



**Museums  
Galleries  
Scotland**

Supporting Scotland's Museums



## CASE STUDY

# Carbon Literacy in Museums Galleries Scotland

Museums Galleries Scotland



Resilience

Climate Action

## Overview

Alex Smith, Climate Officer at MGS, writes about Museums Galleries Scotland's journey to becoming a Carbon Literate organisation in 2022.



This project meets the aims set out in the [climate action](#) priority area of the strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries.

## The project

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) started on a Carbon Literacy journey in 2022. So far this has included the delivery of Carbon Literacy training to MGS staff, partnerships to deliver the same training externally to the sector, development of a new course with ongoing delivery, and MGS being awarded as a Gold Carbon Literate Organisation at the end of 2022.

Prior to starting our Carbon Literacy journey, climate action and sustainability was a small but growing part of our work. As it grew in importance, a Climate Officer was employed at MGS in July 2021 with a Museum Development Assistant joining through the Kickstart scheme and subsequent employment, in October 2021. Once a Climate Team was in place, we had the resources to analyse our internal procedures, ensuring we were working as sustainably as possible. This included measuring our carbon output, creating a climate strategy, and switching to a renewable energy supplier. Climate and sustainability started to become a wider part of the support MGS offered to museums and the work we engaged in with partners.

Part of the work we conducted was a sector-wide survey that highlighted an appetite and need for climate related training within the sector. We decided to deliver Carbon Literacy training to help provide a base of knowledge for those working in the museum sector.

**Carbon Literate  
Organisation**  
Gold



"I found the course to be digestible and engaging. Writing an action plan really forced me to think about my impact as an individual and helped me to identify new ways of reducing my carbon emissions. The knowledge I've gained has also helped me communicate more confidently with the sector."

**Robyn Evans, Digital Marketing  
Assistant at MGS**

## Challenges and successes

- We partnered with Keep Scotland Beautiful to deliver a bespoke course for both the Scottish museum sector and MGS staff. For the internal training, each member of staff created an action plan with both group and individual actions to reduce carbon emissions. The action plans were worked through with the Climate Officer to identify areas where significant progress could be made. We found more opportunities in the group actions as MGS is an outward-facing, partnership-based organisation with plenty of opportunities for group actions.
- The individual actions were more challenging as MGS already works in a fairly lean and digital manner, but reductions could still be found in individual areas and departments including the way we travel, procurement, and digital behaviours. MGS has since been certified as a Gold Carbon Literate Organisation with aspirations to reach Platinum level.
- Engagement levels across MGS were high and the sessions were attended by over half of the organisation.
- Staff were keen to learn what we could do collectively as an organisation and individually.

## Impact

The training has gone a long way towards giving staff the knowledge and confidence to be able to talk about climate and sustainability issues, especially carbon, with the sector and our wider partners. Although we delivered the training recently, we have already seen impacts from the action plans committed, including;

- An MGS staff Cycle club has been established
- Climate action has become a standing agenda item at meetings within different sector groups and forums
- We're looking at ways of reducing our digital footprint with our new website
- Staff are more confident in talking about climate issues and the role museums can play in tackling climate action

Our next steps are seeking ways to increase our facilitating capacity with more MGS staff delivering Carbon Literacy training sessions for the sector. Through this increased capacity and expanded delivery, we plan to maintain the engagement with Carbon Literacy and help commit to more carbon reduction actions across the wider sector.

During this journey we've learned:

- The impact museums can have on carbon emissions, both directly and indirectly.
- The appetite for training such as this and the ambition in the sector to take action.
- The potential, and responsibility, for MGS to play an important role in creating a sustainable sector.

## Guidance

On your climate journey ensure that a wide range of people, including stakeholders, are involved in training as this can have a brilliant impact on the discussion with different experiences and backgrounds brought in.

### Additional information

For anyone interested in finding out more about Carbon Literacy, see the [Carbon Literacy Project website](#).

If you have any questions about becoming a Carbon Literate organisation, please contact MGS at [climate@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk](mailto:climate@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk).

**T: 0131 550 4100 | W: [museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk](http://museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk) | Twitter: @MuseumsGalScot**

Museums Galleries Scotland is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland (No. 74264) and a charity registered in Scotland (No. SC015593).