

The Greenhouse – Vision 2030

Here follows the Vision for *The Greenhouse* by 2030. Over these ten years, we are defined by our core guiding principles, which are:

Top Quality Creative Work

Sustainability through Storytelling

People First

A Collective Mindset

An Exciting Place to Work

Zero-Waste Practice

Actively Welcoming

Profit for Purpose

Transparent and Accountable

The description – shaped by all the members of *The Greenhouse* team – demonstrates our ambition for our future. A future in which *The Greenhouse* has played a seminal role in normalising sustainable lifestyles and combating climate change, through arts and storytelling.

The Buildings

The Greenhouse has evolved. From its humble roots as a 40-seater venue at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2019, ten years later it has grown into a complex of buildings hosting a multitude of different businesses. The buildings themselves are mostly wooden and are made completely from found and recycled materials. They surround a courtyard – which itself hosts a number of events and activities, depending on the time of day or the time of year.

To start with, there are two or three specifically creative institutions on site. A theatre yes. But also, a purpose-built cinema, a music studio, and possibly an art gallery. Each is carefully and intelligently designed to be unique in its own right, while also being malleable depending on creatives' needs. When people walk into these spaces, they can't help but breathe in – there is always a faint, sweet smell of sawdust. The smell that something creative and yet eminently natural is happening here. The theatre is regarded as a great example of natural minimalism – how humans can design and create with nature in mind to achieve stunning results. When people enter the complex for the first time, and step into a building, they say "this building is beautiful".

But it's not just about the creative institutions. There are rehearsal spaces on site, which we use primarily to develop the amazing work that goes up in our theatre – but that we also hire out at reasonable rates to emerging artists and local groups. Members of our community always feel welcome here. Administration offices are on-site as well, so that no matter the work we're doing, everyone working on *The Greenhouse* feels close to the action.

There's also a bar, a restaurant, and space for other small, green pop-up businesses – an eclectic mix united by a common goal. Our mission is clear in every corner of the space, and people feel welcomed into the fold rather than excluded, accused or attacked. The

sustainability running through the air is natural, easy. By virtue of the physical space we create, people feel at home. And of course, that means our work can really sing.

The Work

We've gained a reputation for making amazing theatre – producing over 10 top-quality shows in-house, each year, as well as multiple touring and community projects. There is demand for our work to be transferred to the West-End, to Broadway. These transfers are successful, but our pieces are always changed a little bit when they set foot outside of *The Greenhouse*. There is something so inherently magical and welcoming about the space that makes our amazing work shine even brighter. We are always very careful to explore the environmental implications of any potential tours and transfers

Whilst originally, a lot of our work was about the environment, we have moved away from that somewhat. We are still the leading name in telling sustainable stories – each season contains a few of these, to remember and respect our roots. But we also present shows that tackle other issues. No matter the subject matter, our work remains zero-waste. This is part of our goal to normalise sustainability. We show that sustainability doesn't have to dominate the narrative all the time – it can be a simple fact of life.

Where does this reputation come from? What is it that allows us to make and support such brilliant work? Really, it's our ethos. We have stepped away from the recent propensity of theatre to focus on spectacle and grandeur. Instead, we offer shows that are raw and deeply human. They prioritise the reality of living performers on stage in close proximity to the audience. When people write or talk about our shows, they notice there is something so intimate, so personal about them. They feel they've been invited into a conversation rather than simply buying a seat in an auditorium.

This way of working helps us to de-snob and re-democratise theatre. No matter the level or the topic, we take our work seriously, but not ourselves. We value the people with whom we work, or who see our work, as individuals above everything else. This means we have unusually high proportions of BAME and young (25 and under) audience members – groups who currently tend to avoid theatre. Our work feels welcoming, these groups feel included, and they feel inspired to make their own voice heard.

