



# ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021

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# MAKING IT THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

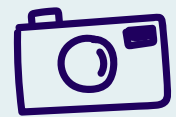
This has been one of the most challenging years for all businesses globally, operating through government imposed lockdowns - many of which have had a serious impact on organisations we work with, especially those that really rely on face to face interaction.



We feel really blessed to have not only made it through this year but to have actually had one of our most financially successful years to date, which saw us achieve a turnover of **£1.1 million**. This helped to place us in the fortunate position of being able to support some of our clients through these challenging times.

That said, the pandemic did affect us in other ways, as it did everyone. Not being able to come together in person - even though we work semi remotely - had an impact. How that impacted each of us as individuals varied. So, more than ever, we focused on prioritising our team, which in turn contributed to our successes this year, of which we are very proud.

This report highlights these successes and outlines how we achieved them, as well as what our plans are as we **look to the future.**



SAY CHEESE!



# 2020/21 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Our sustainability newsletter, [Curiously Green](#), achieved more than 1,300 subscribers in the first year since its launch



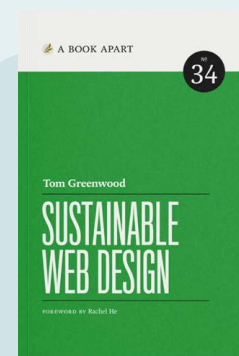
Certified



Corporation

We enjoyed collaborating on several B Corp projects, especially creating the [Better Business Act website](#)

Tom published a book, [Sustainable Web Design](#), with a Book Apart



# INCOME IMPACT

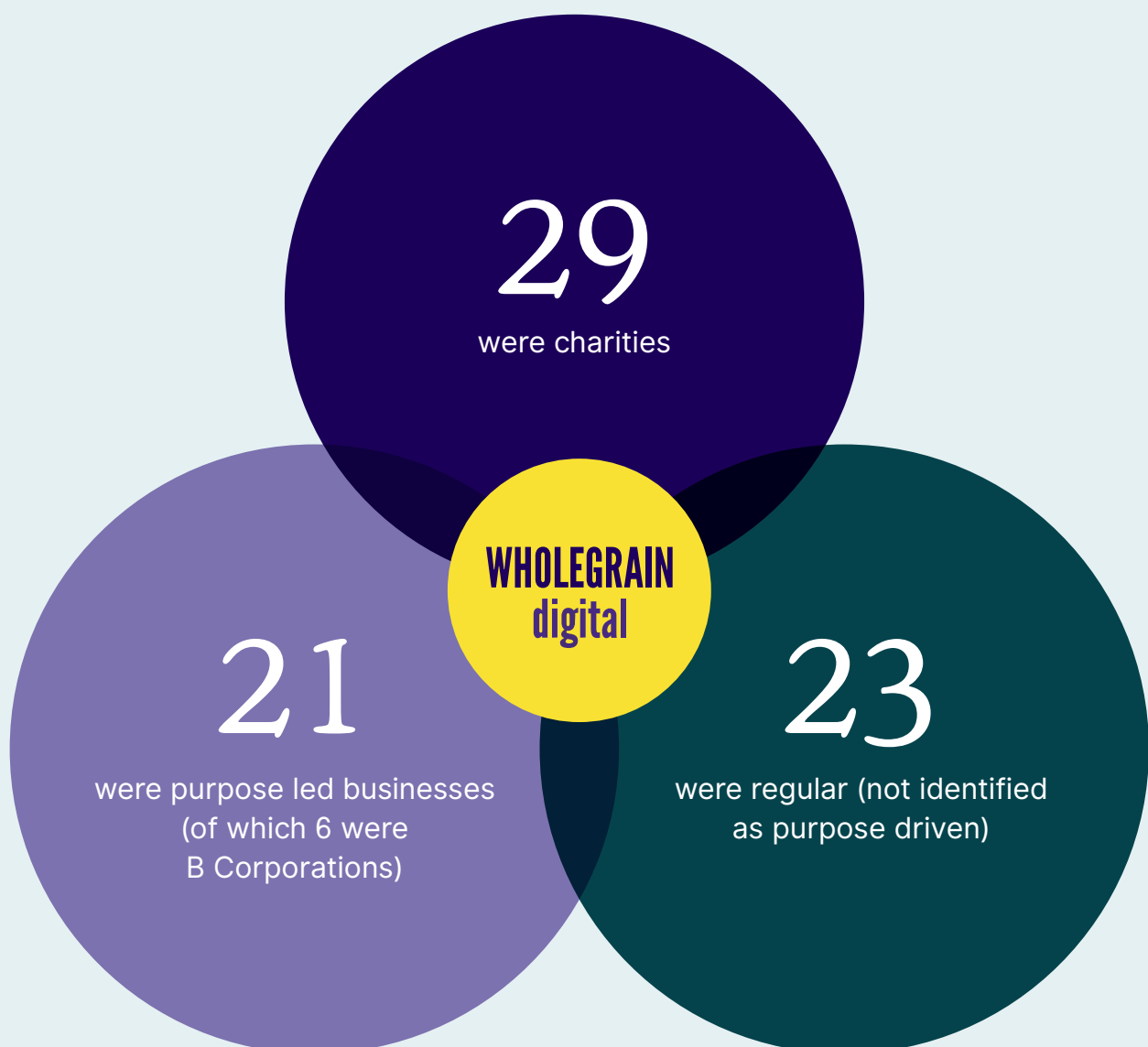
This year, despite the impact of the pandemic on businesses, we achieved a turnover of over **£1 million** for the first time since Wholegrain started in 2007.

