

STaRRY ViLLage

Impact Report

20
23



After a 3 year, Covid-related hiatus, Starry Skies returned to the Kentchurch Estate in 2023.

It meant the world to be reunited with our fantastic community of curious, hilarious kids and their grown ups after so long – playing, learning, crafting and dancing, amongst rolling hills and under starry, starry skies. A huge thank you to everybody who welcomed us back with open arms.

Bringing any event back after several years away will always present a few unexpected curveballs – and (whilst the event was a total joy) we identified some key learnings for how to tweak and perfect the event moving forward – both in terms of site logistics and strategic sustainability actions. So, in 2024, we're chomping at the bit to put these learnings into play and help make the event even better than ever – particularly in line with our new, collaborative, community-focused Starry Village concept ([you can read all about that here](#)).

What were our Environmental Priorities in 2023?

There is an awful lot that goes on behind the scenes, in the name of sustainability, that our audience doesn't get to see! Below, we have laid out what our key sustainability focuses were for 2023...

1. Eradicating disposables

- a) For the first time ever, we followed in the footsteps of our big sister event, [Shambala Festival](#), and removed disposable coffee cups entirely from the Starry Skies eco-system. Cardboard coffee cups may, at a glance, look all earthy and recyclable but they're nigh on impossible a nightmare to recycle dispose of properly, due to a sneaky polymer lining. So, instead, we instructed our audience to bring their own – saving thousands of potential disposable cups from landfill!
- b) We worked with all of our on-site traders to ensure they provided only home-compostable serveware – rather than polystyrene, or those sneaky, dubious 'biodegradable' claiming claims from serveware brands – that in reality need very specific conditions in industrial facilities, collected in their hundreds of thousands to degrade properly (ie – they will not truly home compost)!
- c) The Starry Skies crew who build and run the event all brought along their own crockery and cutlery to use. Huzzah! Please feel free to bring your own to help us reduce single-use waste.

2. Measuring energy use

- a) Our on-site generators used 100% biofuels only!

3. Food sourcing

- a) We presented all our food and drink traders with a brand new 'Trader Guide' and provided them with a hit list of recommended suppliers, who we know keep things as green as possible.
- b) Following in the footsteps of a very successful initiative at Shambala Festival, we prepared our Traders to remove cow's milk from our hot drinks – replacing it with a far less environmentally damaging and less water intensive oat milk alternative. This year, we'll make sure this is enforced to cut pollution caused by our coffees... (though organic dairy milk will still be available for those who need it). [If you want to dig into all the research behind this initiative, there are some wicked resources over on the Shambala website, here.](#)
- c) We asked all of our traders to log the ingredients used in the food they served using [Klimato](#) – a nifty tech platform that allows us to calculate and report on the climate impact of all the food served.

4. Reducing unnecessary travel + measuring guest and crew travel

The Starry site is (whilst an absolute showstopper of a location) not well served by public transport, making it a little trickier than we'd like, to encourage people to reduce their car use!

- a) This year, we began to survey segments of our audience on their access needs, and what they would need us to provide, to reduce the amount of private car travel.
- b) We also got stuck into measuring the travel miles for both our campers and our crew and artists, to help us plan for clever, future alternatives, to get us all there and back again in a more sustainable fashion
- c) We also organised shared travel for our crew, to and from the site, wherever we could.

5. Waste – a circular approach

a) We planned a fun, interactive recycling area! We had high hopes for this one, but didn't quite manage to pull it out of the bag for 2023 – but we're determined to get this in place for 2024, watch this space for a sensational separation station to tackle with the kids!

b) We rented the lovely furniture available in our venues and across the event, from sources local to site, reducing waste and travel miles.

6. A 'net zero emissions' event

a) All campervan and car park passes purchased by our campers included a carbon offsetting levy. 100% of the funds raised go to Ecolibrium – a charity dedicated to tackling event travel miles – where they are invested in various community renewable energy projects.

