



COUNTY WICKLOW ARTS CENTRE

Environmental Sustainability Policy & Action Plan





1: Background

Operating since 2002, Mermaid Arts Centre is “County Wicklow’s creative engine-room”, and a “home for creative communities in Wicklow”. Our purpose is to create connection between artists and communities in Wicklow, and we are committed to achieving this in a way that is environmentally sustainable. Our Strategic Plan (2024-2027) highlights the importance of working sustainably, and this Environmental Sustainability Policy & Action Plan outlines our commitments and ambitions in this area.

Mermaid Arts Centre CLG is a registered charity and is part-funded by the Arts Council and Wicklow County Council. Mermaid has 9 full-time and part-time employees, alongside a team of 10 Front-of-House volunteers. The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees comprising 13 members. In 2024, Mermaid hosted over 360 events and welcomed almost 39,000 people to these events, making an average attendance of 108 people per event.

In early 2025, Mermaid engaged Arts Leaders Associates Ltd to assist with the development of an Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan. A site visit was carried out, and an internal report was presented and discussed with key stakeholders. The report’s findings form the basis of this Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan, which will be reviewed annually by the General Manager, Artistic Director and Board.



2: Current Context For Mermaid

Mermaid is committed to reducing its environmental impact, and it has already taken steps towards improving its energy efficiency. As a large building, Mermaid’s biggest impact on the environment is likely to be its energy usage, and it will be a priority over the coming years to reduce this impact wherever possible. Throughout many parts of the building, CFL bulbs have already been replaced by LED bulbs, and while Tungsten lighting will still be used for some performances, an LED “gig rig” will be used for some events to reduce energy usage.

Between 2022 and 2023, Mermaid explored the potential of installing solar panels however this was not considered to be feasible at the time. A separate site visit was made by a Regional Energy Manager from Wicklow County Council’s Mid-East Energy Unit in 2024 made additional suggestions for upgrades, which have also been considered. A “Website Carbon Calculator” test was also carried out on Mermaid’s website to estimate its carbon footprint, and it scored well.

While energy usage is likely to represent Mermaid’s biggest environmental impact, data relating to audience travel was also reviewed. From a sample of almost 2,500 respondents, this showed that 67% travel less than 10km to attend events at Mermaid, with 49% of journey times being less than 15 minutes. While this indicates a strong local audience base, the majority (70%) travel by car, with only 19% walking and 8% using public transport.

Mermaid has a dedicated café space, but this is generally managed by external café operators. A tendering process is currently underway to find a new café operator, and while the new operator will be responsible for implementing appropriate sustainability measures, Mermaid will ensure that the selection process includes consideration of these measures. The outdoor patio space which is adjacent to the café is also already being used to enhance the biodiversity of the local area, through the installation of planters and foliage, as well as serving as a project space.



3: Fundamental Commitments

Before outlining our specific priorities and action points for 2025, we have identified some fundamental commitments which will continue to be incorporated into our day-to-day work.

Travel & Transport:

- We will encourage everyone to use public transport (or walking/cycling) wherever possible and safe.

Energy Usage:

- We will encourage everyone to switch off lights, heating, computers, water taps, and other devices as appropriate.

Digital Housekeeping:

- We will encourage all staff to practice good digital housekeeping such as decluttering emails, deleting large images, avoiding excessive duplication etc.

Printing & Recycling:

- We will encourage everyone to minimise print requirements where possible.
- We will encourage and facilitate the recycling (or re-use) of all suitable materials.



4: Our Priorities For 2025

In addition to these fundamental commitments, Mermaid has identified several priority areas which we will focus on for 2025. Detailed action points are outlined for each priority area on the following pages, and these will be monitored and evaluated annually.

Priority 1:

Measure and monitor our energy usage.

Priority 2:

Continue upgrading our building and facilities where feasible.

Priority 3:

Continue to support biodiversity and climate advocacy projects.

Priority 4:

Share our environmental sustainability commitments with stakeholders, and encourage them to align with our ambitions.



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mermaidartscentre.ie

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