Our biggest contracts by income were:

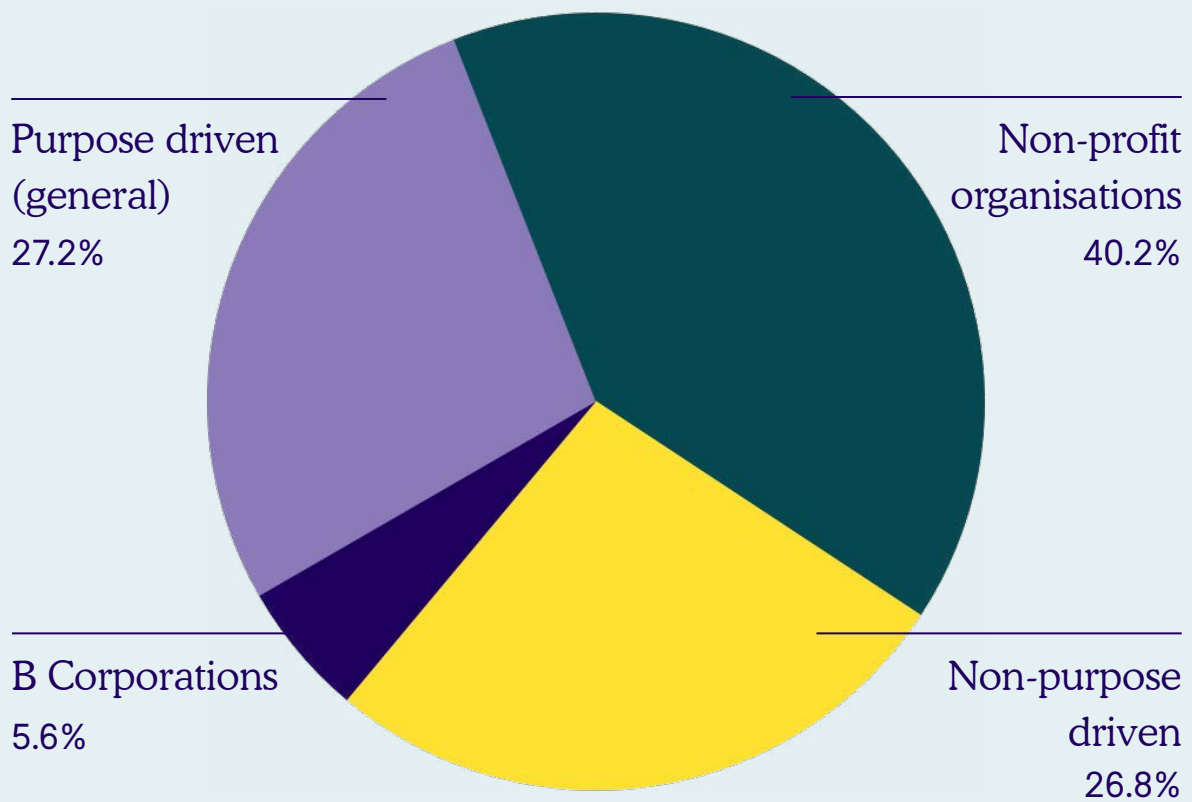


All of our clients prioritise purpose over profit, and we are committed to supporting positive businesses and charities - helping them to achieve their missions through their website goals.

