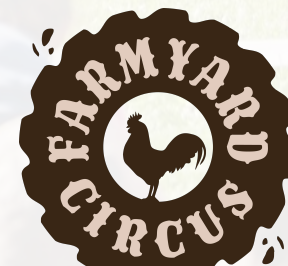




Sustainability Report



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About The FarmYard Circus

At The Farm Yard Circus (FYC), we started creating our work in March 2019 and ever since we have been expanding our skills, enthusiasm and passion to perform.

We are a company of 9 circus performers and musicians from the Southwest England, focused on creating outdoor circus theatre performances that are set and based around life on a farm. The true beginning of the show you see today was created in April 2021 with support from The Invisible Circus' Launch Pad program, and guest artistic directors.

Our show is a unique blend of multi disciplinary circus skills, a farm life narrative and an innovative use of farm props. The research we have put into our tricks and stunts with authentic farm props is a unique approach, and the result of many hours of discussions, imagination and exploration. These skills are now an area of expertise that we will continue to develop alongside our show. We hope our hours of training will continue to spread joy to all who come to see our show whilst inspiring other artists to get creative.

Much like most farmers, summer is our busiest time, and the summer of 2022 marks our first full summer of shows since forming. To have a sneak peak at our show or enquire about booking our unique family fun circus please explore our [website](#).

Who we are. Acrobats. Farmers. **Performers!**



Ben Walker

Performer & Admin



Kirsty Egginton

Performer & Admin



Harry Clements

Performer & Admin



Darine Flanagan

Performer & Touch
Tour & Social Media
Manager



Jake Hirsch-Holland

Performer & Admin &
Touch Tour & HGV
Driver



Jack Clements

Performer & Admin



Charly Riddett

Performer & Touch
Tour & BSL
Interpreter



Cassandra Hillier

Performer &
Musician



Michael Fergie

Performer &
Musician

Farm Yard Circus is supported by



**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

LOWER SHAW FARM



About this Report

The goal of this report is to outline our sustainability footprint as a Circus. To act as a benchmark on how to progress our environmental reduction efforts. We engaged a sustainability consultant to inform us on how to track our impact and thus how to measure our success in reducing it, both now and in the future.

Moving forward we will look back on this sustainability report and discuss what further developments we can make in our

company to improve our impact on the communities we touch and the environment we depend upon.

Previous bid resources and interviews across FYC have informed the creation of this report. International reporting standards such as the **Global Reporting Initiative (“GRI”)** have been used to baseline our work. With four key themes emerging to structure our sustainability strategy and progress for the future:

<div>Responsibility</div> <div>Acting as a responsible circus starts from within, we intend to take responsibility across our partners, practices and people.</div>	<div>Environment</div> <div>We are committed to being an environmentally friendly circus and reduce the environmental impact of our activities where possible.</div>
<div>Inspire</div> <div>Providing an inspiring, healthy and safe working environment for our employees, whilst inspiring others to create!</div>	<div>Accessibility</div> <div>As a company we feel strongly about making sure we are always able to reach a wide array of audiences.</div>



Responsibility



Management

This is the decisive decade for the environment, taking action is crucial. But how best to ensure we act?

At Farm Yard Circus, we want to ensure we are doing as much as possible to operate responsibly. Each one of us welcomes the chance to become a more responsible company - demonstrated through a clear management structure to make quick and effective decisions.

Management structure

In the process of developing our summer tour we carried out a number of company development meetings to define our ethos and aims. Through this process we started testing out a new company management structure with the guidance from an external consultant. Currently we operate using consensus, moving forward we intend to delegate decision making power effectively through pre-agreed systems. This will help us to run more efficiently as a cooperative led company and manage our sustainability in targeted areas.

We aim to continue to develop our management structure as we grow to ensure fair decision making. Despite structural changes, decisions to change the constitution of the organisation, need to be made by a group meeting of all owners. We will first aim for consensus in all cases. If this is not possible decisions will go to a majority vote.

