



the happy
museum

Connecting Sustainability and Wellbeing - a gathering momentum

'Our own happiness is short-lived if we achieve wellbeing for our generation at the environmental expense of future generations.' Happy Museum Project

Jonathan Rowson of the RSA said *'the essence of the climate change challenge is the wrong kind of energy (fossil fuels) in the wrong kind of economy (fixated with GDP) pursuing the wrong kind of objective (consumption without end)'*

In the light of this challenge, and in an increasing number and range of contexts, people are identifying the vital linkage between sustainability and wellbeing and shedding new light on how thinking of these two issues in conjunction might offer a key to providing an alternative vision for what a sustainable and flourishing society might look like both now and in the future. The Happy Museum vision is of the contribution *museums* might make to a sustainable future by fostering wellbeing that doesn't cost the Earth.

This document brings together a range of approaches in different fields which take a complementary frame for action and demonstrate a gathering momentum - followed by background and further information about the Happy Museum.

The range of approaches

UN General Assembly in July 2011 adopted a resolution "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development" It invited member countries to measure the happiness of their people and to use this to help guide their public policies. This was followed in April 2012 by the first UN high-level meeting on happiness and well-being, chaired by the Prime Minister of Bhutan. At the same time the first World Happiness Report was published. *"The analytical community needs to help us understand which policies would raise well-being in a sustainable way. Then we need to convince the public of the link between their well-being and the policies that governments are pursuing. In this way we can help politicians to reap the reward for good, sustainable policies that enhance individual and global well-being."* **World Happiness Report 2013** This was followed some months later by the OECD Guidelines setting an international standard for the measurement of well-being. Their aim was to see happiness incorporated into development of more holistic sustainable development goals in 2015.

The new **UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015** were the result of a negotiation process that involving the 193 UN member states and unprecedented participation of civil society and other stakeholders. The goals are broad in scope because they address the interconnected elements of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. The 17 goals include the following: **People** We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy

environment. **Planet** We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

The aim of the **ONS Wellbeing Measures** is to provide a fuller picture of how society is doing by supplementing existing economic, social and environmental measures. Developing better measures of well-being is a long-term programme. ONS is committed to sharing ideas and proposals widely to ensure that the measures are relevant and founded on what matters to people. It has long been argued that the progress of the country should not be measured by looking just at growth in gross domestic product (GDP). For a full picture of how a country is doing, we need to look at wider measures of economic and social progress, including the impact on the environment. Within the UK, there is a commitment to developing wider measures of well-being so that government policies can be more tailored to the things that matter. Wider and systematic consideration of well-being has the potential to lead to better decisions by government, markets and the public and, as such, better outcomes.

The **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act of 2015** is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals. Alongside seven Wellbeing goals the Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. Doing something "in accordance with the sustainable development principle" means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The **Carnegie Roundtable on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland** identified that we understand wellbeing as the basic objective of creating the conditions for citizens to enjoy long, healthy, creative and valued lives. Alongside the constituent elements of wellbeing such as health, meaningful and rewarding work, social relationships, and access to a healthy environment – locally and globally – society must also pursue substantive freedoms by tackling inequalities, promoting a sustainable economy, and respecting planetary or ecological boundaries.

One Planet Living is a framework developed by BioRegional that allows us to examine the sustainability challenges we face and to make it easy for people to lead happy and healthy lives while only using a fair share of the Earth's resources. Culture and community are viewed as key components of a SD approach, as well as health and happiness – the framework is an opportunity to consider how we can create solutions that achieve multiple benefits. More integrated approaches can be more positively received and longer lasting.

The **Oxfam Doughnut** developed by Economist Kate Raworth takes the Stockholm Resilience Institute's nine planetary boundaries and overlays them with 11 social boundaries (derived from national contributions about social priorities in the lead up to the Rio+20 conference in 2012). The idea is that by considering both environmental and social limits, we identify a safe and just space for humanity to operate within. So, we have an environmental ceiling, beyond which lies unacceptable environmental degradation and potential tipping points in Earth systems but also a social foundation beyond which lies unacceptable human deprivation such as hunger, ill-health and income poverty.

