



# DARKWOODS COFFEE IMPACT REPORT 2021





# Why We Report our Impact

When we started Dark Woods Coffee, we were driven as much by our shared values as we were by our passion for coffee. We saw an opportunity to create a business that reflected our personal values and working with specialty coffee offered a means to achieve this. This is one of the reasons why we became a B Corp. We believe that how we do business and the impact we have on the world around us, is as important as our financial performance.



Dark Woods Coffee is a speciality coffee roaster located on the edge of Marsden village in the beautiful West Yorkshire Pennines. We roast our coffee by hand on three Probat drum roasters in our Victorian mill beside the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and River Colne.

[Read more](#)





**This impact report is a public statement of how we aim to balance our commercial responsibility with our moral responsibility towards people and the planet, and how we are trying to achieve this.**

**It is a demonstration of our commitment to being open, transparent and accountable to all of our stakeholders.**

[Read more](#)



**The focus of this report is broadly centered around People & Planet**

## People

Examines how we support our team and local community, as well as the wider global coffee community from producers to supply chain companies to our customers in coffee shops.



## Planet

Illustrates our journey to reduce our impact on the planet, specifically by reducing the carbon emissions from our production process, but also how we can minimise what ends up in landfill.

# Why B Corp? The Start of Our Journey

We certified as a B Corp in June 2020 with a score of 99.6. Becoming a B Corp was not our destination, but the starting point of a continuous journey of improvement; an opportunity to measure and benchmark ourselves against the highest standards set by businesses at the vanguard of social and environmental excellence.

Becoming a B Corp reinforced our commitment to be a better business; to make a positive impact within our community, both local and global, and for the planet we all share.

[Read more](#)

\*In 2021, we re-assessed our B Corp measurement to include some of the advances we have made over the last year. Our revised (unofficial and unverified) score for the year has increased to 127.4, which is really encouraging.

# 99.6

The B Corp movement is a community of over 3,500 businesses across 75 countries that are committed to using business as a force for good and balancing purpose with profit. The B Corp vision is that companies will one day not only become the best in the world at what they do, but also be the best for the world.

[Read more](#)







# People

From left to right - Elicer Gonzolaz of Finca Rita Isabel, our Damian Blackburn and Pedro Moss, from La Huella, Panama