Our core ethos

We believe in a progressive and human centered approach.

Through working together, the ways of thinking at FYC are broadened. We will use our collective intelligence to focus on making a difference.

Everyone's voice will be equally represented within the company.

Here at Farm Yard Circus there is not one person in charge, not now and not ever. We take a collaborative and cooperative approach to decision making.

"We may delegate decision making power to individuals but all voices will be properly considered."



Responsible Practices

In order for us to keep doing what we love we have been sure to consider all the eventualities of our work.

Our 2022 summer tour involved a lot of firsts for this company; our first tour, our first time training understudies, our first time working with partners to reach less engaged audiences and our first time running touch tours. As with all first, there are significant learnings. We are holding end of summer evaluation days to discuss these and ensure we are operating as responsibly as possible. Aiding this we mapped our key risks and stakeholders.

Risk management

We feel that the FYC summer tour is a very 'safe' project as we are working for agreed fees, with the vast majority confirmed long before we tour. For 2022 we did shows at 9 different events, going into the summer all but 2 were confirmed. The 2 unconfirmed were assessed as 'highly likely' to go ahead and the 7 confirmed events acted as a safety net.

If any of the events did fall through for any unexpected reason, it would not affect our ability to complete the rest of our summer tour, because the fees are fully inclusive of all of our artists' wages, travel and all other associated costs of performing at the event.

In addition, we have been training understudies during our tour, thereby meaning we are more likely to fulfil all our contracts regardless of unexpected circumstances to our performers.

Stakeholder engagement

We, as a collective, are responsible for considering all of our stakeholders interests in our decision-making to ensure the continued success of our circus and the implementation of our strategy.

Our **partners** support us in ensuring we reach the communities we are aiming to deliver to through our shows. By working closely with our partners we gain huge

insight into how very established arts organisations operate and see what we can incorporate into how we work.

The **amazing audience** is what gets us out of bed in the morning. We love to see the beaming faces in the crowd and welcome any feedback post each show, this summer we have reached an estimated 15,000 people.

Understudies, we aim to pick emerging artists to train for these roles. This will give them an opportunity to learn about our creative working style, to be part of a cooperatively run company and get experience touring outdoors in the UK.

Our team of **performers** are diverse in terms of class, gender, neurodivergence and GRT+ lifestyle. We have team members who grew up on farms so have a genuine understanding of the characters we are portraying and the issues we are exploring. This project is helping all of the performers involved to sustain their creative careers and to further establish the FYC company to be more sustainable.

Monitoring our progress

In the mindsight of continuing to improve we measure the success and progress of FYC in a number of different ways.

We measure the quality of the work based on the feedback we receive from our audiences, professionals and partners. For the 2022 summer tour we collected feedback via video format, which can be seen here <<insert link >> and the feedback form linked to our events.

A large part of monitoring our progress is set by how successful we are in reaching our engagement goals, particularly at the subsidised shows. We will compare audience size and backgrounds against our estimated figures to make sure our goals are met.

Another mark of success will be how well understudies are integrated into our team. We will consider how they add to the quality of the show, their experience of working with us and whether that relationship continues in our evaluation days.

We will define project management success as meeting all the above targets whilst keeping the budget balanced.

These markers will be the basis of our evaluation of each summer tour and will be discussed at length during our full cast evaluation residency to inform us how we can continue to improve all these aspects in future projects.

Responsibility: Next Steps

1. Create a clear document to formally outline our governance processes, including the development of focus groups.
2. Decide on the minimum number of events and shows needed to cover all our costs for the summer and the maximum number we can possibly fit in a summer tour without over committing.
3. Ensure our means to track progress at our evaluation days are fair and representative of the summer tours.

Environment



Environmental stewardship

It is becoming increasingly important that we all play our part to operate as sustainably as possible.

We intend to limit any negative impact we have on the environment, creating long-term sustainability for the business. For the first time we have calculated our emissions and now have a clearer picture of our highest emitting areas, providing us with areas to target for reduction.