We had **73 clients** across the year, of which:



THE FULL BREAKDOWN OF WHERE OUR REVENUE CAME FROM THIS YEAR IS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:



33%

of this is from purpose driven businesses, including 5.6% from certified B Corporations

73%

our revenue came from client projects that have a defined positive purpose beyond financial profit

40.2%

of this is from non-profit organisations



# B CORP COLLABORATIONS



**Certified**



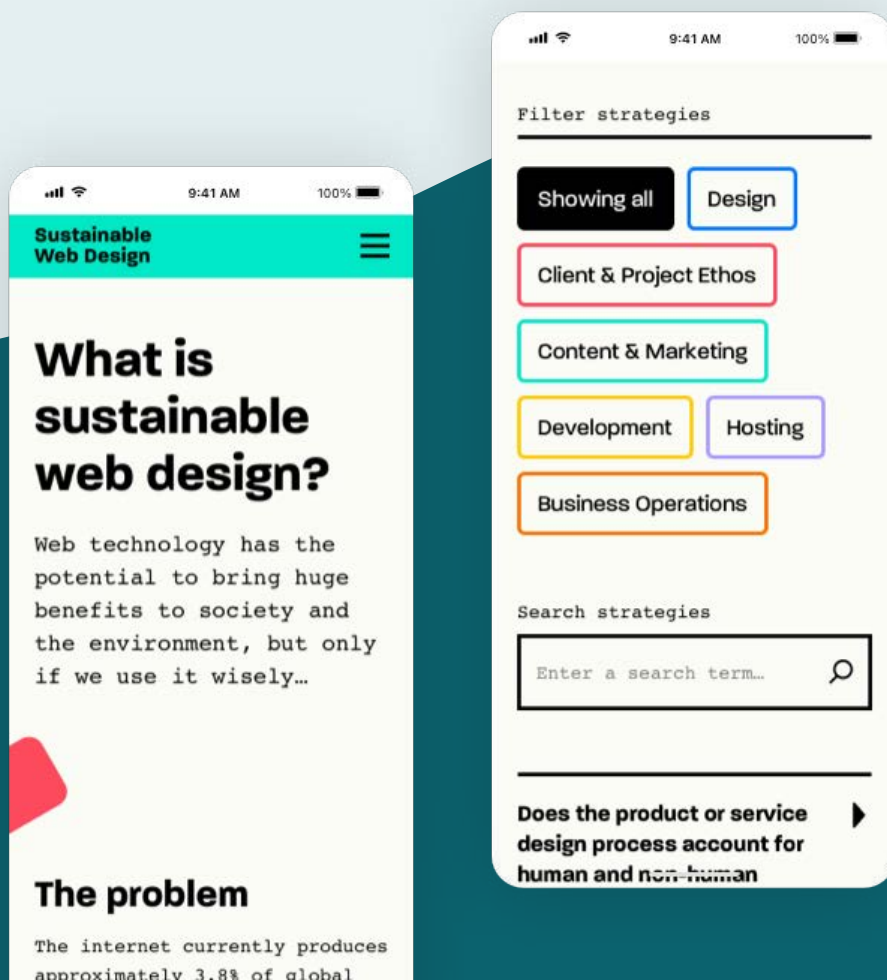
**Corporation**

Following our recertification as a B Corp last year, we enjoyed several B Corp collaborations this year. Not only working on individual projects for B Corp clients, but also collaborating with fellow B Corporations to lead the way in encouraging all businesses - not just B Corps - to put people and planet first in all their business activities.

# A UK/US SUSTAINABLE WEB DESIGN PROJECT

Working with US agency MightyBytes to create a [sustainable web design resource](#) was a wonderful way to unite in our shared mission to bring digital sustainability to a wider audience.

This guide was designed to include sustainable design strategies that benefit society as well as the environment, and is organised with sections on key areas of digital work – Client & Project Ethos, Design, Development, Hosting, Content & Marketing, and Business Operations. This allows visitors to dive into the area most relevant to their work and find practical strategies and resources to help them apply sustainability principles.