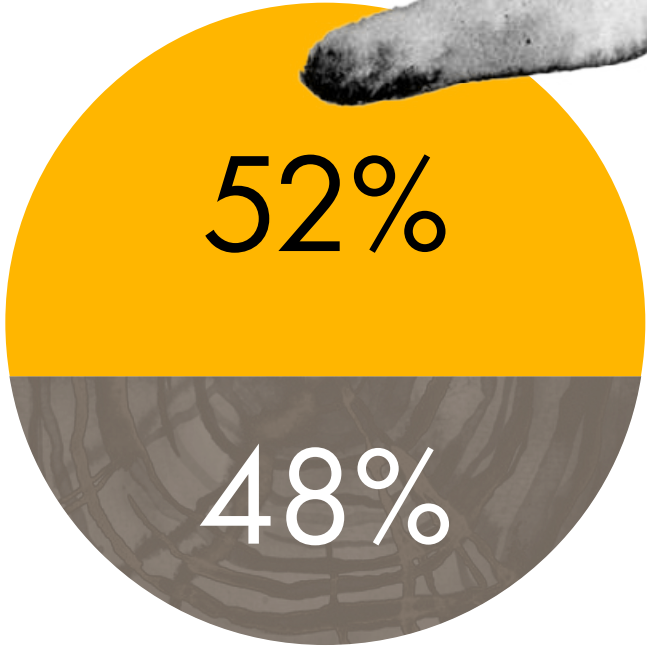


Our team has grown to 17 people;  
a 35% increase over the last  
12 months

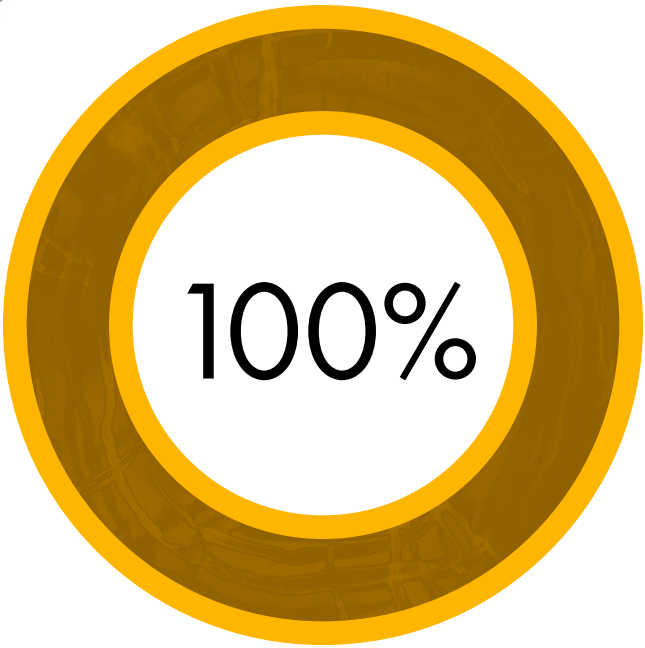
Our ethnic profile is limited,  
currently 100% white European

Collectively, 88% of our team  
are native English speakers, the  
remainder speaking Spanish and  
Polish as native languages

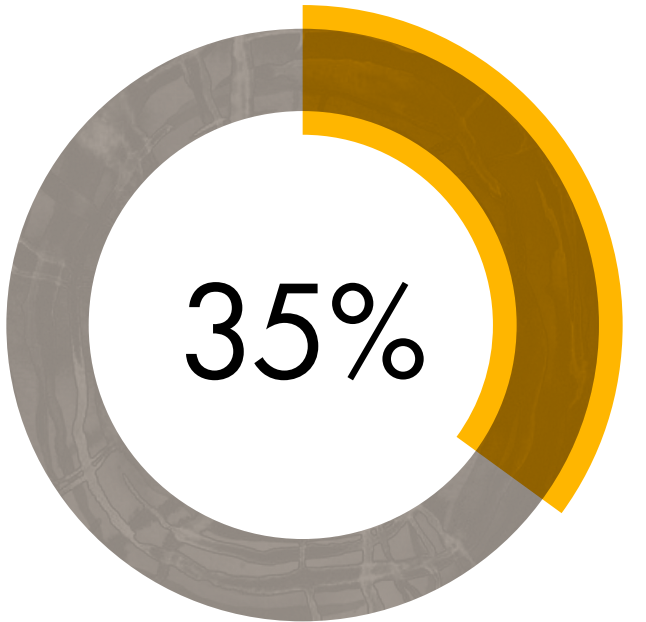
# Our Team



**Team demographic**  
48% of our team  
identify as female  
and 52% as male



**Team retention**



**Growth**  
Increase in team  
members over last  
12 months





# Team Engagement

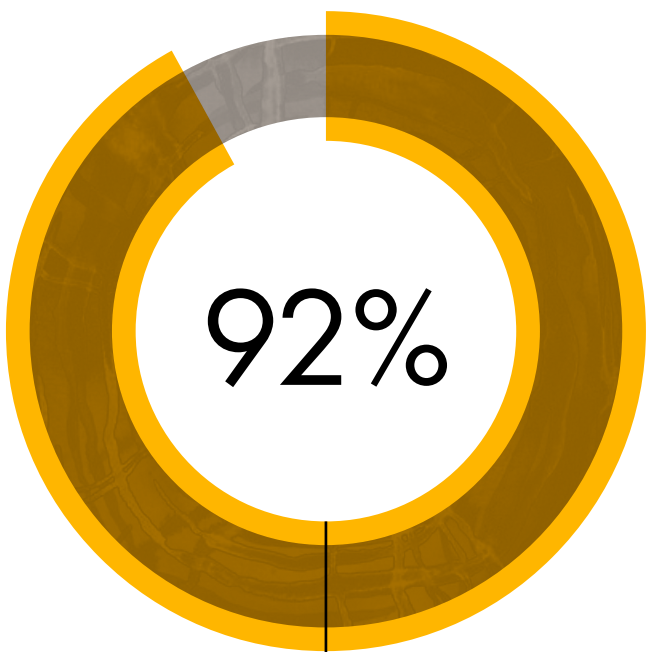
This year, we commissioned an independent survey and asked our team a series of questions to understand how they feel about working a Dark Woods. The results showed that we are on the right track, and the feedback from the team has provided some great insights in to how we can continue to improve as an employer.

We will use the data and feedback from this first team survey as a baseline, from which to track how we are doing and to continue our journey, creating an inclusive, positive work environment.