It is important to highlight that due to the size of our business and that we are UK based our impact is relatively small. However, we still strive to make material reductions where possible - this is important to all of us at FYC. Each member of our core team strides to make environmentally conscious decisions outside of their day-to-day work for FYC. The environmental stewardship we hold as a company is embedded throughout all of our lives.

Throughout this section some key FYC decisions are outlined that solidify our commitment to the planet.

UK based operations

We chose understudies from the UK to avoid flying mileage associated with FYC.

This decision was made to reduce the carbon footprint associated with our company, whilst also lowering our expenditure. This is also why we have chosen to focus on a tour in the UK instead of abroad.

QR Code: Feedback

For each show we do a QR code is printed and placed on our timings board - typically the same one, reused!

This is then announced at the end of each performance. The code will bring viewers to a form where they can give feedback with the option for anonymity. This will give us an idea of the people that are coming to our shows and how they reacted to it. We aim to collect 75 of these over the course of this tour. We will also supply paper feedback forms but try to

limit these wherever possible. Video feedbacks have also been used to reduce the reduce the paper format.

Single-use plastic

We had discussions as a company on our morals on plastic and the environment in relation to eating out, as we will likely be doing this during the summer. We agreed that we would all make conscious efforts on what we were eating and to not use disposable plastics where possible. We also agreed to avoid disposable plastics in other areas of our company eg. plastic bottles, cable ties.

Water Stewardship

It is important to highlight that we are not a big water user in our show; therefore, water stewardship is not a major issue. Water usage across the Group is mainly from human consumption or cooling us down after a big day of shows.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (“GHGs”)

Carbon Balance Sheet

In 2022, we began calculating our emissions for the first time. From the calculations done so far we are responsible for **3.28 tCO₂e** - the same amount of emissions generated in powering a house for half a year.

Scope 1 emissions are direct greenhouse emissions that occur from sources that are controlled or owned by FYC i.e. gas usage and transportation fuel.

Scope 2 emissions are indirect GHG emissions associated with FYC's purchase and usage of energy i.e. electricity usage to charge batteries.

Scope 3 emissions are indirect GHG emissions of FYC's value chain. So far the only measured scope 3 emissions for FYC are emissions associated with FYC performers using their own personal vehicles for business travel, where they claim expenses (cost/mileage) back through the company.

Transport

As a touring circus with a large cast and a bespoke touring set, our biggest environmental challenge lies in our transportation.

Last winter we calculated the amount of fuel we were using to transport our set and performers. The data gathered from last winter and this summer's tour will be used to continually drive reductions in our mileage per show. For example, the reductions made through our recent trailer stage build, see page 13.

Currently, we arrange travel before each company meet and gig so we can carpool where possible. We use Bristol as a base for rehearsals as it was calculated as least total mileage for the full cast to travel to.

Energy

Our electrical system is solar powered. All amplified instruments, microphones and sound effects are controlled by a system designed by our own musicians. This is a great benefit for the show and allows us to be self-sustaining.

All electrical requirements are run on 12V batteries which we power from renewable energy sources that many core members have access to at home. We don't require generators on site to run our show. In addition, the vehicle that will be used to tow our trailer carries a solar power setup that can be used to charge the soundsystem batteries. The majority of our live-in vehicles have a similar system, between us we could fully charge the batteries on site, if needed.

Emissions Scope and Scope 3 Category	Emissions (tCO ₂ e) 2022	Percentage	Materiality rank
Scope 1	0.70	21%	2
Transportation (FYC owned)	0.70		
Scope 2 (energy)	0	0%	3
Scope 3	2.58	79%	1
6. Business Travel (team owned)	2.58		
Total All Scopes	3.28	100%	
Intensity Metric (tCO₂e per event)	0.36		

Sustainable operations

The operations of our circus have a comparatively low impact on the environment. We use low hazard materials, minimise the use of resources during the production of our show, and search for sustainable materials that can be recycled or reused when possible.