7. Conservation of Land

a) Our beautiful Rocky Fold Woods has been sadly impacted by ash dieback over the years we've been away – which is why, on the Sunday morning, before all our campers headed home, we invited you lot and your kids to join us for a tree planting session, to help reforest the woods by planting oak tree samplings! This was a beautiful way to wind the weekend down, so a huge thanks to all those who got their hands dirty with us.

With your help, we planted 200 trees, to help regenerate the land and ecosystem!

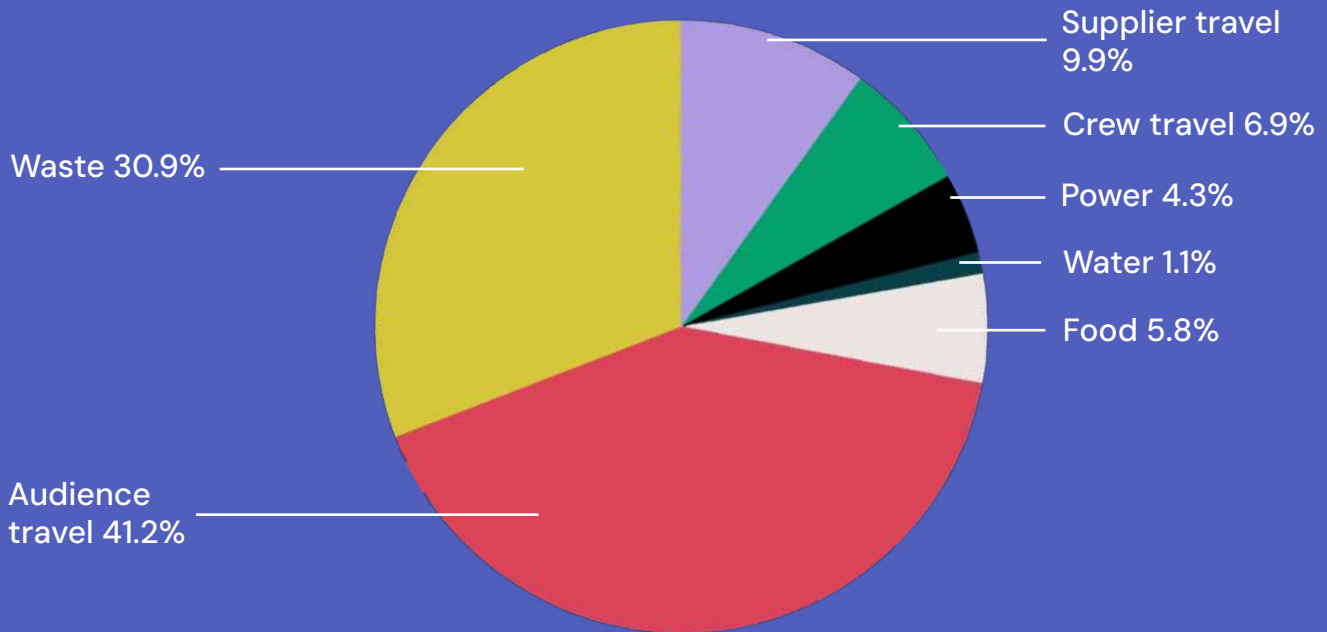


So... How did it all go?!

This is our first detailed Impact Report for Starry Skies (or Starry Village, as it's now known!) so the figures gathered this year by our deliciously nerdy Sustainability boffins represent a benchmark for measuring and reporting our progress moving forwards.

Some gaps in data were filled with educated estimates, to help us create a broad baseline. As we continue to work to make Starry Village as eco-friendly as possible, we'll develop our methods and partnerships to improve the accuracy of our data sets!

