



York
RACECOURSE



GREEN
KNAVESMIRE
300

**Environmental
Sustainability
Progress Report**

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Background

OUR PURPOSE

York is one of the oldest racecourses in the world, with racing first starting on the Knavesmire in 1731. As we approach our 300 year anniversary in 2031, we are committed to ensuring that the racecourse continues to play a positive role in both the sport of horseracing, and the City of York, for at least another 300 years.

As part of this commitment, York Race Committee and every member of the York Racecourse management team, has committed to supporting our environmental goals, across energy and emissions, biodiversity, water management, waste and resource use.

Together, we have been able to deliver real change since we first began monitoring our impacts in 2017. From our carbon footprint and the stewardship of our acreage, to the management of water and waste, we have embedded sustainability into all areas of our operations.

This report details the changes achieved so far, and our ambitions going forwards.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to host the best racing action, whilst delivering the best racegoer experience.

We shall strive to achieve this in as sustainable a way as possible.

We are proud of our near 300-year heritage, proud of our stewardship of the environment in which York Racecourse stands and proud to chart our direction for at least the next 300 years, following our strategy for environmental sustainability; **Green Knavesmire 300.**



**“That which we
do today will echo
through the
centuries”**

Green Knavesmire 300

We know that in order to enjoy a future that includes world-class horse racing, we need to minimise our negative impact on the environment, conserve precious resources and maximise our potential to have a positive impact through our land stewardship.

We are the sport of the land and the way in which we take care of it defines us.

Therefore, our undertaking is to set our own high standard in managing York Racecourse responsibly, ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy racing at this wonderful place for centuries to come.

Our project, Green Knavesmire 300, focuses on four key pillars which enable us to achieve our bold vision:

ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES SET IN 2017 FOR SUSTAINABILITY AT YORK RACECOURSE

PILLAR

TARGET

Net Zero by 2040

We will address all areas of our emissions and build a plan that will reduce our scope 1, 2 and 3 to Net Zero by 2040 and assess the impact of racegoer travel (Scope F).

Enhance biodiversity

We will undertake projects that enhance biodiversity on our site, engage in tree, hedge and other planting schemes, including a wildflower meadow, to support carbon sequestration, create new habitats for wildlife, and increase our plants for pollinators, as well as add beehives to our spaces.

Conserve water

We will seek to reduce the volume of water taken from mains supply, put in place a water management system, add rainwater harvesting to our new buildings and replace bathroom facilities with more efficient systems when upgrades are due.

Embrace the circular economy

We will eliminate single use plastic from our venue, improve our waste management plans and create operational systems to ensure we maximise the value of our resources and make environmentally-conscious procurement choices.

We have solidified our environmental commitments by becoming the first independent racecourse to sign up to the UNFCCC Sport for Climate Action.

Read our full strategy in detail here: [Green Knavesmire 300](#)

Our story so far

York Racecourse began its sustainability journey in 2017, with an overhaul of our activities. In 2023 we reviewed our progress with a full carbon footprint and audit of operations between 2017 and 2022. We delivered a number of changes in accordance with the recommendations of the audit and redeveloped the southern end of our site in alignment with the principles of sustainability, with the completion of the Bustardthorpe Development.

To date, operationally we have:

Reduced our direct emissions by over 50% from 2017 to 2024.

Reduced our reliance on mains water

Reduced our use of single use plastic on site

Brought beehives to York Racecourse

Planted more trees, flowers and shrubs on site to support pollinators and biodiversity

Recycled more waste than we incinerate, and developed an action plan to further reduce waste generation

Engaged our staff in more initiatives and projects

Completed the Bustardthorpe Development in alignment with our sustainability strategy

Installed a living flower wall in the Ebor Fashion Lawn

Specifically, this has meant:

Being the proud recipient of three different sustainability awards for the Bustardthorpe development



7

Added seven electric robot mowers to our fleet, ensuring lawned areas are cut as efficiently and sustainably as possible.

2



Bee hives installed on site in spring 2024

2



electric vehicle charging points installed

Single-use plastic waste reduced through the use of reusable cups in the Bustardthorpe Development.

