

DARKWOODS

B-CORP

REPORT

2022 / 23

Supporting the planet

Certified



Corporation

Introduction

Welcome to our annual B Corp Report for 2022/23, our third year as a certified B Corp, and the year we will go through our B Corp recertification.

In this report, we provide updates on our progress towards our sustainability goals, and teasers of new initiatives we are have in the pipeline for 23/24.

As with our previous B Corp reports, this one is broadly focussed on People and Planet.

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](#)



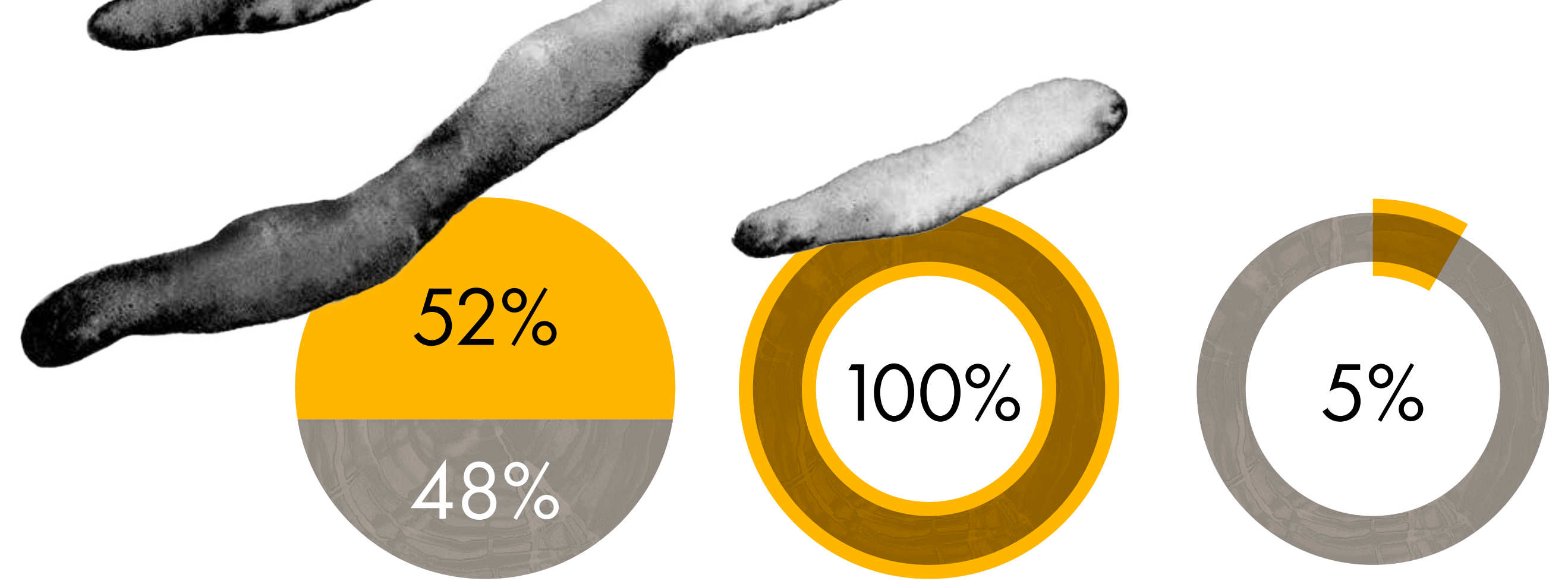


People

Our Team

Our Team has grown to 21 people, this year, while we have maintained our 100% retention, with none of our team members leaving over the last year.

We have maintained our Living Wage Employer certification this year. This is very important to us, during the cost-of-living challenges, which will have impacted on our team members as much as everyone else.



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

Team retention
None of our permanent team left the business over the past 12 months

Growth
Increase in team members over last 12 months





Team

John

Joined in 2023

Joining Dark Woods in 2023 has opened a new experience for me as I have never worked in the hospitality industry previously. They have a fantastic outlook, look after their employees with a relaxed culture and I am impressed with the lengths they go to on their environmental awareness.

I retired from the fire service in 2022, leaving behind great colleagues, there followed my retirement plan to go on cycle packing trips around Europe. I have many more trips planned and to be planned.

Joining Dark Woods has been a positive curve ball to my life, belonging to a new work family which I did not expect after retiring.

