

**KIELDER
OBSERVATORY**
Infinite Inspiration



Inclusivity Action Plan





Welcome

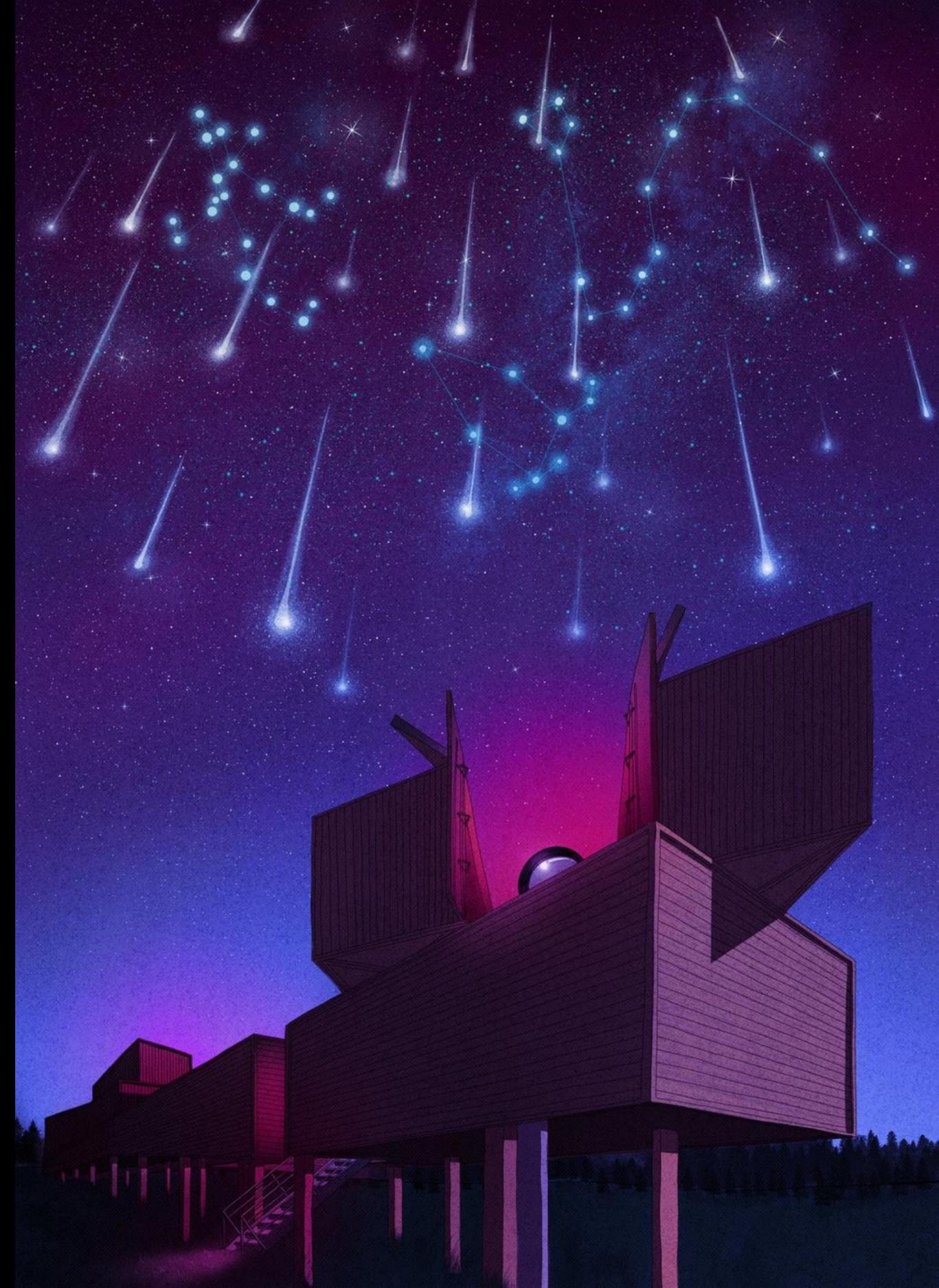
Looking up at a dark sky glittering with stars is fundamental to the human experience, and has inspired scientists, engineers and artists.

However, most of the world's population now lives under skyglow with increasing light pollution. It is places like Kielder Observatory and other protected dark sky parks where we can all reconnect with the cosmos.

However, we know that this opportunity is not available to everyone - there are financial and cultural barriers to participation.

We are committed to becoming a more inclusive organisation in our new [strategy](#). This document outlines where we are and our next steps.

