



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

Referred to as Appendix C in the Fèis Rois Business Plan 2025 - 28

2025

2028

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	Highland Good Food Partnership website
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INTRODUCTION

Fèis Rois acknowledges that the world is facing a climate and biodiversity emergency, and that urgent and collective action is required to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5°C and to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We recognise that the climate crisis requires collective action. Fèis Rois has a Green Champion (currently the Office and Finance Manager) and works collaboratively with Creative Carbon Scotland.

This environmental sustainability policy aims to encourage an environmentally responsible culture within Fèis Rois regarding energy use, waste and recycling, transport and travel, and within the community.



REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS IN LINE WITH SCOTLAND'S PATHWAY TO NET ZERO

Fèis Rois calculates its total carbon emissions by gathering data relating to the following areas: Energy and Utilities; Waste (Both Landfill and Recycling); Transport and Travel; Other Sources. This data is reviewed at quarterly Board meetings where targets are measured and compared to previous years' data for the same quarter.

During the period of its 2025 to 2028 Business Plan, Fèis Rois will take a number of measures intended to reduce carbon emissions in line with Scotland's pathway to net zero. These will include:

Energy and Utilities

- Ensuring lights and electrical equipment are switched off when not in use.
- Using renewable energy suppliers in the Fèis Rois office, which is leased and not owned.
- Continuing to implement a 4-day working week, which results in less energy use.
- Using low-energy light bulbs, where possible, and all replacement lighting will be low-energy.
- Seeking to reduce the amount of energy used as much as possible, for example, by setting heating controls to appropriate level for conditions.
- Considering the energy consumption and efficiency of new products when purchasing.

Waste and Recycling

- Moving to being a paperless office. The organisation has already handed back its leased photocopier, and is planning to move to a new digital, paperless accounting system in 2025/26.
- Eradicating waste sent to landfill and adopting the circular economy.
- Ensuring food waste is separated and composted as appropriate, including at specific Fèis Rois courses and events.
- Ask artists, participants and audiences to take reusable water bottles to events. We will not provide single use plastic at events.
- As far as possible, use washable crockery and glassware rather than disposable cups at community ceilidhs and events.
- Favouring more environmentally friendly and efficient products.
- Using rechargeable batteries.

Transport and Travel

- Implementing a hybrid working policy, which reduces travel to and from the office on the days when people work from home.

- Reducing the need to travel, restricting it to necessary journeys only.
- Ensuring the use of alternatives such as Teams/Zoom meetings.
- Measuring emissions from travel using the 'claimexpenses' tool, which already shows the largest source of emissions for Fèis Rois to be from paid for mileage. This is a particular issue relating to living and working in the Highlands, and also for our organisation in delivering a project in every school in Dumfries & Galloway. The Highlands and Dumfries & Galloway are both regions where public transport is very limited. We are aiming to reduce this over the period 2025 to 2028 by piloting the leasing of electric vehicles instead of always paying for mileage for artists to use their own petrol or diesel cars.
- Minimising the carbon footprint of the freelance artists contracted by the organisation by offering a number of travel incentives. Fèis Rois pays artists' mileage at a rate of 45p per mile, but this is increased to 50p per mile if they are car sharing and taking a colleague with them. Fèis Rois also offers a mileage rate of 20p per mile for anyone who cycles, and there is an opportunity for Fèis Rois staff to benefit from the workplace Cyclescheme.
- Minimising the carbon footprint of audience travel by organising communal transport for audiences/participants. For example, at the October holiday residential music-making course for young people, Fèis Rois will put on a coach for 49 participants to travel from Dingwall to Ullapool together rather than 40+ families travelling to Ullapool separately by car.
- Minimising the carbon footprint of audience travel by promoting the use of public transport on the Fèis Rois website by listing the available bus and train services to get to classes, workshops and events.
- Minimising the carbon footprint of audience travel by exploring how to integrate a lift share scheme, e.g. using the <http://hitravel.liftshare.com/> portal, into how we promote and communicate information about our events, and actively encourage participants and tutors to use it.
- Making air travel a last resort for internal travel, and for all flights to require Board approval. The organisation acknowledges that there may be some rare instances when an internal flight is necessary given the Highland base of the organisation. However, these should be avoided whenever possible. Fèis Rois recognises that any air travel will have a negative environmental impact and that, for the Board to approve air travel, the economic and cultural value of the work/project will need to be very high indeed.

Other Sources

- Reducing the organisation's digital footprint by not storing unnecessary files in the cloud and regularly having a digital 'clear out' at 6-month intervals.
- Not sending unnecessary emails.
- Utilising cleaning materials that are as environmentally friendly as possible, which are now available locally.
- Using refill products where practical, for example liquid soaps
- As far as possible, using sustainable and ethical suppliers when purchasing goods for resale / merchandise.

