



# **Dippy on Tour exhibition**

## **The start of our climate action work**

Touchstones Rochdale

# Touchstones Rochdales

Touchstones is a local museum, art gallery and archive centre in Rochdale town centre, responsible for caring and making the boroughs cultural heritage collection accessible.

We work, and support local communities, groups and individuals to programme exhibitions, workshops, activities and events and pride ourselves on being a hub for culture and heritage in the town.



# Our Dippy on Tour exhibition

Our **climate action work** first began during the planning stages of our Dippy on Tour exhibition that Rochdale hosted in early 2020. Here we worked in partnership with the Natural History Museum on an interactive, family friendly exhibition to support Dippy's visit to the town.



Looking specifically at the theme of sustainability, we worked with groups and volunteers to highlight and celebrate the fantastic work being undertaken in the borough. The exhibition featured **an installation of over 1000 bees**, all knitted by members of the community and suspended from the ceiling in the gallery space to highlight biodiversity.

Members of staff also took part in **Carbon Literacy training** delivered by MDNW to support the messaging of the exhibition.

Since then, as an organisation, we have been consciously thinking about how our work impacts the environment and have been **actively taking steps** to reduce our carbon footprint in any way we can.

# The bees...

Hundreds of bees were knitted by our community for the Dippy on Tour exhibition in 2020. It formed part of a huge installation within the gallery space to support environmental themes explored within the show.

We were inundated with the knitted bees and couldn't display them all, so we sold them in our shop during the exhibition and donated the money to two sustainable projects in Rochdale:

- Petrus Incredible Edible Garden (PIER), a community group run by Petrus which provides supported housing and related services to the homeless people in the Rochdale area, and
- Rochdale In Bloom.



We are delighted to have received support through the funds raised from the knitted bees on the Dippy tour to use on our community allotment on Belfield Road.

We will use the funds to develop a biodiverse sustainable display that will not only increase the biodiversity on site but will also be used to teach others in our community about how we can use different types of plants to attract wildlife including beneficial pollinators such as bees.

Team at PIER

# Impacts and Outcomes



Environmental impact is a key consideration during the planning stages of all new projects including exhibitions and collections work.



We are part of the Roots and Branches project which provides us with support, advice and networking with other institutions to share current sector knowledge.



Two members of staff have undertaken training to deliver Carbon Literacy Training to all members of staff. This is being rolled out to all members of staff in the organisation.



We consciously consider how we can reuse, recycle and adapt materials for exhibition design and in creative workshops to reduce waste and use only materials from a sustainable source wherever possible.



We have undertaken a assessment with Julie' Bicycle (a company mobilising the arts and culture sector on the climate and ecological crisis) to report on our current status and advise and recommend next steps to enable us to become more sustainable.

# Challenges and Barriers



Like a lot of individuals and organisations when actively thinking about climate impact and changes, it can often be **overwhelming**. The subject is **vast** and often quite difficult to understand. The **urgency** of climate change can make deciding where to start confusing.



Changes can be **expensive, time consuming and resource intensive** which can create barriers to positive development.



However through **relationships** with organisations such as Manchester Museum, Museum Development North West and the Natural History Museum, who have been invaluable in **providing knowledge, support and resources**, we have been able to take the first steps on our climate action journey.

Climate action is  
a marathon not a sprint!

“

Through the work we have undertaken on our Dippy exhibition and with MDNW, we have started to **think seriously about our responsibility** as a cultural organisation and the impact we are having on the climate crisis.

Alongside other recent changes and ways of thinking, we are now only using **materials** that come from a **sustainable source** and can be **recycled or reused**. We are also monitoring and reducing the amount of **waste** we produce to enable us to manage our collections and exhibitions in an environmentally thoughtful way.

Sarah Hodgkinson,  
Museum Curator and Collections Manager



The Carbon Literacy course has enabled me to evaluate environmental impact both in the work place and in my personal life. The learning has already become embedded into everyday conversations about taking urgent climate action.

Bryan Beresford,  
Curatorial and Community Engagement  
Coordinator and Carbon Literacy Trainer

In our organisation, we are already seeing changes in the way we work with artists by reducing wastage. We are now moving towards creating policies that bring artists and collaborators on board with our goals from the get go.

# Next steps and future climate actions

- To implement the recommendations and next steps from our **Julie's Bicycle report**.
- To have an **environmental policy and action plan** in place, for all the activity we undertake at Touchstones and the Arts and Heritage Resource Centre.
- To embed an **environmental theme into our exhibitions programme**, ensuring we are tackling current issues to educate and galvanise our audiences.



# Find out more



Our Trust blog post: [Local biodiversity projects receive donations from sales of knitted bees](#)



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# Roots & Branches

## Seeds for Action – case studies



The **Seeds for Action Programme** is part of the Roots & Branches project. It aims to connect Carbon Literate Certified museum people across England to develop and build on their carbon reduction strategies and approaches to taking climate action.



By pooling our **collective expertise and resources**, we can save ourselves time and money, and tackle the climate emergency more effectively together. Feel free to **share this case study** with others.

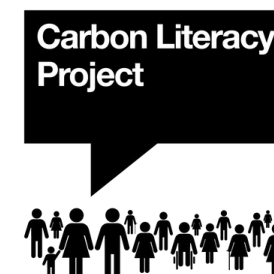


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