A Community of Businesses

The Greenhouse is more than just a theatre, more than a hub of buildings. *The Greenhouse* has become a community of businesses. Each offers something very different, but is united in guiding principles. There are at least five businesses which make up *The Greenhouse*, each specialising in a different area of zero-waste hospitality or lifestyle.

Some of these are based on-site. Like a zero-waste fashion boutique selling curated vintage and second-hand items, or a zero-waste brewery to stock our bar. Some are off-site, like *The Greenhouse's* consultancy arm, which helps organisations build sustainability into the core of their work and tell their own sustainable stories. Or our Research and Development arm, exploring solutions for sustainable energy storage in the arts and beyond.

The businesses are part-owned by *The Greenhouse*, and part owned by industry-leaders in their respective field. They are attracted by our ground-breaking proposition to lead by example and show how sustainability can fit into any area of work, as well as our exciting people-first approach that encourages our staff to learn, innovate, and take risks. This has been a key step along the path to financial sustainability and growth for us. By expanding the areas

in which we work, sticking to our core mission of using storytelling to spread sustainability, we have developed exceptionally strong financial performance. This makes us attractive to financiers and makes it easier for us to raise capital or investments for new projects.

The Financial Bottom Line

We must be profitable in order to survive, but our primary purpose is to contribute to a better life for everyone we touch. We are incredibly proud of the strong financial bottom-line performance that we have consistently been able to achieve. Our business model, diversifying across art forms and into other industries has been called ground-breaking by other arts institutions. In moving away from not for profit and towards profit for purpose, we have been able to focus on increasing our earnings, and re-investing to maximise our positive impact.

We've expanded out, not up. We are able to support many new ventures that encourage sustainable lifestyles, and are able to employ more people in the green sector. Our executives are paid fairly, but they don't take outrageously huge salaries – which allows us to ensure that everyone who works with us is paid, at the very least, a London Living Wage.

It's also allowed us to develop better work. As our means have increased, we've been able to work with amazing talent to make award-winning zero-waste shows. We've demonstrated that it's possible to make performances that are both top-quality *and* sustainable. We've expanded our community schemes, investing in resources, educators, and time to provide the most benefit possible to the people around us. And we've put money into our R+D arm, researching sustainable technology, to help other theatres, and other industries work sustainably.

We've invested in people through young artist development programmes – supporting early-career creatives to develop zero-waste work, while providing space to take risks experiment. We've invested in training our people, helping them pursue their interests and grow with us. We fund sabbaticals when staff feel it may be beneficial to them and their work.

All of this has been possible because of our financial bottom line. But it also contributes to the bottom line. Building strong relationships with artists, staff, and our community means people care about us. They feel connected to *The Greenhouse*, and they want to keep returning – whether that's to buy a ticket, or to keep making ground-breaking, important work.

Connected to the Local Community

We don't hide behind our four walls. Ever. Our local community is our lifeblood. Their love for us and our work is what allows us to keep operating – it's as simple as that. And we nurture that relationship at every possible opportunity.

Community groups are welcomed into our space whenever they need it, at heavily discounted (or even free) rates. We love having local groups in and around the complex. These groups feel connected to *The Greenhouse*. When asked, they will say that absolutely, they feel *The Greenhouse* is theirs, and that they share a part in it. We host parties and celebrations for the local community, be that for businesses or individuals. People living in our closest four postcodes are offered discounts at all of our businesses, and local businesses receive a significant discount on our sustainable consulting services. In this way, we are committed to sharing our knowledge with our community, to help us all become more sustainable.

We go out to meet the local community as well. We frequently work with local schools and youth organisations to deliver lessons and workshops on sustainability, storytelling, and many things in between. We visit local care-homes. Local organisations receive heavily

discounted rates, and the fees are simply to cover our costs. We run regular performance classes, both on-site and off-site. These are not just acting workshops – we help build confidence and social skills that are transferable to every aspect of life. As well as a more sustainable community, we help to build a more confident community that is more active, and more sure of its voice.