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN THE CONTEXT OF CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

Fèis Rois has a strong track record in promoting and assisting the improvement and protection of the environment and encouraging an environmentally responsible attitude within participants and audiences. For example, the organisation was a lead partner in Dandelion 2022 Ltd, a large-scale nation-wide project with environmental sustainability at its heart. Fèis Rois has also delivered a number of partnership projects with Nature Scot, including Caithream na Cruinne, a song writing project where young people wrote original Gaelic songs about environmental issues that matter to them. See: [Caithream na Cruinne - Fèis Rois \(feisrois.org\)](https://www.feisrois.org/caithream-na-cruinne)

During the period of the 2025 to 2028 Fèis Rois Business Plan, the organisation will consider the climate emergency when contracting musicians and artists to teach on courses and to perform at events. Increasingly, Fèis Rois will prioritise contracting local musicians to reduce unnecessary travel. Fèis Rois wants to see musicians being celebrated, and able to earn a sustainable living, in the communities in which they live.

Previously, pre-pandemic, the Fèis Rois Ceilidh Trail would have had some performance opportunities overseas. Fèis Rois has taken the decision to focus the Ceilidh Trail on the UK only, with no internal flights for this project, which recognises the co-benefits of reduced emissions and greater opportunities for areas with less access to the arts. We feel that this is a strong example of remodelling activities for the benefit of both people and planet.

When Fèis Rois does undertake international strands of work, as much planning as possible will be done online and any international travel will be for an extended period of time and of high cultural and/or economic value. Rail travel will be prioritised for work in the UK and Europe.

Fèis Rois will continue to develop environmental themed work that raises awareness of climate change. This will include inviting young people and musicians to compose new songs. The work of Fèis Rois is intrinsically linked to people, place, landscape and ecology, and all are affected by the climate emergency. Fèis Rois will collaborate with other organisations, including Nature Scot, to raise awareness of the climate emergency and its impact on biodiversity in Scotland. New commissions will build on the Gaelic tradition of referencing the environment in the work.

In addition to offering song writing opportunities on many of its courses throughout the year, Fèis Rois will also incorporate storytelling. In the context of Scottish Gaelic perspectives, "indigenous storytelling education" plays a crucial role in addressing the climate crisis by nurturing a deep connection to the land, fostering a sense of stewardship and responsibility, and preserving traditional ecological knowledge. From a Scottish Gaelic perspective, the concept of "dùthchas" underscores the importance of heritage, belonging, and connection to the land. By embracing dùthchas through storytelling education, communities can cultivate a profound sense of rootedness in their homeland, fostering stewardship, and care for the environment.

By integrating Gaelic storytelling into its youth programmes, Fèis Rois can provide participants with opportunities to develop a deeper connection to the land, a stronger sense of stewardship and responsibility towards the environment, and a greater appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living beings. Through storytelling, teaching traditional Gaelic songs, and offering song writing workshops, Fèis Rois can inspire action and promote sustainable living practices, empowering individuals to become advocates for environmental conservation and climate resilience

ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

Fèis Rois recognises that there is a need to manage the impact of the climate emergency to ensure long-term business sustainability for the organisation.

The organisation has already evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic that it was successfully able to, and has the infrastructural wherewithal to, deliver virtual lessons and music events online if need be. From a business continuity point of view, this backup functionality to be able to deliver virtual events is important given that the climate emergency may prove to impact Fèis Rois' ability to deliver in person events (flooding, storms, etc).

In terms of adaptation, Fèis Rois is committed to reducing food miles and using local food suppliers for its music courses, training days and events. The organisation will collaborate with the [Highland Good Food Partnership](#) to explore tangible ways to do this during the lifespan of its 2025 to 2028 Business Plan.

With hotter summers and increased rainfall in the Highlands, Fèis Rois is conscious that the office building it leases is surrounded by derelict land and a lot of concrete. Taking the learning that Fèis Rois gleaned from being a major partner in Dandelion 2022 Ltd, the organisation plans to work with the landlord and partners in Dingwall to increase green spaces around the office to help absorb excess heat and rainfall.

Fèis Rois plans to create a sensory community garden with a new outdoor performance space for the whole community to enjoy. They will plant native and biodiverse species in this new green space to help slow rainfall run-off. Uplifting concrete/paved spaces in favour of permeable green spaces will improve drainage on the site and reduce the risk of the office ever flooding. A rainwater harvesting system will be installed to storing excess water for irrigation of the garden during hot spells.

It will be a food growing garden with local seeds and species being grown that are adapted to the Highland climate and that have stories and connections to the people, music and language of the community of Ross-Shire. Fèis Rois will programme concerts, workshops and events in the new garden.

Fèis Rois will work with the Keep Scotland Beautiful initiative called Highland Community Waste Partnership to use the compost from food waste at Fèis Rois events in growing situations. By using the compost in the new garden, or by giving some of the compost created from food waste at Fèis Rois events to Dingwall Community Woodland, it will be building carbon in the soil and reducing methane from landfill.

When no further emissions can be eradicated, Fèis Rois will calculate its total emissions at the end of each financial year and balance residual emissions by purchasing trees through an accredited programme at Trees for Life at Dundreggan. To date, Fèis Rois has already purchased a [grove](#) at this carefully planted site. However, in future, Fèis Rois will look to buy carbon credits that would then be listed on the UK Land Carbon Registry. Trees for Life's conservation estate at Dundreggan is validated and verified under the Woodland Carbon Code, the gold-standard for woodland carbon sequestration. It contains over 250,000 new native trees and has the capacity to offset over 50,000 tonnes of CO₂.



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