

COVE PARK

Cove Park Environmental Policy 2023 – 2026

**Created March 2016
Updated April 2026
Next Review April 2027**

Cove Park's Environmental Policy was created in 2016 and is reviewed annually by our team and trustees.

As a cultural organisation we believe we can and must play a key role in meeting Scotland's ambitious net zero target. This Policy expresses our commitment to managing our environmental impact and ensuring Cove Park is a model of good practice, influencing and driving change locally, nationally, and internationally. This commitment is reflected in our programme focus, and in our operational and financial planning and management. It is central to Cove Park's ethos and work culture.

Background: Cove Park's Site & Facilities, Programme, Partnerships & Networks

Site & Facilities

Cove Park is located on a 50-acre rural site overlooking Loch Long in Argyll, on the west coast of Scotland. Immediately prior to the launch of Cove Park in 2000, the site was a public conservation park, and this ethos remains at the heart of what we do. We maintain a strong commitment to the conservation and preservation of this outstanding setting, its woodland, wetland, grassland, flora, and fauna.

The site has accommodation for up to 14 individuals as well as the Jacobs Building, an award-winning purpose-built space which includes communal facilities for our residents, workspace, public space, offices, a library, and two adjacent units of accommodation. Cove Park also has five studios and one store/workshop (a Nissen hut).

The Jacobs Building opened in July 2016. It was designed and built with sustainable principles in mind:

- Low energy, long life lighting keeps the energy consumption low. Well-positioned windows and glass doors take advantage of natural light, reducing the need for electric lighting.
- Implementation of hand dryers and unnecessary electrical appliances has been avoided to keep energy demand low.
- Windows and doors with good U-values to reduce the heat loss through the glazing whilst taking advantage of passive heat gain.
- The concrete screed floor provides thermal mass to retain passive heat gain from the south and west glazing. The concrete also helps to regulate the internal temperature and keeps the building cool in the summer months.
- Natural ventilation and openable roof lights sustainably cool the building without the need for mechanical systems.
- The overhanging roof to the south avoids excessive heat gain in summer months.
- Future development and use were considered at the design stage, with an adaptable layout and a large loft space to expand into (plans are currently being developed to convert this space into a new Reading Room and library).

The Jacobs Building was also fitted with a wood pellet boiler and a log-burning stove, with the aim of providing a sustainable secondary heat source to reduce the energy demand. However, the cost of fuel for both the boiler and stove is now very high, and their environmental benefits are questionable. We are therefore moving towards sustainable sources of energy, with a focus upon solar and wind power and, in March 2024 we began work on an application for CARES funding (Community Energy Scotland) to support the associated costs.

Cove Park's Pods are upcycled oak-construction buildings (sited in 2001), and our Cubes are recycled metal shipping containers (sited in 2002 and 2006). Both are integrated carefully into the site, with established ponds and turfed roofs. The Pods are currently heated with LPG fueled boilers and the Cubes and Studios with electric radiators. The move to sustainable energy will also extend to these units of accommodation.

Programme

Cove Park's national and international residency, creative learning, and engagement programmes now welcome over 250 individuals per year. Our residencies enable research, experimentation, the development of new ideas, new work and approaches to contemporary creative practice and the world we live in.

In 2021 we launched within our wider residency and engagement programmes a strong focus upon the climate crisis and environmental sustainability, involving artists and creative practitioners whose work responds and relates to the climate and biodiversity crises, with the aim of heightening awareness and sharing strategies for change. Recently, this approach has seen residencies for visual artist Edd Carr (founder, Sustainable Darkroom), the commission of a short artists film on Argyll's rainforests, 'Congenial Soils and Favourable Situations' by Rachel McBrinn and Alison Scott, and the 'Net Zero Youth Voice' programme, led by artist Louis Brown, and concluding in a film created by teenagers in Argyll and in London as part of an Imperial College London research project.

We are committed to maintaining this focus and it is central to our strategic and programme plans for 2025-2028.

Partnerships & Networks

Cove Park became a [Green Arts Initiative](#) member in 2016. Run by Creative Carbon Scotland (CCS) and Festivals Edinburgh, the GAI supports the sharing of relevant knowledge, ideas, and experiences. In joining GAI in 2016 we have committed to improving our monitoring and management of our environmental impacts each year and to reporting annually on our environmental impact and action plan.

