



PRESTON CITY MELA

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

2023 to 2026



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Background

The Preston City Mela Community Interest Company [Not for Profit] run event that seeks to bring communities together and celebrate South Asian Culture in the Northwest of England. Its values are deeply rooted in preserving and promoting South Asian arts in all forms and cultural heritage. The Mela event consists of a one-day festival celebrating South Asian culture drawing crowds of up to 8000 people with a variety of performance artists, Workshops and Catering that all help to celebrate the story of south Asian communities in the Northwest. In Addition, Mela has several projects that consist of tutoring, coaching, and training in South Asian arts.

The Arts Council of England 10-year strategy 'Let's Create 2020 -2030' places environments as one of its key principles. Requiring arts-based organisations to lead the way in their approach to environmental responsibility. Preston City Mela through this policy and action plan aspire to integrate environmental measures as part of its core work.



Environmental Statement

The Preston City Mela Community Interest Company (PCMCIC) Recognizes that it has a responsibility towards the Environment that goes beyond simply complying with relevant legislation, we are committed to ensuring that the environmental impacts of the Mela Festival and projects are as low as possible and will seek to ensure that year on year, improvements are made to reduce the Environmental impacts and the carbon footprint of the festival programmes.

We have an excellent platform to simultaneously promote our South Asian culture alongside environmental awareness and health and wellbeing.

Preston City Mela [PCM] aim to focus in the short term on the following key points to reduce environmental impacts from our event / projects.

- a) We will seek to gather data that shows the current carbon impact of our event, this is to help us understand where to focus our efforts and where we should look to continually improve.
- b) Comply with all relevant Environmental Regulations, Laws and legislation that relate to our event.
- c) We will encourage visitors to our event /projects to consider their carbon footprint and encourage the use of low impact transport.
- d) We will work with our suppliers to ensure that produce for the event is sourced locally and that wherever possible, environmental considerations are in place.

- e) To support and promote a wider message around environmental issues using our existing platform to showcase what can be done to reduce environmental impact, working with our partners in the Environmental and sustainability sectors to promote this awareness.
- f) We seek to engage with our communities to Broaden awareness of Environmental issues both here in the UK and the wider issues of Environment impacts in South Asia, through workshops and liaison with key environmental partners.
- g) Mela will appoint a Board Member to ‘Champion the **‘Environmental Theme’** within our work.

Our intent moving forward is to grow and develop on this year on year. To seek and identify new methods to reduce our carbon footprint and to develop awareness of the environment. To build our relationships with environmental organisations and partners to facilitate this.

We will continue to use our unique platform to showcase the consequences of climate change, both locally and nationally, and to show what must be done to reduce the impact of climate change.

We are committed to using sustainably and locally sourced materials, equipment, and products, with the aim of reducing travel miles. As well as re using materials as part of our workshops.

Our location is well linked to the public transport network, and we will highlight the travel hierarchy to visitors, encouraging them to choose greener travel options, such as public transport or arriving by bike or foot, rather than driving to the event.

We have started this journey, with the intention of reviewing our position year on year , Preston City Mela is committed to collaborating and working with others on forward thinking innovative practices and ideas that will help us protect our planet, both here in the UK and across our South Asian communities.



Data

There Is an understanding that the data from our events is key in PCM being able to understand and tackle its own Carbon footprint. In order, to seek viable carbon reduction, we first need to understand the level of impact from our event and identify key areas where carbon reduction can be sought.

There is an acceptance that the PCM do not currently hold a full data set and will therefore need to gather further data at this year’s event. Once we have a greater set of data, we will be able to plan and identify areas for improvement.

- a) We will utilise a survey for visitors to the event to understand their transport preferences, we will use a manual questionnaire and move to use QR code survey to capture this data in the future,
- b) We will look at other forms of data capture to understand as much as possible what our carbon footprint is.
- c) Using survey data and combining this with observations, we will build a data set that will help us to understand our carbon footprint via a carbon calculator.



Transport

We are aware that as a cultural event programme, the highest likely area of impact will be around transport. We estimate that 5000 people attend our one-day festival and that a variety of travel options are used to attend the event; and a further 200 across our projects.

It is also important to consider accessibility to the event ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to attend on the day.

We recognise that travel is a significant contributing factor to the environmental impact of our event, albeit one that we do not have direct control over.

We will seek to take the following actions to reduce the Environmental impact of Transport as part of our event.

- a) The location of our event for this year will be in Moor Park Preston, this location has been picked due to its central urban location, proximity to local South Asian communities and good public transport links, being a 20-minute walk from Preston City Centre and being situated on several different bus routes.
- b) Car parking options in the area are limited, which will encourage people to find alternate means to travel and will encourage the use of public transport and car sharing.
- c) We will seek to work with partners and transport providers to ensure that the Mela is as accessible as it can be for our audience.
- d) The PCM will publish guidance for those who wish to attend the event via public transport, providing clear information as to which public transport methods can be used. We will encourage the use of public transport by promoting a travel hierarchy.
- e) Given that our artists will need to bring items, costumes, and kit with them it usually isn't practical for them to take public transport to the event, however car sharing will be promoted and encouraged amongst artists and performers.



Food & Drink

Another recognised aspect of the Mela festival is the sourcing of food and drink, we source from across 6 different caterers for our event but recognise there are commitments that we can make here as well to ensure that we are taking effort to minimise environmental impact.