Forum for the Future's Horizons created with the Technology Strategy Board, describe the safe environmental limits an economy must operate within, the social and political foundations that enable our societies to flourish and the essential needs for humans to survive and thrive.

Friends of the Earth made the following **Statement on Wellbeing**. We all want a better future for ourselves and our children. But too often this is taken simply to mean ensuring

economic growth (increasing gross domestic product – GDP). True well-being is about much besides economic growth: freedom to be heard and have influence, good relationships, purpose in life, green space, health, freedom from discrimination are all important.

Nick Marks – founder of the **Centre for Wellbeing at the New Economics Foundation** - *'In a sense that [sustainability and wellbeing]'s been the thrust of my work over the last 15 years, which is that I started working on alternative measures to GDP in 1992-93. Me and Professor Tim Jackson at Surrey University who wrote Prosperity without Growth, worked on an early version of something called the Index for Sustainable Economic Welfare. Basically we were trying to add up the cost of climate change and the costs of other things and take them off GDP. For me, that is the point of wellbeing. It has to change the discourse which is to say that economic indicators of progress are always saying more is always better. Actually I think we need to think about the quality of the experience we have and that's why I've got interested in wellbeing. It was my driver. My driver was a sustainability driver to get into happiness and wellbeing in the first place.'*

The **Transition Town Network** supports community led responses to climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy, building resilience and happiness. *'Although it is still an experiment, the learning thus far from five years of Transition in a wide range of settings is that a process of bringing low-carbon living, resilience and localisation about in a way that is founded on playfulness, creativity and – yes – happiness has only just begun to demonstrate what it is truly capable of.'* Rob Hopkins, Founder

Happy City explicitly makes the connection between sustainability and happiness The Happy City Index (HCI) is an alternative way to measure progress and prosperity in the 21st century. It's the world's first city scale, living system built to produce happier people and places without costing the earth. Designed to change what we measure and how we measure it, the HCI adjusts the balance of economic indicators to include vital factors missed out by GDP alone.

The 'Nature and Wellbeing Act - a green paper from the Wildlife trusts and the RSBP identifies that a thriving natural environment is part of the solution to our most pressing social, economic and environmental problems. To improve our economy, our communities, our health and our wellbeing, we need greater commitment to nature's recovery and fundamental changes in how we value, use and interact with our natural world. We need an approach that not only commits to the recovery of nature, but takes action to improve nature as part of the solution to our social and economic challenges. This approach must be embedded at the very heart of how we govern and plan for our economy, our community, our health and our wellbeing.'

In **KPMG's A new vision of Value – 2014** it states 'Ultimately, a new vision of value must be one in which a company's management accounts for its stewardship not only of financial, manufactured and intellectual capital, but also of human, social and natural capital. Globally agreed measurement standards are needed to enable the comparison of one company's stewardship with another's.

The **2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change** was formed to map out the impacts of climate change, and the necessary policy responses, in order to ensure the highest attainable standards of health for populations worldwide. This Commission is multidisciplinary and international in nature, with strong collaboration between academic centres in Europe and China. The central finding from the Commission's work is that tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century. Given the potential of climate change to reverse the health gains from economic development, and the health co-benefits that accrue from actions for a sustainable economy, tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of this century. Many mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change are "no-regret" options, which lead to direct reductions in the burden of ill-health, enhance community resilience, alleviate poverty, and address global inequity. Benefits are realised by ensuring that countries are unconstrained by

climate change, enabling them to achieve better health and wellbeing for their populations. These strategies will also reduce pressures on national health budgets, delivering potentially large cost savings, and enable investments in stronger, more resilient health systems.

The **SLAM (Sough London and Maudesley) 6 Ways to Wellbeing** includes Care for the Planet alongside the NEF 5 Ways to Wellbeing, Be Active, Keep Learning, Give, Connect and Take Notice.