In 2021 we established a partnership with [Argyll & the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust](#) (ACT) and became the Argyll Beacon, one of 13 Scottish Climate Beacons supported by CCS to bring environmental and cultural organisations together in anticipation of the COP26 Conference in Glasgow.

Cove Park also co-founded the [Nordic Alliance of Artists Residencies on Climate Action](#) (NAARCA) in 2021 and maintains an active role in this consortium of six international residencies based across the Nordic region. Our aim is to collaborate on research, institutional change, and education around climate change, and to ensure all aspects of our core programmes – residencies, commissions, exhibitions, publications, creative learning, and engagement projects – reinforce and communicate these aims. We want to change the ways in which our individual residency organisations travel, produce, consume, purchase, reuse, recycle, upcycle, and dispose.

In addition, Cove Park is a member of the international [Green Art Lab Alliance](#) (GALA) and the [Circular Arts Network](#) (CAN).

NAARCA Sustainability Toolkit

Cove Park contributed to the NAARCA Sustainability Toolkit for Residencies (Appendix 1) and follows its recommendations. This free resource is downloadable from the NAARCA website. By 1 March 2024 the Toolkit had been downloaded 215 times and has been shared via each of the NAARCA partner organisation's website, newsletters, and social media platforms. The Toolkit's author, NAARCA Eco-Coordinator Jaana Eskola, presented the resource at AGM of the Swedish Artist Residency Network in 2023 and will be presented in May 2024 to the Finnish Artist in Residency Network.

Our Environmental Policy: Aims & Actions for Change

This Policy is reviewed and updated annually. Cove Park's team, trustees, residents, programme participants, and visitors are consulted as part of each review. Cove Park's Director is responsible for ensuring the policy is updated and communicated to all relevant parties.

We believe transformational change is necessary if we are to tackle the climate emergency. Our Policy and plan for action is built on the following key priorities for this change:

Mitigation – Reducing emissions.

Adaptation – Promoting behavioral change, responding to the impacts of climate change.

Climate justice – Change must be based on solutions that are fair, just, and equitable.

Our Aims and Actions for Change over the course of this Policy are:

1. **Aim: Reduction of carbon emissions resulting from travel, in line with Scottish Government's commitment to reduce car kilometers travelled by 20% by 2030.**

Actions: 1) Maintain use of Zoom for as many external meetings and interviews as possible; 2) Maintain home working for full-time members of the team on a one-to-two day per week basis. 3) Encourage use of public transport over cars, taxis, or flights amongst team members, residents, and visitors (see Sustainable Transport Policy); 4) Provide e-bikes for use by residents and team*; 5) Use only electric vehicles when a taxi is required. 6) Transition from a petrol-fueled site vehicle (used to support access across our site) to an electric vehicle in 2027-2028 and installing car chargers at Cove Park.

** With funding from Cycling UK, Cove Park purchased in March 2024 three e-bikes for use by team members and residents.*

2. **Aim:** Reduction of emissions resulting from energy consumption and utilities, including water use.

Actions: 1) Maintain a 'switch off, save power' approach for those staying and working on site; 2) Increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption through procurement, maintenance, and appropriate insulation; 3) Begin the transition to renewable energy in 2025.

3. **Aim:** Eradication of waste sent to landfill and the adoption of the circular economy, ensuring waste is recycled and food waste separated as appropriate.

Actions: 1) Maintain recycling procedures already firmly in place: informing residents via our Handbook and inductions of our recycling commitments, providing recycling bins (glass, paper, plastic, tins, food waste) in the Jacobs Building and all accommodation units; 2) Encouraging studio-based practitioners to use recycled materials and eco-friendly processes and products.

4. **Aim:** Reduction of emission boundaries generated through the procurement of goods and services in the supply chain.

Actions: 1) Work only with accredited suppliers sharing Cove Park's ethos and commitment to carbon emissions reduction; 2) Purchase products and services that

cause the least damage to the environment and encourage others to do the same.

5. **Aim:** To include climate risks and plans to mitigate risks in the organisation's Risk Register and work towards the development of a Climate Adaptation Plan.

Action: To further this planning at Board level and to incorporate risk relating to climate change in our Risk Register by 2025-2026.

6. **Aim:** To embed Climate Justice in our approach to our programme, operations, and financial management, to ensure inequalities are not perpetuated or new inequalities created.