Case Study: Trailer stage

Our current largest GHG footprint stems from transport, and a key step to mitigate this was our recent trailer build. Last year with the help from Arts Council England, we built our touring stage which has helped the development of FYC and allowed us to be more efficient with our travel, reducing our carbon footprint. The trailer also provides a safety net for running the show in adverse weather conditions.

With our new trailer stage and effective carpooling we only need 3 vehicles to transport the cast and set to events, on certain shows this number has been as high as 9.

In the creation of our trailer stage the majority of the materials used were sourced through second hand means and was completely designed and built by us! Core materials such as steel and specific tools required were purchased.

Waste initiatives

We try and reduce the waste associated with each show when possible. Currently we don't track our waste data but are in the process of exploring alternatives to certain pieces of equipment that need replacing after each show.

Materials

We juggle fruit and veg, set our prop hat on fire and eat pretend soup!

The majority of our outfits for the show have been sourced from car boot sales, existing collections and second hand shops. We have then personally designed the outfits to best fit the feel of the show.

A few props were sourced directly as we need to ensure the equipment used is reliable during the show. For instance, our juggling clubs and wheelbarrows have been purchased first hand but we intend to reuse these indefinitely.



Environment: Next steps

1. Continue to put an emphasis on carpooling where possible. Business travel is our largest environmental impact. Replacing our vehicles with electric ones is not a possibility due to the funding we have. We will continue to carpool as best we can.
2. Explore options of offsetting our remaining car emissions in a local-based manner, through a certified provider. We are aware of the negatives of offsetting and do not see offsetting as a means to overlook our environmental responsibility.
3. Target obvious additional scope 3 measures that aren't currently being measured. For example, we will explore utilising our QR code feedback form to incorporate questions on travel to shows, and be mindful of the emissions associated with the materials we purchase first hand.



Inspire



Skills development

The 2022 summer tour success has above all been owed to the tireless effort of our core team members. As we grow, we want to continue to offer a stimulating work environment that encourages personal development. We want to develop our own skills, or the skills within FYC, and foster artistic curiosity. In short, we want the FYC environment to inspire and encourage team members to fulfil their potential.

Our experienced team focuses on delivering long-term value for the business and outstanding shows to our amazing audiences. Members of our team receive specific training in many different areas that will help us going forward. Members are trained in the delivery of touch tours, British Sign Language (BSL) and our environmental impact. We also hold regular company development meetings.

This initial 2022 summer tour has seen a huge number of firsts for us at FYC and we aim to continue this. To develop our skills and organisation further we recognise the value of trying new things as a company.

Year in review

Total no. shows

39

Events

9

Audience reached

>15,000

Subsidised shows

3

Instagram

1.8k

Emissions (tCO₂e)

3.28

Our focus areas

Experimentation

We take experimental risks with our funds to develop the quality of our work. To develop our organisation we recognise the importance of testing out new approaches and trying new things.

Skill development

Our core team members have a unique blend of experiences as self-employed circus artists. FYC will act as a platform for team members to continue to develop their skills.

Understudies

Understudies are crucial for our long term resilience. We intend to bring in a number of emerging artists for their fresh views, skills and opportunities they may bring to the team.

Engagement

At events such as Out There Arts Festival, we presented our show to a number of industry professionals and fellow circus theatre makers. After these sort of shows we encourage specific professional feedback relating to the show narrative, staging and accessibility. This is a key part of our engagement efforts. To ensure we are continuing to inspire others and develop ourselves.

After each festival, we will also invite each booker to fill out an online form relating to the suitability for their event, their perceived engagement and feedback on the shows. All of these forms will include an option to upload a video or audio to make the process more accessible.

Social Media

One of our team members will use social media strategic planning to evaluate what works best for engagement, how to reach new people and stay connected to people that have watched and enjoyed our show. Continuing to share our content way beyond our shows.

The strategic planning and feedback received will be brought to our 3 day evaluation at the end of the season to be assessed and incorporated into our work.