Duncan

Joined in 2022

Having worked with the hospitality industry for fifteen years, from craft beer to natural wine and everything in between, it seemed a sensible transition to move into the world of coffee. Seeking a new opportunity after running my own business, I couldn't turn down the offer to work for Dark Woods.

I am very grateful for having one of the best jobs I've had - the building, the location, the people and of course the coffee make this a fantastic healthy environment with a great work ethos.

I'm excited to see where this journey takes me, as the first eighteen months have been a joyous ride.

Chloe

Joined in 2022

After being self-employed and working solo for several years, I decided to step back into the world of employment. I knew I didn't want to work just anywhere – company culture, ethics and location were all incredibly important to me.

I had been a Dark Woods customer for years, and the opportunity to work here came at the perfect time.

It has been an incredible journey so far, learning about the world of coffee from friendly, passionate individuals who are all working towards the same goal – great coffee, strong ethics, and good vibes. I'm so excited to see what the next few years bring.



Community

Local Community

In 2023, we launched our **Community Small Grants Programme**, with the aim of providing a more **transparent, accessible and equitable approach to our local giving.**



We allocated a budget of £10,000 and opened for applications from any grass-roots community organisation within our local area, adopting a simple application process, offering grants of £100 to £500.

In the first application round, we funded 9 local organisations for initiatives ranging from litter picks to hot meals for older people to mental wellbeing sessions.

“Thank you, Dark Woods, for enabling us to buy new kitchen equipment to help us serve more than 100 people each week with hot wholesome food.”

St Bartholomew's community church café

Over the course of the year, we ran two more application rounds, providing grants to a further 13 local community organisations.

[Read more](#)





Global Community

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



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.

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.

Our Coffee Partnerships 2023

Green coffee accounts for over 70% of our total purchasing; it is the heart of our business.

In 2023, we sourced more than 163 metric tons of coffee, the majority through our long-term relationships with a group of around eighteen amazing producer cooperatives and family-run farms.

These are mutually beneficial partnerships; 99% of our coffee buying is agreed through forward-contracts, providing the certainty and trust that enables our partners to invest in their farms and communities, and secures us the quality and supply security for our customers.

HONDURAS + JAMAICA
 COSTA RICA + PANAMA
 COLOMBIA +
 PERU + BRAZIL
 BOLIVIA +

YEMEN
 ETHIOPIA
 INDIA
 TANZANIA
 YUNNAN

163

Metric tons of coffee sourced (contracted) by Darkwoods in 2023

Central America & the Caribbean

Total KG sourced 2023 – 11,442kg

No. of Producer Relationship — 8

Length of Relationships — 1-6 years

[Read more](#)

South America

Total KG sourced 2023 – 100,341kg

No. of Producer Relationships — 10

Length of Relationships — 1-10 years

[Read more](#)

Africa & the Middle East

Total KG sourced 2023 — 16,650kg

No. of Producer Relationships — 3

Length of Relationships — 3-6 years

[Read more](#)

Asia

Total KG sourced 2023 — 34,920kg

No. of Producer Relationships — 3

Length of Relationships — 4-6 years

[Read more](#)

Global Support



Farmers' Voice Radio (FVR)

We continue to support the work of Farmers' Voice Radio.

We love their focus on empowering smallholder producer communities by providing training on setting up and running local radio programmes (like Radio 4 Farming Today). FVR has helped to transform lives and livelihoods for hundreds of thousands of small farmers across Africa.

Farmers' Voice Radio is embarking on an ambitious Academy programme aimed at Latin America producer communities, providing free-to-access training for producer organisations seeking to set up their own Farmers' Voice Radio programmes.

[Read more](#)



Café Femenino Flood Relief – Peru

Back in March 2023, Peru was hit by Cyclone Yaku, which devastated infrastructure, roads and bridges around many of the coffee-producing communities we work with. Vital transport links were destroyed in Lambayeque, Cajamarca and the Amazonas regions by landslides and flooding.

As always, the Café Femenino Foundation leapt into action, creating an emergency relief fund to support vulnerable communities. Along with other coffee businesses, we contributed funds to the repair of roads, restoring connections to rural coffee producing communities.

