

Association for Heritage Interpretation

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Best Practice Guide 21

Sustainability & Regeneration

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Designed for screens – no need to print

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I: Introduction

Rethinking Interpretation & Sustainability



This guide is for anyone who works with interpretation – curators, designers, architects, educators, funders, community partners, or simply audiences curious about how exhibitions and cultural programmes come to life.

What is interpretation?

At its heart, interpretation is the art of sharing stories, ideas, and meanings in ways that connect people with places, objects, and each other. It might be an exhibition, an event, a trail, a performance, or even a single text panel. If it sparks understanding, emotion, or reflection – it's interpretation.

But interpretation is more than just communication. It's a bridge:

- Between past and present;
- Between people, places, and ideas; and
- Between silence and meaning.

Its purpose is simple yet powerful: to distil the essence of human and natural history into experiences that matter – experiences that linger, resonate, and inspire.

Why this guide matters?

Museums, galleries, heritage sites, and festivals are not separate from the challenges of our time. Climate change, inequality, and economic shifts affect them and they, in turn, influence how communities see themselves and imagine the future. Every choice in interpretation, whether about materials, design, or storytelling, has an impact.

This guide will help improve those choices. With practical tools, creative prompts, and real examples, it encourages a shift from doing less harm to doing more good. This guide is for anyone who believes culture can be a force for renewal, care, and imagination.

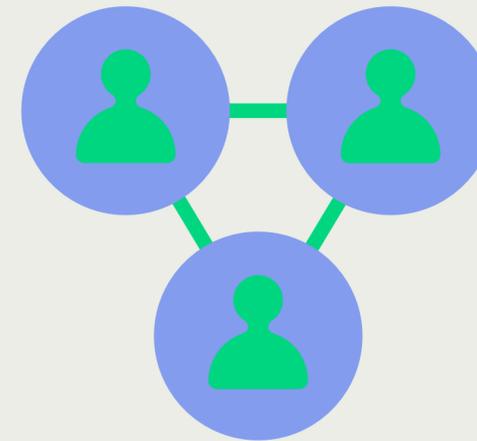
Our guiding principles

Four principles run through this guide:



Environmental and social sustainability are inseparable.

Care for people and planet must go hand in hand.



Embedded and collective.

Sustainability should shape everything - from vision and materials to audience experience and legacy.



From less harm to more good.

Go beyond damage limitation; aim for regeneration.



Shared responsibility and ambition.

Everyone has a role. Together, we can set higher standards and inspire change.

Although exhibitions are the focus here, these principles apply across programmes, performances, festivals, community projects, and digital storytelling – anywhere people connect with ideas, places, or each other.

In short:

This guide is for everyone who believes interpretation should not only share meaning but actively model the path to a flourishing future.

2: Create

Thinking Sustainably in Exhibition Development



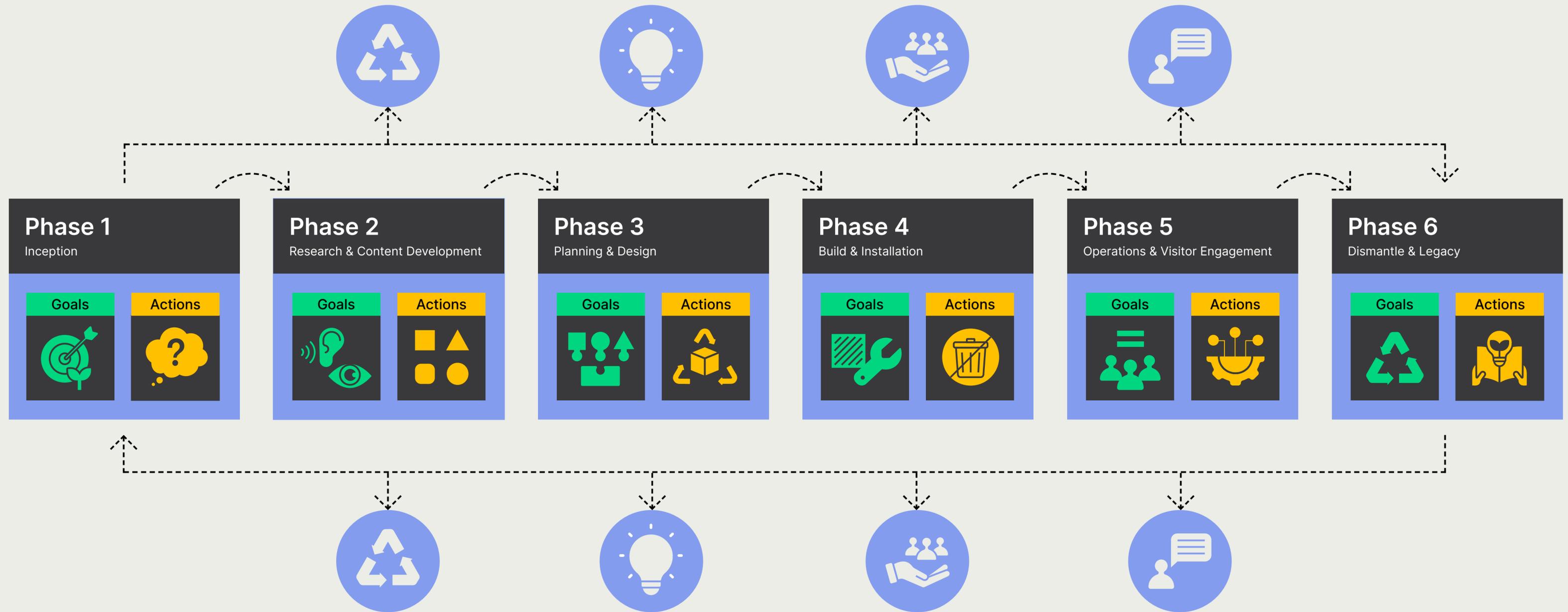
Sustainability is not an afterthought. It is the foundation of how we imagine, design, and deliver exhibitions today. Every choice – large or small – shapes the kind of world we leave behind.