Social media manager

Our social media manager, Darine, has been working with social media content creation for the arts for over 3 years, and has directed our mini online cabaret and was one of the main creatives in our [Choose Your Farm Adventure Video](#).

Throughout our summer tour she has created and posted original content online to raise brand awareness. We now have 1.8k followers on instagram and 1.4k on facebook. Our followers grow with each show and we see this as a long term investment, especially for when we put on independent shows in the future. A focus was given in our content creation in making content suitable for the hard of hearing and visually impaired.

Our social media manager will also gather audience reaction videos over the

course of the summer and compile them into one evaluation video. This video will be used for our social media, on our website and in the promotion of future shows. We think this will be especially useful for future independent shows.



Understudies

We will develop our system for integrating understudies and working with the new skill sets they will offer.

It's a risk that we don't manage to fully prepare the understudies for the role. In order to avoid this, we worked closely with our director Gwen to facilitate our rehearsals and make sure they ran efficiently.

By working with an experienced director through this process we drew from their knowledge to develop effective methods for integrating understudies. A key aim for us as a business is to be able to replicate this process for any FYC role.

Testing out having understudies for our tour is essential for our work in the covid era. Being able to incorporate new people into the team means we can continue to inspire others. Understudies are invaluable for ensuring our availability.

Recruitment

It is crucial we develop our methods of recruiting new people, something that will be very important for future growth. FYC is an inspiring place to work, and we are pleased to be able to offer others the opportunity to grow with us.

We began by putting a call out for new team members to a wide range of networks. We have spread it to recent graduates of circus schools in the UK, through community circus groups across the UK and many circus companies based in the UK who work with a wide range of audiences and performers.

The application form is short and simple, and we encourage applications from anyone interested. Video calls are then held to try narrow down successful applicants.

Inspire: Next Steps

1. Establish a clear social media approach that focuses on inspiring others to create and the value of learning new skills.
2. Formally develop and write up our methods of integrating, hiring and developing understudies, without external assistance, drawing upon 2022 tour learnings.
3. Set training goals for each core team member at the beginning of the year. Ensure anyone that expresses interest in developing a certain skill is supported by FYC to do so, if relevant to the business.



Accessibility



Accessible arts

We have engaged a professional consultancy to improve every aspect of our show's accessibility.

We have worked with Grania Pickard, at Oddly Moving, to develop pre-show touch tours, and an understanding of what accessible art looks like in the circus world. Our work is already mainly non-verbal, but we will also embed British Sign Language (BSL) into the show for greater accessibility. Team meets and greets have been crucial in developing our ability to cater for a range of audiences.

The accessibility of FYC has not stopped at our shows, efforts have been made to ensure recruitment of new members, feedback forms and our social media platform are more accessible. Applicants can apply through video instead of an in-depth form, similar to our feedback form and BSL is incorporated in our social media posts.

Touch Tours

We run pre-show "touch tours" where people can touch props, be in the set and meet team members to prepare themselves for the intensity of the spectacle. The touch tours offer a tactile introduction to what is to come and are focused on those with autism spectrum disorder but open to others who are partially sighted or neurodivergent. We also talk through aspects of the show with those anxious about what will happen.

The consultation with Grania, was invaluable for developing these sessions. Three cast members received training in running touch tours but only 2 will be needed per show. This is to give some flexibility so the role can be shared. We used the 3 subsidised shows, documented on page 20, as an opportunity to develop and evaluate the touch tours.

British Sign Language (BSL)

The narrative in our show has a strong focus on visual storytelling, which is done through physical theatre and circus stunts. Therefore, it inherently uses very few audio language. We wanted to improve this by training members of our team, who have previously trained in BSL, to work with a BSL tutor, to develop the signing of the song lyrics in the show.

As a result, when we say certain words the entire team do the action to make it more accessible. On a number of occasions members of the audience have approached us and thanked us for incorporating BSL into our show.

