

**SOMERSET  
HOUSE** step inside think outside

# SUSTAINABILITY AT SOMERSET HOUSE





# THE HOME OF CULTURAL INNOVATORS

**We connect creativity and the arts with wider society, bringing worlds and minds together to intensify creativity and multiply opportunity, driving artistic and social innovation at once.**

**We are a site of origination with a cultural programme offering alternative perspectives on the biggest issues of our time.**

**Home to the UK's largest creative community, working globally across art, technology, business and social enterprise, we draw fresh ideas and new talent in, attracting over 3 million visitors a year to our historic central London location.**

Sustainability and responsible event management are of paramount importance to Somerset House and, by extension, our accredited suppliers. We are actively responding to environmental issues and aim to be cultural leaders in our sector by championing sustainable practices. By working together, we can make positive changes and collectively reduce the impact of our events on the planet.

To hold ourselves accountable, we have identified 5 key areas in which we can all make progress when it comes to sustainability.

- Waste Management
- Sustainable Energy
- Travel & Vehicle Emissions
- Social Sustainability
- Raising Awareness

Our aim is to set realistic, achievable, and measurable targets with our suppliers, to track improvements and identify further areas for growth. We seek to be an agent of change; it is our responsibility to back progress and act as industry leaders in these areas.



# WASTE MANAGEMENT

We are committed to taking action to reduce waste associated with commercial events at Somerset House and continue to develop sustainable solutions to manage waste onsite.

As part of our tender process, all our accredited suppliers have also made a commitment to reduce waste.

Our long-term goal is to ensure that all events are designed and delivered using reusable or recyclable materials, and that a sustainable ethos is embedded in all events hosted at Somerset House.

## STATISTICS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Somerset House is proud to send zero waste to landfill. All recyclable waste is separated, including plastic, cans, cardboard and food waste. Any items left are sent to incineration plants that generate energy from the waste.
- We are taking a firm stance on one-off waste with a no single-use plastic policy for all commercial events.
- Somerset House has made a commitment to offer as many opportunities as possible for guests to engage with recycling. Look out for our new coffee cup recycling stations dotted around the site!



# SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Your Event Manager will work with your chosen suppliers to consider the energy use of your event and suggest sustainable alternatives where possible.

## STATISTICS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Somerset House uses an onsite combined cooling, heating and power plant (CCHP) to produce 49% of all our electricity. The heat generated by the CCHP process then goes to warm the building during winter and cool it in summer, dramatically reducing our CO2 emissions. For other electricity use, we use 0 carbon sources for all grid electricity.
- In 2023-2024, Somerset House is focusing on increasing our use of solar, wind, and hydro energy sources.
- Somerset House have implemented new infrastructure to manage energy usage and identify new sustainable energy solutions. We can provide energy-use data on request so that you can understand the environmental impact of your event.
- Somerset House has undertaken a substantial project to locally control room temperatures across our site and implement an automated system to reduce temperatures in unused spaces.