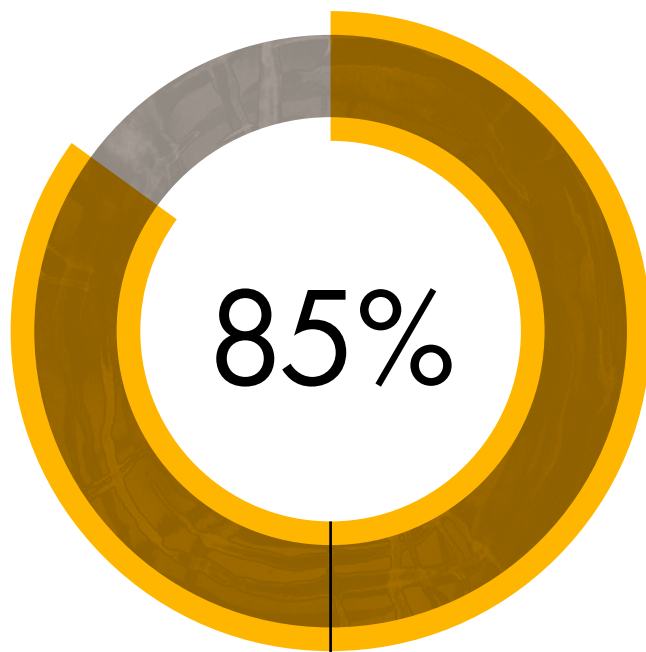
[Read more](#)

In 2020, we were certified as a Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage Foundation

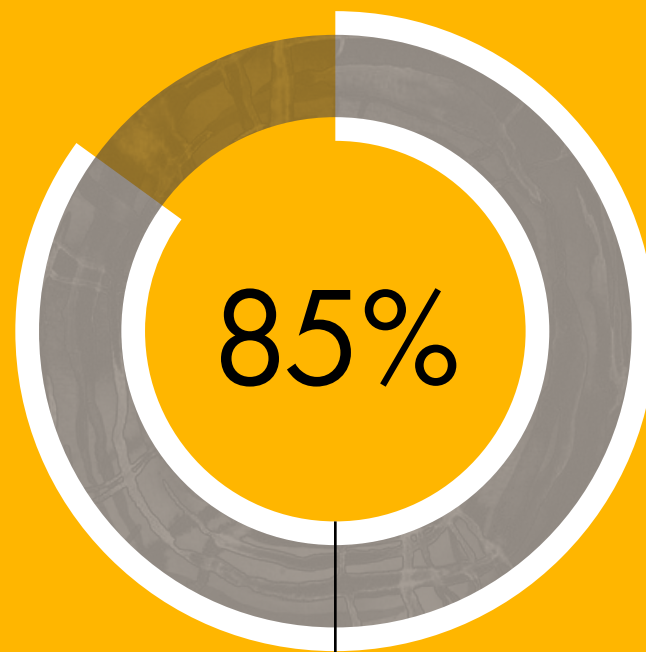
[Read more](#)



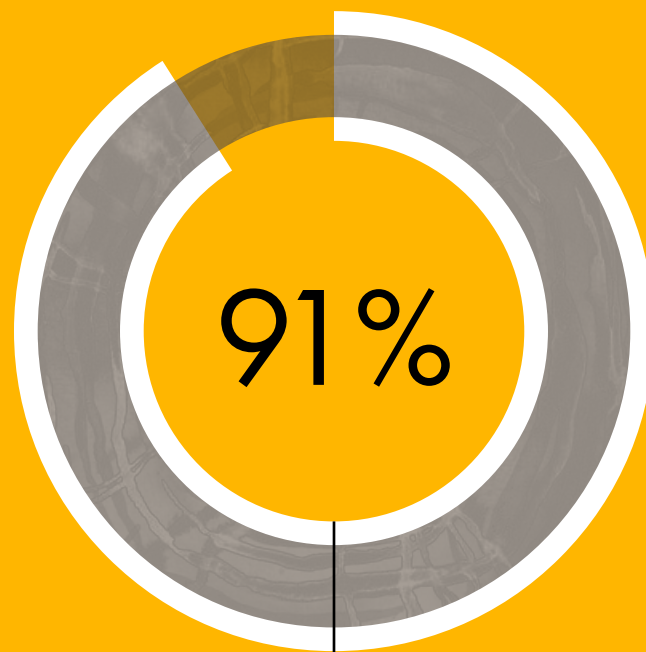
92% enjoy working at Darkwoods Coffee



85% feel they have responsibility in their job



85% enjoy their current job



91% feel that the company looks after its team members

“As we grow it’s important that the teams continue to understand and value each other. We would benefit from a bit more proactive team building”

“Everybody is really open and nice, it’s so good to be part of a team like this”





# Steve

Joined in 2021

I wanted a career in coffee, after working for several years as a craft-beer brewer, when, when the opportunity arose at Dark Woods. I immediately resonated with their core values, and approach to business - alongside having enjoyed their coffee for years!