To think sustainably is to recognise that exhibitions are not temporary spectacles; they are part of a longer story. They have a footprint, a legacy, and a responsibility. Embedding sustainability means asking, at every stage: Whose voices are included? What impact will our materials have? How will this design live on when the exhibition ends?

This is a call to shift our mindset. To see the exhibition process as a journey, where responsibility is woven into every decision – from the first spark of an idea, to the final dismantling, to the continuing life of the materials beyond the exhibition. This is about designing with care, building with foresight, engaging with equity, and leaving a legacy that strengthens both people and the planet.

When we embed sustainability in this way, exhibitions become more than cultural experiences: they become models of responsibility, acts of stewardship, and commitments to a shared future.

Toolkit 1: Sustainable Exhibition Process



By embedding responsibility at every phase, exhibitions can prove that culture and care for the planet belong together.

Toolkit 1:

Sustainable Exhibition Process

Phase 1: Inception

Goals



- Define clear sustainability objectives.
- Establish shared responsibility across the team and relevant communities.
- Minimise the environmental impact of audience travel while encouraging access for diverse audiences.

Actions



- Consider whether the exhibition is necessary.
- Consider where it might be displayed after your site.
- Explore fewer but longer-running exhibitions to reduce impact.
- Consider alternatives: could it be digital, online, or hybrid?
- Build team awareness of sustainability principles.
- Engage with relevant communities early, including local residents, groups connected to the subject matter, partner organisations, and potential audiences.
- Consider environmental footprint in audience planning and targeting – prioritise hyper-local audiences where feasible.
- Collaborate with public transport providers, cycling schemes, or ride-share platforms to offer incentives or discounted travel.

Phase 2: Research & Content Development

Goals



- Develop content that is inclusive, local, and socially responsible.
- Ensure interpretation reflects diverse voices and accessible experiences.

Actions



- Apply inclusive interpretation methods, such as multisensory elements, accessible text/media, and multilingual content.
- Incorporate participatory elements and co-creation opportunities.
- Specify clear actions that visitors can adopt or adapt in their own lives to further environmental, social, or community benefits.
- Research and embed diverse perspectives.
- Consult community partners throughout development.

Phase 3: Planning & Design

Goals



- Create sustainable, flexible, and modular exhibition designs.
- Build for reuse, minimal impact, and future legacy.

Actions



- Use modular or demountable displays.
- Design reusable display cases informed by recognised UK best practice for environmental control and security (e.g. PAS 198 and Government Indemnity Scheme expectations), ensuring they can be reused and remain suitable for future loans.
- Prioritise design for deconstruction (clips and screws).
- Specify sustainable materials (Forest Stewardship Council [FSC] timber, recycled steel, no PVC [polyvinyl chloride], mineral-based paints).
- Minimise movement of objects and materials.
- Engage product representatives for sustainable solutions.
- Integrate salvaged and recycled materials into the exhibition concept.
- Develop a business plan that anticipates future uses of the space.
- Plan for reuse and eventual deconstruction, including flexible, practical small power and lighting layouts.
- Explore budget opportunities to enable sustainable choices.

Toolkit 1: Sustainable Exhibition Process

Phase 4: Build & Installation

Goals



- Minimise environmental impact during construction.
- Embed sustainability into materials, methods, and scheduling.

Actions



- Reuse walls, cases, and plinths; minimise new builds.
- Use low-volatile organic compound (low-VOC) paints, eco adhesives, and LED (light-emitting diode) lighting.
- Incorporate salvaged and recycled materials into storytelling.
- Schedule efficiently to reduce energy use and waste.

Phase 5: Operations & Visitor Engagement

Goals



- Deliver a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable visitor experience.
- Ensure wellbeing and accessibility are integral to operations.