[Read more](#)



World Coffee Research

This year, we continued our support for World Coffee Research and their essential work focused on research to dramatically improve coffee productivity, quality, climate resilience, and farmer livelihoods.

[Read more](#)





Global Support

Ardent Children Center, Ethiopia

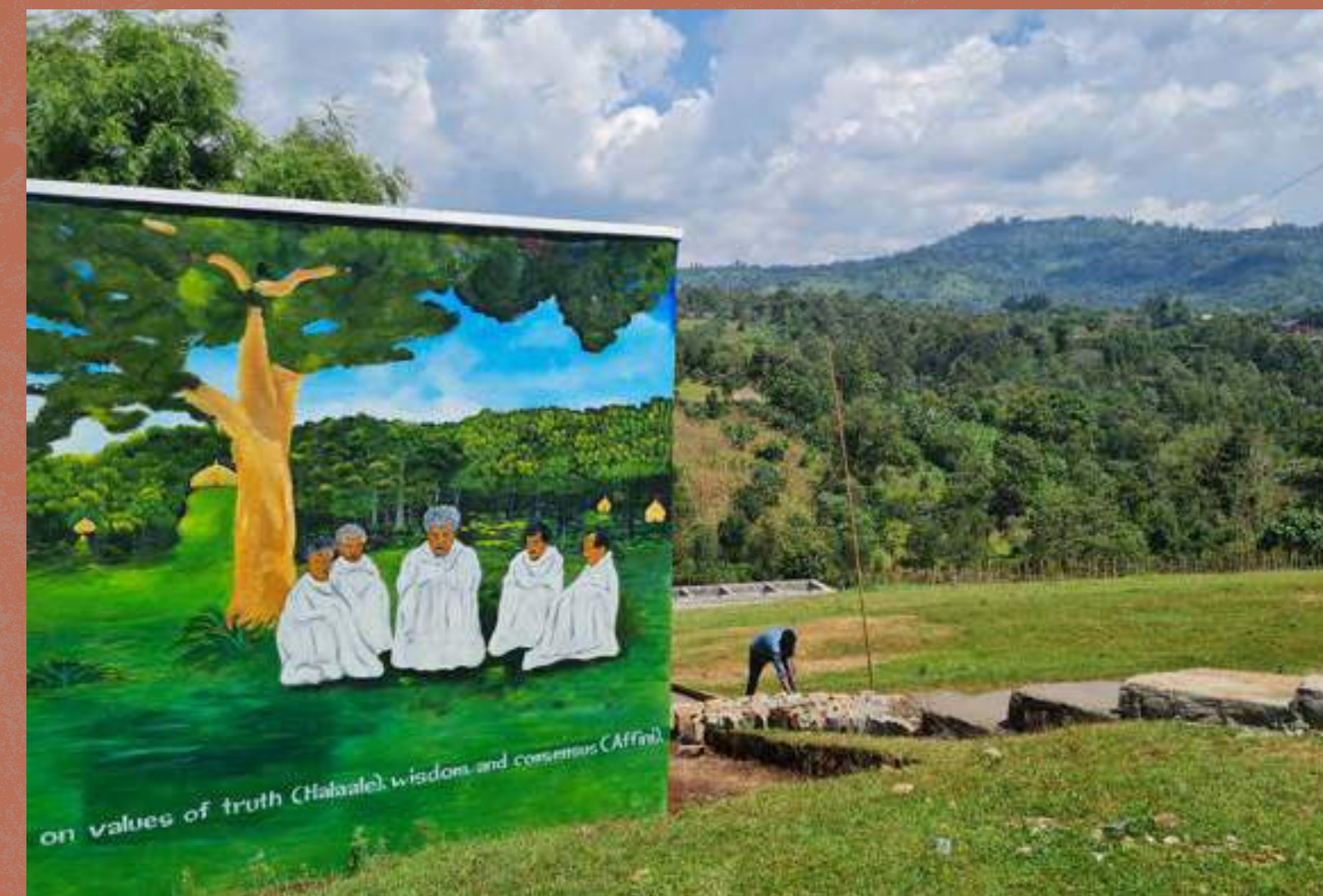
We continue to fund the important and inspiring work of the Ardent Children Center in Bensa Town, Sidama, in Ethiopia.

Our funds help the team at the Center to provide practical, educational and pastoral support to the 30 children in their care.

