

# THISEGG'S *ME & MY BEE* SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

*Trialling the Theatre Green Book & Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools to assess the environmental sustainability of the Oxford Playhouse 2021 Pop-Up Tent Tour*



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT: GERAINT LEWIS

## **Josie Dale-Jones and Eleanor Warr**

ThisEgg's *Me & My Bee* was originally co-created by Joe Boylan, Josie Dale-Jones and Greta Mitchell, and funded by public funding through the Arts Council England and National Lottery. It was developed at The Garage, Cambridge Junction & ArtsDepot.

The remount & 2021 tour was produced by Oxford Playhouse with Josie Dale-Jones. It was re-devised & performed by Doxah Dzidzor, Tom Roe and Tianna Sealy-Jewiss, directed by Josie Dale-Jones.

**ThisEgg**

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OXFORD  
PLAYHOUSE

**Theatre Green Book**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on the process of following the Theatre Green Book 1: Sustainable Productions guidance and using the Julie's Bicycle Creative Carbon Tools to try to reduce and measure the environmental impact of the remount of ThisEgg's family theatre show, *Me & My Bee*, produced by Josie Dale-Jones and Oxford Playhouse in Summer 2021. *Me & My Bee* was also adapted for film and made available digitally after the tour.

The report, guidance for the process and data collection was completed by two Sustainability Champions - Eleanor Warr for Oxford Playhouse and Josie Dales-Jones for Staging Change, and in collaboration with the *Me & My Bee* company and Oxford Playhouse staff.

### PRE-PRODUCTION

Communication is more important than ever when working in an environmentally sustainable way. We need to work together. Initial conversations with all parties involved - in-house staff and freelancers - are essential for buy-in. These conversations will need to be repeated as new members come on board. They also allow you to set up direct communication links between departments and with the freelance team, which means you can integrate sustainable choices without miscommunication, doubling up or adding a huge workload unnecessarily.

Combining the Theatre Green Book guidance and data collection with the Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools data collection can be challenging. Although both tools are very useful, the combination can be overwhelming for team members. Collaboration between the Theatre Green Book and Julie's Bicycle to consider how the tools might be made more complimentary would support teams working towards sustainable aims.

### PRODUCTION

Sustainable working needs more time scheduled and more budget allocated to pay for that time. This includes pre-production, time to put together resources about local venues and transport, R&D time for technical, designers, makers and sourcers, as well as marketing teams to imagine sustainable alternatives, rehearsal time and travel time when touring. It's important that freelancers and individuals aren't being asked to do more work without their fees being adjusted for extra time spent on sustainability and reporting.

'Green Jobs' are a great way to share the responsibility for sustainable working with the cast and other touring company members when on tour. These include creating a cooking rota or being responsible for turning off the lights during rehearsals.

## POST-PRODUCTION

The process does not finish after the final show. Check Ins and Reflection meetings must be scheduled to facilitate the closure of the process and to allow for learning opportunities. These should include receiving venues and community groups.

Storage for items post-show is a challenge due to limited space availability. Local venues and companies must work together to aim long-term for shared storage facilities so that the burden does not fall on freelancers or small companies.

We agreed that it was important to extend the Theatre Green Book guidance and reporting to cover the filming stage of the project. This isn't currently included in the Green Book or Julie's Bicycle reporting but as more projects have a hybrid or digital element, it's important the impact of this stage of production is accounted for instead of picking and choosing which elements of the production to focus on. The end of the filming marked the end of this iteration of the show and all materials would then be stored or disposed of. It was vital that we were able to account for the final disposal.

## THEATRE GREEN BOOK TARGETS

Our **Theatre Green Book Target** for the show was **Baseline**. During production, we achieved:

62.5% of Costume materials were sourced sustainably. **Baseline** target achieved.

81.81% of Props and Furniture materials were sourced sustainably. **Intermediate** target achieved.

Set and Scenery n/a - Due to the nature of the show design, which was originally conceived by ThisEgg to be toured via public transport (to reduce transport emissions), any Set or Scenery fell under the category of Props and Furniture.

75% of Technical materials were sourced sustainably. **Baseline** target achieved.

During post-production (including filming), we achieved:

100% of Costume materials were disposed of sustainably. **Advanced** target achieved.

100% of Props and Furniture materials were disposed of sustainably. **Advanced** target achieved.

Set and Scenery n/a - See above.

100% of Technical materials were disposed of sustainably. **Advanced** target

achieved.

## JULIE'S BICYCLE CREATIVE CARBON TOOLS

The Creative Carbon Tools calculate the impact of accommodation, personnel travel and freight travel, resulting in a carbon footprint report for your project measured in Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). This is also the measure used to calculate the annual footprint of an organisation - this reporting is necessary as part of National Portfolio Organisation Arts Council England reporting.

The carbon footprint for the *Me & My Bee* tour was 0.61 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

For contrast, the carbon footprint for Oxford Playhouse's Annual Summary 2020-21 was 2.11 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e (this includes also energy use, water consumption, waste generation and recycling, travel and production materials).

The majority of the impact was a result of personnel travel by car. We did not record audience travel.

Bus	938 km	96 kg CO <sub>2</sub> e
Car	3,161 km	479 kg CO <sub>2</sub> e
Train	972 km	34 kg CO <sub>2</sub> e
Total	5,070 km	609 kg CO <sub>2</sub> e

## OPEN QUESTIONS

Josie and Ellie invite readers to consider the following open questions, which we formed reflecting on this process:

- There is currently no way to account for the impact of Marketing, Digital/Hybrid output (mini-sites, social media etc) or Participation materials using the Green Book or Creative Green Tools reporting. Material Inventories can be created for these departments but how else could they be included in this work?
- Should the sustainable choices made in sourcing/disposing of materials and business travel be reflected in the way you build a creative team? What might that mean? Who might it include and, more importantly, who might this exclude?
- How can work about the climate crisis inspire audiences to help make change?
- What is a successful and sustainable marketing campaign? Plantable flyers featured in a The [Stage article](#), for example - flyers made of biodegradable paper

with poppy seeds inside that can be buried. The flyers were ‘a big hit with audiences’, but the company acknowledged that they were also expensive and limited in terms of design. We think there is still a lot to be explored around sustainable marketing.

Get in touch! If you’ve been thinking about these questions or have ideas about ways to go about these challenges, we’d love to hear from you! You can find us on Twitter @thisegg\_ and @elliewarr.

## INTRODUCTION

Hi! We are Josie - one of the co-creators, and director of ThisEgg's *Me & My Bee* - and Ellie - Sustainability Champion on the Oxford Playhouse tour of *Me & My Bee*.

In Summer 2021, Oxford Playhouse and ThisEgg co-produced *Me & My Bee*, an award-winning family show, on a Pop Up Tent Tour - the production toured locally around Oxfordshire in a large tent, visiting school playing fields and community parks. For context, this tour took place just after things were opening up after the Spring 2021 Lockdown as a result of Covid-19. This was a remount of the show - *Me & My Bee* was originally made in 2016 and toured until 2018.

The show is rooted in the climate crisis and how we can help save the bees to help save the world. We wanted to use environmentally sustainable practice in the re-rehearsals and touring of the show. We used a combination of tools and guidance to inform sustainable choices and set environmental goals for the tour, including:

- **The Theatre Green Book, Book One: Sustainable Productions**
- **Staging Change as Sustainability Consultants**
- **Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools**

Since writing this report, the Theatre Green Book have also developed standards for touring, which you can find [here](#) and 'How To's', which fill some of the gaps we encountered in this process.

In this document we hope to share with you what we did and how it went. It contains reflections about mounting a show with the Theatre Green Book guidance and targets. We hope it will be useful for our own practice moving forward and that the sharing of it can be of some use to other companies wanting to reduce their environmental impact too.

We've structured the report to follow the process of the show from pre-production to future life. At the end of each section you will find Learning bullet points - reflections from our successes and mistakes that we hope will be useful to you.

We recommend reading this document alongside the Theatre Green Book Production PDF as we use a lot of the same language and refer to guidance found in there. You can find it [here](#).

You can also find out more about the Theatre Green Book, Staging Change & Julie's Bicycle in our appendix.

## AT A GLANCE

1 Tent

4 company members on tour (3 x Performers, 1 x Stage Manager)

7 weeks from start of rehearsals to end of run (2 weeks rehearsal, 5 weeks tour)

9 venues (4 school sites, 5 community venues)

20 participation workshops

52 performances

1895 audience members (1009 schools audiences, 886 community audiences)

## PRE-PRODUCTION

*Me & My Bee* was originally designed so that the set and props could be carried around on public transport. Sustainability was embedded into the making of the original show and the creatives who were returning to rework the show for this tour already had environmentally conscious practices.