The **NEF Social Settlement** offers proposals for moving towards a new social settlement that is able to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The settlement has three main goals: social justice, environmental sustainability, and a more equal distribution of power. There is a dynamic relationship between these goals; each depends on the others for fulfilment. Addressing them together means aiming for *sustainable social justice*, which requires a fair and equitable distribution of social, environmental, economic, and political resources between people, places, and – where possible – between generations.

In a paper **How Empathy Drives Common Values, Social Justice and Environmental Action**, Roman Krznaric core message is that we need to instigate a cultural shift from 'buying' to 'belonging' – from extrinsic to intrinsic values – where our personal identity and wellbeing is based much more on the quality of our relationships and sense of community engagement than on the size of our bank balance or the heady offerings of a luxury consumer lifestyle, and where more of us are willing to put common interests before self-interest.

The **Julie's Bicycle publication Sustaining Great Art** (March 2015) identified that 'Acting on environmental impacts has quick and tangible benefits beyond carbon emissions reductions including wellbeing.'

Create – A Journal of perspectives on the value of arts and culture

Published by ACE November 2014 - We need our strategic thinking to recognise that through art and culture we are making a long-term investment in public wellbeing. Art and culture are a part of every human's makeup and potential, assets that should be explored and developed – not commodities that can be separated from the essence of the person and exploited. They should be regarded as essential to the functions of life in the same way as food and water, and like health and wellbeing, they should not be seen as a cost but as an investment in a thriving society and economy.

Why Waste Prevention May Lead to an Increase in Quality of Life

Produced by the Danish Ministry of the Environment Happiness Research Institute

This report is an attempt to address questions such as: How do sustainable behaviours influence our level of happiness? Why is there a link between sustainable behaviours in general, and waste management in particular, and happiness? And how may happiness research contribute to better societies, a more sustainable future, and an improvement of our lives?

There is evidence supporting all four explanations AND, in fact, all hypotheses can coexist.

1. Happy people may be more likely to engage in waste management and sustainable behaviours, while ...
2. Waste management and sustainable behaviours may cause an increase in happiness in a direct manner, while ...
3. Waste management and sustainable behaviours may also cause an increase in the quality of the environment and civil society, which subsequently leads to an improvement in quality of life, while ...
4. Personal traits such as environmental concerns or altruism can cause a tendency to engage in sustainable activities, and altruistic individuals report higher levels of well-being.

As our understanding of what drives happiness grows, we may decouple the link between consumption and happiness – and thus put the world on a more sustainable path." **Meik Wiking, CEO, The Happiness Research Institute**



Background

The Happy Museum vision is of the contribution museums might make to a sustainable future by fostering wellbeing that doesn't cost the Earth. It is not primarily about individual health and wellbeing but comes further upstream, helping museums support wellbeing in society.

The project has something of a Trojan horse for engagement with the bigger issues of our time. People were readily attracted to its more explicit focus on wellbeing, however it was sometimes in danger of being dismissed as a lightweight 'happiness' project – with the deeper context being overlooked.

The original thinking in the 2011 Happy Museum Paper - A Tale of How Things could Turn Out Alright - laid out the context behind the project.

Whilst many museums appreciate their position at the heart of their community and combine scholarship, stewardship, learning and a desire for greater participation, Happy Museum shows that the context is now different. Climate change, pressures on the planet's finite resources and awareness that a good, happy society need not set economic growth as its most meaningful measure offer a chance to re-imagine the purpose of the museums.

In the late 60s and 70s astronauts on the Apollo missions took the first pictures of the earth from space. It represented the first time man was fully confronted with the fragility of the Earth amid the vast expanse of space. It was a clear message of the finite nature of our home planet and the moment has been credited with the birth of the modern environmental movement – with Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace setting up within two years.

Nearly 50 years since that photo was taken, however, we continue to treat the planet like there is no tomorrow. We have entered a new geological era – the Anthropocene – an era defined by the impact of humanity on our ecosystem. Impact which includes climate change, loss of biodiversity, ocean acidification, soil degradation and resource depletion.