- a) Between our caterers and suppliers for event we estimate approximately 75% of the food sold at our event is vegetarian.
- b) All caterers are encouraged to source their supplies from within the local area, both to reduce food miles and to support local business.
- c) We will work with our suppliers to ensure that, where possible, waste is reduced, or renewable products are used as part of the supplies from vendors.



Waste

PCM-recognise that waste will be generated as part of our event, and it is important we focus on reducing our environmental impacts in this area by focusing on the Waste Hierarchy and promoting the circular economy as part of our events.

- a) We will comply with the relevant legislation ensuring our waste is handled in a responsible and legal way by a suitably authorised competent organisation.
- b) We will apply the waste hierarchy wherever we seem the opportunity to do so, reducing, and reusing items as opposed to generating waste.
- c) We will look at ways to work with our waste provider to separate out recyclable waste streams to allow for more effective recovery of materials. For example, looking at separate collection bins for general waste and recycling.
- d) We will look to incorporate the reuse of recycled material in our projects and workshops.



Projects & Workshops

As part of the PCM programme of events there will be a series of workshops focusing on traditional south Asian arts and crafts in an interactive setting; these events focus on audience interaction and the promotion of cultural skills in a non-performative setting.

- a) These workshops will utilise materials that may go to waste, this material will be upcycled and utilised to create new craft-based items.
- b) Were feasible continue the Environmental theme throughout the workshops to raise awareness.



Inspire Change

As an organisation we recognise that currently there is a lack of engagement and representation in our BAME communities when it comes to Environmental issues, both locally and—nationally and the impacts this has globally. Currently only 0.6% of environmental professionals in the UK are from BAME backgrounds, this is despite BAME communities having a higher likelihood of being disproportionately impacted by environmental issues.

There is a recognition in organisations such as the Environment Agency, that representation and engagement is low. The PCM already has a relationship with the Environment Agency but can seek to use this to promote both wider environmental issues and increasing the awareness and accessibility of Environment sector roles for the South Asian Community.

The Preston City Mela reflects the South Asian community in the Northwest, many who have come from or have ties to the Indian subcontinent, an area significantly effected by a wide range of environmental issues and associated impacts from climate change over the past 40 years. These communities are predicted to be some of the worst impacted communities globally from the impacts of climate change.

The PCM can act as a vehicle for increase environmental awareness both in the UK and awareness of global environmental issues, especially those from the Indian subcontinent that have previously had a direct impact on our community.

To promote this theme, the Preston City Mela will seek to do the following.

- a) Continue to work with the Environment Agency to promote environmental awareness at the festival itself, expand this working platform to share broader awareness with South Asian communities.

- b) Develop an environmental theme based on previously materials used at events to engage with the community and using this as a foundation to raise environmental awareness.
- c) Expand on the environmental theme by seeking collaboration with other local Environmental charities and looking at ways to work mutually to promote broader social awareness and good environmental practice.
- d) Will look at case studies/ workshops showing common Environmental issues, that are both experienced here and in South Asia. With an emphasis on combining culture and increasing environmental awareness/engagement
- e) Consider introducing projects with focus on art that have an environmental theme within its design.
- f) Use Mela events as an opportunity to promote Jobs in the Environmental sector amongst South Asian communities in the Northwest.



Limitations

The PCM also recognises there are some limitations with the environmental work and carbon reduction it can carry out Whilst the following may be limitations at this time, it is hoped these can be continuously reviewed and acted upon in future.

- a) We understand that the data we hold is currently limited and needs improving. We aim to continue to gather data from our event to build up a picture of, and to understand our carbon footprint via the use of this a Carbon calculator.
- b) As the PCM is both a Community Interest Company [Not for Profit] and a free ticketed event there are funding limitations on what measures we can use to promote environmental sustainability, and we need to strike a balance between implementing environmental measures and accessibility to our communities. However, we will seek to use the PCM as method to promote environmental sustainability.
- c) As the event is nominally an outdoor event, there are limitations on what further infrastructure methods can be used, as a daylight summer event the amount of artificial light is reduced but there is still a challenge for example around the use of diesel generators for Workshops and suppliers.

Appendix One - Sample Questionnaire for Data Collection from Public Attending



Introduction

Preston City Mela is committed to tackling and improving the environmental impact of our Mela programmes. To better stand what improvement Mela can make, please can you complete this short survey.

Q1. How did you travel to the Mela event? [please tick]

- Bus
- Train
- Walk/Cycle
- Car /motor vehicle
- Electric vehicle
- Taxi

Q2. What is the postcode you travelled from?

Q3. If you travelled by car, how many people were in the car?

Q4. What would encourage you to travel by more sustainable means if you don't already?

Q5. In your opinion, what improvement can Mela make to reduce carbon footprint?

Appendix Two - Sample Questionnaire for Data Collection from Vendors



Introduction

Preston City Mela is committed to tackling and improving the environmental impact of our Mela programmes. To better stand what improvement Mela can make, please can you complete this short survey.

Q1. How much diesel/ electricity they have used for the day?

Q2. How many meals have they sold? *(this could be money taken divided by average meal price to give a figure, although exact figures would be better)*

Q3. What percentage of your meals sold were:

Vegetarian?

Non-Vegetarian?

Q4. In your opinion, what packing or serving measure can be taken to improve food provision at the Mela event?