We have a growing relationship with the producers and community in and around Bensa, which is now one of our regular coffee producer origins.

In November 2022, Ian travelled to Bensa to visit the newly-constructed Ardent Coffee drying station, and to meet with the kids and staff team at the Children Center.

[Read more](#)





Customers

Education

Throughout the year, we provide a range of training opportunities for our wholesale customers. This year, we provided:

579

Total number of people attended individual barista training sessions

94

Bespoke sessions held (both on and off site)

83

Different wholesale customers received team training

47

Scheduled courses at the roastery across SCA and in-house modules



Supporting our customer community

Food waste and composting

The food service sector struggles with food waste; it can be challenging to manage segregating food waste, recycling and general waste during a busy lunch time in a small café.



With this in mind, we launched a project to find out whether food service businesses could embrace better food waste practice and composting food waste.

With support from the COP26 Legacy Fund and Huddersfield University, we recruited ten food service businesses to take part in a six-month trial. We bought each business a composter, provided guidance and support.

Our research partners at Huddersfield University monitored progress and each café.

With the pilot phase complete, we took all the experiences – positive and not so – from the participant cafes and produced a Good Practice Guide, that is downloadable and free to any business.

[Read more](#)



Composting Pilot Profile: Lodge Cafe

An independent community-café based in the renovated gate house at the entrance to Bowling Park in Bradford. Laurence and the team at Lodge focus on sustainability, so jumped at the chance to participate in our composting pilot. We asked Laurence to reflect on their experience of the project:

Before joining the project, what was your approach to waste and composting?

Before this project we had little experience of composting. We had experimented with using spent coffee grounds as garden fertiliser over the past summer (2022). We also provided “compostable” packaging with all our takeout items. On the odd occasion we’ve heard back from customers who have attempted to compost these items at home.

What was your main goal, when deciding to take part in the pilot?

Our goal for this project was to reduce the number of leftovers, spent food and produce that gets thrown into general waste. Then to create compost that we can either use to fertilise our plants or plant new items into our garden. We thought it would be nice to provide compost for our local allotments. Our big aim was to incorporate a composting process into staff routine that didn’t over impact our workflows. We were curious to see how composting will fit into our working week. We hoped that, over time, this system would be beneficial to our business by reducing our general waste.

What were the main challenges you faced?

We struggled to implement this process into our shifts as we don’t have the time around our normal roles to compost! We’ve found that is an activity that has had to be implemented around our normal working hours. However, the results from a little extra time put into each week have been worth it for us.

What did you learn from being part of the pilot?

The compost we have made so far has been used to fill all our hanging baskets and planters this spring. We used a combination of composted food waste, spent coffee and last year’s soil from our baskets and planters. Everything we’ve planted so far has been with our own compost! The plants have taken to the soil very quickly and seemed to flourish within a couple of weeks!

We’ve also been successful in composting packaging from our suppliers. Darkwoods new compostable coffee bags and our compostable takeaway cups have all been added into the mix. Most importantly for us, we are much happier knowing that any spent food is making its way into the compost and is feeding our plants!



Do you think you will keep composting?

“We will be sticking with the composter throughout this summer and have even thought of filling up old coffee bags with our spare compost and giving them out to a few of our interested customers.”

Customer Engagement Surveys

Over the course of the year, we undertook several surveys with our wholesale customers to find out the challenges they are facing and how we might support them.

They told us:



What do you think are the main environmental and sustainability challenges you are facing?