Underpinning much of this impact is the exponential growth in our levels of consumption - which are driving us beyond the natural limits of our planet. Research by the Global Footprint Network suggests if consumption levels worldwide were the same as the current rate of the UK - we would require the resources of 3.5 planets to meet our needs. As David Attenborough once said "Anybody who thinks there can be limitless growth in a limited environment, is either mad or an economist."

But economic growth – or GDP – is currently the way we measure societal progress. However it has some crucial flaws. It encourages resource depletion through a focus on growth - and can't differentiate between spending on good things (like education) and terrible things (like the rebuilding required after a natural disaster). It doesn't measure services that nature provides, such as fresh water, or those without a market price, such as raising children. As Robert Kennedy once put it, GDP measures everything "except that which makes life worthwhile."

In addition - despite decades of economic growth our general wellbeing has flat-lined and inequality is rising. In the USA the richest 20% control 80% of the wealth, with a similar figure in the UK and getting worse. Meanwhile there is compelling research from academics like Wilkinson and Pickett that more equal societies do better. Their book, *The Spirit Level* pulls together a weight of research worldwide to demonstrate that the wellbeing of our societies is truly dependent on greater equality.

We need to recognise the finite limits of our planet, look long and hard at our levels of consumption and focus on a fair distribution of resources to meet both our current and our future needs.

Meanwhile countries around the world – including the UK – are investigating other measures of progress that include a focus on what truly makes a society 'well'. The Happy Planet Index developed by the New Economics Foundation also measures countries on their ability to pursue good environmental stewardship, to foster strong communal relationships and promote mental well-ness.

The Happy Museum took as inspiration a number of key thinkers in the field of wellbeing – and in particular Martin Seligman, an American psychologist and major proponent of 'positive psychology' and his three stages of happiness. Firstly, the 'pleasant life', of simple positive emotions. Secondly the 'good life', manifest in Csíkszentmihályi's work around Eudaimonic Flow which identifies that people are happiest when they are in a state of flow – concentration or complete absorption with the activity at hand. Finally the 'meaningful life', where bringing together flow and individual strengths creates for people something greater than self. We were also inspired by the New Economic Foundation's (nef) Five Ways to Well-Being of the potential for museums as spaces for people to be active, learn new things, look at the world differently, make friends and give something back.

Happy Museum proposes that a community experiencing high levels of well-being would be first and foremost a good place to live. However happiness will be short-lived if we achieve wellbeing for this generation of the city at the environmental expense of future generations. Consequently we would focus on creating the conditions for wellbeing - whilst at the same time valuing the environment - and being a steward of the future - as well as the past.

Activity

In the four years since its inception and with less than half a million pounds of investment (with gratitude to PHF, ACE and CyMAL and support from People United) HM has:

- Funded creative interventions in 22 museums (including London Transport, Derby Silk Mill, Lightbox, Beaney House, Reading, Chiltern Outdoor, Cinema, Imperial War and Manchester Museums) leading to individual development and organisational change.
- Undertaken evaluation using the Story of Change taking learning from creative interventions and research to develop a set of common principles.
- Created a suite of case studies, tools and resources for use by the wider sector.
- Shared learning with the wider sector through a series of events including three annual symposia bringing the community of practice alongside leading UK museum and cultural practitioners, policy makers such as ACE and MA and representatives from think tanks, NGOs and academia such as New Economics Foundation (NEF) and Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT).
- Developed complementary HMP activity in Wales and Scotland supported by funding from CyMAL and the emergent Cantie Museums in Scotland with the backing of Museums and Galleries Scotland.
- Commissioned a ground-breaking piece of econometric research with Daniel Fujiwara of the LSE Museums and Happiness – the Value of Participating in Museums and the Arts measuring the value of museums to people's happiness.

- Developed a major new research programme - the LIFE survey, which will explore how museums create well-being, and how significant that well-being is.
- Has had nearly 40,000 visits to its website by over 23,000 users and has over 5,500 followers on twitter.
- Has international reach with the HM team presenting papers across UK, Europe, to Australia, the US and soon to Brazil.