Working here has allowed me to move back to a beautiful part of the world, where I can indulge my passion for photography and exploring the great outdoors.



# Duna

Joined in 2021

After several years working in the food and, then, pharmaceutical industries, I was attracted to Dark Woods by their ethos and approach.

The world faces many challenges over the coming decades and businesses and society will need to adapt; Dark Woods is willing to face these challenges and, for us coffee lovers, that is an asset for the future.



# Clare

Joined in 2020

Having spent most of my career working in fashion retail, the coffee industry has been a complete revelation! Working for a local company who are trying to create a positive change through B-corp culture, ethics and sustainability combines my personal values with a love of coffee!

I love food, especially anything that involves fermentation, and I spend my spare time making sourdough bread and charcuterie.



## Team Profile

Get to know a few of our newer team members



# Local Community

**We're rooted in our local community. Almost all of our team live within 10km of the Roastery. We want to be part of a vibrant and healthy local community and, over the last year, we have lent our support to a number of groups and initiatives.**



## Colne Valley Business Network

With other local businesses, we have helped to revitalise and transform the CVBN from a small informal networking group to a non-profit membership organisation, connecting and supporting local small businesses with each other and within the wider community.

One of our directors sits on the Board of the CVBN and we provide our premises, free of charge, for networking events and meetings.

[Read more](#)



## Local Arts and Music

For the last 6 years, we have supported the Marsden Jazz Festival - the acclaimed annual event hosted in our village. Pre-COVID, we hosted concerts; this year, with the Festival facing financial challenges, we have funded the Jazz Re:freshed stage, supporting up and coming new talent.

## The Welcome Centre

Our friends, renowned folk duo, Belinda and Heidi, live in the next village and we host one of their annual concerts, which also raises money for the local food bank. This year, with COVID restrictions preventing live performances, Heidi and Belinda held an online concert and we matched donations made by those watching the concert, raising a total of £10k for the Welcome Centre in Huddersfield.



## Other Local Support

As a small business, there is a limit to the resources we have available to support local causes. We try to give what we can, where we can, even when we cannot provide funding support. For example:

- We bought uniforms for disadvantaged children in a local cub scout group
- We provided free or discounted coffee to seven charities and social enterprises
- We provided free training and technical support to five charities and social enterprises
- We supported the local Mountain Rescue with free coffee sachets and cups to use in their rescue control vehicle having previously provided a cash donation



**As a speciality coffee roaster, we have an interdependent relationship with coffee-producing communities around the World. Our relationships extend beyond traditional supplier-customer interactions; they are built on mutual trust, loyalty and commitment, a desire to see our global neighbours flourish in the same way as our local neighbours.**

In its most simple form, our support is embedded in our green-coffee buying principles, and extends to our financial and practical support for the communities who sell their coffee to us (our buying principles are set out on the next page).

Beyond our coffee purchasing, we aim to support coffee producer communities however way can. This might be entering their coffees in to speciality food industry awards or increasing exposure of coffee origins to premium brand customers; to resourcing initiatives in communities on the ground.

We actively support the work of World Coffee Research (WCR); an international charity working on the next generation of coffee plants to enable farmers to meet the challenges of climate change.

[Read more](#)

# Community — Global





# Our Buying Principles

**Wherever possible, we will only source green coffee, raw materials, products and services through a values-driven approach, which takes into account economic fairness, product quality, respect, mutually supportive contracts and long-term relationships.**

We require supply partners to have an ethically sound approach within their own business, from caring for their workforce, to respecting local laws and regulations and the local environment and communities in which they operate.



## Our Values

### Transparency

We share our ideas, decision-making process and expectations about what we are seeking in our coffee sourcing, to ensure common understanding between us and our supply chain partners.

### Respect

We treat our partners as equals in business. We appreciate that we have an interdependent relationship with the coffee producers, millers, exporters and shipping agents that make up our supply-chain.

### Commitment

Our aim is always to build lasting relationships with our main coffee-producer suppliers, providing them with the security and certainty that we will buy from them year on year, typically increasing volume annually. Wherever possible, we foster and develop mutually beneficial, long term relationships with supply partners to ensure economic sustainability, a respect and understanding of quality and consistent supply and a fair and just reward.