Actions



- Reduce single-use print; provide digital guides and projections.
- Offer sustainable merchandising, food, and beverage options.
- Embed accessibility, equity, and wellbeing across all visitor experiences.
- Offer ticket discounts or perks for visitors who travel to the exhibition on foot, on a bicycle, or via public transport.
- Provide an option for visitors travelling by car to offset the carbon emissions of their journey.
- Clearly communicate sustainable travel options in marketing and ticketing information.

Phase 6: Dismantle & Legacy

Goals



- Close the sustainability loop.
- Capture and share institutional learning for future exhibitions.

Actions



- Reuse, recycle, or donate materials.
- Develop a waste management plan to ensure all materials are disposed of responsibly (0% to landfill), with tracking and reporting of outcomes.
- Use the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) Exchange platform to record, share, and redistribute exhibition materials.
- Store modular components for future exhibitions.
- Document lessons learned in a 'sustainability memory'.

Sustainability in exhibitions is a responsibility that shapes every decision in the process. Every material chosen, every story told, and every interaction with visitors carries consequences for both the environment and the communities we serve.

Reducing harm starts with awareness. It means recognising where harm could occur and taking deliberate steps to prevent it, whether through materials used, energy consumed, or inclusivity of the experiences created. It is about doing more with less, designing for reuse, and building systems that leave a positive legacy.

This is a chance to rethink the exhibition process from the ground up. From sourcing materials responsibly, minimising waste, and cutting energy use, to embedding accessibility, equity, and community participation at every level, we can transform exhibitions into models of ethical, responsible practice.

Sustainable exhibitions are about creativity, not compromise – finding innovative ways to delight, educate, and engage visitors while caring for people and the planet.

Case Study: Scotland's Wildlife Discovery Centre

Embedding Sustainability throughout the Exhibition Process

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and Bright White partnered to create the storytelling, design, and interpretive strategy for Scotland's Wildlife Discovery Centre (SWDC): a £6.5million initiative at Highland Wildlife Park, in the heart of Cairngorms National Park. More than an exhibition, SWDC is a flagship model demonstrating how responsibility and sustainability can be embedded at every stage of the exhibition process – from consultation, to construction, to visitor experience.

A Catalyst for Change

The Cairngorms biome is one of the most ecologically significant landscapes in the UK. SWDC offers intimate encounters with both native Scottish species and global conservation ambassadors - from wildcats and arctic foxes to polar bears and snow leopards. Together, these species reveal the interconnected challenges of biodiversity loss, climate stress, and habitat fragmentation. The Centre was conceived not merely to inform but to act as a catalyst for behavioural change, helping visitors understand the relationships between people, place and wildlife and empowering them to take meaningful action.

Responsibility from the Outset

Social and environmental responsibility shaped the project from its earliest moments. Over 90 stakeholder groups - including local communities, conservationists, educators, land managers and underrepresented audiences - were engaged to shape narrative priorities, interpretive methods and community aspirations. This participatory process ensured lived experience informed every decision and that the final experience is inclusive, relevant and locally grounded.

Building Sustainably, Demonstrating Accountability

Sustainability principles guided all material, construction and operational decisions. The three new buildings are powered almost entirely by integrated solar panels and air-source heat pumps. One uses a greywater system, and two feature living roofs that provide habitat for native species. Many fixtures and fittings were crafted from wind-blown trees sourced directly from the site.

A joint sustainable materials policy ensured that chosen materials were recyclable, biodegradable or made from recycled sources wherever possible. These choices are made visible within the interpretation and public programmes, turning the buildings themselves into teaching tools. Sustainability is not just stated - it is demonstrated.



Case Study: Scotland's Wildlife Discovery Centre

Embedding Sustainability throughout the Exhibition Process

Interpretation that Responds to Visitors

Interpretation was designed as a non-linear, visitor-centred journey to encourage agency and accommodate a wide range of learning styles and access needs.

Key spaces include:

- **An Doras (The Gateway):** an immersive hub linking Scottish and global species that introduces the big conservation questions of our time.
- **A' Chaonnag (The Learning Hive):** a flexible learning environment supporting schools, youth groups, and community organisations through inclusive, accessible programming.
- **An Saobhaidh (The Conservation Den):** a reflective space offering panoramic views of conservation breeding areas, including for the critically endangered wildcat.

Non-linear, bite-sized storytelling enables visitors to curate their own pathways, encouraging extended engagement and deeper, lasting behavioural impact.