This helped us to deliver our sustainable goals because everybody was on the same page. However, this might not always be the case. Instead we would recommend carbon-literacy training for producers and production managers (and anyone else you can invite along) involved in a show at the earliest stage possible. This will help embed the sustainable aims and foster creative problem solving. You can find out more about Carbon Literacy here on the [Carbon Literacy Project](#) website - there are resources for organisations and individuals looking to understand more about the climate crisis or receive in-person training.

Oxford Playhouse wanted to trial the Production strand of the Theatre Green Book in collaboration with ThisEgg and Staging Change, using *Me & My Bee* as a case study. The next step was to appoint a Sustainability Champion, as suggested by the Theatre Green Book guidance, to coordinate sustainable practice, collect data for the targets and reflections for evaluation. The sustainability work was built into the budget. The Sustainability Champion was paid a freelance fee of £500 for this work, which included completing the Julie's Bicycle reporting and running a debrief session with Oxford Playhouse. Staging Change was also paid a set fee of £500 for their work as environmental sustainability consultants, reporting and running a debrief session with Oxford Playhouse.

## GETTING STARTED

So, what happened next?

- Ellie (Sustainability Champion) re-read the Theatre Green Book and pulled out all the information relevant to the tour. This included the guidance about Outdoor work and Touring, as well as the general guidance for designers and makers. She put this all together into a presentation for the producers, to help make the process transparent and accessible. The Green Book now have a separate set of standards for touring, which you can find [here](#).
- Oxford Playhouse Producers, ThisEgg, the Sustainability Champion and Staging Change discussed the sustainability targets. We'd never used this way of

measuring the impact of a show before, so we also set ourselves a range - we wanted the production to fall between Baseline and Intermediate targets. This meant that we were aiming for 50-75% of our materials to be from sustainable sources and 65-80% of our materials to have a future life after the show.

- We added the suggested 'Green Meetings' to the Production schedule and reviewed the budget to account for additional Green Meeting time for freelance creatives.
- We discussed low-hanging fruit. This was a local tour of a show designed to pack down into a suitcase. Previous Oxford Playhouse Pop Up Tent tours had used diesel or petrol vans to transport the set/costumes/tech and company from venue to venue. We decided together to aim to replace the van with an electric vehicle.
- Using the Theatre Green Book examples, Ellie made Material and Supporting Inventory templates, ready for the designers and makers to fill in. (The Material Inventories aim to measure what percentage of materials used for the production are sourced and disposed of sustainably). She met with the designers and introduced them to the Theatre Green Book inventories, and created a short written guide to the Inventories so that they could refer to them as they went along. (We asked the designers to fill out the inventories as they went along).
- We included an interest in sustainability into our call outs for freelancers and discussed how the job of collecting travel data (for the Julie's Bicycle Project Report) would be included in the Stage Manager's job role.
- We didn't have time to develop a Green Production Agreement - we wanted to include commitments from the Oxford Playhouse Sustainability Action Plan in the Agreement and the plan was still being developed by the Oxford Playhouse Green Team. Instead we included a short section about sustainability in freelancer designer and makers' contracts. It looked like this:

*You are aware of Me & My Bee's environmental aims, and agree to work in line with them. You will make green choices where possible. Should you need any assistance, you will contact [Sustainability Champion] or Staging Change for help or advice.*

*You agree to:*

- *Complete an inventory as outlined by Oxford Playhouse by the end of the run*
- *Take part in evaluation of sustainable aims and processes as outlined by Oxford Playhouse by the end of the run*

## GREEN RIDERS

We developed a Green Rider to send to schools and community venues receiving the tour.

On the Staging Change website you can find some questions you can ask a venue - be it for rehearsals, or ahead of programming a show - to find out how they are incorporating sustainability into the organisation. These are designed to invite venues into conversations about the actions they are or could be taking to increase their sustainability. This can be a good conversation opener and a nice way into making some asks and building a green rider.

- You can find Staging Change's questions for venues [here](#).
- Julie's Bicycle also has a Green Rider you can use - the example requests are geared towards bands touring to music venues, but it's still useful. Find it [here](#).

We know it can feel awkward asking these questions, especially if you've been given the space in-kind, for example.

With this project, we found that there was also a nervousness about asking too much of the schools and community venues. We borrowed some example requests from the Julie's Bicycle Green Rider and added them to the Logistics Form we were already planning to send to venues in advance. We wanted to find out more about the places where the tent would be pitched, parking access etc. Some of this information was also needed for our Julie's Bicycle Project Reporting.

You can find our Logistics Form in Appendix 2.

However there was a miscommunication about how this information would be passed onto the Production Team which meant that the actors and Stage Manager missed useful information about parking and access to food and water supplies at the venues. This is a really important learning point! Reworking an existing system to add in a sustainable element can mean that team members are unclear who is responsible for passing on information. Josie and Ellie reflected on this and our suggestion for next time is below.

Learning:

- Face-to-face (or Zoom) inductions with venues are more useful than forms. It's a much friendlier approach and, if you can get someone from every venue together for one induction, less time consuming. It gives you a chance to explain your motivations and commitments, and for the venues to ask any questions or raise concerns.

- Configure the communication chain so that any information that will benefit the company (e.g. info about kitchen access or recycling provision) goes to the Company Stage Manager. We missed opportunities to have hot school lunches as a result of a complicated communication chain. And hot meals are very important!
- Some of the data you need for the Julie's Bicycle reporting can be found out through a quick Google rather than asking venues. For example, you can work out the distance between the venue and the nearest public transport using Google Maps.

## 'GREEN' CASTING AND HIRING

Hello, it's me - Josie. Here are some things I was thinking about whilst building the team and making sustainable choices for the touring of *Me & My Bee*. I wondered about what that might mean for the casting and the hiring of the creative team, for example...

I wondered about 'green' casting and hiring.

I wondered what that might be, and what it might mean.

I wondered about the people we might want to work with, and their own principles. I wondered about whether or not they would, or, should match the principles of the production. I wondered about what that meant.

I wondered about levels of expectation.

I wondered what was fair.

I thought about privilege.

I imagined finding out that someone touring with *Me & My Bee* was a climate denier. I wondered how that would make the team feel.

I thought about what impact that might have on the production, and potentially on the audiences and the message of the show.

I wondered why they would want to do the show in the first place.

I wondered how political we wanted to get.

If we were devising this show from scratch again, or another show that dealt with the climate crisis, I wondered if it would be interesting if everyone already felt the same. I thought that might be a boring show.

I made the choice to be transparent (but still very loose) about the level of engagement in sustainable practice from the outset, beginning with the open call (more on that later), and at the point of contract asked the creative team to acknowledge the principles of the show (similar to the above in the designer contracts).

I'd like to find a way of making these hopes/wants/needs more tangible.

I couldn't imagine firing someone for walking into rehearsals with a disposable cup though. And also... no one had asked these questions of the people already working for Oxford Playhouse.

I wondered if that was fair.

For *Me & My Bee*, I decided that it was not about individual actions this time, and that the project itself was a form of collective action. I hoped that this would allow everyone to support one another in that.

I'd like to find a way of co-creating a set of sustainability standards with groups of creatives, producers and venues for productions. A way that means they can change every time, depending on the people and organisations involved... what they feel they can commit to on an individual level, and the aspects of working in a greener way feel exciting to them (whilst challenging themselves too).

## OPEN CALL

Going back to exploring what the actual 'green' casting and hiring might look like...

ThisEgg did an open call for performers for the restaging of the show, using social media. We made the decision not to reply to every individual applicant, unless they were being invited for an audition. Emails have a significant carbon footprint and we wanted to minimise that impact. Instead we stated on the call-out / job advert that if applicants hadn't heard back by a certain date, their applicant had been unsuccessful.

Here are the relevant sections of the call-out:

*"The show is rooted in the climate crisis, and the rehearsals and tour will be run in line with creating as environmentally sustainable a production as possible. We are looking for performers who are passionate and open to making our industry a little bit greener. Staging Change will be helping us all to learn about what we can do!*

...

*If you have been selected for audition, Oxford Playhouse will let you know by Monday 3rd May absolute latest (really sorry for the tight turnaround). If you haven't, it's not because we don't have time to reply to you, it's just that emails account for 23,000 tonnes of UK CO2 emissions each year. Sending a few less each day can help save 16,400 tonnes of CO2 per year."*<sup>1</sup>

We did this with awareness about sensitivity around 'rejections'. Sometimes, sustainable choices can feel like you are sacrificing other working models. In the [appendix](#), you can find a screenshot of an exchange between someone (who has consented to the inclusion

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<sup>1</sup> [This article](#) has slightly different data but explains the impact of emails in more detail.

of these messages in this document) and ThisEgg after reading the above call out. We think it's a useful example of when the environmental sustainability conversation interacts with other areas of life - other principles, capacity and responsibility of larger regularly funded organisations versus companies made up of freelancers, or volunteers... the list goes on. I wonder how we can find a happy medium where NOTHING feels like it is falling short.