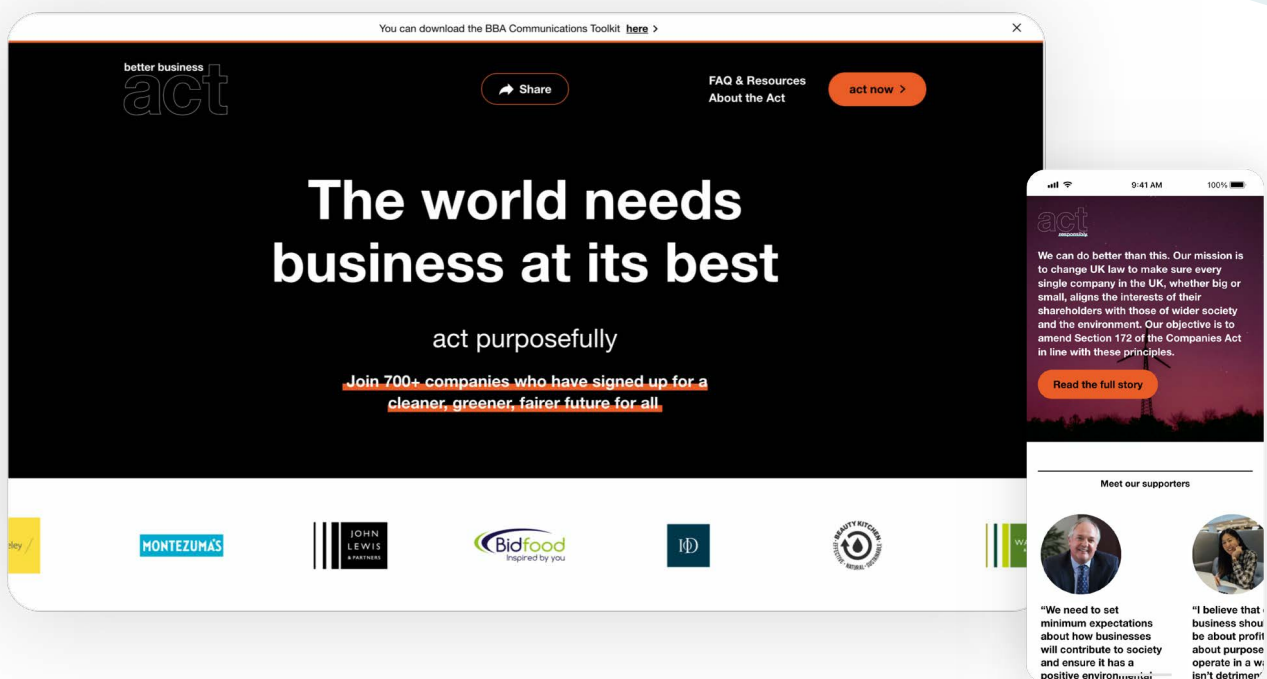
# A B LAB UK COLLABORATION

Collaborating with B Lab UK for the first time was a real honour.

We came together to [create the website for the Better Business Act](#)

- this website encourages business to sign up to get behind this new initiative to change the UK law, so that all companies take more responsibility for our collective environmental and social impact.

This coalition is now **400+ companies strong**, who will be presenting the draft act to parliament in April 2021.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 13

## TAKING CLIMATE ACTION

Most of the [measurable goals](#) that we are always working to meet, if not surpass, relate to [Sustainable Development Goal 13, Climate Action](#).

This year was a really positive year in this respect, with our annual emissions remaining low, even though these emissions have been calculated using a different methodology.

**13** CLIMATE  
ACTION



# REDUCING OUR EMISSIONS

For 2020/21, one of the key changes is that our office space usage (heating energy) has been taken as if everyone works at the office full time. This is of course not the case, and during this year we have hardly been at the office at all due to COVID restrictions. The **12.5 tonnes** figure for the year therefore represents a worst case scenario, and although it appears to be a ton more than 2019/20 (11.6 tonnes), in fact if the comparison were like for like, it would be considerably less.



Total carbon emissions for  
2020/21 was **12.5 tonnes**  
(11.6 in 2019/20)