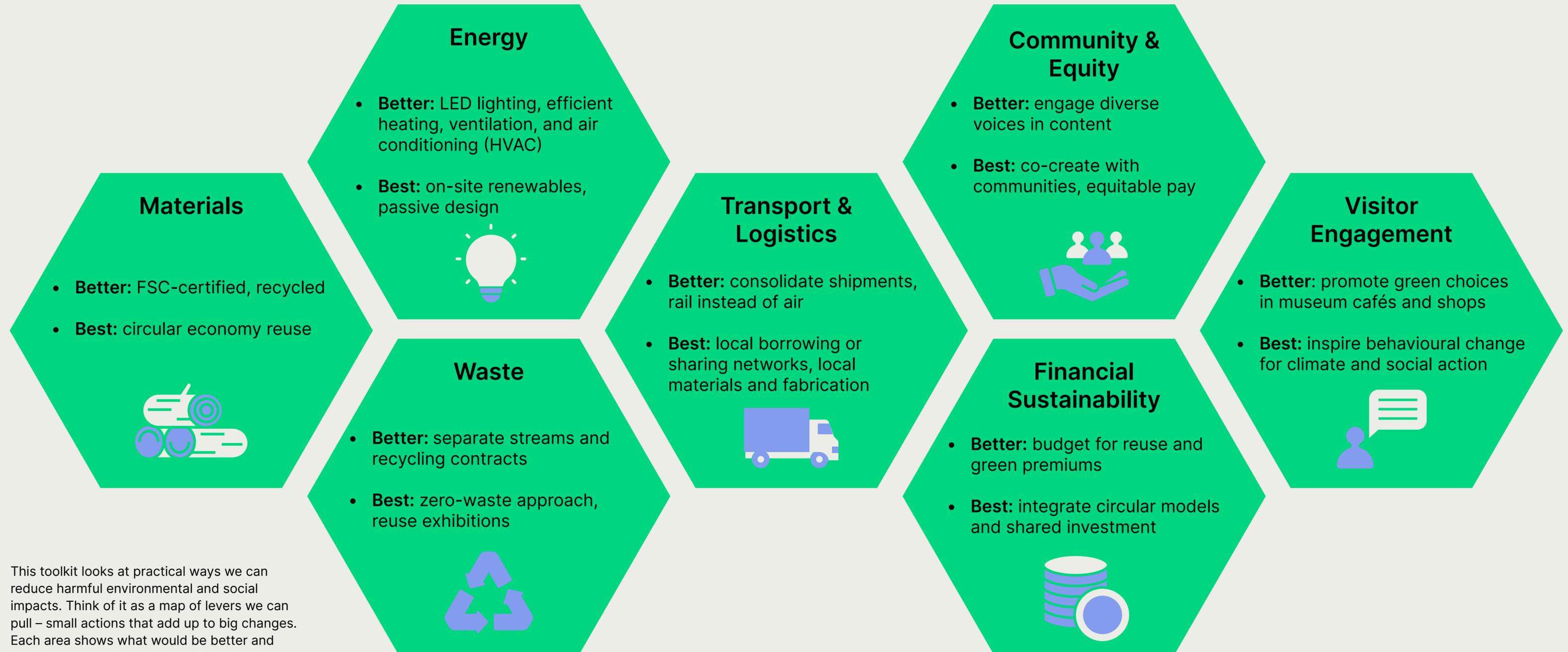


A Model For Responsible Exhibition Practice

Shortlisted for the AHI Calling Out Climate Change award, SWDC demonstrates how sustainability and inclusivity – especially when embedded from the very beginning – can transform an exhibition into a living, working example of climate-aware practice. It meets 13 of the United Nations' (UN's) 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), showing that a responsible, regenerative approach is not only possible but powerful.

This case study illustrates a new best practice for the sector, showing that sustainability should not be an add-on or a final-stage consideration. When treated as a mindset – and applied thoughtfully at every step – sustainability reduces harm, strengthens community connection, and transforms interpretation into a catalyst for environmental action.

Toolkit 2: Reducing Environmental & Social Impacts



This toolkit looks at practical ways we can reduce harmful environmental and social impacts. Think of it as a map of levers we can pull – small actions that add up to big changes. Each area shows what would be better and what would be best. This toolkit turns intention into action, helping exhibitions actively do good – environmentally, socially, and financially.

Case Study:

Whales, Winchester Cathedral

Sustainable Storytelling in a Heritage Setting

The Whales exhibition (2025) demonstrates how thoughtful material choices, environmental responsibility, and heritage-led interpretation can combine to create deep audience impact and commercial success. Conceived as a temporary installation and public programme, Whales explores human relationships with oceans through sculpture, sound, and immersive storytelling – set within one of England’s most significant sacred spaces.

Sustainability through Materials and Meaning

The centrepiece of the exhibition is three half-size sperm whale sculptures, crafted by Tessa Campbell Fraser from ‘ghost’ fishing nets – plastic pollution recovered directly from the sea. Sixteen silk banners visualising whale communication and a whale-song soundscape create a multi-sensory environment rooted in ecological storytelling.