### Continuous Improvement

We challenge ourselves to sell the best coffees; we provide producers with investment, where appropriate, and with constructive feedback on our experience with their coffee and collaborate with them to seek continuous improvement.

We reflect these values in our green coffee purchasing principles:

- We enter into partnerships with the intent to create long-term relationships
- We agree prices with producers that reflect the quality of the coffee and the skill and labour invested in its production
- We share quality feedback with producers to promote continuous improvement
- We commit to purchasing future coffees so that partners can secure financing and, where we are able to, we will pre-finance coffee purchases
- We pay premiums for quality
- We support local initiatives in producer communities, where we have the resources and where our input can add value to local efforts
- We maintain regular communication with producer partners to foster relationships and mutual trust, through visits and, more common now, emails, video meetings and phone conversations



# Our Producer Partnerships



YEMEN



ETHIOPIA

## Yemen

For the last three years, we have partnered with Sabcomeed, a collective of Yemeni specialty coffee producers and exporters, whose foundation is built on a community working together to create stunning coffees, improve conditions on farms, and have a positive environmental impact.

Each year, the Sabcomeed team travel to the mountainside villages to work with farmers. Over the harvest period, they work alongside farmers and artisans to create a local collection hub, constructing small drying tables and sorting-areas where farmers bring and dry their coffee cherries.

Their approach is not typical amongst exporters; it helps Sabcomeed and the farmers to maintain the exceptional quality and consistency for which they have become known; but more importantly, it shares risk and reward between farmers and exporter.

Purchasing from Yemen this year:

60 boxes (microlots)

Total 859 kg

Length of relationship with Sabcomeed 3 years

[Read more](#)

## Ethiopia

Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee, and is home to some of the most famous historic coffee regions: Yirgacheffe, Sidamo, Limu and Harar. No self-respecting coffee roaster would be without a quality Ethiopian coffee in their range.

Over the past few years we have built a strong relationship with Ashenafi Argaw and his team at Ardent Coffee exporters in Ethiopia. We have known Ashenafi since his time working with renowned growers and exporters Ninety+ Coffee, so it has been a great experience to begin working with him directly.

Our relationship with Ardent is truly direct; with Ashenafi, we agree the regions, coffees and producers to work with. Ardent arrange a container, load the coffee and we wait for the ship to make the journey from Djibouti to the UK. Then it is all hands to the deck unloading the container, by hand, when it arrives on the back of a lorry.

Purchasing from Ardent this year:

67 sacks

Total 4,020 kg

Length of relationship with Ardent 2 years

[Read more](#)



# Our Partners in Panama – La Huella

Our story with Pedro and the other farmers that belong to La Huella, goes back several years. After buying a micro-lot of coffee back in 2016, we got to know Pedro, founder of La Huella, and so began a lasting, close friendship. Over the last five years, Pedro and his neighbours have provided us with exceptional coffees, which have consistently received acclaim from consumers and critics alike, including winning a coveted Golden Fork at the UK Great Taste Awards

[Read more](#)