Actions: 1) To maintain a people-centred approach and to acknowledge the climate crisis is not purely a scientific issue, but a social, political, and cultural issue; 2) To give equal voice to all participants in our programme – from the young to the elderly – and to embed this approach further through our EDI Action Plan; 3) To host artists from the Global South and to ensure their voices and perspectives are included in this aspect of our work.

7. **Aim:** To ensure audiences and participants in cultural activity can contribute to thinking and discussions around the climate crisis.

Action: To maintain climate crisis and environmental sustainability as a key focus for our residency, creative learning, and engagement programmes, creating opportunities for talks, discussions, and events that engage new audiences and participants in these urgent conversations.

8. **Aim:** To achieve a 'nature positive' economy, recognizing that economic sustainability cannot be achieved without environmental sustainability.

Action: To integrate climate change into our financial planning and reporting, incorporating sustainability into Cove Park's finance strategy and communications.

9. **Aim:** To rethink established approaches to international working and travel in particular, in a way that is mindful of the climate emergency and climate justice.

Action: To build upon recent developments in the way we offer and manage international residencies, offering slow travel bursaries, working in partnership with other Scottish organisations to offer longer residencies and connected opportunities, to make the investment in international travel meaningful, worthwhile, and appropriately managed.

10. **Aim:** To ensure future capital development projects (i.e. Sound Studio) are built with sustainable principles in mind.

Action: To incorporate renewable energy and sustainable materials at the concept stage and include this requirement in briefs to architects and designers.

A Note on Local, National & International Travel

As a rurally-based residency we carefully consider the impact of travel to and from Cove Park for its team, visitors, and our national and international residents. The site is approximately one hour from Glasgow, 30 minutes from our nearest town, and 10 minutes from our nearest village by car or public transport.

Cove Park benefits from a relatively good local public transport system, and electric buses that provide an hourly weekday service between the Rosneath Peninsula and Helensburgh, our nearest town. When use of public transport is not possible – for access reasons, or time of travel – we use a local cab company with an electric vehicle.

Further detail on our approach to sustainable travel is given in Cove Park's Sustainable Travel Policy.

Monitoring & Reporting

Since 2017 Cove Park has submitted annual Carbon Management Reports to Creative Carbon Scotland. We continue to monitor and evaluated all team and residents' travel, energy, and water use. This work is overseen by Cove Park's Site Manager.

Our Site: Preservation & Development

Cove Park will continue to focus part of its resources on the preservation and development of our 50-acre site, described as 'a mosaic of valuable habitats' and which includes grassland (with and grazing pasture for Highland cows and sheep), wetland, and woodland, benefitting from a rich variety of plants and flowers. The management of the site and the preservation of its flora and fauna is central to the Site Manager's role and something our team and trustees are committed to.

Our Highland cows and sheep belong to a local farmer. This relationship is important to us, and we recognize the sharp decline in family farming in the area (the Peninsula had approximately 14 working farms in the 1970's – this has been reduced to just four in 2023). Offering grazing pasture, in return for land management support and advice, is one way in which Cove Park can support our local farmers.

In 2021 Cove Park commissioned a Land Opportunities survey. This document was researched and written by Clem Sandison (Farming & Land Use Development Manager, Soil Association Scotland). The brief was to understand how Cove Park's site is being managed, to make initial observations from an ecological, social, and financial perspective, and to present ideas for 'light touch' interventions to more radical changes in management. This document continues to underpin our short and longer-term plans for the site.

In 2022 in partnership with ACT and our local community, we planted 500 native woodland trees to create a micro-rainforest as part of the Argyll Beacon programme. Our plans include the development of new paths, a herb and vegetable garden, and beehives. We are

embarking on a process of consultation with Cove Park users, stakeholders, and our local community to understand how best we can develop the site for the future.

In 2023 Cove Park secured funding for a new Sound Studio. As noted in Aim 10 above, this space will be built using sustainable and locally sourced materials, and will use renewable energy sources.

A Catalyst for Change on the Rosneath Peninsula

In 2022 Cove Park created two 'Unexpected Gardens' on the Rosneath Peninsula: fruit, vegetable, and flower gardens for our local community to use and enjoy. The first of these gardens was sited in a rundown outdoor space at Cove Sailing Club, a community-focused Club in nearby Cove village. The second was developed in a former car park at Centre 81 community hub in Garelochhead. Both gardens are now managed and maintained by volunteers connected to the two host organisations, however Cove Park actively contributes creative learning and environmental engagement projects at the Centre 81 garden for the benefit of its wide range of user groups.

End.