The choice of materials is itself interpretive. Visitors encounter the beauty of the whales alongside the physical presence of ocean waste. By transforming discarded nets into sculptures, the artwork models a circular approach to exhibition-making – demonstrating how reclaimed materials can carry powerful narratives without compromising artistic quality. Here, the medium becomes part of the message, embedding sustainability into the core of the experience.



Case Study:

Whales, Winchester Cathedral

Partnership and Legacy

Whales was developed through a collaborative partnership between Winchester Cathedral, Messums, and artist Tessa Campbell Fraser, produced with Ghost Fishing UK and supported by the University of Southampton's Marine and Maritime Institute. This combination of artistic creativity and expertise, scientific credibility, and charitable purpose ensured both integrity and strong public engagement.

Because the installation was created from reclaimed, recycled, and reusable materials, it was designed with onward life in mind. The sculptures now form a touring exhibition, which continues to generate impact without the need for additional materials.



Best Practice Insights

Whales shows that sustainable exhibition-making is not simply about reducing waste; it is about aligning ecological responsibility with interpretive richness and social value. Key principles include:

- **Let materials tell the story.** Recycled or reclaimed materials can deepen narrative meaning and model sustainable behaviour.
- **Use heritage spaces as interpretive partners.** Architectural context can amplify environmental messages and emotional resonance.
- **Design for reuse and onward life.** Touring and reusability reduce environmental impact while increasing cumulative engagement.
- **Link sustainability to audience development.** Environmentally focused exhibitions can attract new audiences while enriching existing ones.
- **Measure emotional impact, not just attendance.** Visitor pledges and behavioural intentions are key indicators of meaningful change.

Whales stands as a compelling model of how material choices, environmental ethics, and heritage storytelling can work together to deliver a transformative visitor experience. With sustainability at the heart of both the artistic and interpretive process, the success of this project demonstrates that environmentally responsible exhibitions can be commercially viable, emotionally powerful, and profoundly memorable.



3: Reimagine

Extending Value



Reuse: The AHI Exchange

Picture this: at the back of a museum, a display case gathers dust. Once, it was the star of an opening night, holding treasures under bright lights. Now, it sits unused, waiting – destined for storage, or worse, landfill.

The AHI Exchange scheme was created to change that story. Born from conversations at AHI conferences, the scheme responds to a familiar challenge: tight budgets, shrinking resources, and the urgent need to act on the climate emergency. Many museums and heritage sites have surplus materials – cases, signage, panels, props – that could still have a useful life. Other museums, especially smaller or volunteer-run sites, lack the funds to access such assets. The Exchange scheme connects the two.

At its heart, the scheme is simple:

- **Need:** Too much good kit is wasted; too many organisations can't afford it new.
- **Aim:** To create a national, digital platform where AHI members can share, swap, and repurpose exhibition materials.
- **Ambition:** To embed circular practice into heritage work – extending value, reducing inequality, and making sustainability a practical, everyday habit.

Participation is easy – list what you have, request what you need, or simply join to be inspired by the ingenuity of others. Contributions can be as small as a single plinth, or as large as an entire exhibition. The benefit is collective: reduced waste, shared creativity, and money saved for interpretation rather than infrastructure.



[Weblink to AHI Exchange scheme platform](#)

Reuse: The AHI Exchange

Sun and Fire at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

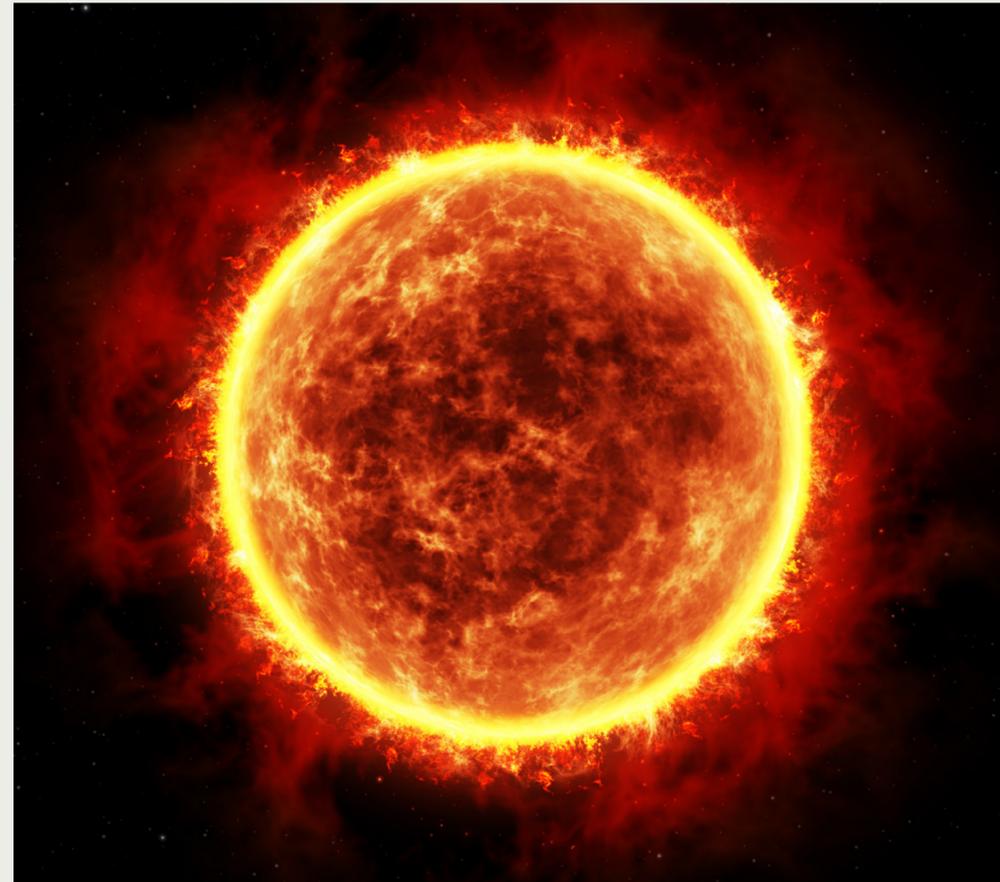
Take the example of Shropshire Museums. For their exhibition Sun and Fire: Life and death at the dawn of history (another AHI-shortlisted award project), the team reused cases and recycled scenography instead of buying new. Materials were reworked with flair, showing that sustainability doesn't mean compromising on quality. The result was cost-effective and striking – but also symbolic. By visibly reusing materials, they showed visitors that sustainability is something tangible, alive, and inspiring, rather than just abstract policy.