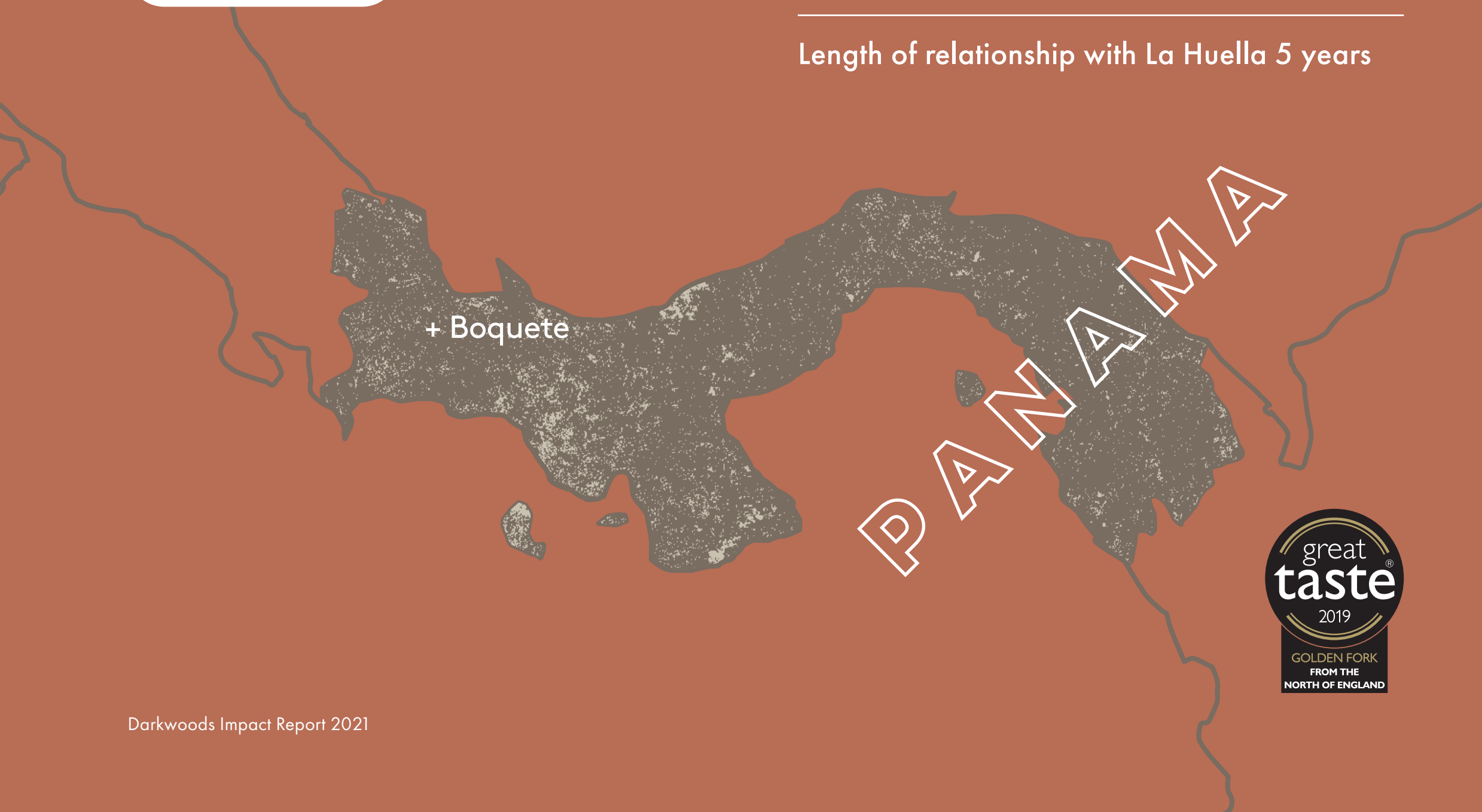
Pedro has become a close friend of ours, regularly visiting us in Yorkshire and hosting us at his farm near Boquete. In 2020/21, our relationship moved to another level, when we collaborated on a ground-breaking community initiative to support marginalised indigenous communities in the Boquete region.

Coffee Purchased from La Huella this year:

59 bags

Total 1,116kg

Length of relationship with La Huella 5 years



# Farmers' Voice Radio in Panama

When Pedro told us about the awful situation caused by COVID, affecting thousands of indigenous people in the Province of Chiriqui, Northern Panama, we immediately offered our support.

The Ngobe-Bugle communities (of which 90% live in situations of extreme poverty and 98% of children under 5 suffer from malnutrition) were particularly affected during lockdown, as people struggled to make ends meet, pushing many poor rural households into even greater food insecurity.

Over 40% of the indigenous population migrate with their families for work, distancing them from their traditional social safety nets and sources of information and support.

We helped create a partnership between La Huella, [Culturama](#) (a local Panama NGO) and [Farmers' Voice Radio](#), run by UK charity, the Lorna Young Foundation. We supported a funding application to the British Embassy in Panama, and provided match funding and technical support from our team.

From October 2020 to February 2021, Culturama, with support from Farmers' Voice Radio, worked with local communities to create and broadcast weekly radio programmes, listened to by thousands of local people.

[Read more](#)



# Cafe Femenino – Peru & Bolivia

Café Femenino is a movement of thousands of women farmers from nine countries across the world. Dark Woods Coffee, like the other roasters that buy from Café Femenino farmers pay above-market prices for coffee as well as an additional premium for each kilo of coffee bought. this premium goes direct to the women producers, with an additional donation to the Café Femenino Foundation, a charity that provides practical and educational support directly to the communities in which the women coffee farmers live. Our relationship in Peru is with the Aspro Agro producer community and, more recently, in Bolivia, we are working with Union Pro Agro producers.