From a creative perspective, we make space for local artists – be that in-kind support, programming space, or even funding – and for local businesses and artisans to sell or display their work. In this way, the local community feels that they are represented by the work they make. We strive to make sure we are doing right by them, with regular consultation and feedback sessions. In return, they feel kinship, passion, and love for *The Greenhouse*.

Leading in Sustainability

The Greenhouse leads the way in building a sustainable future. We have realised the importance of compassion and the power of narratives in discussing climate change. As such, we are a gold standard for environmental communication.

We lead by example and hold ourselves to a very high standard. By ingraining zero-waste practice into every level of the organisation, we demonstrate the viability of radical sustainability. But we never rest on our laurels – each year, we review our practice and explore ways that we can improve. Be that through adding green energy generation to the buildings or exploring carbon-neutral transport options for when touring or ordering deliveries. We are constantly researching to ensure we are always at the cutting edge of sustainability.

We have created a whole separate branch of the organisation dedicated to realising this – our Research and Development arm. Created from explorations of different and eco-friendly ways to bring electricity into *The Greenhouse*, the R&D arm has expanded significantly, and is able to conduct ground-breaking research into energy capture, energy storage, and other fields of sustainable technology. Whilst this arm focuses specifically on applications for the arts – including energy capture, energy storage, and other fields of sustainable technology – they are always looking to share their technology with applications in other industries.

In this, as with all areas of the organisation, we are committed to an open-source approach. We share the steps we're taking and the progress we're making. We listen to others and ensure no work is being wasted in the fight against the climate crisis. We inspire active collaboration, built on the work that has come before us. Because the radical collectivism and community this inspires gives us all a far better chance of building a brighter, greener future.

Our Audiences

The Greenhouse has a meaningful impact on our audiences. We have touched them on an individual level and helped them connect with the natural world. When they leave us, they begin to approach their life more consciously. They are aware of the discrete decisions that they are making, and the effects they have on the people and environment around them. They begin actively making changes, and are excited to learn more.

We have opened their eyes. They begin to see the power of their individual actions. They are aware of their power to affect not only the climate crisis, but any issue on any scale. They realise the impact that they have. Our audiences aren't just inspired. They are empowered. They feel more confident in themselves and their ability, and they have a renewed faith in the power of the individual.

But they don't feel excluded or singled out; they don't feel like these burdens are theirs alone to bear. Instead, they feel welcomed into the community. We touch anyone and everyone, creating discussion and collaboration for the passionate and the cynical, the newbie and the experienced. We actively foster this sense of community, helping our audiences meet like-minded people and realise that they are not alone in this – or any – fight. Many of our audience members start building their own communities from this – around sustainability, or around any other issue that really matters to them. They are inclined to share what they have learnt with others.

As a result, *The Greenhouse* ripples outwards – our goals our mission reach even more people as audiences share what they have learned with others. They return home to set up their own *Greenhouse* communities where they live, dedicated to sharing sustainable skills and stories with their neighbours, who in turn will share what they learn with others too. Our community expands to people who have never set foot inside one of our buildings, and we are well on track to our goal of ensuring everyone is within 20 miles of a *Greenhouse* group.

This helps our reputation grow further. People in these communities are excited, one day, to come and visit us, even if they haven't already. When they do come, or when we come to them, they discover the quality of our work, our actively welcoming atmosphere, and our sense of community for themselves. We stay with them for a long time afterwards.

Actively Welcoming

'Welcoming' isn't a passive word. Anyone walking into *The Greenhouse* says the space feels warm, friendly, and welcoming. Every member of the team is Front of House trained, no matter their role, to ensure everyone can offer a warm welcome. We regularly invest in this training so that the FOH team is best-in-class, and goes above and beyond to make everyone feel at home. Whilst celebrate the unique skillset of our FOH staff, we also recognise many of them have ambitions outside this specific line of work. So, we support them to grow in other directions too, be that through free classes, rehearsal space, or one-on-one support.