Illustration by Yvette Earl



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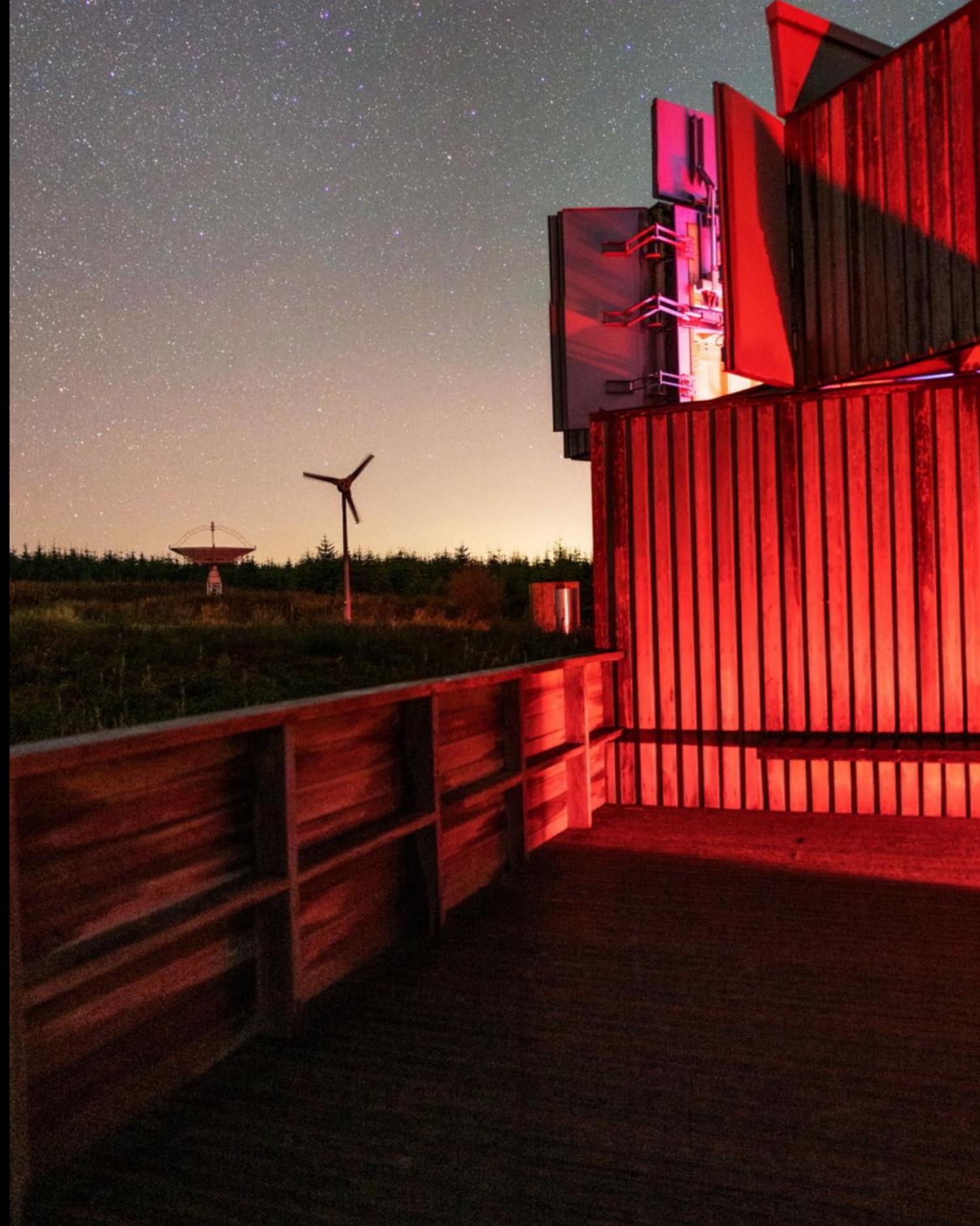


Our Organisation

Our mission statement encapsulates our approach to inclusivity: to create opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities to experience moments of inspiration, revelation, wonder and hope through observing the cosmos.

Our strategy has been developed collaboratively across our team and is publicly available, with a values statement that includes identifying and removing barriers to participation. Staff are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviours, such as being welcoming and respectful of differences.

Our policies and procedures are reviewed annually to ensure adherence to best practice. Staff and trustees undertake ED&I training.





Representation

We have reflected on whether our organisation is representative of the audiences we serve. We define audiences as the communities of North East England as our primary base of operations.