I realised that despite making this choice in the call out for *Me & My Bee*, I am quite happy to send a 'Thanks!' email here and there. In the future, I will carry the principle through outside of a specific boundary for a section of a project. I will include a sentence as part of my email signature to explain this.

## PRODUCTION

### MATERIAL INVENTORIES

We found it useful to set 'Check-In points' into the designers' schedules - one as a deadline by which to complete the **sourcing** part of the Supporting Inventory and one as a deadline by which to complete the **disposal** part of the Supporting Inventory.

We set the first Check-In point on the last day of rehearsals, and the last on the final day of the run.<sup>2</sup> The designers made useful suggestions about how we could dispose of materials in sustainable ways, but it was the Stage Manager and Josie who oversaw disposal or storage at the very end of the run.

Here is how we did!

- 62.5% of Costume materials were sourced sustainably [**Baseline** target achieved]
- 81.81% of Props and Furniture materials were sourced sustainably [**Intermediate** target achieved]
- Set and Scenery n/a - Due to the nature of the show design, which was originally conceived by ThisEgg to be toured via public transport (to reduce transport emissions), any Set or Scenery fell under the category of Props and Furniture.
- 75% of Technical materials were sourced sustainably [**Baseline** target achieved]

We found that by discussing sourcing from the start we were able to prioritise doing this in as environmentally sustainable way as possible. By reporting on this, we were able to hold ourselves accountable.

The set and costume designers were already embedding sustainability in their work, which helped a lot. The benefit of asking them to complete the inventories was that it felt

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<sup>2</sup> Ellie here - I used the Theatre Green Book guidance on a show I directed over Christmas 2021, *Home In Time For Christmas*, and we moved these check-in's so that the sourcing deadline was after previews, to allow for any last minute sourcing. The disposal deadline was also moved to 15 days after the end of the run, to allow for trips to charity shops, recycling collections or pick-ups.

like all members of the team were invested in doing the best we could to be sustainable and to be fully transparent about it.

At the end of the show, we created an evaluation form so we could share learning. Ideally, this would be shared in person in an **Evaluation Meeting** with the whole team, but this means freelance fees need to be adjusted to reflect this extra time. We did add a sustainability clause into the contracts, however the fee was not adjusted. Next time we would account for this.

We found that designers felt that the sustainable aims were clear from the start and that they found the material inventories easy to use. When asked how the production's sustainable aims affected the design process, designers reflected that:

“I had to be very **materials led rather than design led**... basing decisions on what I could find to recycle.”

Designers said that in future work they would “continue to use ‘waste’ materials as starting points”.

There were challenges though.

When asked about the challenges they encountered to sustainable working, designers reflected that additional **time** was a priority.

“The lead time from when my contract was confirmed to the delivery date was too short. **Working sustainably takes longer and we need to allow for that.**”

Also, sourcing ‘last minute’ props sustainably is difficult in a devising process generally. Naturally the show was evolving through the rehearsal process and some unexpected props were needed. We were fortunate to be given rehearsal space and accommodation in a village near Oxford but the rural location made it tricky to nip to a charity shop or another more sustainable option to look for props.

Learning:

- Agree check-in points with the designers and makers to help with the process of completing the inventories.
- Rehearsal venues located close to a town centre, with public transport links to local shops and charity shops make ‘last minute’ sourcing easier.
- Evaluating the process is key for useful reflection - the stand-out from our evaluation was that more time was required for sustainable working.

## CREATIVE GREEN TOOLS

For a CGT project report, you can record the following:

- Performances
  - Number of Indoor performances, size & number of tickets issued
  - Number of Outdoor performances, size, number of tickets issued and whether they are urban (less than 1km walking distance from public transport), peri-urban (1-2 km from public transport) or greenfield (more than 2 km)
- Accommodation - number of people, number of nights in a hotel, number of nights spent with friends/in rented accommodation
- Personnel travel, including vehicle type, distance, fuel type and number of travellers
- Production, including show power (kWh) and freight travel
- Beyond Carbon: a survey which goes 'beyond the numbers and is a way to capture your environmental practice, action and engagement and the benefits which this brings.' The survey includes questions about renewable energy providers, the impact of environmental and sustainability work on your staff wellbeing and policies and individuals with responsibility for the environment within your organisation.

For other types of projects, for example non-touring shows, you can also report on energy use, waste, water and audience travel.

To help collate the data for the CGT report, I (Ellie) created another lovely spreadsheet so that I could gather the information about accommodation and travel as the tour progressed. This would not have been possible without the wonderful Sophie, our Stage Manager, who was collecting mileage for the company each week and reporting back to me via email.

*Me & My Bee* did not require power so there was no show power to record. All accommodation (196 nights in total) was in 'friends/rented accommodation' - support-in-kind from partners or supporters - which meant that there were no hotel night stays. The impact was exclusively from travel - during the tour, the company and the set/costumes/props all travelled in the same EV. This also included trips made to rehearsals and performances by the support team of staff, predominantly from the Playhouse, visits from the wider creative team including the designers and the travel of the facilitators delivering the workshops. The total carbon footprint was 0.61 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

See [Travel](#) for reflections on the process of collecting this data and for a breakdown of travel by vehicle/fuel type.

## REHEARSALS

### VENUE

Finding a place to rehearse can be tricky at the best of times. We were fortunate to be offered rehearsal space in-kind that reflected the sustainable values of the show - a barn in a village near to Oxford. The benefits of the barn from a sustainability point of view were:

- Waste management. There was excellent provision for recycling and we had access to a kitchen, which meant we could reduce reliance on packaged foods or disposable coffee cups etc.
- Facilities. The barn worked well for the show and had the basic facilities required for rehearsals. Having accommodation onsite meant we reduced daily travel to and from rehearsals for the core company. (Producers and support staff still travelled out to the barn for an initial Meet and Greet, and to visit the company, usually driving and often using car-shares.)<sup>3</sup>

The challenges were:

- Temperature control: the barn could get chilly when the weather cooled. Electric heaters were available but would have been inefficient in a large space. The only other option was using huge gas canisters, which we decided against.
- Travel: the rural location meant that public transport was tricky. Before the company's electric vehicle arrived, cabs were necessary and although some 'green' cabs were occasionally available, they were expensive and harder to book.

Learning:

- It's better to be conscious and use the Staging Change or Julie's Bicycle Green Riders to find out the facts about a rehearsal venue before you book, so you can make an informed decision about whether and how you use the space (or what you ask for, such as a recycling bin). It's always okay to ask questions.

### 'GREEN' JOBS

During the rehearsal period & tour, ThisEgg devised 'Green Jobs' together with each touring company member. For the remount of *Me & My Bee* there were 3 performers

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<sup>3</sup> Josie here again - this leads on a bit from the choosing one thing over another - the feeling that having staff present would make the company feel supported and aid artist wellbeing, for example, over saving fuel consumption or vice versa. I think being 'present' in person is often sacrificed in sustainable choices - this gets reaaaaalllly interesting when we start to think about collaborating or touring internationally...

(Doxah, Tom & Tianna) and one stage manager (Sophie). Everyone was responsible for a small (but significant) everyday action:

- Doxah: making sure all lights are off when not in use
- Tianna: sharing sustainable choices etc on social media throughout the tour (using the ThisEgg login etc)
- Tom: creating a cooking rota
- Sophie: doing miles/travel inventory (and recycling at each location and in accommodation)

We haven't reflected with the company on these jobs specifically - partly due to the fact we didn't have budget for the touring team to give feedback on the sustainable elements of the production properly (this is a problem you'll see mentioned quite a bit in this report - environmental sustainability shouldn't have to come at the financial expense of individuals or freelancers).

There are various challenges you can run into when working on the above though, including:

- Some buildings having keys to turn lights on and off - this is an extra hassle, especially when these keys aren't given out to visiting companies
- Sharing on social media only goes as far as a company's following. Hopefully it is better than nothing, but, using social media has a carbon footprint in its own right. I wonder how we measure how worthwhile this was...
- People often have their own plans, and after spending lots of time together, need a bit more individual down time, and although it can be nice cooking together, doing this daily doesn't work for everyone.

