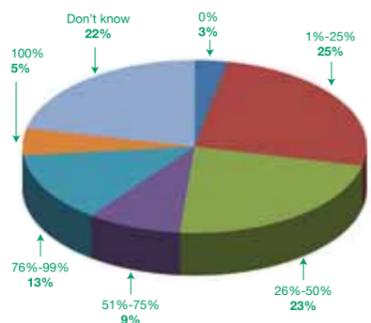


Green Shoots

Armed with statistics galore, AIF's Claire O'Neill asks just how green those festivals are...

Since last year's *European Festival Report*, the introduction of the UK Climate Change Act commits the UK to an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050, with a further commitment to cut them by 34% from 1990's levels by 2020. Of course, this is not just about carbon; other pollutants, water use, waste and so on are all part and parcel of the CO₂ equivalent emissions that are used as a measure of human impact on climate change and the environment as a whole.

What % of your festival's waste do you recycle?



IQ found that more festival organisers now believe that their festivals' environmental credentials have an influence on ticket buyers. 22% think it has no influence, down a third from last year. 36% think it's a huge or definite influence, up a third from last year. The organisers' opinions of how much artists care about the environmental credentials of events has lowered. 35% now believe it has no influence on the artist, compared with 29% in 2008. So it would seem that, if either, it is festival-goers' opinions that are encouraging the move towards greener festivals rather than artist pressure.

Repeat and Gauge

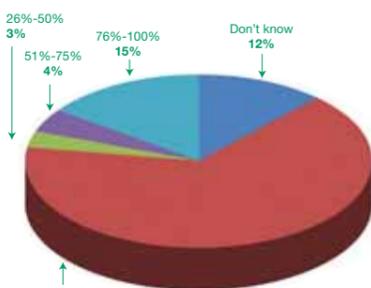
Virtual Festivals (VF) looked at how important environmental initiatives are when choosing which festival to attend – a question asked in 2006 by AGreenerFestival, and Bucks New Uni in 2008. This year, 59.4% say very or fairly important. In 2008, 36% said it was important when considering

which event to go to. Figures have more than doubled from the 2006 results when only 27% thought it was important.

So what can festivals do? IQ found that 39% of festivals now use sustainable energy sources as compared with 25% in 2008. Of these, two thirds have less than 25% of their total energy use from sustainable sources and 15% claim to have over 75% sustainable energy supply. The types of energy being considered as sustainable in this survey included wind power, solar power, green tariff suppliers and bio-diesel. The responses seemed to be fairly evenly spread for the types of energy sources used.

From the events AGreenerFestival assessed over the summer it seems that bio-diesel is a more regularly used source of sustainable power at events. It is important to consider the supply chain if choosing to use such fuel. Most people are now aware of the problem of agricultural land and rainforest being used for bio-fuel crops, causing potential food shortages and environmental damage. A good way to seek sustainable bio-fuel sources is to look for local refineries that convert waste vegetable oil. If they collect used oils from your caterers, even better.

If you use sustainable energy, what % of your energy does it provide?

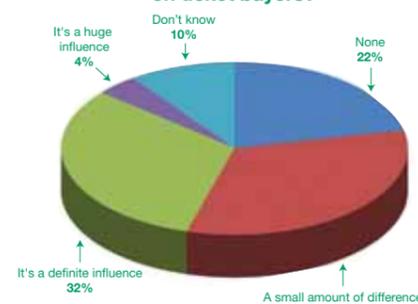


The UK's Summer Sundae Weekender and Big Session Festivals in Leicester, and Fire Gathering in Surrey; and Oya Festival in Norway all use mains power from a green energy supplier. Croissant Neuf Summer Party in Monmouthshire (UK) used 100% solar and wind power.

It seems that a combination method of solar, wind, and sustainably sourced bio-fuel is the most effective method where mains green tariff is not an option. Of course, first and foremost, energy use should be minimised and monitored. When using generators it is important to get the correct size, otherwise excess power will be burned off as smoke.

Of course, in comparison to audience travel, on-site power is small (although still significant and not to be ignored). Julie's Bicycle (JB) found in 2008 that 68% of festivals' CO₂ emissions came from audience travel.

What influence does your festival's environmental credentials have on ticket buyers?



The Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) surveyed 3,300 festival-goers on many aspects of festivals including how they traveled to site. 60% traveled by car and of those, 44% had three or more passengers. This is a reduction from 70% of audience arriving by car in the JB survey in 2008.

Many festivals have been doing a great deal to encourage audiences to leave the car at home or, as a minimum, to lift share. Shambala have teamed up with charity Sustrans to organise bike rides from around the UK to the festival lasting anything from 1-3 days with camping on the way! 250 people cycled from five major cities. Shambala received the 'Outstanding' Greener Festival Award in 2008 for their dedication to greening their event. Bestival had 12 people swimming 7km to the Isle of Wight to raise money for charity! Aside from such antics, a full coach seems to have the lowest journey emissions.

Recommended Reading

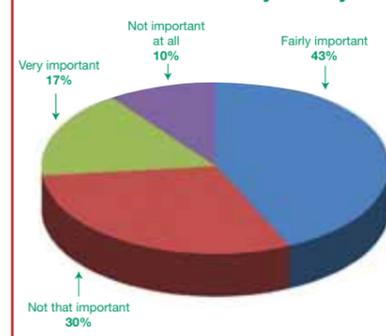
A highly recommended read for sustainable festival transport planning in the UK is JB's *Jam Packed: Part 1 – Audience Travel Emissions from Festivals 2008*. This looks extensively at travel emissions; qualitative and quantitative findings; gives advice and compares with wider leisure industry and UK as a whole.