For us, actively welcoming means constantly updating our accessibility policies. It means promoting diversity at all levels. It means monitoring prices to ensure we're affordable for anyone and everyone (and not just for special occasions – many audience members have made a trip to *The Greenhouse* a part of their weekly routine). Every audience member is treated like they are a part of our family, whether it's their 1st visit or their 100th. Perhaps most importantly of all, it means actively seeking feedback, so we understand how we can improve.

Adding to this, we seek new audiences in other places. We annually tour to different locations across the UK – with a focus on smaller towns and rural locations. Places that most tours usually skip over. It's not the job of our audiences to seek us out – it's our job to seek them out. To make sure they don't feel like our work isn't for them. To connect with people who perhaps wouldn't typically go to the theatre, and welcome them through our doors.

The climate crisis is a defining challenge of our time. We – as an organisation – have only made progress combatting it because we embrace and encourage diversity of thought. We are excited to meet new people and the new ideas they bring. Every person who walks through the doors of *The Greenhouse* feels welcome here.

A Place to Learn

For absolutely everyone, *The Greenhouse* is a place to learn. At an organisational level, we invest in our staff by allocating a budget each year that they can spend on online or in-person

courses. We don't prescribe what the courses are to be about – the money helps our people learn, grow, and be the people that they want to be. We also enshrine the importance of learning from each other – staff members are asked to spend a week working in a different department each year, so that they can understand all the different processes that go into making the company so special.

We are incredibly proud of our external educational offerings. We have begun offering 6-month diploma courses, accredited by UCL, in a variety of different topics around theatre, performance, and sustainability. This has been made possible by the educational framework we've laid down over the last ten years. Through regular workshops that are inexpensive and fun, we help artists and audiences convert interest in sustainability into practical action.

We offer scholarships for promising young artists for whom our learning may be financially inaccessible. We create residencies for risk-taking young artists to learn and develop their skills on the job. These residencies include mentorship from members of *The Greenhouse's* creative team. From our education and diploma programme, we also create a pool of creatives to be regularly involved in our R&D work. They often work on *Greenhouse* shows too, and will be the first port of call when casting our reparatory company each year.

And of course, learning opportunities aren't always formal. As part of our dedication to operating with an open-source framework, we share resources that we have developed through our website. These resources are created from our organisational ideals and practices, as well as our practical experience in making eco-theatre. They provide an easy-to-access way for absolutely anyone to begin implementing sustainability into their life and work.

An Amazing Place to Work

We care deeply about everyone who works with us. We are committed to helping each and every one of them achieve their goals, and become the best people they can possibly be. Everyone genuinely loves working at *The Greenhouse*.

Creatives say we are supportive. By treating them as individuals, and listening carefully to their wants and needs, they feel they are able to fully realise their creative ambitions. Our commitment to fair pay rates means they feel cared for and valued. Our rep company has allowed us to provide consistent employment for a group of young actors.

Our core team is respected for the wealth of knowledge and personal experience that they bring – regardless of their position. They don't feel like a cog in a machine – they feel genuinely valued as human beings. They feel their voice is heard, and they have the chance to be their best selves when they're here. In short, working here is exciting, stimulating, and fun. This is thanks in part to the welcoming and social atmosphere we create amongst our team, and in part to the opportunities to learn, grow, and develop our skills in new directions. It's also because we trust our team. We don't monitor working hours, and we offer 'take-what-you-need' holiday schemes. We regularly seek feedback and explore ways to make working with us even better.

We are quick to celebrate each other's successes – in fact we've developed a reputation for it. Most notably, of course, is our annual internal awards ceremony, where we can celebrate the year past and the year to come. And when sharing in each other's success becomes a bit much, everyone is invited to enjoy some time at our creative retreat in the countryside to relax and rejuvenate. *The Greenhouse* is more than just a place to work – it's a community.

No matter the area, no matter the length of time, no matter who they are or what they've been doing – everyone with whom we work knows that *The Greenhouse* has given them support and freedom to become the people they are today.