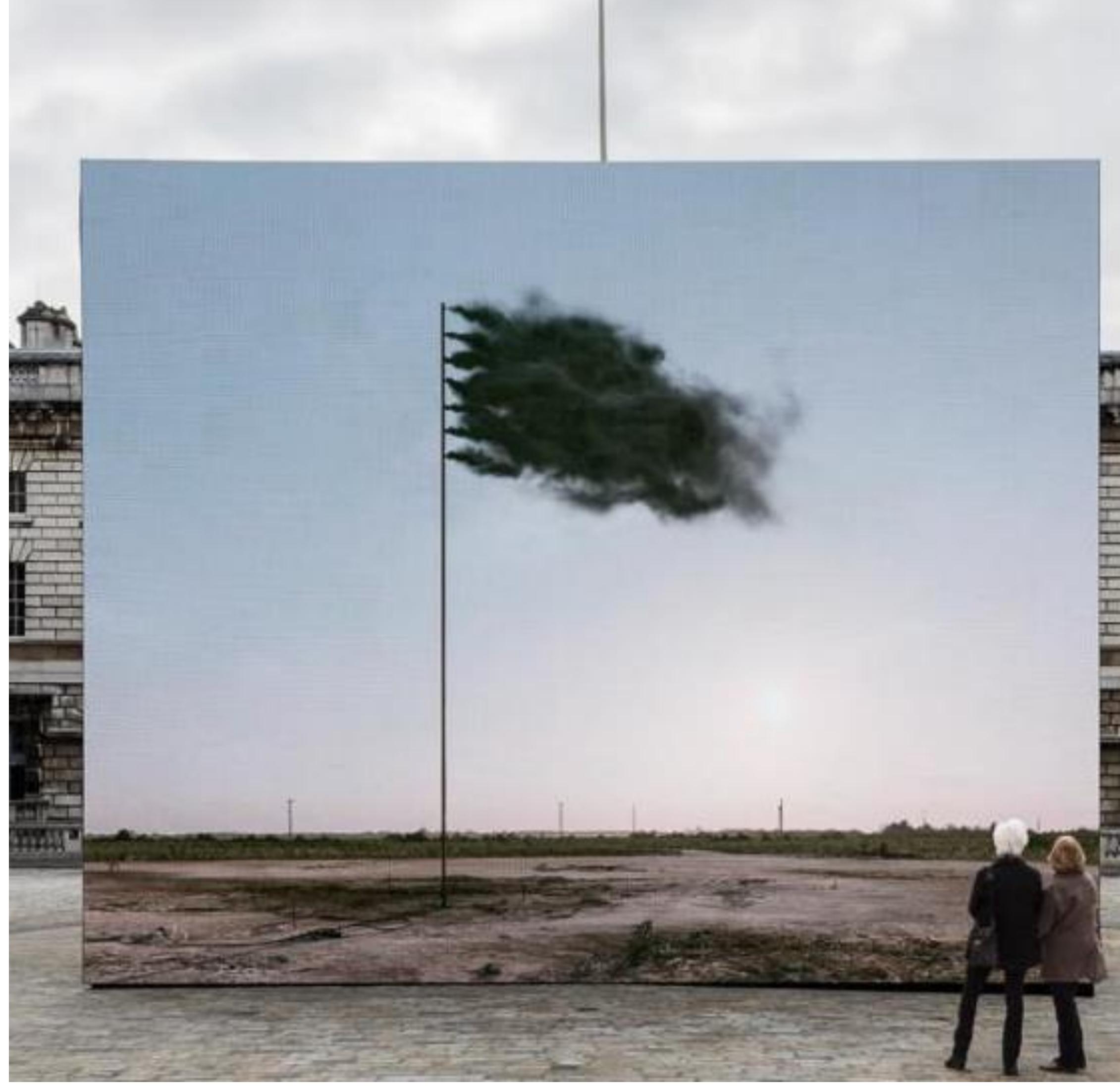
# TRAVEL AND VEHICLE EMISSIONS

Reducing vehicle and travel emissions are a key area of focus for Somerset House. As an events venue we accept suppliers and events each bring their own level traffic so we are working proactively with our accredited suppliers to study what vehicles are being used, whether single larger deliveries can be made, considering delivery windows to minimise engine idling time, and encouraging the use of electric vans.

We are committed to reducing travel and vehicle emissions associated with commercial events at Somerset House and continue to work with our suppliers to source local materials where possible and reduce deliveries to minimise pollution in the local area.

## STATISTICS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Somerset House provides charging points for electric vehicles in our West Service Yard.
- Somerset House encourages our suppliers, clients and Residents to use the same preferred courier and consolidate deliveries to reduce the number of vehicles coming to our site.
- Somerset House has played a large part in the pedestrianisation of the Strand Aldwych, which has led to a reduction of pollutants by 50%.
- Somerset House is well connected by public transport and we encourage all visitors to our site to take advantage of this.
- Somerset House provides safe and secure bike storage and encourages cycling to our site.



# SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Social sustainability is central to our understanding of responsible event management and underpins our sustainability framework. We firmly believe that we have a responsibility as an event venue to promote mental health and wellbeing of employees, engage with our audiences on the sustainability work, and collaborate with event organisers to encourage ethical and accountable practices.

We are committed to making social sustainability a key part of our company culture by engaging in and creating social and economic opportunities for a diverse and inclusive workforce and ensuring all employees are empowered to manage their work-life balance, by supporting their wellbeing.

## STATISTICS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Somerset House is proud to be an accredited Living Wage payer. We pay all our staff and sub-contractors the London Living Wage, as do our suppliers.
- Somerset House is committed to providing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training and development in the workplace including but not limited to accessibility training, mental health first aid, unconscious bias, and anti-racism training opportunities.
- We believe in championing mental health services through our EAP program and network of mental health first aiders. We require our suppliers to provide opportunities for their teams to access mental health support, training, and development.



# RAISING AWARENESS

Our vision is to be a leader in our sector and keep sustainable and responsible event management at the heart of what we do. Working together with our broader community, we want to contribute to the conversation on local, national and international levels; whilst innovating, testing and championing models of environmental best practice.