Other simple actions Staging Change might suggest include:

- Checking that there are recycling bins in rehearsals
- Creating a guide to local shops or restaurants that source local and organic foods
- Helping arrange car pooling or safe cycle routes to rehearsals and touring venues
- Asking everyone to turn off their wifi when working
- Bringing a packed lunch
- Use reusables in rehearsals
- Being the person to tell people to put extra jumpers on before whacking the heating on

## LEARNING:

- *Me & My Bee* was originally made and performed in 2016, and toured through until 2018. The remount in 2021 was performed by a new creative team over a short rehearsal period. As a result, there was not a lot of time to go through the background of making it, and the research involved. We wonder if a longer period

of engagement in the project, its themes, mission and relationship to climate and activism would result in a deeper impact on the touring company, and therefore the audience.

## TOURING

### TRAVEL

Recording the distances travelled on the tour is part of the reporting for Julie's Bicycle, which helps to calculate the impact of the show. Oxford Playhouse had done a tour of America in previous years and recorded the distances travelled by the minibus between venues as part of their annual Julie's Bicycle reporting. The minibus miles massively increased the carbon footprint of that year. With that in mind, Oxford Playhouse decided to source an electric vehicle for this tour - the distances would be smaller, but we knew that travel was one of the big sources of CO2.

### THE EV

While this massively reduced the use of petrol/diesel for the show, the electric car also posed challenges:

- Access to charging points. Locating local charge points and charging the car takes time. The Stage Manager had to plan days off around where the car could be charged quickly and cheaply. And then a day off becomes a working day...
- Locating an EV or hybrid hire car was difficult and there wasn't much choice or local availability. The car that we hired was driven down from Worcester for use in Oxford. Additionally, as this hire was a lease, it came without insurance. Insurance was an additional cost to be budgeted and works in a different way to other car hires.
- Capacity. In previous years all set/tech/costumes touring with the Oxford Playhouse Pop up tent were transported with the company in a (diesel) van, as well as all the materials for wrap-around Participation activities. The smaller size of the EV meant that additional cars were required at each venue to transport materials. So maybe we didn't save that much petrol/diesel anyway.

In addition to the company's transport, we recorded travel for support staff, including facilitators, the tour manager and the marketing team. We found that:

- Car shares were effective, but did mean early starts for facilitators due to the remote locations of schools and the early start of the school day.
- We were conscious of avoiding busy public transport to reduce the risk of Covid. Team members reflected that they used more Ubers than they would have done in non-Covid times (you can now get green Ubers, but they don't come around very often)
- We used Google Maps to calculate distances via public transport. Tracking business mileage was straightforward for the company, who travelled together, but inconvenient for the wider team of support staff and not attempted for FOH volunteers.

## THE FOOTPRINT

In total, the distance travelled by the EV carrying the company and set/costumes/props was 245 miles.

The travel taken by the support team - the company manager, marketing, facilitators and other Playhouse staff was predominantly taken in petrol or diesel cars, with car shares and lifts often used to reduce impact.

**The total car travel was 3161 km, meaning that company travel only accounted for 12.5% of total car journeys.**

It's not possible to gauge the CO<sub>2</sub>e footprint of an EV vehicle contrasted to a fossil fuel vehicle using the CGT calculator, which is a shame because it would give us a sense of how much the EV contributed or reduced our carbon footprint. However it is clear that total company travel was significantly lower than total support team travel and therefore focusing on how to reduce the impact of the support team's travel would be a priority going forward.

The majority of travel taken by bus or train was for company members travelling longer distances, for example to Oxford from homes in London.

## ON COLLECTING TRAVEL DATA

Collecting data about travel was challenging. The picture we present in the CGT reporting isn't complete - not all staff reported their travel data and there is only so much chasing you can do before you make educated estimates. Recording travel data feels like a bore when you are busy running around for a show - or you just forget - and I fully appreciate that. On the other hand, what we ended up with was a comprehensive picture of the travel taken by freelancers and a more patchy picture of the travel taken by in-house staff. The system we put in place of weekly updates worked for the company but didn't work in practice for the support team members.

I think there is an interesting point here about the readiness of freelancers to comply with asks from venues, such as sustainable working, which unfortunately is related to the power imbalance between a venue and freelance artists. When a venue makes an ask of a freelancer, often the freelance artist feels that they need to comply. In-house staff don't experience this in the same way and may therefore be slower to build new asks, such as sustainable working, into their routine.

This is why I think it's important to be upfront about these challenges with your team and try to devise creative solutions in consultation from the beginning of the process. Organising Carbon Literacy Training for Heads of Department or Team Leaders is also so

useful if you want to embed sustainable thinking across your venue. It empowers staff and facilitates conversations about approaches to the challenges presented by sustainable aims. It also clearly communicates the expectations of the venue of the in-house staff. We didn't have time to do this for *Me & My Bee*.

There is also a practical challenge to report business travel for in-house staff. As they are commuting into the venue to work on a variety of projects, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish which journeys fall under a particular project. It's important to specify this to staff if you're asking them to keep track of their travel. For example, a trip out to a tour venue needs to be recorded as part of the Julie's Bicycle Project Report travel data. The daily commute into work does not.

I think working with venue finance teams to see how we can integrate sustainable reporting into expenses forms could be a good solution, so that in-house staff are reporting mileage for compensation and for sustainability reporting at the same time.

#### LEARNING:

- Electric vehicles can be difficult to source. Allow plenty of time to organise a hire to ensure that the company has access to the vehicle from the start of rehearsals.
- Mapping charge points and charging time should be factored into the designated driver's contracted hours.
- A calculation should be made as to whether the proximity is close enough to the tour locations to make it worth it.
- Allow plenty of time to secure a local hire car in advance of rehearsals.
- Budget for insurance (there are some different rules in hiring electric vehicles).
- Consider a large EV car or an EV van.
- Spend time thinking about how you can reduce the impact of the support team travel. Is an EV for the Company Manager/lead Producer an option?
- Integrate collecting data about business mileage with expenses claims and set up a good communication chain between the Finance team and the person completing Julie's Bicycle reporting. This should combine two jobs into one.
- Setting up cross-departmental group chats so journeys and car-shares can be planned in advance and most efficiently. Working together makes sustainability much easier on lots and lots of levels.
- Be aware that drivers doing the bulk of car-share driving will require TOIL (time off in lieu) to compensate for early starts and roundabout routes to collect colleagues. We wonder if these roundabout routes are saving the environment that much anyway...

#### ACCOMMODATION

Across the production, the company stayed in 3 places. During rehearsals they stayed on

the same site as the rehearsal venue, as well as spending a few nights in an Airbnb. Whilst touring, they stayed in student accommodation at Wolfson College, Oxford University. There were 196 nights spent in accommodation in total. Data about accommodation is part of the CGT reporting. As all our accommodation was at Friends/Rented accommodation as opposed to hotels, the CO2e footprint was 0 kg, according to the CGT measures.

- Waste: there were separated recycling bins in accommodation
- Laundry: there was no access to laundry at the accommodation. Although a bit of a mare for the touring company members, the costumes and the materials they had been made from, required hand-washing anyway. Handwashing costumes was a challenge in colder weather though. No one wants a damp costume.
- Kitchens & length of stay. Private kitchens and longer stays are useful especially for buying in bulk - bulk buying reduces the amount of packaging that may be wasted by buying the same amount in more packages.

#### LEARNING:

- Prioritise (safe & reliable) Friends/Rented accommodation over hotel stays.
- Create a checklist for Green Digs and arrange Induction meetings with accommodation hosts to discuss waste and recycling in advance of your stay e.g. recycling bins in the accommodation itself might be good, but collection changes from council to council (and any other questions you dare...)
- Budget for costume doubles to avoid challenges around handwashing. (In this scenario, it's even more important to think carefully about how to dispose of the costumes at the end of the run.)

#### FOOD

When touring, eating without everything being wrapped in plastic can be really hard. For the touring of *Me & My Bee* in the summer of 2021, ThisEgg and Oxford Playhouse ensured that all accommodation had a usable kitchen and that the touring company had reusable coffee cups, tupperware and cutlery. Even so, we found that:

- The nature of being outside in the Tent (and because of Covid), meant that hot lunches would have been appreciated!
- Cafes at venues were expensive...

#### LEARNING:

- Loan the company a thermos or a cool/warm box and/or ask venues for use of a

- microwave (harder this year because of the pandemic).
- Make connections between venues and the company to find opportunities for the company to eat school dinners or in-house.

## AUDIENCE

For the Pop Up Tent Tour, Oxford Playhouse took *Me & My Bee* to schools and community venues, meaning that generally speaking, the travel for audiences was reduced compared to travel to the main theatre building. All of our venues were within 1 mile of public transport links and we chose school hosts located near other local schools so that classes could walk to see the performance as opposed to taking a coach.