Adding a touch tour into our performance offer and embedding BSL into the fabric of the show has further increased the quality of our performance offer. We will continue to strive towards making our show more accessible to people of different needs and encourage feedback of how to do so.

Community integration

Our strategy to increase community integration during our 2022 summer tour was to use revenue from ticketed events to subsidise community outreach in our three focus areas: Swindon, South Bristol, and Somerset.

Our three target areas were chosen as research showed that it was likely families wouldn't have experienced art in the form we are offering there. Our show has an easy-to-follow family friendly narrative. It is an exciting and playful blend of circus, theatre, and music. Therefore, we think it is perfect for audiences who might be enjoying circus-theatre for the first time.

Concession shows

Our subsidised shows are held in areas of low cultural engagement to work towards increasing access to high quality cultural experiences to all backgrounds and postcodes. We believe our shows will bring some families from the local community together, which has many benefits, as stated by the Arts Council <link lets create notes>.

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/outcomes-0>

To make this happen we partnered with three different organisations - Windmill Hill City Farm (South Bristol), Fandangos Ltd (Swindon), and Take Art (Somerset) - who have experience in running community events. All three partners “host” the show and support primarily through their strong connections in the area. The local marketing ability meant we managed to reach a diverse range of communities with our shows each time.

Our show in Somerset with Take Art was held rurally, it was inspiring to share our farm themed circus show to an audience that directly related to the show themes.

Windmill Hill City Farm set up a new project in BS14 – one of Bristol’s most deprived neighbourhoods (reference) – and hosted a concession show at their new site benefiting community integration.

Swindon is the area of lowest cultural engagement in the Southwest. We worked with Fandangos Ltd and Swindon Council to present the show for free in Queen’s Park - an accessible location in central Swindon.

Our concession shows help to work towards “removing the geographic, economic and social barriers that currently prevent many people from taking part in publicly funded cultural activity” (reference). By being part of lots of events across the UK, many rurally, we are part of something that supports local economies, both before and after events.

Outdoor arts events

Outdoor arts events are great opportunities for communities to come together and experience different art forms. We toured free outdoor arts events at Taunton Live, Eastleigh and Out There Arts. Studies from Outdoor Arts UK have shown such events to be more diverse than other theatre events. The shows are an accessible way to bring art to a wide range of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Our previous experience in outdoor events and our trusted partners, meant the shows were successful in engaging with many different communities.

Creative case

Eight of our nine core members are full time vehicle-dwellers so audiences watch us arrive, perform and leave together. We are not from ethnic GRT communities; we have chosen this lifestyle in the rich cultural tradition of travelling circuses. GRT+ communities receive excessive negative press without enough recognition of their contribution (past and present) to essential cultural institutions such as circuses, fairs and libraries.

We believe our work is enriched and we are able to connect with marginalised audiences in a more meaningful way due to our embracing of this lifestyle.

Our team is from a wide range of backgrounds. One member grew up in the care system which statistically makes you less likely to have a successful career than any other major demographic (NSPCC reference). Three members grew up on farms with significant understanding of these communities. We collectively have a genuine understanding of farming, working class and GRT+ communities and have neurodivergent team members which keeps our work relevant and representative.

Our company has an equal blend of female and male artists with equal pay and decision-making power. Our productions present strong female characters who display leadership qualities, extreme physical strength and tool competence.

We are in the process of adding 4 new members to our team and are strongly encouraging applicants from backgrounds under represented in the arts.

Accessibility: Next Steps

1. FYC Charity Day, we intend to dedicate a day of our time as a circus to giving back to a community charity close to our heart.
2. Further our BSL abilities to include the introduction and outro speaking section, this is the only section currently not signed in the show.
3. Each concession show partner offered us insights into how community organisations operate, and how we can most effectively work with them to reach the most people possible with our show. We feel strongly that we want to continue our community integration work, and so we will use our 2022 tour as an opportunity to set a detailed plan on how to improve.
4. Collate and analyse audience demographic and geographic data to improve insights for increasing the shows accessibility.



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