



Climate Policy and Action Plan

July 2026

**HIGHLANES
GALLERY**

CLIMATE ACTION POLICY AND PLAN FOR HIGHLANES GALLERY 2026

POLICY STATEMENT

Highlanes Gallery recognises the urgent climate and environmental crisis facing our planet and the immediate need for decisive action across all sectors. We are acutely aware that the current pace of change is insufficient, and that a collective, accelerated response is necessary. With the window for effective action closing rapidly, we commit to taking proactive steps to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis now.

As part of our commitment, we acknowledge that environmental sustainability must be an integral part of our exhibition programming, public engagement, and operational strategies. Highlanes Gallery recognises our responsibility to protect the environment through our practices and activities, while upholding the highest standards of artistic excellence. This policy aims to foster collaboration with staff, board members, and artists.

The arts have such an important role to play. Highlanes Gallery supports the importance of addressing the climate and nature crisis, having already implemented various initiatives, exhibitions, and programs related to ecology, biodiversity and sustainability. Highlanes Gallery also recognises the role it plays within the local community of Drogheda & County Louth in supporting climate action through public engagement and learning.

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations to address pressing challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental protection. They provide a roadmap for creating a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous world by 2030.

Highlanes Gallery aligns with the UN SDGs, particularly SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, which promotes resource and energy efficiency, reduces waste, and encourages sustainable practices.

- SDG 13: Climate Action, fostering a proactive approach to climate change within the arts sector.

ACTION PLAN

Over the past five years, Highlanes Gallery has established a foundation for monitoring energy consumption, improving waste management practices, and encouraging individual actions among staff and stakeholders. These actions include the introduction of LED lighting throughout the building (2022), café & Gallery areas, the introduction of two Bee Hives on the gallery rooftop (2023) and the introduction of Solar Panels (2024). We continue to use our platform as a public institution to promote learning and engagement around environmental issues in our exhibition, collection and public engagement programme. Building on this progress, we will adopt a more structured and comprehensive approach to assessing and reducing our environmental impact at the organisational level.

Key Areas of Environmental Impact

1. Curating, installing, and de-installing exhibitions.
2. Caring for and storing The Drogheda Municipal Collection.
3. Programming.
4. Retail and catering.
5. Building construction, operation, and maintenance.
6. Office processes.
7. Transport of artworks and staff travel.
8. Managing and enhancing Highlanes Gallery's modest grounds to support biodiversity and climate resilience

The Gallery's **Sustainability Ambassadors** will lead these efforts, focusing on refining and expanding our environmental monitoring practices.

In 2025, following participation in the Arts Council's Climate Action Seminars, we will expand our environmental monitoring across all areas of operation. This will include establishing a CO2 emissions baseline for the organisation, which will serve as the foundation for our long-term sustainability goals. Our target is to reduce our carbon emissions by 55% by 2030.

Roles & Responsibilities – Sustainability Ambassador

Highlanes Gallery Sustainability Ambassador

The Sustainability Ambassadors will lead and coordinate Highlanes Gallery's climate action response, aligned with the Arts Council's **Climate Action Policy**. This role focuses on governance, collaboration, education, and impact reduction. The Ambassador will convene regular team meetings, ensure organisation-wide involvement, and lead on compliance with the Arts Council's expectations for funded organisations

Sustainability Ambassadors (2026–2027):

- Stephen Hodgins **Gallery Manager** – Operations & Facilities
- Aoife Ruane **Director / Curator** – Programme Sustainability
- Sé Kelly **Visitor Service's Supervisor** – Gallery Team
- Simon Colfer **PR & Administration Coordinator** – Community & Learning
- Rosin McAuley **Board Member** – Strategic Oversight

Action Plan 2025 - 2027

1. Lead Climate Action Implementation

Key Activities	Responsible Member(s)	Timeline	Notes
Drive Climate Action Plan integration across programming, operations, and engagement	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator	Q1-Q4 2025 – Ongoing	Align with Arts Council strategy
Ensure alignment with Arts Council targets (mitigation, adaptation, resiliency)	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator, Board Member	Q1–Q2 2025	Reference Arts Council targets
Embed climate justice and equity in all activities	Director / Curator, Team	Q1 2025 – Ongoing	Include marginalised communities
Guide Director Curatorial strategy for eco-conscious practices and climate-related themes	Director / Curator, Gallery Manager	Q2 2025 – Q4 2027	Integrate into exhibition planning cycles

2. Monitor and Reduce Environmental Impact

Establish a carbon baseline using tools like Julie's Bicycle	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator	Q2–Q3 2025	Include energy, travel, materials, waste
Set annual emissions targets; track against 2030 goal	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator, Board Member	Q3 2025 – Annual review	Aim for 51–55% reduction
Apply circular economy principles in exhibitions and procurement	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator	Q4 2025 – Ongoing	Focus on reuse, ethical sourcing

3. Build Climate Literacy and Culture

Coordinate staff and artist training (Arts Council Climate Training Programme)	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator	Q2–Q4 2025	Include CE Staff and freelancers
Integrate sustainability into internal processes (meetings, inductions, job descriptions)	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator, Board Member	Q3 2025 – Q2 2026	Make part of organisational culture
Promote behavioural change via signage, digital comms, and green events	Team	Q3 2025 – Ongoing	No single-use plastic, low-carbon catering

4. Collaborate and Share Learning

Engage with national visual arts and climate networks	Director / Curator, Gallery Manager	Q1 2025 – Ongoing	Join SFO Network & others
Represent Highlanes in local and national sustainability efforts	Director / Curator, Gallery Manager	Q2 2025 – Ongoing	Build partnerships and visibility

5. Report and Communicate Progress

Deliver sustainability reports to the Board as part of CEO Report	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator	Q2 & Q4 each year	Include KPIs
Evaluate and update the Climate Action Plan annually	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator, Board Member & Board	Q4 2025–2027	Incorporate new Arts Council guidance
Contribute to Arts Council reporting and national learning	Gallery Manager, Director / Curator	Annual	Share templates, insights with the sector