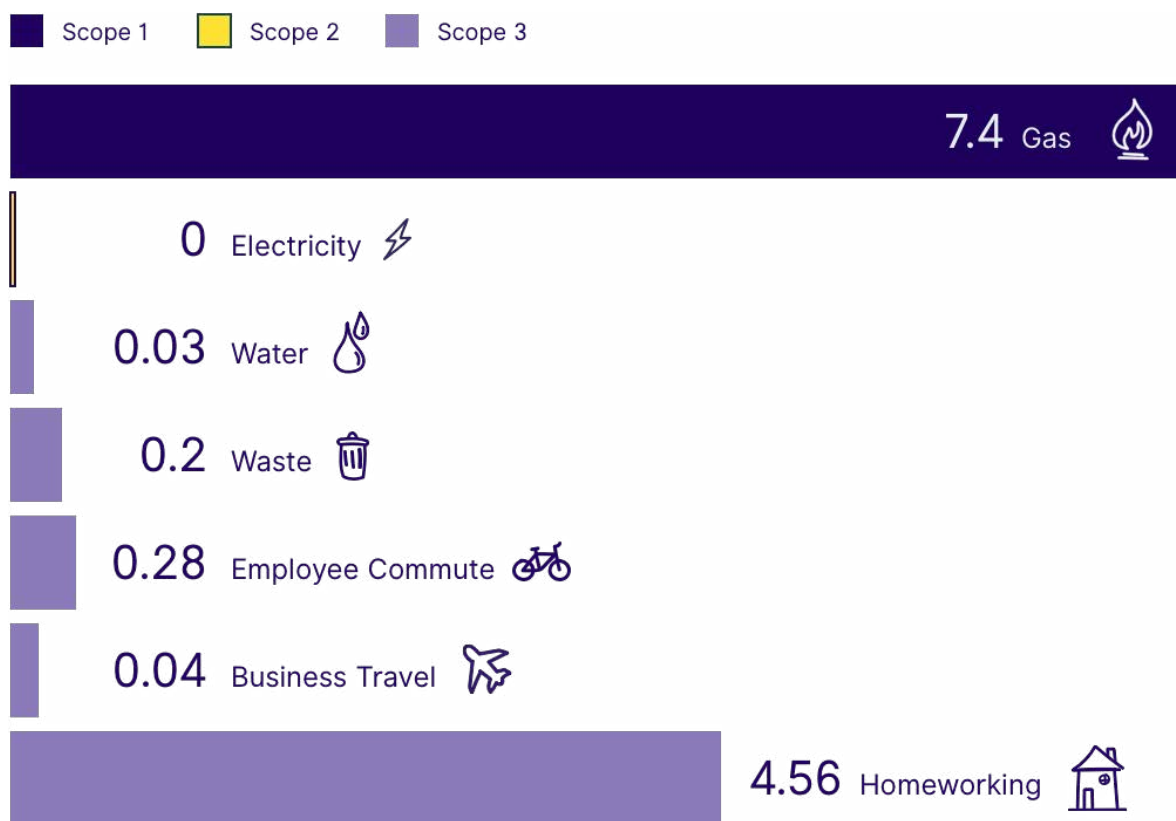
We recruited **7 new team** members in 2020/21, and have still maintained our 2019/20 achievement of using **100% renewable energy** both at work and at home



We travelled **2681km**, a massive reduction on last year (73,251km). Most of our travel is commuting, so lockdown had a big impact on reducing our emissions from travel to and from the office.

These emissions figures include all 3 emissions scopes, with Scope 3 including:

- Electricity and gas use for working from home
- Business travel
- Commuting



Scope 3 emissions are the team's home emissions. With the methodology used this year, the team's gas emissions have been included, despite the fact that all team members are on renewable energy tariffs, as the availability of renewable gas sources in the UK is limited and the commitment from providers is only that the emissions are offset. The electricity emissions remain at **0 for all team members.**