However... it is difficult to measure the impact of audience members who did travel by other means to see the show, or to get any sense of the wider impact of our audiences on the carbon footprint of the show. We don't currently have metrics to measure that impact and it is also incredibly difficult to access audience data (for good reasons) due to GDPR. It is possible to calculate the impact of audience travel using the CGT project report if you have access to that data. Thanks to work from the Box Office and Ticketing teams, Oxford Playhouse do also report as part of Annual Summaries on audience travel, but this is not specific to a production.

We wonder how companies and venues can encourage or actively support audiences in making green choices around their theatre experience.

We wonder who picks up that carbon - is audience travel, their eating/drink choices around seeing the show, and other parts of their life our responsibility too?

Some ideas:

- Look into how data is collected for the Annual Summaries and see if more detail can be gleaned for specific projects.
- Maybe there is a pick up / carpool option in booking tickets?
- Maybe venues commit to only selling locally grown / made food and drink for consumers?
- Maybe there is an offset option in buying tickets?  
... maybe, maybe, maybe...

We hope that the more work made about the climate crisis, the more we can engage the public as a whole in its issues as well as solutions on a day to day level.

## MARKETING AND MERCHANDISING

The Oxford Playhouse Pop Up Tent Tour is specifically designed to reach audiences who

might not otherwise have regular access to live theatre. Because of this, the focus is on visiting schools, community centres and local parks around rural Oxfordshire. All tickets are free of charge, although, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, booking a ticket was required as a means to maintain an overview on numbers for health and safety.

Because of this, most of the tour has a pre-existing, inbuilt audience, for example, school children, and therefore did not need specific show marketing.

This said, when *Me & My Bee* was performing in a public space, regardless of it being in a popular park with regular footfall, the show did need marketing to bring in audiences.

Marketing a show is SO important. If no one knows it's happening, no one will be there, and everything you've done (even if it is green) is effectively pointless. That's the truth. But, what is green marketing? Good question... we wonder if it actually needs to start with, what is effective theatre marketing? Another good question. We're not sure we know the answer, and if anyone does, we would love to know more. Annnnnnd, as we've said, marketing is really tricky, particularly when bringing environmental sustainability into play, but how can we also ensure our marketing is inclusive and accessible on all levels?

Here are a few of the things we considered, and some of the challenges we came up against around marketing for this project:

- We printed flyers on recycled, recyclable paper at a local printer. This was a little bit harder to find, but not that difficult. An easy win.
- We worked across both ThisEgg & Oxford Playhouse social media channels. We do not have data about the carbon footprint of this specifically for *Me & My Bee* as both accounts are used across various projects at one time. We wonder about effective online communication. It feels like a greener option because we can't see the impact, but digital choices impact the planet too.<sup>4</sup>
- The Tent itself was decorated with Oxford Playhouse branded bunting. Although we would have liked to make this bespoke to the show in the tent, the bunting had been used in previous years, and will be used again. This felt like the green choice, but perhaps sacrificed an element of design for the show, and also made it harder to present the show as a co-production.
- The Oxford Playhouse Marketing team commissioned bee stickers for audience members to wear after seeing the show. This was an effective marketing tool as the show was often on more than once a day in the same location and having people in the park with the stickers on sparked conversation, perhaps then leading to more audience members for another show later in the day. We did have a lot of these stickers leftover however, and since they are tied into the show's identity, but have the Oxford Playhouse website on them, they aren't really suitable for use on any future touring of the show.
- We printed QR code stickers (more on this in the website section) to take people to

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<sup>4</sup>More on that here:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200305-why-your-internet-habits-are-not-as-clean-as-you-think>

the *Me & My Bee* website. Unfortunately these were non-recyclable and made anything they were stuck to non-recyclable (unless they were removed). In future we will use one large poster with the QR code instead of multiple labels.

## LEARNING:

We feel there is a lot to be explored around sustainable marketing so we don't have as many concrete actions to share yet.

- Take the time to find a local printer who will print flyers on recycled, recyclable paper.
- Use large posters for QR codes instead of multiple labels.
- Print fewer flyers and use the Staging Change icons (see below) to encourage audiences to take photos of flyers and recycle them.

Staging Change created a Recycle Me and Take A Photo campaign at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2018. They asked companies to add their graphic (below) to their paper marketing and prompt people to take a photo of flyers and posters. And, if people did take a flyer, they were encouraged to recycle it.



Ironically, there wasn't the time to add these on to the flyers for *Me & My Bee* between proofing and printing. Learning - more time, again!

There is currently no way of recording the impact of marketing or participation materials using either the Theatre Green Book inventories or the Julie's Bicycle reporting. You could create extra material inventories for these sections, but it seems to us that more could be done to acknowledge the role of marketing in our sustainable goals.

## WEBSITE

We developed a mini-site for *Me & My Bee*, as part of the Participation offer. The site featured photos of the show and activities such as word-searches and dot-to-dots.

When reflecting on the sustainability of the website, our Digital Producer reflected that more time for planning would have been helpful as she would have had more time to look at greener web hosting solutions. More planning time would also have allowed for coordination of the show website with Google Analytics, which would have indicated the

amount of traffic the website received. This data would have given us an idea of how much footfall the website had - a useful way of working out whether having a website is worthwhile.

If you're interested, there are a number of carbon calculators for websites - you pop in your URL and get a sense of the impact your website has on the planet. For example, using the [Website Carbon Calculator](#), we can see that the Theatre Green Book website is cleaner than 67% of webpages tested and emits in a year the amount of carbon that three trees could absorb. However, the Theatre Green Book website doesn't use green hosting, which would reduce the amount of CO2 emitted by 9% (Website Carbon Calculator also offers suggestions of green hosting solutions). Other calculators include [Green Web Check](#) and [Ecograder](#).

The Green Web Check graded our website as 'grey or we are not sure about the greenness of the hoster.' We tried running the URL through the Website Carbon Calculator to compare results, but the test was unsuccessful. This is probably because the *Me & My Bee* website is no longer available publicly as the payment for the domain has expired. However, we found out that the host for the *Me & My Bee* site, WP Engine, has been moving clients to Google data centres. Google has committed to use only renewable energy by the end of 2017. You can request green hosting from WP Engine by specifying that you want to be in one of the Google data centres. WP Engine's other main provider is Amazon Web Services - described in [this article](#) as 'not fantastic environmentally'. Amazon Web Services have apparently made progress and are aiming for 100% renewable energy by 2025. You can find a 2021 breakdown of green website hosts [here](#).

As with all sustainable choices, longer lead-time and planning is required for making digital elements of the show more green. Limited planning time for this project meant that all marketing material mentioned above had already been sent to print by the time the website was launched, and so did not include information about the *Me & My Bee* website. Instead, QR code labels were printed and stuck onto the seed packets that audiences were given as they left the show. The seed packets contained wildflower seeds to grow flowers to help feed the bees.<sup>5</sup> The company weren't sure if these were recyclable so were unclear about what advice to give to audiences looking to dispose of the seed packets once they'd planted the seeds.

This is a perfect example of where sustainable choices had been made but unfortunately undone by a last minute change or a planning mistake. The seed packets themselves were recyclable and made from recycled materials, and the intention for the website was that it would act as a way of reducing printed participation materials.

In the future, we will work to have a clearer overview for a production, the touring, marketing and wraparound for the project. This starts with securing funding and venues

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<sup>5</sup> At the end of the Tour we had seeds left over. Excess seeds can be donated and we gave ours to a local Helen & Douglas House who were redeveloping their children's garden. It is necessary to check the rules about planting (yes, there are rules about planting) – or, if storing the seeds for future iterations of a tour, check the expiry date.

earlier on too. Not always an easy thing to do. I (Josie) wonder what environmentally sustainable aims might mean for the way funding bodies are structured, and how they distribute money..

## POST PRODUCTION

### DISPOSAL

Disposal of sets in a sustainable way is often tricky. The Creative team may not be directly involved, meaning there is an ‘out of sight, out of mind’ mentality instead of team-wide problem-solving. There might be a quick turn-around for the next show and there is almost always a big question about storage - very few companies or venues have places to store materials or costumes in case they might be reused in the future.

If you or the venue you’re working with do have storage, amazing! In his *On Bear Ridge*: National Theatre Wales case study for the Theatre Green Book, David Evans (Head of Productions) describes successful sustainable disposal of boards in storage that have done four or five shows, and using wire from one show to make chicken coups in another.

If not, it is still possible to dispose of your materials sustainably.

My advice - Ellie here - is to make disposal a challenge that the whole team can help solve. Schedule a check-in to plan disposal during the run, way before your Get-Out. This will allow you time to share knowledge about local reuse centres, contact local theatres to see whether they would like to magpie anything for upcoming productions, or arrange donation or selling of items on eBay, Freecycle, Facebook Marketplace etc (including temporary storage of items until they are collected, who is responsible for listings and a back-up plan if they don’t sell). It also gives you time to research or ask around for anything you don’t have the answer to. This process of networking builds a stronger circular economy in your area.

