

NEW SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS FANS CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF LIVE EVENTS

A new survey from Buckinghamshire New University and music industry campaign group A Greener Festival of nearly TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED festival fans from around the World shows that the public is increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of events – but – when it came down to it, they would prioritise getting to see their favourite band over environmental issues.

The research, supported by the Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) in the UK and Yourope, the eighty eight strong European festival association, asked festival fans fifteen questions on green issues. Fans responded from 32 countries worldwide. Top responding countries included the UK (40%), Slovakia (27%) and Germany (13%) and the home nations of other fans responding included other European countries, the USA, Canada, China, Russia, India and Turkey.

Question: Where do you think festival's have a negative environmental impact?

Noise	76.5%
Waste	87.4%
CO2	56.1%
Waster Wastage	55.3%
Traffic	81.4%
Land damage	65.5%

Teresa Moore, Head of Music & Events at Buckinghamshire New University said “awareness of the environmental impact of festivals remains high – although not much has changed from 2008 when we surveyed 1,407 festival fans in Europe. In the 2008 survey, 80% considered noise at festivals had a negative environmental impact, 82% thought waste had a negative impact, 56% thought festivals had a negative carbon footprint, 60% were worried about water waste, 84% thought travel and transport had a negative environmental and 53% were concerned with land damage. But its encouraging that most fans remain aware of both their own and the event's impact”.

Question: Who should be responsible for minimising the environmental impact of festivals?

Despite fan travel being by far the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions (usually nearly three quarters of an events total footprint at an out of town site) and therefore within the audience's control, most fans thought it was organisers who should be responsible for minimising an event's environmental impact:

Festival organiser	90.0%
Local authority	30.3%
Festival goers	79.7%

However, there has been a significant rise in fans saying they should take personal responsibility for the impact, up from 56% in 2008 to 79.7% in 2012.

Teresa Moore noted that “this represents a significant shift in audience attitudes since the last survey was conducted, and whilst very encouraging, it should be recognised that attitudes do not always translate into changes in behaviour.”

Question: Recycling – “I separate my rubbish at festivals where separate recycling bins are provided”

Strongly agree	50.8%
Agree	35.8%
Not sure	7.2%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly disagree	1.3%

There was another significant increase in fan’s green awareness with recycling with 86.6% of fans saying they will recycle in 2012 – up from 62% in 2008.

But whilst fans seemingly support recycling initiatives, practices vary from festival to festival. **Claire O’Neill**, General Secretary of the Association of Independent Festivals said “whilst 86.6% of fans say they will recycle – we know that a substantial minority – probably one in five – leave tents and other camping gear behind at festivals which causes a huge headache for organisers – and the environment” adding “2012 saw the launch of the ‘**Love Your Tent**’ campaign aimed at reducing left behind tents and camping gear as well as the London 2012 inspired **Zero Waste Events**” which we hope may make a difference.

68.5% of fans supported the use of re-usable cups, plates and glasses. This number was actually a drop from 2008 when 78% of fans supported re-usable utensils.

65.5% of festival goers would be happy to pay a deposit on reusable cups and glasses although 17.7% would not.

A whopping 86% supported the composting of food waste. The results give ammunition to event organisers, on-site catering teams, bars and stall holders to implement environmentally friendly practices, which a large majority of the audience actually *want*.

Question: Travel - “I would travel by public transport if it was provided as part of the ticket price”

Strongly agree	44.1%
Agree	25.4%
Not sure	17.5%
Disagree	9.5%
Strongly disagree	3.5%

This figure of 69.5% is almost the same as 2008 when 71% of fans agreed with the question saying they would use public transport if included in the ticket price

Ben Challis co-founder of A Greener Festival commented – this is a more encouraging response than we had expected in the recession – better train services in continental Europe and much better coach travel with companies like Big Green Coach in the UK are continuing to shift audience views – but, and it’s a big but, car travel, particularly in the UK, is still central to many festival’s and fans travel plans “ adding “so there remains a role for car pooling and lift sharing in car centric societies – something event organisers can actively support”.

Paying for environmental initiatives

When it came to paying for green events, 49.8% of festival goers would pay an **increased ticket price to reduce the festival's environmental impact** (up from 41.5% in 2008) but 18.8% would not accept any rise.

28.1% of festival fans said they **did consider a festival's environmental impact when choosing to go to an event** (up from 21.8% in 2008) but the majority of did not with 25.4% not sure. However overall this is a substantial drop from similar research in 2009 and 2008 (59.4% and 36% would consider those), and reflects opinions in 2006 when 27% of fans though the issues were important, with 46.4% then saying that an event's environmental record was not of interest.

When asked if they would **go to an event if their favourite band was playing – even of the event had no green policies** – 86.5% of fans said that they would still go

Perhaps more encouragingly, 43.1% of fans said that they had **changed their behaviour as a result of green initiatives or ideas they had discovered at festivals** with Claire O'Neill, General Secretary of the Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) saying "festivals remain a great place to engage with music fans on environmental issues" adding "it's clear that most fans want to go to green events – and are prepared to listen and learn. But not all do, and event organisers have to be aware of mixed audience opinions with a small percentage quite opposed to change"

RESEARCH DATA 2281 RESPONDENTS

RESPONDENTS NATIONALITY

UK 40%
Slovakia 27%
Germany 13%
Switzerland 4%
Finland 3%

AGE OF RESPONDENTS

0-15	1.1%
16-20	23.9%
21-25	25.8%
26-30	16.4%
31-35	9.3%
36-40	6.6%
40-50	9.8%
51+	7.1%

TOP RESPONDING FESTIVALS ATTENDED

Pohoda Festival (Slovakia, capacity 30,000)
Melt! Festival (Germany, capacity 20,000)
Glastonbury Festival (UK, capacity 177,000)
Open Air St Gallen (Switzerland, 30,000)
The Cambridge Folk Festival (UK, capacity 20,000)

Illosaarirock (Finland, capacity 21,000)
Oya Festival (Norway, capacity 80,000)

Survey conducted between April and September 2012 by Buckinghamshire New University.

For further information please contact Teresa Moore at teresa.moore.ac.uk

Editor's notes

Teresa Moore is Head of Department for Music and Events Management at Bucks New University

Buckinghamshire New University has enjoyed a long and successful history since it was founded in 1893. The University now offers an extensive portfolio of courses spanning the creative and cultural industries, the management and information management sectors, and the public sector. It also offers services to industry including contract research, consultancy and the opportunity to employ graduates.

The University has completed a major campus re-development programme, which saw the opening of: a new state-of-the-art building in High Wycombe known as the Gateway and comprising a learning resource and technology centre, events hall, gym, sports science laboratory, dance, drama, music and video production studios, library and meeting rooms; new student accommodation in High Wycombe; and a new base for nursing students and applied healthcare research in Uxbridge, West London.

Website: bucks.ac.uk

A Greener Festival is a not-for-profit company committed to helping music and arts events and festivals around the world adopt environmentally efficient practices.

Website: agreenerfestival.com