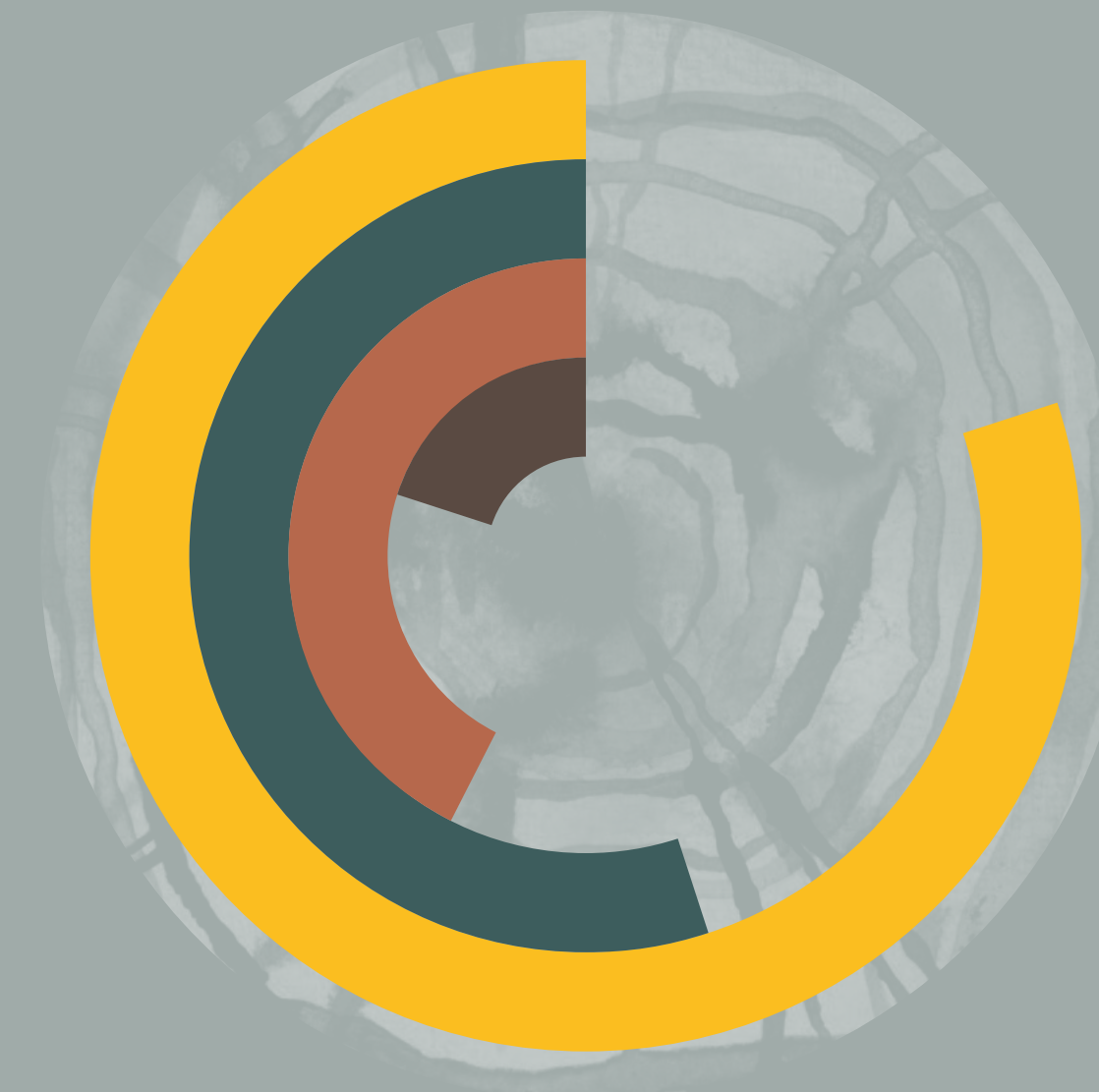


82.5%
Running costs

60%
Customer footfall and spend

45%
Recruiting and retaining staff

What are the main challenges you think you face in the coming months?



80%
Energy use and efficiency

55%
Carbon footprint

42.5%
Waste management

20%
Food waste

20%
Understanding regulations

What can we do to support you?