The Pop Up Tent Tour of *Me & My Bee* concluded on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, but the creative team returned to Oxford for filming the digital leg of the tour in September. The costumes and props used for the live show were reused for filming, meaning that the live show version of *Me & My Bee* achieved 100% of materials disposed of sustainably (Intermediate target achieved).<sup>6</sup>

At this stage in the project Josie took over the bulk of recording materials for the inventories. Ellie also created a specific inventory for the film production company that we worked with which they completed really thoroughly. This included a Technical Supporting Inventory, an inventory for business travel and a Green Rider. You can find

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<sup>6</sup> And if they weren’t, they were either given to a Tianna (cast member) to use for her children's party business, or, live in Josie’s flat, hoping for another tour...

the template [here](#).

We agreed that it was important to extend the Theatre Green Book guidance and reporting to cover the filming stage of the project for several reasons. The film is part of the legacy of the project and plays an important part in sharing the message of environmentalism more widely.

Additionally, more and more projects have a hybrid or digital element and it's important the impact of this stage of production is accounted for instead of picking and choosing which elements of the production to focus on. Again, not just undoing the hard work you've already done on making green choices. Finally, the end of the filming marked the end of this iteration of the show and all materials would then be stored or disposed of. It was vital that we were able to account for the final disposal.

Here is how we did:

- **100% of Costume materials were disposed of sustainably [Advanced target achieved]**. All items were either put into storage by ThisEgg or donated to charity.
- **100% of Props and Furniture materials were disposed of sustainably [Advanced target achieved]**. All items were either put into storage by ThisEgg or donated to a Children's Party company.<sup>7</sup>
- Set and Scenery n/a - Due to the nature of the show design, which was originally conceived by ThisEgg to be toured via public transport (to reduce transport emissions), any Set or Scenery fell under the category of Props and Furniture.
- **100 % of Technical materials were disposed of sustainability [Advanced target achieved]**. All items were used on multiple jobs by the film production company or returned to storage.

We think that sustainable disposal really needs strong local networks between local companies and venues so that in pre-production and post-production materials can be exchanged and reused more easily. More dialogue about what is recyclable and going spare at the end of a run means less in the bin and less money spent on skip hire. There are some initiatives that are already working well in this area including: [Set Exchange](#) and Facebook Marketplace. Even Ebay can be a good option for set disposal.

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<sup>7</sup>Josie here - by ThisEgg storage we mean my flat. This is only possible because the costumes don't take up too much space, and I am lucky that my flat has good cupboards (and also that my flatmates are kind). There have been times where the flat is full of random bits and pieces from shows (particularly throughout lockdown where it felt like holding on to set and props for shows that where half made was like holding on to the hope that we'd be able to finish them). It is not fun living amongst your shows. Conversations about how venues can support with storage could be part of the initial offer to companies and freelancers to make disposal more environmentally sustainable.

## MEASURING IMPACT

So far, it seems that measuring our ‘negative’ impact is relatively do-able. How, though, do we measure the impact of a show on its audiences? How do we know whether what we have done is worth it? Whether we have made anyone think, and act differently? Tricky.

We thought a lot about the traces we were leaving in the places the tent popped up - the effect of the tent on the grass, what bringing large groups of people together in one outdoor space might do to its environment, how we can be responsible for the waste left on site etc etc...

At the end of the show, the audience are given flower seeds to plant. Some of the schools we visited were excited about being able to create a bee garden from these. Something like this is a really nice legacy for a show to have, and a reminder to the people at those schools of the show and its themes. It might even spark conversation with someone who didn’t see it, and help them learn about bees too.

Staging Change did a similar project with HOME Manchester, *Spring*, where they installed a visual and audio installation in the foyer. It was a replica of a city, which over the month it was there for, grew moss and flowers. A symbol for rewilding. Audiences were invited to scatter their wildflower seeds in some of the parks around Manchester. They teamed up with Castlefield & Sackville Gardens who reserved patches of earth for this. Working together with councils and other public authorities - who are keen to help out and are on a similar mission - can be a really positive thing. When they are not, it’s a really difficult task.

We wonder what it might mean if touring companies aimed not only to leave no trace, but a positive one everywhere they visited.

Staging Change had some great conversations with designers including David Shearing about leaving positive traces of where we’ve been too... These conversations led to a collaboration between Staging Change and Variable Matter - an audio walk exploring locality. You can find out more about that [here](#) if you’d like to.

## LEARNING:

- In future versions of the Oxford Playhouse Pop Up Tent tour it would also be great to establish a check-in with schools and venues months after the performance, to reflect on the impact of the show.

## FUTURE LIFE

### THE DIGITAL VERSION...

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, theatres and makers began creating more digital work than they did before. This ranges from a live capture of a performance, streamed to people's homes to entirely new forms. ThisEgg, for example, with Camilla Clarke began developing an interactive online installation blend video game. You can see more about that [here](#).

Creating digital adaptations of theatre shows have some really brilliant benefits, particularly when it comes to access.

What exactly digital means for sustainability - because of the equipment used, the footprint of that, as well as the energy used by the devices we watch them on, and the materials used to make those devices - there's also the heating of many buildings for people to be in versus the one space that lots of people come together in, for example - we're not yet completely sure, but we thought we would share a bit about what we did anyway so you can figure it out with us.

We made a digital adaptation of *Me & My Bee* in the hope that it will reach more people than the touring show could. Because the show wants to galvanise people into action surrounding the climate crisis, we felt that the further that could reach, the more positive impact we might be able to have as a whole.

It is, though, always a risk (financially, and for the planet). We made this without knowing where it would go, and if there was going to be any uptake on it in terms of distribution partners, or, as a result, audiences.



## COMMITMENTS

We learnt a lot. We made mistakes. We found some solutions, and we came up with a few ideas. Following the evaluation of the efforts to be sustainable on the tour of Me & My Bee in Summer 2021, ThisEgg made commitments / statements of intention moving forward. We are sharing them here to help hold ourselves accountable:

**ThisEgg** will:

- Always begin rehearsals with a conversation about the environment, and how the climate crisis will affect choices in making and touring a production with the entire creative and producing team, no matter the theme of the show itself
- Always use the Theatre Green Book to set goals, and record an inventory of tangible items and work with sustainability consultants as standard
- Always question venues and people in power we work with about how they're incorporating sustainability into what they do
- Always delegate green jobs to the touring team
- Always tour with a green rider, and include certain asks in regards to the environmental sustainability in contracts with people and organisations moving forwards
- Always schedule space for green meetings into a production timeline
- Develop a Green Production Agreement
- Budget for freelancers time on sustainable sourcing and reporting
- Continue to look for collaborations with marketing specialists, experts who might be able to help measure the less tangible impact of the content of a show, and researchers to inform the content of any future shows relating to the climate crisis

The above commitments are examples of what ThisEgg feel they can do now (whilst also challenging themselves to be doing more). We will continue to renew these to keep up with best practice.

### **Oxford Playhouse**

The plan was for us (Josie and Ellie) to hold a workshop with Oxford Playhouse staff following the tour in Summer 2021 to devise commitments with the Playhouse, share the learning and implement changes for the 2022 tour. Communication around the report from the venue has been slow and so none of this has happened.

We are grateful to former Joint-CEO Vanessa Lefrancois for her suggestions and Paul Simpson, Participation Manager and Head of Operations, Richard Willoughby for their

support.

We extended the offer of the workshop and were hoping to get the Playhouse's sign off on the report before we published. We knew that the further we got from the original tour, the less useful the learning would be. It had always been the plan to share the report with a wider audience, to support other theatre makers on similar journeys. We really wanted this process to be circular, feeding the things we learnt into future projects. We set a deadline for publication so here we are. We hope that sharing this now, in January 2023, is not too late and that you, whether you are a maker or a venue, can find some use here.

The energy that began this process was lost. We still hope to collaborate with the Playhouse on this in the future. Environmentally sustainable processes can only be made possible when they are prioritised.

## BEFORE WE GO...

We would really like to encourage other companies and organisations to trial the Theatre Green Book, and consider their impact on the environment when putting on work, and touring it too.

Staging Change has been a useful resource for both artists and venues. Having been unable to secure funding for the core work of Staging Change, Co-Directors Alice and Josie ran the network on a voluntary basis. Without financial support, they were no longer able to prioritise Staging Change, and therefore couldn't give it the energy required to take effective actions. As individuals, they continue to work as freelance creatives, challenging themselves and collaborators to develop environmentally sustainable practice. If you'd like to work with either of them in this capacity (as consultants or otherwise), please do get in touch.