Regarding waste management, only 3% are lagging behind with absolutely no

recycling, a reduction from last year's 12%. The results show that more organizers don't know what percentage of their waste is being recycled. This highlights the need for better monitoring and benchmarking at events. It is hard to know whether progress is being made when there is nothing to gauge it against. Certainly most waste and recycling companies should be able to offer information about tonnes of waste sent for recycling, landfill etc.

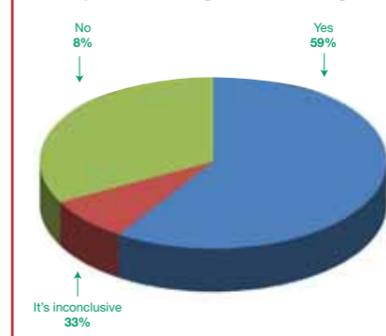
A number of festivals collect the waste together and separate it on site or nearby. There is always an element of sorting even

When choosing a festival, how important is it that it's environmentally friendly?



when different bins are provided, but not having separate bins loses audience awareness of the process. Festivals are very influential places. It was certainly my peer group's parties that influenced me to look at recycling, organic food and alternative energy sources in the first place. Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival went a step further with interactive initiatives such as the RecycleBall which can be rolled around a site to collect different types of recyclables.

Are human carbon emissions responsible for global warming?



On the Isle of Wight they have a gasification plant. This means that the waste can be heated and the emissions captured to produce energy for homes on the island. This is a great way of harnessing energy, whilst diverting waste from landfill in the process. However, it is energy intensive to heat the waste – and anything that can be recycled or

re-used should not be sent for gasification. It would be great to see bio-digesters being utilised by festivals where biodegradable waste is turned to natural gas and compost.

VF found that 23.3% of festival-goers have left their tent at a festival. 79th Reading Scouts, Bright Green and Festival Republic teamed up to salvage left camping gear at Reading Festival, then organised a community sale where you could buy a car full of items for £25. Audiences need to be encouraged and helped to bring less, leave less behind and not see camping gear as disposable.

All Gone Potty

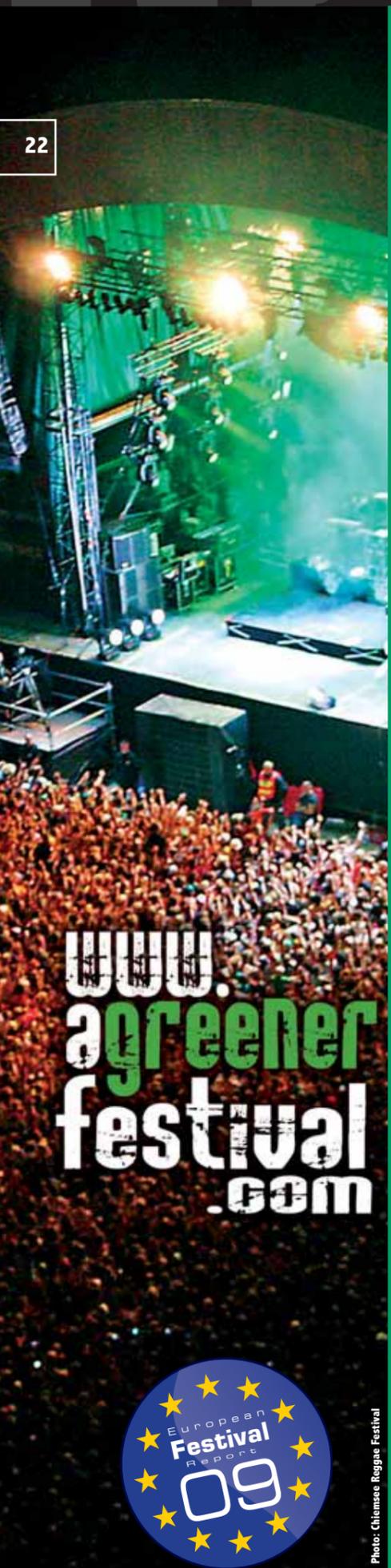
To look at the less glamorous side of events: Sunrise Celebration, One Love, Standon Calling and Dare 2 Festival all used 100% compost toilets including for crew during the build and de-rig. Natural Event provide compost toilets, as well as Thunderboxes, and Comfy Crappers, who provide compost toilets that the audience pay for and that include permanent maintenance crew. Eighty flat-packed toilets can fit onto a truck (as compared with around 16 portaloos), so travel emissions are more than quartered.

Do you use sustainable energy?

Yes: 39% No: 61%

It was great to see the amount of monitoring and data collection that Italy's ten-day reggae festival Rototom Sunsplash does in conjunction with the University of Bologna. Their ethical procurements policy bans Nestlé and Coca Cola at the event and uses local suppliers for their bars. Ubuntu is the cola that they use, which is a fair trade alternative, and the company put a percentage of profits back into the communities in South Africa where the drink is produced.

This year, JB launched a free online tool to help festivals measure, analyse, report and act on their greenhouse gas emissions and AGreenerFestival continues to assess and advise an ever-growing number of events in environmental best practice 'in the field' (37 winners globally this year). Also, more events are sharing experience and ideas with each other through AIF, and a dedicated environmental event management handbook *Sustainable Event Management: A Practical Guide* written by Meegan Jones will soon be released. Certainly, no such resources were readily available for festival organizers in 2006, and so it looks like great moves in the right direction in a short space of time.



www. agreener festival .com



Photo: Chiamee Reggae Festival