ABOUT

Vision:2025 is the environmental steering

Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering charity, mobilising

Resource Futures are a national waste and

INSIGHTS: THE LANDSCAPE AHEAD

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** policy, expected to be passed into UK law by 2025, will make producers liable for the expenses associated with managing their products after their initial intended use.
- A national Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) on drinks containers will come into effect by October 2025 for PET plastic 50ml-3L containers and cans.
- The impact of DRS and EPR within a festival environment remains uncertain, for example in terms of how consumers will redeem their deposits.
- The recently released national Environment Improvement Plan 2023 includes a plan to eliminate biodegradable waste to landfill
- > There is a growing market for separated recyclable materials
- > Most of the nations within the UK are failing to currently meet the minimum 65% recycling target set by the EU, with the exception of Wales. Festival industry research suggests that UK festivals on average achieve a 32% recycling rate.





KEY CHALLENGES FOR FESTIVALS AND **OUTDOOR EVENTS**

- A knowledge gap exists regarding what data can be

- recyclability and compostability of materials,

QUICK WINS

Separating food waste

Organic (food) waste is accepted in almost all areas, and can be easily achievable in a outdoor event setting. Composting 1 tonne of food waste avoids 618kg CO2e in comparison to landfilling.

Eliminating waste and maximising reuse

Banning problem materials such as plastic, encouraging the reuse of hard plastic cups and having deposit return schemes, can tackle single-use and reduce volumes of waste being generated. The environmental benefit of reusable cups is achieved when they are used more than five times.

Strategic placement and emptying of bins matters

Bins placed in areas where they are needed, such as food zones and busy throughfares, will make it easier for waste to be captured with less contamination. Festival management teams should have more oversight of the frequency of bin emptying and can specify that they are emptied at peak-use to ensure they are never over capacity. Overflowing bins lead to littering and 'waste dumping'.

Compulsory waste data reporting and baseline setting

Including the capture and provision of waste data within waste contractor agreements is essential. With this data the quantity of different materials used can be identified, baselines can be established, and reduction strategies can be implemented and monitored the following year.

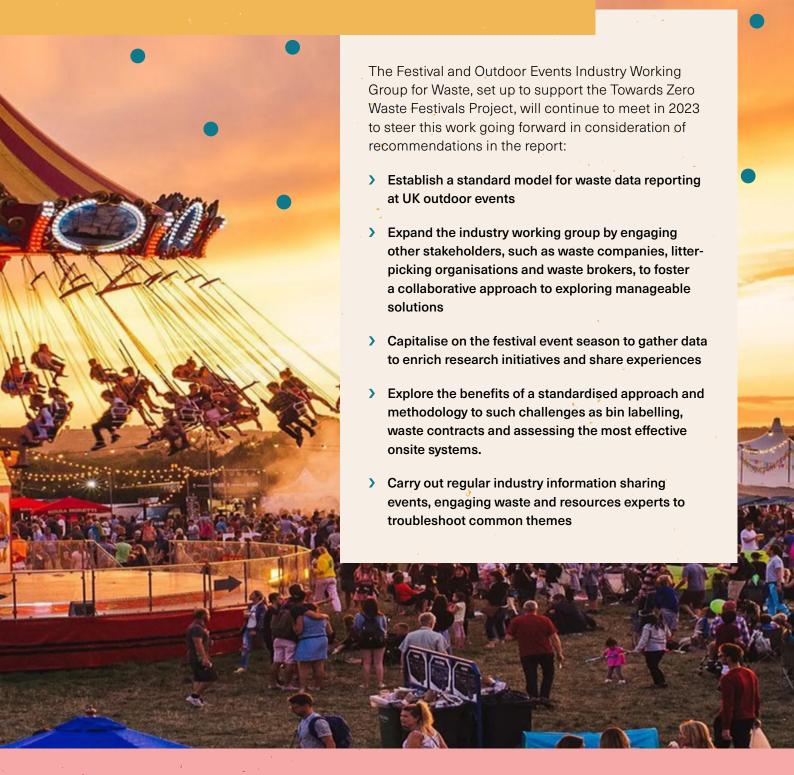
Materials policy

Creating a simple materials policy (i.e. a list of materials permitted and not permitted onsite) based on what can be managed and recycled at your event and in the area is an important and easy step. Share the policy with all stakeholders to help avoid the use of problem materials.

Audience communications impact behaviour onsite

Sending out clear sustainability messages to attendees that prepare them for the ethos of the festival and expectations for managing materials makes a difference. Encourage reusable items and reassure attendees that infrastructure is in place to support reuse e.g. refill stations for water bottles.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NEXT STEPS FOR THE UK FESTIVAL AND OUTDOOR EVENTS INDUSTRY



To download the full 34-page Toward Zero Waste Festivals report, please click **here**