[josiedalejones.com](http://josiedalejones.com)

[aliceboyd.info](http://aliceboyd.info)

If you're looking for an introduction to working sustainably on a project, for example, using the Theatre Green Book or the Creative Green Tools, looking at how they can be integrated into your production, or want a briefing for your Creative Team, reach out to Ellie at [leanorftwarr@gmail.com](mailto:leanorftwarr@gmail.com).

There is a lot of talk, and a lot of jargon out there in life but ESPECIALLY around environmental sustainability. It can feel really big and really complicated. We found that the Theatre Green Book guidance helped navigate a path through it. Both carbon calculators helped us to be accountable and involve the wider team in this process.

There is a lot of freedom and a lot of power in setting some values and boundaries. We're not saying it is straightforward or easy to do, and it can feel scary and that you're putting other opportunities at risk. There are times where one of your principles and an organisation, company, or a person conflicts with other principles too. For example you might want to rehearse in a certain place with really ethical and sustainable funding and all the energy sources are solar powered, but it's not wheelchair accessible. Remember it is about balance and awareness, and gently pushing and challenging that - it's about conversation, and understanding. We found that setting values, boundaries and goals helped us feel a little bit more in control, and definitely more conscious of the choices we were making. It helped to make something that can be really overwhelming and impenetrable slightly more manageable

We'd love you to share any commitments you might be making with us. You can reach us on social media at @thisegg\_ and @elliewarr.

## USEFUL INFORMATION AND ATTACHMENTS

- [Guide to Completing Material Inventories](#)
- [MAMB Material Inventories](#)
- [Oxford Sustainable Theatre Guide](#)
- [Green Clover](#) (formerly known as Scenery Salvage), is based near St Albans and Watford. They have an extensive prop and scenery hire directory of salvaged and repurposed items.
- [Set Swap Cycle](#) - Facebook group for reusing, sourcing and selling materials. Also great for advice from makers.
- [Recycle Now](#) - Government website where you search how to recycle or dispose of materials locally
- [Community Repaint](#) - National initiative collecting unwanted paint and redistributing to communities

We would also suggest looking into best practice in other areas including (but definitely not limited to):

- [anti racism touring rider](#)
- [access all areas](#)
- [trans casting commitments](#)
- [ITC rates of pay](#)

## Appendix 1: Bios

**Josie Dale-Jones:** My name is Josie. I use she/her pronouns. I am half Swiss and half Welsh. I grew up in Cambridge, and a little bit in Basel. I am a theatre maker/performer/producer/writer/director/you get the idea... I mostly work in theatre, and I mostly work under '[ThisEgg](#)'. **ThisEgg** is a company I set up for which I self-produce, co-create & perform shows. I also like to work outside of ThisEgg, and I also like to do just one of those things (make/perform/produce/write/direct/etc.) at once, which is why I am here, and maybe why you are too? Most recently, I have been invited to be a part of **The Climate Crucible**, an international residency hosted by **BIRCA, Denmark**. I received a **Culture In Quarantine** commission from **Arts Council England & BBC**. I was a director in remote residence in Ukraine for the **British Council's Taking The Stage Programme**. I was nominated as a finalist for the **Arts Foundation Theatre-Makers Award 2021**. **the egg, Theatre Royal Bath** appointed me a **2019 Leverhulme Arts Scholar**.

Eleanor Warr: Ellie (she/her) is a director and writer based in Birmingham. She works part-time as the Regional Associate Schools Manager at the **Royal Shakespeare Company**, shifting the way that teachers and young people encounter Shakespeare. She also works as a freelance sustainability consultant, supporting production teams to reduce the carbon footprint of their projects using the **Theatre Green Book** guidance. Previous work includes: Creative Associate: 'Twelfth Night' (**RSC**), Director: 'Gabriel' (**Oxford Playhouse, University College, Oxford** and the **Cameron Mackintosh Fund**), Director & Co-writer, 'Home In Time For Christmas' (**BT Studio, Oxford Playhouse**), Dramaturg 'Talking Bodies' with **Hot Coals Theatre**, the **Cambridge Footlights International Tour Show 2017**, 'Howie the Rookie' at Edinburgh Fringe. Assistant Directing includes: *Beauty and the Beast* (Oxford Playhouse) and *Cinderella* (**Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells**). Ellie was **Resident Director** at **Oxford Playhouse** from 2019-2021, where she led professional performance and educational engagement work with young audiences and co-founded the Playhouse **Green Team**.

**ThisEgg** is a company which Josie set up for which she self-produces, co-creates & performs shows. ThisEgg's show in collaboration with Made My Wardrobe, *dressed*, received a **Scotsman Fringe First** as well as a nomination for ThisEgg for **Total Theatre Awards' Emerging Company 2018**. The show completed a national tour before returning to the Festival for the **British Council Showcase 2019**. *dressed*, was nominated for a **2020 Offie Award for IDEA** (innovative/ devised/ experiential/ atypical). ThisEgg won the inaugural **Underbelly & New Diorama Untapped Award 2018** for early-mid career theatre companies. *Me & My Bee*, ThisEgg's show for family audiences won the inaugural **Les Enfants Terribles Stepladder Award 2017** & was nominated for **The Fringe Sustainable Practice Award & Brighton Award for Excellence**. In 2018 it was performed almost 200 times across over 100 venues in England, Scotland, Ireland & Wales. Before that, ThisEgg's *Goggles*, won the **NSDF Edinburgh Emerging Artists**

## Award 2016.

**Oxford Playhouse** is a theatre for everyone. **Oxford Playhouse** and its **Burton Taylor Studio** present and produce a wide range of live performance. Our programme includes the best of British and international drama, family shows, contemporary dance and music, student and amateur shows, comedy, lectures and poetry. The Playhouse produces and tours its own shows, hosts **Artists in Residence** and presents **Playhouse Plays Out**, an ongoing series of off-site events which happen at locations across the county. The theatre's Participation team work with over 15,000 people each year through post show discussions, workshops, work experience, holiday schemes, a youth theatre and a young people's theatre company. **Oxford Playhouse** is committed to delivering this artistic vision of being a Playhouse for everyone, inspiring people and transforming lives by cultivating and championing creativity - on our stages, in our communities, and online.

The **Theatre Green Book** is an initiative coordinated by **Renew Culture** in collaboration with sustainability experts **Buro Happold**, and partnered by all the leading sector bodies in theatre. Industry artists, technicians and staff from venues across the country were consulted to develop guidance to help the industry work more sustainably. In three volumes, the Green Book sets standards for making productions sustainably, for making theatre buildings sustainable, and for improving operations like catering and front of house.

**Staging Change**: a grassroots artist-led organisation, which supported theatre makers responding to the climate crisis. Since launching in 2019, Staging Change led sustainability campaigns at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and VAULT Festival, as well as presenting workshops alongside other events for artists at venues including HOME Manchester, Pleasance Theatre Islington and Fringe Central. They hosted two awards, the Sustainable Fringe Award in collaboration with Creative Carbon Scotland, and the Staging Change Award, in collaboration with VAULT Festival.

**Julie's Bicycle** is a pioneering not-for-profit mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, JB has partnered with over 2000 organisations in the UK and internationally. JB has loads of fantastic resources which are free and available online. You can have a look on their website here.

The **Arts Council Strategy** for 2020-2030 has sustainability as one of the core principles. You can find out more about the Strategy here. **National Portfolio Organisations** (NPOs) are required to think about sustainability and their environmental impact as part of their funding agreement. NPOs are venues and companies that regularly receive funding from the Arts Council. **Julie's Bicycle** has partnered with the Arts Council to support NPOs in

their work reducing their carbon footprints, offering guidance to staff and a set of free tools to calculate impact. These are called the **Creative Green Tools** (CG Tools).

The **CG Tools** are a set of carbon and environmental calculators that are free to use. You can find out more about them [here](#). They aim to make it easy to measure energy use, water consumption, waste generation and recycling, travel and production materials. NPOs are required to submit annual reports, measuring energy use, water consumption, waste, travel and materials. You can also submit a project report using these calculators, which will work out the impact of an individual show.

We used **Theatre Green Book** targets and the **Creative Green Tools** calculators to measure the impact of *Me & My Bee*.

## Appendix 2. Logistics Form

Oxford Playhouse Plays Out Tent

*Me & My Bee* – Summer 2021 Tour

### CONTACT DETAILS

Oxford Playhouse Contact Details	Participation Manager:	Paul Simpson
	Email: Direct Telephone:	
	Address:	
Plays Out Tent Production Contact Details	Producer: Email: Direct Telephone:	Robert Bristow
	Stage Manager: Direct Telephone:	Sophie White (We will pass this on closer to the time)
	Tent Construction Firm: Contact Name:	Hurlingham Tents

School/Venue Contact Details	Name of School/Venue: Office Telephone:	
	School/Venue Address:	
	Name of booking contact: (This should be the name of the person who has organised the booking)	
	Job Title:	
	Email: Direct Telephone:	
	Name of contact on arrival: (This should be the name of the person liaising arrangements on the day)	

	Job Title:	
	Email: Direct Telephone:	
	Names of any additional staff involved in planning:	

We are committed to making our tour as sustainable as we can, and we would like to open a conversation with local schools about how we can work together to be environmentally friendly. If any of these questions do not make sense or feel problematic, let us know.