The Happy Museum Principles

- Create the Conditions for Wellbeing
- Value the environment and be a steward of the future as well as the past
- Pursue Mutual Relationships
- Be Active Citizens
- Learn for Resilience
- Measure What Matters

It has had a significant **impact on the museum sector** having:

- A committed community of practice involving individuals from museums across the UK and including many who have not been commissioned by HM.
- Precipitated some significant organisational change. Its 'micro-commissioning' demonstrates excellent value of money influencing several whole museum developments. These include major capital grants to Gwynedd and Ceredigion for re-build; the MPM role – Manchester Museum incorporated HM thinking into its' leading role in the NW; one new museum – Happy Museum informed a £6M build of the Story Museum; and museum re-purposing - Torquay as an environmental centre, the RWA's organisational review, and the multi-million pound re-make of the Silk Mill, Derby.
- Created a set of principles with a focus on the key museum role of stewardship. It has widened museums' focus from 'arts and health' to 'population level' wellbeing and sustainability so they are both well-being focused AND careful with resources.
- Influenced further cultural value work by the AHRC, RSA, DCMS and Arts Council, each of whom who has picked up the well-being valuation approach piloted by HM – and by the Warwick Commission, who are interested in HM action research methods. It continues to broaden this work by bringing both behavioural and social media research into the programme. (with Bangor and Oxford Universities).
- Evidenced the well-being value of museums as over £3K a year.

***"The skills and knowledge which we have developed as an organisation as a result of this project is phenomenal, and we are beginning to use these to work on other projects in more resourceful way. There has been a sense that aspirations have been raised in terms of what can be achieved in the future."* Derby Silk Mill**

HM has also had significant impact **beyond the cultural sector** influencing policy thinking around Well-being and Sustainability and advocating successfully for the particular role of culture and museums. In 2011 the Office of National Statistics announced an open consultation on the first set of national well-being measures – which did not include measures on Arts, Culture and Heritage. HM used its networks and profile to campaign for the successful inclusion of measurement of 'engagement with arts/culture' from the outset.

HM was delighted to see the publication of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Well-being Economics' report on Well-being in Four Policy Areas included Arts and Culture. This cements the role of Arts and Culture in Well-being policy development and is a direct result of advocacy work by HM with the APPG last year, giving evidence at a key APPG session. As the report notes – 'Arts and culture play an important part in all our lives, and well-being data will help make the case for spending in these areas.'

As the UNESCO sustainability framework identifies '... a sustainable future – whatever form or forms it takes – will be decided by people in relation to their cultural traditions and values.'

What next – a 5-year plan

Since 2015 we have focused our activity on a 5-year programme at the completion of which, in 2020, we intend to disband. The programme aims for the following outcomes:

- Well-being and Sustainability are as familiar and relevant to museum thinking as Learning and Participation.
- Through a focus on Well-being and Sustainability we will have played a key part in supporting organisational resilience in the museum sector.
- In turn museums will have supported the development of resilience in their staff and communities and in wider society as a whole.
- The value of culture in developing a sustainable global future will be better recognised.

To support these ambitious aims we drew up plan to work with new and existing partners and supported by a broad base of potential funders. The plan is underpinned by our ongoing Story of Change, which is been adapted and refined throughout the life of the programme.

A key part of this programme is an in depth 5-year study working with a minimum a small group museums across the UK. The study is investigating the impact of a focus on wellbeing and sustainability on individual, organisational and community resilience. It brings together cross-cutting museum teams in a programme of action research and supported peer learning. It is underpinned by a learning evaluation and research programme using the LIFE methodology. Participating museums include Manchester, Derby, Beaney House in Canterbury, Lightbox, Woking, Woodhorn and Ceredigion.

In 2016 and beyond we hope to create a Happy Museum Affiliate Scheme to build a sustainable network for sharing of practice and peer-learning.

We are delighted to have received funding for the period 2015/6 from the **ACE Museum Resilience Fund** to take forward the first year of this activity, working in partnership with and with invaluable support from **People United**.