[Read more](#)

Coffee Purchased from Cafe Femenino Peru this year:

190 bags	Total 13,110kg
Length of relationship	7 years

Coffee Purchased from Cafe Femenino Bolivia this year:

5bags	Total 350kg
Length of relationship	1 year

## Peru Community Support (Cafe Femenino Foundation)

In 2019/20 we funded three community projects within coffee growing communities who supply coffee to us, supporting the construction of a coffee wet mill and two rainwater capture reservoirs. This year, we funded two further community projects:

### Agriculture Supply Shop - Villarumi, La Cria, Huanama

These Andean communities are isolated from towns, access roads are poor and public transportation is only available once or twice a week. The pandemic has worsened the difficulties of accessing supplies.

### Irrigation System - La Cria, Huanama

Climate change has seriously affected coffee and food cultivation in the community of La Cria. Rains have been reduced to only 4 months per year. Through the system of water channels, the community has been able to distribute water quotas to the producers in a way that reduces flooding and distributes the water as needed for crop production. This project creates a sprinkler irrigation system providing sufficient water during coffee flowering and delivering water needed for coffee and food production.





# Education

Our coffee education programme was severely limited this last year due to COVID restrictions and lockdown. However, during the periods that we were able to have visitors in the roastery, or to visit our customers, we continued providing free customer training and support:

576

Total number of people trained in barista skills

12

Trainees supported through SCA certified barista training







# Planet





# Overview

The speciality coffee sector does not have a great environmental track record. Coffee growing and milling can be water-intensive; food miles, from origin to consumer, are high; roasting can be energy intensive, and packaging has, traditionally, ended up in landfill. Like other responsibly-minded businesses, we are seeking ways to reduce our negative impact on the planet, whilst maximising benefits to those further along the supply chain.

We take a holistic view of the social and environmental challenges faced by our industry, both within our own operations and globally, within our supply-chain. For example, paying farmers better prices for the coffee beans they grow, means they are less likely to depend on intensive and unsustainable farming practices and can afford to leave shade trees planted and support increased biodiversity.

Within our own operations, we are examining two crucial areas - carbon emissions and materials waste going to landfill. Again, there is a synergy between these two areas. We aim to ensure that, in addressing one challenge, we don't inadvertently worsen our impact on the the other. We are seeking ways to measure and reduce our carbon footprint, and to embrace circular-economy principles, with the aim of reducing how much of what we produce ends up in landfill.



# Our Operations

We are taking steps to reduce our day to day carbon impact: Encouraging alternative commuting for staff - car shares, cycling, bus, walking

All of our company vehicles are now hybrid or full EV

We have replaced the glass in our mill roof with insulated polycarbonate

We installed destratification fans in our high roof space to recirculate risen heat to the workspace below

The chaff (natural waste from roasting) is composted locally; our coffee sacks are given away in the community and re-purposed

We have reduced our UK and international travel (and will continue to maintain annual reductions)

NB – for the last year, team members have had to stop car-pooling due to COVID, however this will resume as it becomes safe

We are making increased use of video conferencing to talk with coffee producer partners, e.g. Panama and Ethiopia, reducing the need to travel

We will replace our industrial gas blower factory heaters with low carbon air source heat pumps during 2022

We aim to install high output solar PV panels along our roof, providing carbon-free energy for our operations and space heating

We are installing solar water heating panels on our roof to provide carbon-free hot water during the spring, summer and autumn seasons

**We are currently measuring our carbon footprint and developing our strategy to become carbon neutral by 2025.**

[Read more](#)