Please note: There is not an expectation for your school to have the specific facilities below. We are asking these questions to get a wider understanding of what is available at your site.

Do you have an electric charging point we could use? (We are using an electric vehicle to transport the cast, set and costumes to the school and home again)	
Do you have separate bins for landfill, recycling and food waste? (If not, would you be able to set them up for the set-up and performances?)	
Do you have drinking taps that our cast, company and audiences can use to refill water bottles?	
Are there plant-based meal options available at your school/venue? And do you work with local food suppliers?	
Do you use recycled paper or Forest Stewardship Council paper for your printing?	
How far are you from the nearest public transport stop? (This information is useful for us as part of our sustainability reporting at the end of the process)	

Do you have bike racks for cyclists?	
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SUSTAINABILITY (PART 2)

We are working with Staging Change, a grassroots organisation, which supports theatre makers responding to the climate crisis, to make this show as sustainably as we can. Staging Change can offer a 2-hour Zoom workshop in early September around sustainability in schools and creating Green Champions in the classroom.

Would your staff members be interested in an online workshop about sustainability?	
When are your INSET dates in September 2021?	
How many staff members would be interested in attending?	
Is there anything specific to your own school setting that you'd be especially interested in discussing in these workshops?	

### Appendix 3: 'Green' Casting & Open Call

We have permission to share these messages from both Josie and the person who messaged. We have removed their name as this was their preference.

Hey Josie. I hope you're well. I'm a big fan of your brilliant work, so please know that this message is underscored by a deep admiration for you/ ThisEgg. I wanted to respond to your recent callout, where you mentioned your reason for not getting back to actors who apply as a way of working to reduce your CO2 emissions. Whilst I'm wholeheartedly supportive of any and all environmental efforts, this really hit a nerve for me. I'm not an actor, but I am a creative who has spent huge amounts of time and effort on hundreds of applications, many of which I never received a response to. The same applies to all the actors, directors, creatives I am close to as friends and as collaborators. I'm sure the same applies to you too - having to essentially 'reject yourself' for lack of any actual rejection/response to applications, is something we've all had to deal with. I think actors have to do this most of all. It seems to me that if you genuinely do have the time and resources to get back to actors for this callout (a rare thing, it seems), you have a responsibility to do so. Perhaps, I don't know, even just via a social media post that says 'if you've not heard back from us by now then you've not been selected for audition' it feels like that could be a small but hugely supportive gesture to the actors who have spent the time applying to the casting call. Especially given the lack of work right now, and the year we've all had/are having. I don't know much about the contributions of social media to CO2 emissions (perhaps you do?), but surely sharing the callout in itself has an impact too...? I'm keen to know how/why you made the decision that getting back to actors via email was one of the key ways to reduce your carbon footprint on this project. It feels a little strange to me to be choosing this particular, contested and sensitive area. I was considering tweeting about this, but I really hate adding to the big old twitter mess. It rarely feels productive, so though I'd message you directly instead. I guess I just wanted to flag how uncomfortable this made me - and to be totally honest, a number of others who I've mentioned it to as well - and perhaps try and better understand your choice here. I hope you don't take this the wrong way. These conversations feel important to have, and privately feels a better and more constructive space. [] x

Hey [], Thanks so much for your message. I am 100% up for having these conversations - it is really complex and I appreciate you getting in contact and being open and honest. I really understand where you're coming from, especially as you say,

as a freelancer, and a company made up of freelancers. I appreciate the energy put into an application and always want to respect that, and, not that this makes it any better, but just so you know, this concern was definitely thought through before making the choice I made on this occasion. I am working with Oxford Playhouse, Staging Change, and the Theatre Green Book in process of re-staging and touring *Me & My Bee* this summer. We are using the show, and the casting of it, as a case study (positives and negatives included) in a possible model for sustainable production. As such we are exploring different methods of reducing all form of impact environmentally. Not all of it will work, this being an example perhaps. This form of call out is a first time try for us (and haven't seen or heard of it being done before so had no one to ask about their own experiences of it). It felt like a risk because in some ways compromised other parts of what I, and ThisEgg, stand for - for example personal relationships and care for people being at the centre of the work. I don't think it should ever be a case of compromising one mission over another, but in the context of the current state of the climate crisis it felt like a gesture towards something, and a commitment to a greener industry. The number of applications we have had is over 1000 (which is amazing!). Though we didn't know the numbers would be this high, it feels significant enough to have taken the risk in reducing our CO2 through not responding to every single applicant. I hoped by being transparent from the start, people would have the option to apply or not fully knowing how this part of the process might work. You're right, social media has a huge contribution to our carbon footprint but so many people use it anyway, we don't really have much control over that. I added the call out to the ThisEgg social channels because, considering this, I wanted performers without agents to have access to the job. Thanks for not adding to the Twitter storm, It does, though, sound like a little more explanation might be useful, especially if other people are thinking about this too - perhaps I'll try to write something on the thoughts section of the ThisEgg website about it (not that that's visible enough)... This might not be as full a response as you may want. This is a busy week for me (outside of ThisEgg) but I'm well up for a further conversation around it if you'd like to chat over the phone, just let me know. Thanks again - this has been genuine learning for me around the limits of carbon reducing,  
Josie x Apr 27, 2021, 9:50 AM

Hi Josie The opposite is the case - this is a really clear and detailed response, thank you so much for engaging with the conversation! I really hear where you're coming from. It feels like a constant weighing up of the ethics, and explained in full by you it makes more sense to me. Especially in relation to it being an experiment/first time thing. Maybe talking about it in more detail publicly will have a positive effect in

encouraging other companies to think about the process as you have. Re: 1000 applicants - right now, everything is mega oversubscribed, yet everyone seems to be surprised by applications - I wonder if there needs to be more transparency between different companies so people know how many applications they're likely to get? I wrote a (to be honest slightly assy) tweet about this recently. BUT that said, it's of course really brilliant you got so many! I guess I'm constantly searching for a sustainable (both environmentally of course, and personally) way of handling recruitment processes so people don't feel like they're just shouting into the void. What you've done seems really reasonable - ie if you don't hear back within a certain date, presume you've not been selected - because at least that doesn't leave any space for feeling like you never found out. I think the succinct phrasing of the environmental aspect on the callout, without explaining it, just sounded a little like using the environment as an excuse for not responding. Which, obviously is not what you meant AT ALL, and I recognise that. But, it feels slightly close to being read as that, especially with how quickly people glance at things like this on socials. Thanks for generous offer to chat - I've gone on far too long now, so don't worry about that. I really do appreciate you getting back to me, and for being a company that's working on these kind of things so compassionately. Really hoping you find a brilliant cast! [] x

## Appendix 4: Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools Details Data Report: *Me & My Bee*

Group	Item	Total values - kg CO2	Total values - Consumption	Total values - Unit	per Performanc e - kg CO2	Per performanc e - Consumptio n	Per performanc e - Unit
Show power	Indoor	0	0	kwh	0	0	kwh
Show power	Outdoor	0	0	kwh	0	0	kwh
Accommodation	Friends/rented	0	196	nights	0	1.940594059	nights
Accommodation	Hotel	0	0	nights	0	0	nights
Personnel Travel	Bus	95.93406669	938.047	km	0.9498422445	9.287594059	km
Personnel Travel	Bus local	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Car	478.7503748	3160.7196	km	4.740102721	31.29425347	km
Personnel Travel	Ferry	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Chartered Flights	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Domestic Flight	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Longhaul Flights	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Shorthaul Flights	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Minibus	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Minivan	0	0	km	0	0	km
Personnel Travel	Motorcycle	0	0	km	0	0	km

Personnel Travel	People Carrier	0	0 km	0	0 km
Personnel Travel	Pickup truck	0	0 km	0	0 km
Personnel Travel	SUV	0	0 km	0	0 km
Personnel Travel	Train	34.4790389 6	971.5142 km	0.34137662 33	9.61895247 5 km
Freight Travel	Air	0	0 km	0	0 km
Freight Travel	Rail	0	0 km	0	0 km
Freight Travel	Sea	0	0 km	0	0 km
Freight Travel	Truck	0	0 km	0	0 km
Freight Travel	Road vehicle freight	0	0 km	0	0 km