

**NATIONAL
COAL MINING
MUSEUM**



The Legacy of Coal and Our Sustainability Manifesto

2026

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Our Sustainability Manifesto

At the National Coal Mining Museum for England, we are committed to sharing the heritage of coal mining, what it has meant for communities across England and its legacy now.

From ancient times through to 2015 - many generations, millions of men, women and children - worked underground across England's coalfields.

There is a great deal for their descendants and the people of England to be proud of, to be inspired by and from which we can learn for the future.

We also fully recognise the environmental legacy: the impact the burning of coal and other fossil fuels has had on our environment.

We are therefore committed to sharing the story of that part of coal's legacy, the critical position in which the world now finds itself, the urgent need to reduce our Museum's and the world's carbon footprint, and what steps need to be taken to achieve that.



We will lead by example

We are committed to being an innovative national museum and heritage destination, adopting and showcasing sustainable practices across all aspects of what we do.

By embracing and showcasing new technologies and ensuring the sustainability of all our programmes and operations, we will engage and inspire visitors of all ages, backgrounds and needs, while minimising our environmental footprint.

We have set up a special working group of representatives from across all our departments and projects to implement the delivery of projects and activity to reduce our carbon footprint and how we engage our communities and visitors with coal's legacy.

Through this commitment, we will honour the legacy of coal mining whilst engaging the environmental legacy which it and other fossil fuels continue to have, exploring how society can respond to climate emergency, and ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy and learn at our museum in a way which is inspirational, impactful and sustainable.

What do we mean by Sustainability?



Sustainability means that as a society, we use the precious resources available on earth for our daily needs without running out of these resources in the future or harming the environment that provides them.

Being located within Wakefield and Kirklees Councils, our strategy aligns with the climate action targets set by both local councils and the UK Government[†].

We need to achieve a balance where the amount of carbon and other greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere is equal to the amount being removed or offset.

[†] The UK's plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050: commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9888/



Our Commitments



We will reduce harmful gases released into the environment

Our planet earth is getting damaged by greenhouse gas released from different human activity around the world.

To reduce these impacts UK Government has set a goal for everyone to reduce their emissions to reach net zero by 2050.

To support this mission, we are committing to reduce emissions following the target guidance released by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) for carbon goals.

We are committed to exploring and championing the potential of mine water to provide low carbon heating, extracting heat from the 1.5 million gallons of water we pump from underground each day.

We hope that will provide heating for our site in such a way may significantly reduces our carbon footprint and provides an inspirational national showcase of this new technology.

We are also exploring the way in which the museum can introduce and engage our visitors with a variety of other low carbon technologies across our post-industrial landscape.



We will reduce and change how our buildings use energy

A large proportion of our emissions comes from energy used in our buildings and mine water treatment. To tackle this:

- We are working on energy-saving projects for our buildings, by improving their fabric and systems.
- We currently have solar panels and biomass boilers, and we plan to boost our green energy technologies.
- We are committed to designing new buildings and exhibits that are energy efficient.
- We are aiming to source energy from our supplier to include renewable options in our energy mix that is backed by certifications.





We will lower the environmental impact of what we use and buy

The greenhouse gases released from the things we buy for our café, gift shop and other day to day operations, through their production, transportation and at the end of its life when it becomes waste, is estimated to be 44% of the total greenhouse gas we produce. We will:

- Examine and evaluate the impact from our operational activities including what we buy and sell, waste produced and transportation costs, also known as 'scope 3 emissions'.
- We will implement a supplier selection process and will build a buying policy that puts sustainability at the heart of what we do.
- Our museum café and gift shop are committed to supporting more local suppliers and prioritising environmental impacts of the products we sell.
- We aim to expand vegan and vegetarian options on the menu, promote the use of reusable mugs and cups, and reduce plastic bottle use.
- In our gift shop, we plan to source more products from local artists and manufacturers, meaning less carbon used in their transportation, and prioritise items with recycled content or that are biodegradable.
- We are working towards providing a 'green venue' for conferences and events, and host networking opportunities focused on sustainability.



We will recycle and reduce the waste we create

We already recycle all our cardboard and paper and compost the horse waste from our pit ponies.

We aim to recycle and compost all our general waste streams such as glass, plastic and food waste generated from our café, shop and offices and are looking at how we can compost food waste on site.



We will save water and protect our waterways

Water is another resource on earth that is affected by pollution, including from generations of industrial activity.

As a coal museum, we partner with the Mining Remediation Authority to treat mine water pumped from our collieries before it goes back into local watercourses, making sure it's safe for the environment and our community.

Together, we're protecting this precious resource for the future. We will share the story of how we do this, how waterways are still impacted by industry across the UK and around the world, the damage this causes and how it needs to be addressed.



Learning, Engagement and Collections

We recognise that to fully share and learn from the story of coal we must also explore its legacy in terms of environmental impact. Our learning and engagement and collections teams incorporate climate and environmental impact into many of their activities, including:

- Working with funding from the Natural History Museum to deliver a festival in Autumn 2025, co-created with young people. This event is exploring climate change and the legacies of coal mining.
- We want to create spaces in the museum where people can reflect on the legacy of coal and its impact.
- We're building new partnerships across communities and groups, who will be a vital part of future projects. Volunteers are supporting us to look after our site and encourage biodiversity, for example through the planting of native trees and wildflowers courtesy of the Woodland Trust.

- Our formal learning programmes explore how our water treatment facility helps us to conserve our waterways. Our primary school minibeast workshops celebrates and explores the rich biodiversity in our woodland.
- For all audiences we will highlight and discuss new green energy sources, as part of coal's legacy story, in fun, engaging and effective ways.

We are committed to making sure our visitors and communities feel confident and motivated to embrace these technologies, and to engage with the legacy of coal, whilst still being immensely proud of their mining heritage.





We will protect and celebrate the landscape, habitats and biodiversity that surround the museum

Our former colliery site is now reclaimed by nature. It is an excellent example of a post-industrial landscape of which there are so many across England.

We have completed a comprehensive survey of local habitats, biodiversity and an assessment of our waterways' health.

These studies will explore how the nature around us can be nurtured, how its importance can be celebrated and how we can protect them into the future.

We are planning physical interventions and activity programmes that will improve our habitats and give volunteers and local communities the opportunity to boost the biodiversity of our site, landscape and woodlands.



Sharing the Impact of Coal

We will achieve this through:

- Galleries and exhibitions that promote sustainability, discuss climate change, renewable energy and encourage green and climate conversation.
- Interpretative interventions across our landscape which share its stories, the impact of mining and the inspiration we can draw from it to protect our landscape into the future.
- Exhibits showcasing circular innovations relating to coal and its communities, such as the re-use of ochre and long traditions of recycling and reuse, for example rag rugging.
- As we take steps to reduce our environmental footprint and introduce new technologies, we will showcase and share this publicly, across all our communication channels, by working with partners and local communities, and with all our visitors to the museum.





Our journey towards sustainability is ongoing.

We invite our community, partners, and visitors to join us. Together, we can ensure that the National Coal Mining Museum for England continues to be a place of learning, inspiration, and positive change for generations to come.

This manifesto has been created by Dhanya Mohandas AIEMA MSc, working with our partners, supporters, all our staff teams and trustees, as part of a postgraduate internship programme with the University of Huddersfield, supported by Santander.

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