Overall Impact 2023:

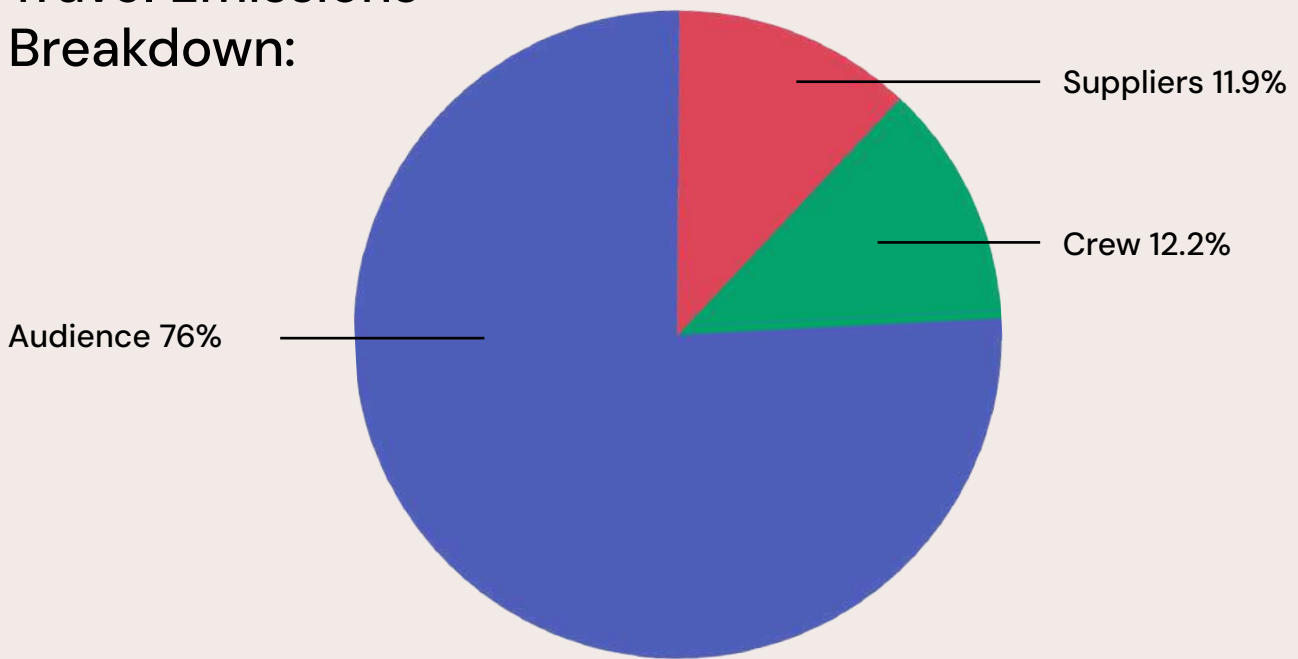


The Headline Statistics:

Overall Impact	
Power	2.49 tonnes CO ₂ e*
Waste management	18 tonnes CO ₂ e
Water and sewage	0.66 tonnes CO ₂ e
Food	3.36 tonnes CO ₂ e
Audience travel	24 tonnes CO ₂ e
Crew travel	4 tonnes CO ₂ e
Supplier travel	5.8 tonnes CO ₂ e
TOTAL	58.31 tonnes CO₂e

* CO₂e or 'carbon dioxide equivalent' means the number of metric tons of CO₂ emissions with the same global warming potential as one metric ton of other greenhouse gases.

Travel Emissions Breakdown:



Travel	
Percentage of guests that arrived by car	79%
Percentage of guests that arrived by campervan	21%
The average car occupancy (aka the amount of bums per seat on seats per car!)	3.08
Audience travel emissions	25 tonnes CO2e
Suppliers' travel emissions	3.9 tonnes CO2e
Crew + artists' travel emissions	4 tonnes CO2e

Water	
The total water usage for the event	371 m3
Water per person, per day	51.61 litres

Energy usage for the event	
Mains electricity use	0 kWh
Diesel use for on site vehicles/plant	250 litres
Bottled gas for our on site showers	370 litres
Gas used by our traders/concessions	317 litres
HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) used in our on site generators	1,368 litres