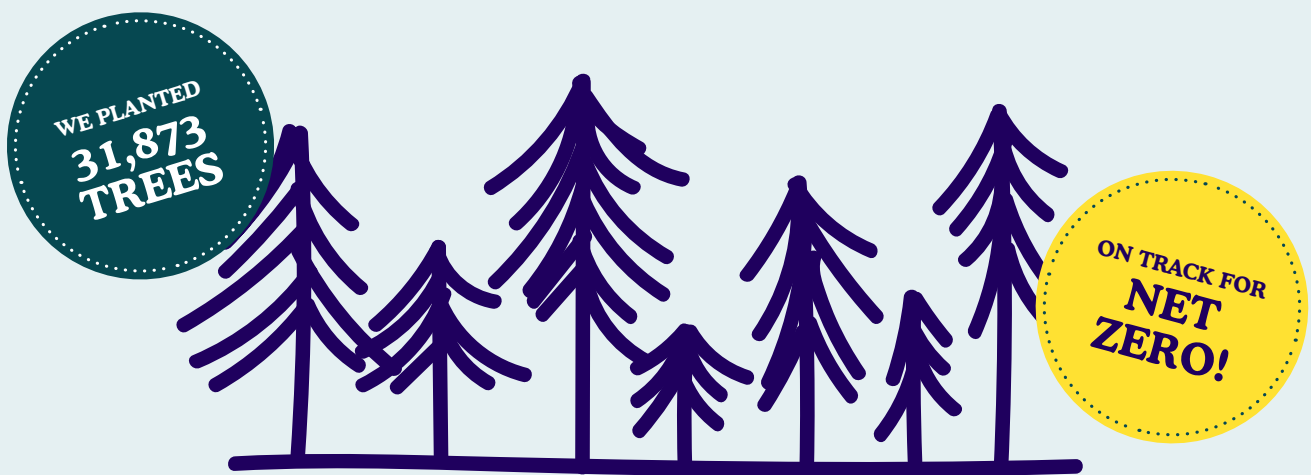


Our emissions remain very low compared to most other companies, with [Inhabit](#), who produced our emissions report this year, stating that using their methodology, **12.5 tonnes** was the lowest they had ever seen. This achievement is the result of continued conscious efforts on our part. And, although the pandemic did reduce our carbon emissions in terms of travel, we are mindful that we used Google Meet and Zoom much more frequently for client meetings, which had an impact on our digital footprint - [according to estimations](#) in 2020, one hour of online meetings uses around **282g CO2**. This adds up, so although digital emissions are not included in the report, we will continue to ensure that we hold only strictly necessary meetings, both in-person and online, this coming year.

# REDUCING OUR IMPACT

Last year, our stretch goal was to become carbon positive by the end of the 2020/2021 financial year. We achieved this by keeping our emissions low, and by continuing with our [tree-planting model](#) for regenerative business.

This year, we planted **31,873 trees**, a massive 27,373 increase on the 4.5k trees we planted in 2019/20.



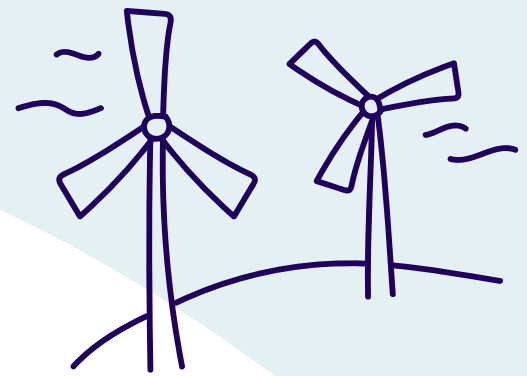
The next step on our commitment to reducing our emissions was to honour our promise of being committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030. We made this public promise as part of the [B Corp Climate Collective](#) back in 2019. While we are on track to achieve this in 2021, we are currently seeking to get more in depth information about our scope 3 emissions as detailed on page 14. We are also looking at further carbon offsets that **remove carbon** from the atmosphere to ensure that when we do announce this achievement, the figures are completely robust.



# A MORE ROBUST APPROACH

Now that we have started the new methodology of measuring our emissions with Inhabit, we not only want to ensure the data is as **accurate as possible**, we are also increasing our efforts to surpass **net zero** and become **carbon positive**.

To offset our emissions for the 2020/21 period, we will do so with Inhabit, offsetting the initial amount through carbon credits, and the same again with UK Pending Insurance Unit (PIU) woodland schemes. This is separate from, and additional too, our original and ongoing tree planting model.



## CARBON CREDITS

Conventional carbon credits reduce emissions in a measurable way but do not remove them from the atmosphere. These credits can be obtained through initiatives such as helping fund renewable energy projects. As it is only conventional carbon credits that meet the requirements to be 'carbon neutral' (because they are guaranteed), we initially offset our emissions in this way. However, to ensure that we are also removing carbon from the atmosphere, we are doubling our efforts by also offsetting the same amount again, with PIU schemes.

## PIUs

PIUs are a promise to deliver on carbon removals from the atmosphere via woodland schemes. They are like an IOU for carbon removal and help fund ongoing work to remove carbon from the atmosphere. However, as they are in the future, they do not count towards claims to be 'carbon neutral'.

Going forward, we will continue with the annual use of both of these types of carbon offsetting, to ensure that our approach is **extra robust**.

# 1% FOR THE PLANET

Every year we donate 1% of our annual revenue to a charity that is helping to protect nature. Our 2021 charity of the year was [International Rivers](#), a US based organisation working globally to protect rivers around the world, and the communities that rely on them.