An anonymised survey was sent out to staff, trustees and volunteers. 18% of volunteers responded (9 responses); 85% of employed staff (12 responses) and 85% of trustees (6 responses). This exercise has revealed some areas where we are doing well and some areas for action. The organisation is representative of our communities except for gender identity and socio-economic background.

While the organisation looks male-dominated with 67% identifying as male as opposed to 49% in the North East population, the organisation is female-led, with a balanced team; it is the Board which is almost all male and this can be addressed with recruitment of new trustees. We also need to take action concerning socio-economic background as we are not representative of the North East.





Our Culture

We asked staff to tell us how they felt about working at the Observatory, rating the following questions from 0 = not at all to 10 = completely.

| Question: | Average answer: |
|--|-----------------|
| I get along well with other people in the organisation | 9 |
| I understand my role at Kielder Observatory | 9 |
| I understand how my role contributes to the success of Kielder Observatory | 9 |
| I feel proud to be at Kielder Observatory | 10 |
| I feel trusted in my role | 9 |
| I feel I can be creative in my role | 8 |
| I feel I am learning new things in my role | 8 |
| I feel valued as an individual | 8 |





The Observatory

Our site and buildings have been reviewed for accessibility by the Calvert Kielder Trust; there is one room that is not wheelchair accessible, limited by the design of the building.

We have an access statement and a “what to expect” document, both available on our website and both reviewed annually.

Our events are currently developed internally by the team: each event has a common structure but individual team members are expected to bring their own knowledge, voice and lived experience to talks and content delivered. We host Relaxed Astronomy events and have hearing loops.

However, a full assessment of event provision with regard for different abilities and under-represented audiences will be necessary, with co-creation of event content with a “Kielder Panel”, recruited to ensure diversity of lived experience.





Education Outreach

It was knowledge of the financial and cultural barriers that exist to people visiting the Observatory that caused us to devise a STEM enrichment programme, which aims to replicate the Kielder moment of inspiration in schools. In the last three years, this programme has reached hundreds of schools and tens of thousands of students, particularly working in areas of socio-economic deprivation.

We have extended the impact of this programme with "STEM to Stars"; regular observing groups in schools, with links to industry experts to illustrate careers in STEM.

We provide further pathways into STEM at all ages, with work placements, paid internships, teacher CPD, and a thriving volunteer programme.

The next step for this will be support to specific audiences, e.g., SEN and excluded children, and also for higher and further education.





Community Outreach

We have started to craft programmes that reach out in different ways:

- Escape Velocity, a programme teaching children to image the dark skies on their mobile phones.
- Frank's Fellowship, supporting young artists in Northumberland with a bursary.
- Cell-based learning for prisoners, working with HMP Northumberland
- Kielder PopUps, free, informal events around the North East.
- Kielder Constellations, an augmented reality app so anyone with a smartphone can have a Kielder Observatory wherever they are.

We are also exploring methods of co-creation. SPIDER Astronomy saw us commissioning a creative practitioner to work with a community group in Sunderland, Young Asian Voices, to co-create a digital curriculum to enable complete novices to understand radio astronomy, learn how to remotely access our radio telescope, and generate data for use in academic research.



What's Next

| Task | Date |
|--|-------------------|
| Governance | |
| Appoint Board champion for inclusivity | April 2023 |
| Recruit a more balanced Board in terms of skills and representation in the 2023 Board recruitment process | During 2023 |
| Require all trustees to undertake unconscious bias training | June 2023 |
| Team | |
| Assess team recruitment process to ensure equality of access to opportunity | April 2023 |
| Introduce anonymised monitoring data questions to improve our understanding of applicant profile | April 2023 |
| Include values and behaviours in staff development | April 2023 |
| Require all staff to undertake unconscious bias training | June 2023 |
| Participation | |
| Identify partners in areas where we are not representative to learn best practice in removing barriers | June 2023 |
| Establish a "Kielder panel" which is representative of our audiences to inform our thinking | April 2023 |
| Assess events for inclusivity and incorporate more diverse voices into the design of our events | June 2023 |
| Cocreate programmes for underserved students, initially focusing on excluded children and SEN children | From January 2023 |
| Learn how our digital offer can be more inclusive and accessible | June 2023 |
| Assess representation and accessibility in words, imagery and reach in our communications channels | April 2023 |
| Ensure any proposed programme of activity incorporates evidence of positive effects on our inclusivity and representation. | Ongoing |

This action plan will be reviewed every six months. If you have any comments, thoughts or ideas about how we can become a more inclusive organisation, please email admin@kielderobservatory.org – we look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you



Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society is a Registered Charity (No 1153570)



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