For more information see www.happymuseumproject.org or twitter at @happymuseum

**Happy and Green – Connecting Sustainability and Wellbeing
London Transport Museum - 4th February 2016
List of Participants**

Maria	Amidu	Visual Artist	
Tom	Andrews	People United	Founder/Director
Alison	Armstrong	Present Minds	
Sue	Barnard	Arts Council England	Relationship Manager, Museums (London)
Mandy	Barnett	MB Associates	Director
Nicola	Buckley	Chester Zoo	Volunteer Manager
Tony	Butler	Derby Museums	Executive Director
Deborah	Butler	Arts Council England	Relationship Manager, Touring
Katie	Childs	National Museum Director's Council	Policy and Projects Manager
Ruth	Clarke	Happy Museum	Evaluator
Alex	Coulter	All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing	
Tricia	Croot	Roald Dahl Museum	Learning Manager
Jocelyn	Cunningham	Arts and Society	Founder and Director
Rib	Davis	The Lightbox	Special Projects Director
Laura	Down	National Portrait Gallery	Head of National Programmes
Liz	Ellis	Heritage Lottery Fund	Communities and Diversity Policy Advisor
Kathy	Fawcett	Arts Council England	Relationship Manager Museums (South East)
Katherine	Ford	Cinema Museum/GK Partners	Consultant
Kate	Forde	Wellcome Trust	Senior Curator
Steve	Gardam	Roald Dahl Museum	Director
Peter	Gingold	Tipping Point	Director
Gillian	Goode	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Grants Manager
Susan	Grayson Ford	Big Draw	President
Julie-Anne	Hogbin	Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity, University of Surrey	Centre Manager
Louisa	Hooper	Gulbenkian	Programme Manager
Rob	Hopkins	Transition Network	Founder
Jurgen	Huber	Wallace Collection	Senior Furniture Conservator
Martin	Humphries	Cinema Museum	Director
Ruth	Jarratt		Consultant
Peter	Jenkinson		Cultural Broker
Hilary	Jennings	Happy Museum	Director
Sholeh	Johnson	Julie's Bicycle	Head of Creative Programmes
David	Jubb	Battersea Arts Centre	Artist Director
Judith	Knight	Arts Admin	Director
Bernadette	Lynch	Change Management Associates	Consultant
Joanna	Massie	RSA	Project Engagement Manager
Patricia	Morison	Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts	Senior Executive
Sam	Mullins	London Transport Museum	Director
Lucy	Neal	Happy Museum	Associate

Gus (Lord)	O'Donnell	Frontier Economics	Chairman
vassia	Paloumbi	Tate	Energy and Environmental Manager
Clare	Patey	Empathy Museum	Director
Vanessa	Peterson	London Transport Museum, Cargo Collection	Museum trainee/writer
Vicki	Pipe	London Transport Museum	Programme Manager, Communities and Families
Gaby	Porter	Gaby Porter + Associates	Director
Cathy	Putz	V&A	Head of Touring Exhibitions
Laura	Pye	Bristol City Council	Head of Culture
Ian	Rimington	Arts Council England	Relationships Manager
Julia	Rowntree	Clayground Collective	Director
Beth	Schneider	Royal Academy	Head of Learning
Steve	Scott	Museums Galleries Scotland	Head of Resources
Charles	Seaford	An Economy that Works	Director
Sara	Selwood	Pomegranate	independent cultural consultant
Sue	Sheehan	London Borough of Lambeth	Senior Policy Officer
Tiphaine	Tailleux		Project Manager
Fiona	Talbott	Heritage Lottery Fund	Head of Museums, Libraries and Archives
Jane	Tarr	Arts Council	Director, Organisational Resilience, Environmental Sustainability and Newcastle
Tom	Thornton	Paul Hamlyn Foundation	Grants Manager
Ben	Twist	Creative Carbon Scotland	Director
Kate	Tyndall		Consultant
Rupert	Widdecombe	Real Ink	Consultant, Editor, Writer
Helen	Wilkinson	AIM	Assistant Director
Isabel	Wilson	Arts Council England	Senior Manager, Collections & Museum Programmes
Liz	Zeidler	Happy City Bristol	