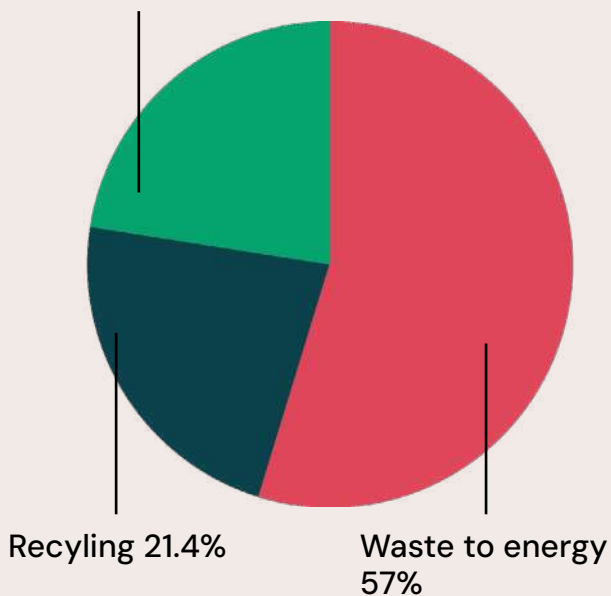
Food	
The total carbon footprint of the food sold on site	2.4 tonnes CO2e
The total number of meals served	3431
Average CO2 emissions per meal	0.65

Waste Breakdown:

Waste	
Total waste generated at the event	5,192 kg
The amount of waste per person, per day	2.88 kg
The amount of waste sent to landfill	0 kg
The amount of 'Waste to Energy'*	2,960 kg
The amount of waste that was recycled	1,110 kg
Inedible food waste	1,120 kg
The amount of edible food repurposed	0 kg
Overall recycling rate	43%

(*Waste to Energy is when waste is burnt, to produce steam in a boiler, and the steam is used to power an electric generator turbine.)

Food waste 21.6%



Reusable Bar Cups	
Reusable bar cups used	6,510
The number of cups lost/taken home/not returned	2086
Percentage of cups lost	32%



What went well...

- This report! A robust write-up of our actual impact at Starry Skies, for the first time.
- 59% of drinks came from local suppliers (the majority of which was beer!)
- Our first year of banning coffee cups and asking the audience to bring their own was a great success – with zero problems or complaints reported.
- The average CO2 Emissions per meal was significantly less than the UK average – 0.65kg CO2e at Starry vs 2.5kg CO2e average!
- 200 trees planted at the event!
- Zero waste sent to landfill!

What didn't go so well...

- 32% of our reusable bar cups went missing, as people accidentally took them during pack-up mayhem. We'll be ramping up the signage and communications around this in 2024, to make sure more cups are returned – and can be reused at multiple events around the country.
- We didn't quite manage to get a detailed, hourly breakdown of our energy data throughout the event, which would have been useful for planning 2024.
- A 43% recycling rate is better than the average for our industry, but we think we can do better! As this figure includes food waste for composting, so actually only about 30% of non-food waste was separated for recycling. We'll all have to work together to improve this, so get ready for a separation station at Starry Village!

What are Starry Village's main sustainability challenges?

Audience travel is a tricky one to reduce at this event – for a few reasons. Firstly, the beautiful, rural farm we call home is not well served by public transport. Secondly, the fact this is a families-only event means it's pretty difficult for our audience to travel light, whilst ensuring they have everything their young kids may need for a weekend of living in the great outdoors!

Our big sister event, Shambala Festival, has been happily meat and fish free for 8 years, saving us an estimated 100 tons of greenhouse gas per festival. We suspect this initiative may not be as easy to pull off at Starry Village, as some young children may be understandably less adventurous about trying new vegetarian or vegan dishes!

Starry Village's teeny, tiny size means we, as organisers, have less leverage to make deals with local, ethical food suppliers than we do at our larger events, due to the small scale of supplies needed! However, that said, we'll be asking you more for your preferences this year, to see what we can achieve together.

What are Starry Village's main sustainability opportunities?!