77.5%
Updates and newsletters on good practise and regulations

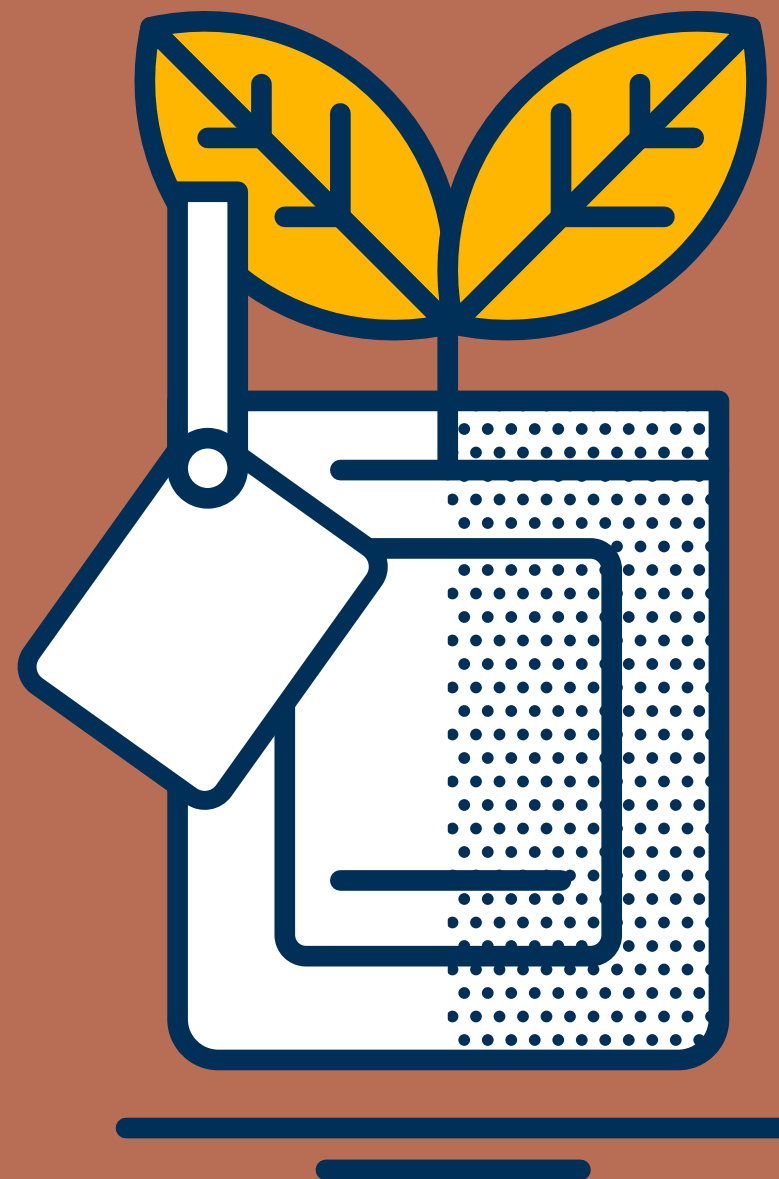
55%
Workshops and Training

50%
Opportunity to get you and your customers involved in supporting our coffee producer projects

Materiality Assessment

To prioritise our sustainability challenges, we undertook a materiality assessment. This is an approach that helps us to identify and understand the relative importance of specific sustainability topics to our business. This involves looking at a variety of factors through two lenses: potential impact on our business and their importance to our stakeholders.

We set out 22 sustainability and business challenges we face within our industry and asked our stakeholders to vote on their importance for us – from extremely important, to not important at all. We approached our staff, suppliers, home customers and wholesale customers. Each group had slightly differing priorities, however the overall trends were consistent and have given us a clear steer on what issues we need to prioritise within our business.



People ranked the following extremely or very important:

Supporting sustainable livelihoods and better prices for small coffee producers

98%

Reducing or removing plastic from coffee packaging

97%

Working with suppliers that demonstrate ethical practices

93%

The results show that human rights and fair labour practices, at every point in the production chain, are the priority for all groups.



Planet

Circular Economy

Our progress and stats

Following our successful pilot of this approach, we fully launched the returnable cans scheme this year, focussing initially, on our local area and then into Sheffield. We now have a weekly delivery run, and around 130 cans in circulation. Since we fully launched the scheme, we have achieved:

850+

Cans were filled, dispatched and returned

328kgs

Cardboard diverted from waste across over 5100 coffee bags

7x

Each can can be used seven times, making them climate positive - their use has removed more carbon than was produced making them



Emissions Mapping

We are working with Caravela, one of our coffee export partners, and fellow B Corp, on our carbon emissions mapping.