54%

Reduction in scope 1 & 2 emissions from 2017 to 2024

972,402 kWh



Less electricity purchased from the grid in 2024, compared to 2017 - enough to power 270 average UK homes for a whole year!

39%

Reduction in scope 3 emissions from 2017 to 2024



No Mow May carried out in areas of the site where we could support biodiversity

2023

Switched to using organic, biodegradable disinfectant products in equine areas, without compromising on efficacy for biosecurity.

BUSTARDTHORPE DEVELOPMENT



95%

of the workforce and materials used to create the development were Yorkshire-based

The bricks were made just 12 miles from the racecourse!

This reduced the emissions from contractor travel and supported our local economy and community.

Located at the southern end of the racecourse, this development was completed in Summer 2024. To meet with the standards and expectation of the York Racecourse environmental strategy, the development incorporated the following features:

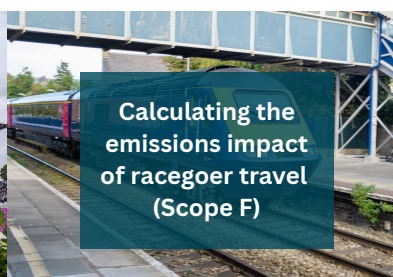
- Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof
- Low-energy use through efficient lighting, equipment and a design that maximises natural light
- Rainwater harvesting, waterless urinals and water-efficient toilets
- Enhancement of existing and creation of new planted areas, including a green roof, new trees and planters with RHS pollinator-friendly plants.
- Back of house facilities designed to support waste sorting and increase recycling rates, and washing facilities for the use of reusable serveware (including cups), eliminating this former waste stream entirely.



Find more information on the development [here](#).

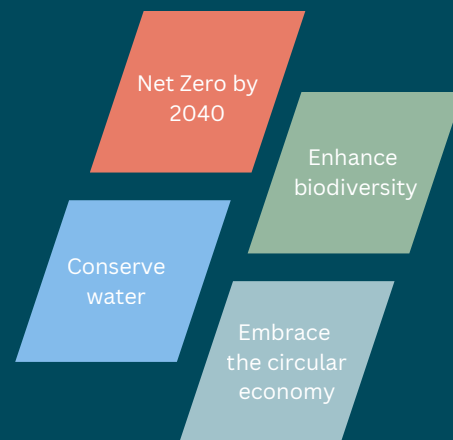
Influencing positive change beyond our own operations

As part of our UNFCCC Sport for Climate Action, we recognise the importance of influencing beyond our own operations. We have actively been involved in sustainability-focused projects that engage the broader racing, local and racegoer community in sustainability. Some examples included:



Looking ahead

We are proud of the progress we have made so far towards achieving our sustainability goals. However, we know there is more for us to do, and 2025 marks the start of the next phase of work on sustainability for York Racecourse, as we fast approach the end of our first decade of focused environmental action.



What does 2025 - 2030 look like at York Racecourse?

Prioritising further emissions, waste and resource reductions across our operations.

We have an action plan in place for further reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, minimising resource use including mains water, sustainable catering opportunities, and engagement with our key suppliers on their own sustainability goals.

This includes being one of a small number of businesses to utilise the new UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard for our Stableside development, which will drive our overall commitment to decarbonising the site.

Enhancing biodiversity

In 2025 we have embarked on a site-wide 'getting nature back on track' biodiversity project, to provide significant ecosystem benefits, such as an uplift in nature, improvements to soil health and carbon sequestration opportunities on site. We hope the outcomes will demonstrate the potential for the same nature-based projects at other British racecourses, with York creating a blueprint for wider-scale impact.

Amplify our voice and use our influence to inspire

In line with our UNFCCC commitments, we want to broaden our influence to inspire change throughout our communities. We will do this through our communications and stakeholder engagement plan.



Groundbreaking new development

Our Stableside development will set the standard for net zero building design, using the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standards



Wider influence in horse racing and sport (Scope X)

Communicating the benefits of sustainability and showcasing the work done at York to other venues.



Further engaging racegoers (Scope F)

Particularly around race day waste and travel to and from the racecourse.



Continued interaction with our local community (Scope C)

Identifying community partnerships, working with schools and hosting 'give and gain' days.





York

RACECOURSE

GREEN   

KNAVESMIRE

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