**80%**

**of our team live within 10km of the mill**

**20%**

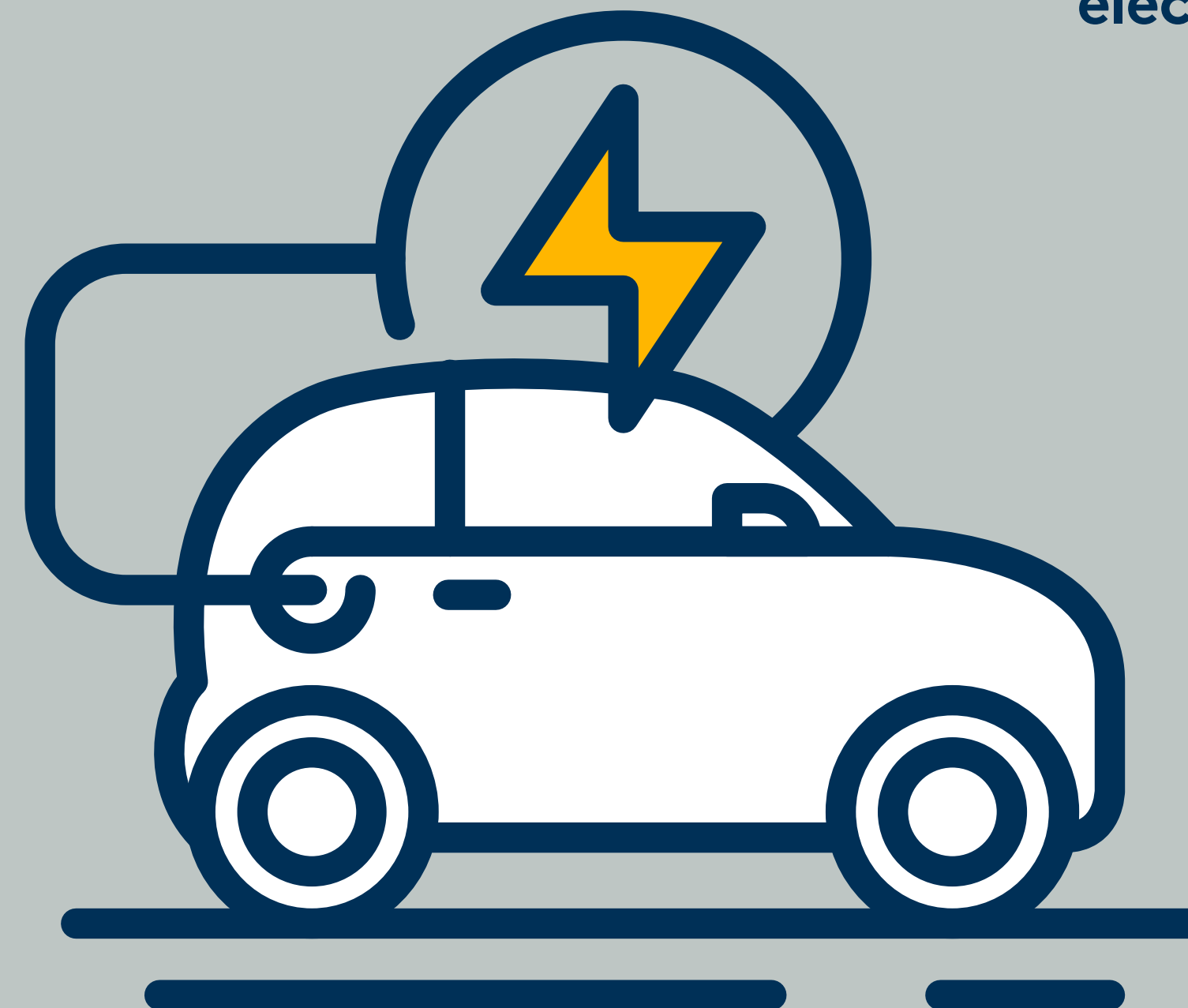
**of the team commute to/from work via public transport**

**40%**

**of the team cycle or walk to/from work at least once a week on average**

**40%**

**of the team commute to/from work using electric cars**





# Circular Economy

An increasing challenge within the coffee industry is the use of packaging and how much of it ends up in landfill.

The challenge is to find materials that are home compostable, but which will also protect the coffee within.

We switched to recyclable packaging in 2019, but we recognise the limitations of this, particularly in the UK, where the local authority recycling infrastructure is poor and geographically patchy.

With support from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, we are exploring approaches to reduce the amount of packaging we use and to find truly home-compostable packaging materials for our coffee bags.

[Read more](#)





# Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

There are seventeen UN SDGs and they provide a guide for nations, businesses, organisations and individuals. We embrace the SDGs, they guide our planning and decision-making. All seventeen are Important, but we focus on five goals where we feel we can make the biggest impact.

[Read more](#)



**1** NO POVERTY



Ensuring that within our business and along our supply-chain, we take action to pay wages and prices that support sustainable livelihoods

**5** GENDER EQUALITY



Promoting women's equal participation within the business and throughout our partner businesses and supply chains

**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Understanding and reducing our materials footprint, embracing circular economy principles and reducing reliance on fossil fuels

**13** CLIMATE ACTION



Understanding and addressing climate related challenges throughout our operations, striving to continually reduce our impact

**15** LIFE ON LAND



Protecting our local environment and supporting coffee growing communities to adopt sustainable farming practices and support biodiversity

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**







**D A R K W O O D S**  
**C O F F E E**



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