Caravela has created a comprehensive carbon mapping online platform

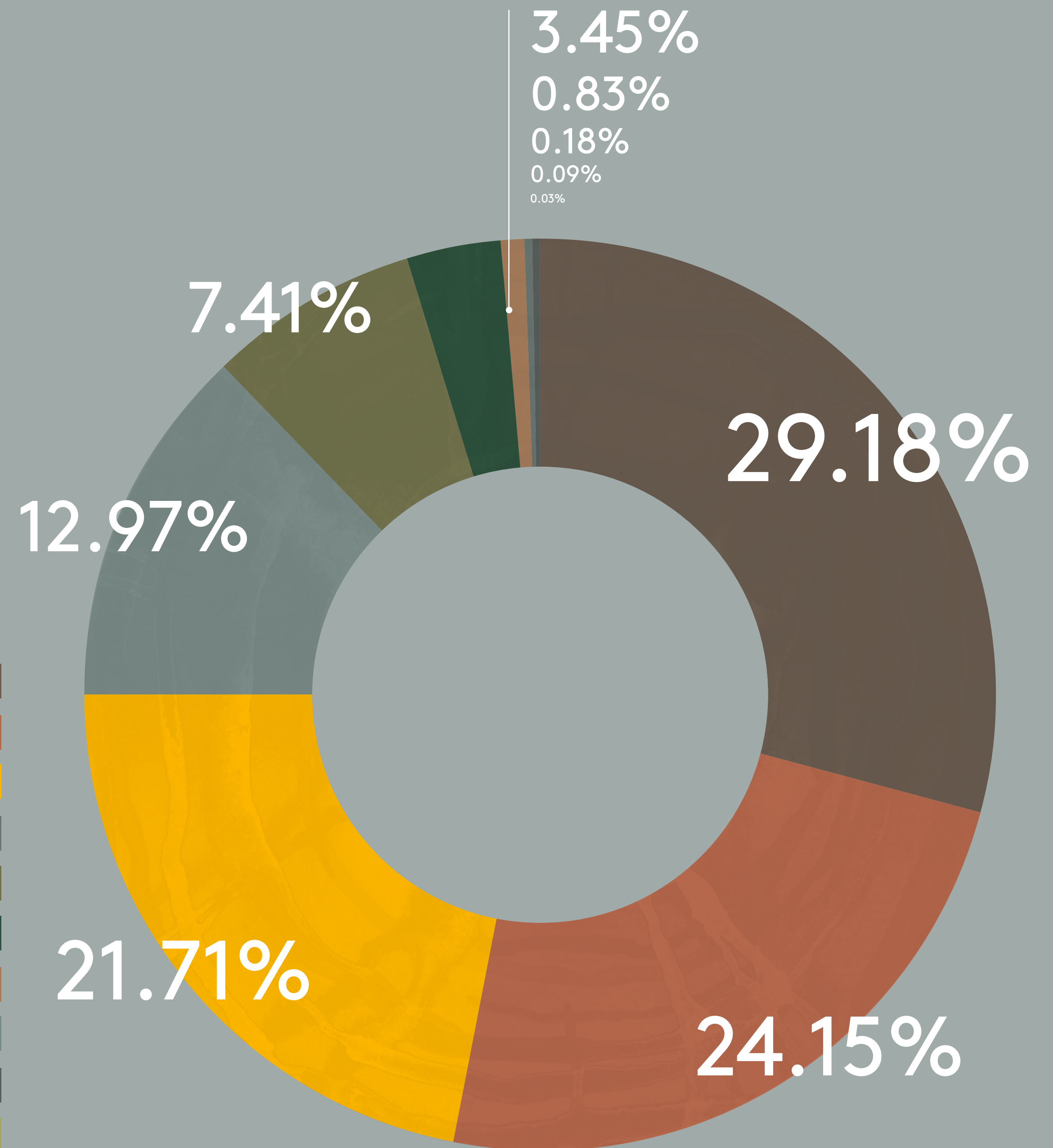
Once we have it up to date and running, we hope that Team members will be able to input their own data e.g. mileage. The visual nature of the new platform helps us to get a better understanding of impact and will be able to show us which areas of the business we need to look at to reduce our carbon footprint in future.

Thanks to tracking our carbon data we can start to see trends and the progress we have made. For example, due to the changes made to our packaging we have used over a ton less plastic in 2023 than in 2022.



2023 Carbon Emissions (All in Ton CO2-eq)

Purchased Goods (eg. Packaging) — 60.417
Fuel Consumption — 49.995
Employee Commuting — 44.944
WTT — 26.849
Coffee Freight — 15.335
Energy Consumption — 7.14
Business Travel — 1.717
Hotel Stays — 0.381
Waste Generation — 0.19
Water Consumption — 0.056





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