Why it Matters

The AHI Exchange is more than a recycling network. It's a chance to rethink value, to extend the life of interpretation materials, and to close the loop between creation and reuse. Each exchange prevents waste, cuts costs, and strengthens collaboration across the sector. By joining, participants regenerate community value, build resilience, and take practical climate action.

The Shrewsbury example shows what can happen when creativity meets circular practice. Now, imagine this multiplied across the UK: a living, national ecosystem of reuse, led by heritage professionals.

That's the promise of the AHI Exchange.





The afterlife of exhibitions, which lies at the heart of the AHI Exchange, deserves wider examination. Too often, exhibitions are treated as fleeting: designed, displayed, dismantled, and forgotten. But what if we changed our perspective? What if every exhibition was not an endpoint, but the beginning of something new?

Imagine interpretive media, scenography, and components conceived with the same artistry we bring to artworks themselves – destined not for disposal, but for reuse, repurposing, and reinterpretation. What if every case, panel, and display carried forward its own memory, ready to speak again in new contexts?

In this way, exhibitions cease to be temporary; they become part of a longer cultural journey. Materials transcend their original function, becoming cultural markers or catalysts for new forms of engagement. A recycled plinth, a repurposed case – these objects gather meaning, embodying creativity, responsibility, and continuity.

Sometimes, exhibition materials even rise to the level of artefacts themselves. The Blaschka glass models, originally created as interpretive tools to reveal the fragile beauty of marine life before digital technologies existed, are now regarded as masterpieces of art and science and are accessioned in museum collections worldwide. This reminds us that exhibitions don't have to vanish when the lights go out. They can endure, evolve, and continue shaping culture long after their original purpose has passed.

Case Study:

Housesteads Roman Fort, Northumberland



At Housesteads Roman Fort in Northumberland, the installation *The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is* showed just how powerful the afterlife of an exhibition can be. Designed by Morag Myerscough to celebrate the 1,900th anniversary of Hadrian's Wall, this bold, contemporary work transformed the ancient site with vibrant colours, large-scale typography, and striking forms. It reimagined the fort as a living canvas for creativity and community. Importantly, this project was honoured with the AHI award for Best Temporary Event, underlining AHI's commitment to innovation and excellence.

What made the project truly special was its approach to social sustainability. Local people became co-creators, rather than just spectators. Through workshops with schools, refugee groups, and young people with learning disabilities, community voices shaped the final design. Even the title of the work came from a participant.

But perhaps the most powerful element of the project came after the installation closed. Instead of being dismantled and discarded, many components – such as hand-painted placards and sculptural forms – were given new homes in community centres, schools, and public spaces. These pieces now continue to spark conversations, bridging past and present, while fostering a sense of belonging.

4: Regenerate

Inspiring renewal



Sustainability has long been a guiding principle in the museum and heritage world. But today, we must go further. It is no longer enough to simply sustain exhibitions, collections, or practices.

We must step into the more ambitious – and more urgent – space of regeneration: actively repairing, rejuvenating, and empowering the communities, cultures, and ecosystems that museums and heritage sites shape. This is about moving from protecting what exists, to cultivating what might yet flourish.