We commit to raising awareness on sustainability within the events industry by engaging our clients and audiences, ensuring that they are aware of the more sustainable options available for their event. We aim to inspire and engage visitors through cultural programming and events addressing climate change and environmental sustainability; whilst creating, testing and sharing innovative new models of environmentally sustainable working and living with our resident community and contractors.

## STATISTICS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- We offer private views and curator talks of our exhibitions and installations to encourage all event attendees to engage with sustainability through the Somerset House cultural programme.
- Our residents sustainability group Sustain meet regularly to discuss how Somerset House as a collective can fight against climate change and embrace sustainable and responsible systems of work.





# MAKING YOUR EVENT MORE SUSTAINABLE

**How are you advising your guests to travel to your event?**

The easiest and most sustainable way to reach Somerset House is by public transport. We are a short walk from several tube and train stations – including Temple, Embankment, Blackfriars, Covent Garden, Charing Cross and Waterloo. Somerset House can also be reached by bus and by river boat services.

**How are you sharing Somerset House’s accessibility information with your guests?**

Somerset House strives to be open and accessible to all, and we are working to remove barriers for visitors with disabilities and to ensure our events are accessible. Detailed information about accessible routes to our event spaces, accessible toilets, wheelchair access, and assistance dogs can be found on the [Accessibility information section of our website](#).

**How are you encouraging your guests to treat all event staff with respect?**

Our staff and suppliers work hard to deliver your event. By entering Somerset House, you and your guests agree to respect anybody – regardless of attire, gender, sexual orientation, race, belief and experience – and should expect to receive that same respect. By entering our event spaces, you agree to treat all people equally and without prejudice or presumptions, including our staff.

**How are you planning to monitor your event’s energy use?**

Most event spaces at Somerset House have the technology in place to monitor energy usage during an event. We are happy to share the data for your event space at your request.

**Are you creating new, event-specific material for your event?**

Reducing the amount of dated and branded content you produce for your event will reduce waste – and is a simple way to reduce costs. Consider how any materials created for your event can be reused by yourself or your suppliers. Making cost-effective sustainable choices – such as using lighting to decorate your event space rather than producing bespoke decorations – can greatly reduce the impact of your event on the environment.

**How are you sharing information about Somerset House’s sustainability with your guests?**

Somerset House strives to deliver sustainable events, and we share our successes across our social media channels. You can tag Somerset House Events in your social posts about your event: @somersethouse\_venuehire

**How are you inviting your guests to your event?**

Using paperless, online invitations can reduce waste.

# HOW CAN OUR SUPPLIERS SUPPORT YOU?

**Are you working with your suppliers to source materials for the event to reduce travel and vehicle emissions?**

There are simple ways of reducing emissions to your event. Have you considered coordinating deliveries with suppliers to reduce travel emissions and vehicles arriving to site?

**Are you talking to your suppliers about sustainable options?**

Many people assume sustainable solutions tend to be more expensive, however, this is not always the case. Have you spoken to your suppliers about cost effective sustainable options? For example, using an LED red carpet instead of a real carpet!

**Have you considered plant-based menus to reduce your carbon footprint?**

Speak to your caterer about your menu choices to see how your menu can be more sustainable. Why not focus on in-season and local produce to showcase the best of your event location to your guests?

**Are you asking your suppliers to monitor sustainable energy use?**

Have you spoken to your suppliers about what sustainable energy they use within their organisations? Many organisations use solar energy as this is a more sustainable option.

**How are you asking your suppliers to decorate your space?**

What materials are being used and created for your event? Work with your suppliers to design your event in the most sustainable way to reduce waste. Have you asked your suppliers how they manage their waste?

**Have you spoken to your suppliers about their sustainable initiatives?**

Do you look for pay-it forward schemes? Some suppliers have charity partnerships that mean you can support a good cause through your event. Think; charity canapes, donating event props to schools, and sending your flowers to hospitals and charities!

**SOMERSET  
HOUSE** step inside think outside

The Arks of Gimokudan by Leeroy New



As an independent charity that does not receive any regular public funding, all event hire income directly contributes to our diverse cultural programme, our pioneering inclusive talent engagement work, our support of emerging artists, and helps to maintain our historic Grade I listed site.

### **CONTACT US**

[events@somersethouse.org.uk](mailto:events@somersethouse.org.uk)

+44 (0)20 7845 4618

[somersethouse.org.uk/venue-hire](https://somersethouse.org.uk/venue-hire)

View our Accredited Supplier List [here](#)