We're dreaming of Starry Village becoming a completely disposables free event – which is far easier to pull out the bag at a very small event, than it is a large one – though after looking at our reusable bar cup losses – it's fair to say we may need to charge deposits on any reusable crockery we provide, to ensure they are returned!

Starry Village welcomes hundreds of brilliant, curious children each year – meaning we have an opportunity to help create and motivate the eco-warriors of the future – how ace is that?!

Our new Starry Village concept has given us heaps of ideas on how we can better engage our audience to do their part in keeping the impact of the village as low as possible – watch this space for more on this..

So, what's next in 2024?

In 2024, we'll be focussing on 'filling the gaps' from 2023 – for example:

1. Ensuring ONLY HVO fuels are used. We were SO close this year, but due to a supplier delivery mix up, a small amount of diesel did need to be used in one generator. Frustrating, but fixable!
2. Food! This will be a key focus in 2024 – we'll be carefully mapping the ingredients used for the meals served – and will work with our traders to try and swap ingredients for more ethical, local alternatives, wherever possible.
3. We will be weaving way more workshops, walkabouts and fun new initiatives into the Starry Village programme, to get us all working together towards a better future.



2024: The Nitty Gritty Bit

● Eradicating disposables:

- As we begin our journey towards our goal of eventually becoming completely free of disposables, we'll be needing some sturdy statistics on the amount of serveware used by each trader (including the size and costs of the specific plates and cutlery needed for their menus) to help us prepare a budget and process.
- We'll be encouraging our audience to consider bringing their own reusable crockery and serveware wherever possible – and ensuring there are plenty of wash up points available, to keep things clean!
- Losing nearly 1/3 of our reusable bar cups was less than ideal! So, in 2024, we'll be shouting from the roof tops to make it super clear how this system works, with improved signage and communications.

● Measuring energy use:

- We'll be putting a plan in place to avoid using any diesel at all in our pre-event site work and site visits.
- We aim to monitor the energy used throughout the event, in stringent detail – setting targets to hit throughout.
- We hope to use only electrical site buggies on site in 2024.

● Food sourcing:

- We'll be looking at significantly increasing the amount of plant-based food available on site, aiming towards less-damaging meat options and discussing the journey towards more sustainable and plant-based options with traders and you folks! [Read more about our plant-based journey at Shambala Festival.](#)
- We'll also identify more local, more ethical, organic meat suppliers for the meat eaters in our village.
- We'll be ramping up our communications to our audience the on the huge, individual impacts of making more sustainable dietary choices – and showing just how delicious these greener choices can be!
- We're aiming to source 50% of the village's food, locally – to support the community and reduce transportation of food.
- We'll be bringing our Food Traders along on our sustainability journey, to help enforce our environmental ideals – something we have done effectively for many years at Shambala Festival.
- We're going to work with our traders and caterers to map out an accurate and detailed total food footprint for the village. .
- We're looking at bringing in some climate conscious youth groups, to help us with our new food focus!

● Reducing unnecessary travel & measuring guest and crew travel:

- We're keen to explore connecting our villagers ahead of the festival, to help organise lift shares, to help get bums on all those empty car seats where possible!
- 56% of the Starry Village crew travel from Bristol – so we'll be exploring the possibility of a crew shuttle bus, to get those travel emissions down.

● Waste and circularity:

- Our 2023 event achieved a 42% recycling rate. Below industry average, but we know we can do better than that!
- We'll be aiming to get those recycling rates up to 50% in 2024 – through better signage, encouragement and education and figuring out fun ways to turn recycling into a game, with rewards to be earned and the Starry silliness, to boot!

● A 'net zero emissions' event:

- We'll be clearly mapping all of our emissions, separate our crew and artist data and drilling way deeper into which materials and suppliers match our vision and goals!

As Kermit the Frog once said, it ain't easy being green – but it's certainly a LOT easier when everyone (crew, artists and our villagers) are all on board – it take as a village after all – so a huge thank you to every single one of you, for coming with us on this journey.

Stay tuned over the coming months for more information on our 2024 sustainability plan, and how you (and your kids!) can get involved.

Team STARRY X