And one shining example of this regenerative spirit comes from Orkney, Scotland – at the Stromness Museum, part of the Orkney Natural History Society.

Case Study: Climate Cafés in Orkney

The project Climate Cafés: Changes in a Lifetime transformed the museum into a living hub of climate action. A series of climate cafés brought local people together to share the environmental changes they had witnessed – partly through conversation and partly through creative, hands-on reflection.

Participants stamped their words and feelings onto metal jigsaw pieces, which were later assembled into a striking public artwork at the heart of an exhibition. But what made this project remarkable, and why it won an AHI award for Excellence in Interpretation, was what happened next. The work did not end when the exhibition closed. It grew. It adapted. It expanded.

The museum continued conversations with its community and, through these, became a hub for shoreline biodiversity surveys, forging enduring partnerships with organisations such as The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to advance climate education. This is an example of regeneration in action: creative, inclusive, collaborative, and above all, lasting. Stromness Museum was not just telling a story about climate change – it was helping to drive positive change in the community.

And that spirit continues today. The local youth club has been involved in the installation of a seawater temperature monitoring probe, which streams live data directly into the museum.



Here, you can see the youth club snorkelling just off the pier as part of this work.

The museum is also working with artist Jenny Pope, who has drawn inspiration from the collection to create a floating sculpture. This artwork is designed to represent buoyancy and resilience in unprecedented times, with an underlying purpose of actively encouraging marine life to colonise it.



Here, you can see the monitoring buoy being deployed in the waters around Stromness.

These ideas make regeneration tangible: in young people engaging with the sea, in live data pulsing into the museum, and in a sculpture that is at once art, science, and sanctuary. These are not just projects. They are seeds of renewal, offering opportunities for museums and heritage sites to help communities imagine – and inhabit – a flourishing future.

Toolkit 3: Regeneration

From Sustaining to Flourishing

This final toolkit is shaped around four thematic pillars: nature, community, culture, and future generations.

Each pillar provides prompts to inspire regenerative practice. Imagine exhibitions that actively restore ecosystems – through living walls, pollinator gardens, or materials that capture carbon. Imagine museums as civic healing spaces, co-created alongside communities to nurture wellbeing and rebuild social bonds.

Imagine culture itself as a catalyst – where art and heritage become seeds for new futures, sparking behaviours that sustain interdependence. And imagine always designing with future generations in mind, so that every exhibition leaves behind something valuable and purposeful: a learning hub, a garden, or a legacy that continues to grow long after the doors close. These museums aren't just providing more 'stuff', but resources, experiences, and spaces that can be used, reused, and cherished.

The purpose is simple but radical: to ensure that every exhibition, every programme, and every partnership does more than sustain – it actively renews, regenerates, and helps our world to flourish.

Toolkit 3: Regeneration

From Sustaining to Flourishing

Community as Commons (Social Renewal)

- Co-created programmes that build social capital
- Exhibitions as civic healing spaces (post-conflict, wellbeing)
- Equity as abundance: diverse voices, reciprocal relationships

Culture as Catalyst (Creative Renewal)

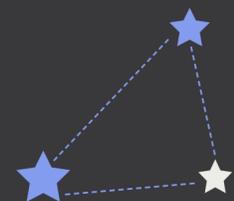
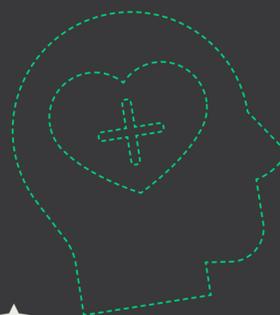
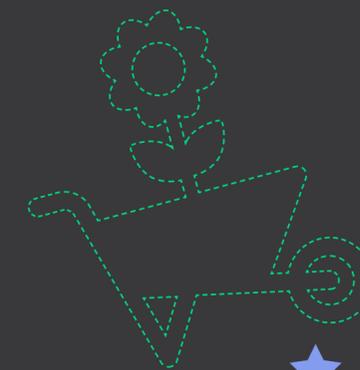
- Art or heritage as seed for imagining sustainable futures
- Use of storytelling to spark regenerative behaviours in visitors
- Festivals and exhibitions that celebrate interdependence

Nature as Partner (Ecological Regeneration)

- Exhibitions that restore ecosystems (such as living walls, pollinator gardens)
- Materials that sequester carbon (bio-based, hemp, bamboo)
- Museums as habitats (green roofs, bird boxes)

Future Generations (Long-Term Flourishing)

- Every exhibition leaves something behind (such as a learning hub, community garden, or digital legacy)
- Design for circularity and growth (modular kit that can be gifted to schools)
- Align with UN SDGs – but framed as opportunities, not obligations



Case Study: Carbon Legacy and FOREST Planting Futures At Kilmartin Museum

At the redeveloped Kilmartin Museum in Scotland, Lizzie Rose's Carbon Legacy and FOREST embody a shift from sustainability to regeneration.

Built from 375 felled oaks, Carbon Legacy drew on the Glen's 5,800-year-old cursus monument. At its heart were 375 living oak seedlings, turning the museum into both a site of remembrance and a seedbed of possibility.

For FOREST, community workshops invited participants to draw each seedling in oak-gall ink, creating 375 unique works. The installation echoed the collective labour of ancient builders and today's climate activists.

Crucially, the exhibition's legacy lives on in the form of young oaks planted in the area around the museum. These trees are now monuments, rooted in community, regeneration, and the promise of a vibrant future.

This project, which was shortlisted for the AHI Calling Out Climate Change award, is a testament to the power of regenerative practice. It stands as a vivid example of how museums and heritage sites can move from sustaining to creating – from exhibiting the world to actively shaping it.



Exhibitions are never truly temporary. Their influence extends far beyond their physical duration, shaping thinking, inspiring action, and shifting the relationships between people, places, and the planet. What is created within a museum or heritage space can continue to resonate – quietly or powerfully – long after the final visitor has left.

This guide on sustainable and regenerative exhibitions gathers principles, insights, and approaches that are grounded, creative, and actionable. Yet its purpose goes further. It invites a new mindset: to recognise exhibitions not as fixed displays, but as seeds. Seeds that can take root in communities, spark unexpected collaborations, and open new pathways for cultural and ecological renewal.

As cultural organisations imagine the futures they want to nurture, a question emerges: what legacy might each exhibition, programme, or intervention set in motion?

The ideas in this guide encourage a shift from simply sustaining what exists to actively regenerating places, relationships, and possibilities. This shift challenges us to consider how our work might replenish rather than deplete, and how we might restore as well as reveal.

Ultimately, our impact is measured in two ways: how well we preserve what we inherit, and how boldly we contribute to what will follow.

5: Resources & Further Reading



1. American Alliance of Museums (AAM's) Sustainable Exhibition Design & Construction Toolkit

Link: [AAM – Sustainable Exhibition Design & Construction Toolkit](#)

Description: A comprehensive toolkit outlining sustainable and circular approaches to exhibition design, including materials guidance, a 'Materials Pledge', and strategies supporting human, social, ecological, and climate wellbeing.

2. mindful MATERIALS Library

Link: [mindful MATERIALS Library](#)

Description: A curated catalogue of responsible construction and fabrication materials, offering data-driven guidance for selecting environmentally conscious materials.

3. The Design Museum's Environmental Impact Toolkit

Link: [Design Museum – Environmental Impact Toolkit](#)

Description: Developed with Future Observatory and URGE Collective, this data-backed guide analyses the carbon and environmental impacts of exhibition-making and provides practical strategies and impact-modelling tools to reduce them.

4. International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art's (CIMAM's) Sustainability Toolkit

Link: [CIMAM – Toolkit on Sustainability in the Museum Practice](#)

Description: An evolving online resource offering best practices, case studies, templates, and a wide directory to support environmental, social, and economic sustainability in museums and contemporary art exhibitions.

5. Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC) and The Exhibitions Group

Links: [GCC](#), [The Exhibitions Group](#)

Description: Provide carbon calculators, practical guidance, case studies, and circular economy strategies to help galleries and museums reduce the environmental impact of exhibition-making and touring.

6. International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) Sustainability Toolkit (events-focused)

Link: [IAEE – Sustainability Toolkit](#)

Description: A modular 'how to' guide for sustainable exhibitions and events, covering operational evaluation, environmental reduction strategies, social sustainability, and reporting tools (available to IAEE members).

7. Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO): Fostering dialogue in divisive times

Link: [NEMO – Fostering dialogue in divisive times](#)

Description: A practical guide for museums on facilitating community dialogue and climate-related engagement, offering case studies and step-by-step methods for inclusive, socially sustainable forums.

8. Getty PST ART Climate Impact Program Report

Link: [Getty – PST ART Climate Impact Report](#)

Description: A report detailing the successful PST ART Climate Impact Program. Representing the largest data set of exhibition emissions to date, it highlights the sustainable practices adopted by partners to reduce carbon and waste in their regular museum operations.

9. Carbon Literacy Project: Carbon Literacy for the Cultural Sector

Link: [Carbon Literacy for the Cultural Sector: Museums Toolkit](#)

Description: A toolkit, providing UK museums with carbon literacy training and practical tools to reduce their carbon impact, empowering staff to tell the story of climate change through their collections.

10. Museum Development North

Link: [MD North](#)

Description: An Arts Council England-funded partnership between four regional museum trusts, dedicated to building strong museums across the North that will drive cultural identity and deliver transformative impact within their communities.

10a. Museum Development North: Museocycle

Link: [MD North Museocycle](#)

Description: A recycling scheme for Northern museums that diverts unwanted museum equipment from landfills by rehoming it with other institutions, creating a circular economy within the sector.



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