We were honoured to be able to support International Rivers by creating their [River Resources Hub](#) for them. This hub allows people to explore the wide range of research resources that they have produced over the past 30 years.

# 1% FOR THE PLANET

Our ongoing partnerships also include:



Trees for LLife



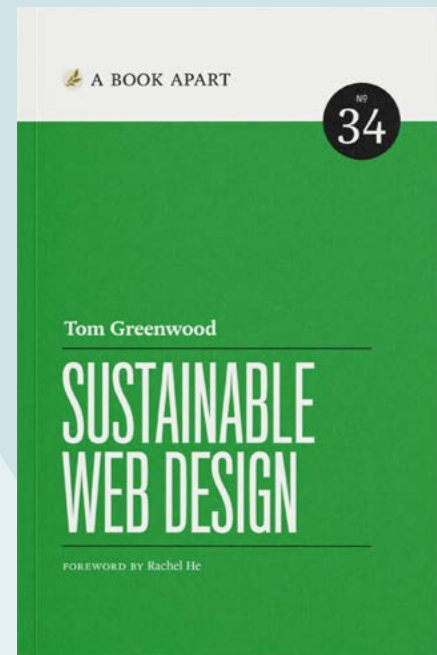
THE  
GREEN WEB  
FOUNDATION

**Possible.**



Eden Reforestation Projects

# POSITIVE PUBLISHING



In 2021, our Co-Founder/Director Tom [published a book with A Book Apart](#). Sustainable Web Design was launched in February, and was well received.

In 2020/21 we published 15 articles on environmental topics as well as a number of articles on web [design](#) and [development](#), and some [sharing our developmental journey](#) as a team. We have been invited to speak as guest speakers at several events across the year including the [2021 Mozilla Festival](#) and the first ever B Corporation [Beyond Net Zero Webinar](#). We have also contributed to several publications, including the [inaugural issue of Branch magazine](#), and a feature in [Wired magazine](#).

Our sustainability focused newsletter, [Curiously Green](#), continues to grow month on month, reaching over **[1,300 subscribers](#)** in the year since its launch, becoming a leading publication often referenced by other digital sustainability professionals.

# GREENING THE WEB

If the internet was a country, it would be the world's **7th** biggest polluters. As a sustainability focused company, we are passionate about sharing this knowledge with others in our industry so that we can all do better. This passion has helped us to become recognised as world leaders in greening the web.

We don't just talk the talk, we make sure our numbers match our mission.



## OUR TARGET

Our target is for **100%** of client websites to be hosted on green hosting by **2026**. Since last year, we've seen an increase of **12%** so we are well on track to achieve this in good time.

We are also still on target for all the new websites that we develop to be less than the industry average. Our average client website homepage in 2020-21 remains consistent with last year, with emissions of **0.5 grams CO2 per page view** (using Website Carbon v2 methodology). The average for the whole web is 1.76 grams (March 2021).



# WEBSITE CARBON

Referenced widely in online publications from Channel News Asia to Wired magazine, our carbon calculator for websites saw growing demand over the year, exceeding 2 million tests completed by the end of the 2020-21 financial year.

Our [website carbon tool](#) has become an essential resource for any business looking to reduce their digital carbon footprint. The badge developed by our developer Josh Stopper, which we released last year to help organisations proudly display their carbon credentials, is now widely used.

A blue rectangular badge with rounded corners. It features a white box on the left containing the text '0.07g of CO<sub>2</sub>/view' and a green box on the right containing the text 'Website Carbon'. Below these boxes, the text 'Cleaner than 93% of pages tested' is written in white.

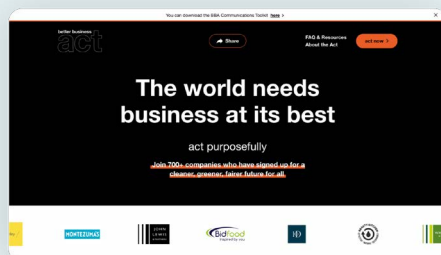
0.07g of CO<sub>2</sub>/view **Website Carbon**  
Cleaner than 93% of pages tested

**GET THE BADGE!**

A hand-drawn green arrow pointing from the 'GET THE BADGE!' text towards the 'Website Carbon' badge.

**TREESTORY**

0.31G OF CO<sub>2</sub>



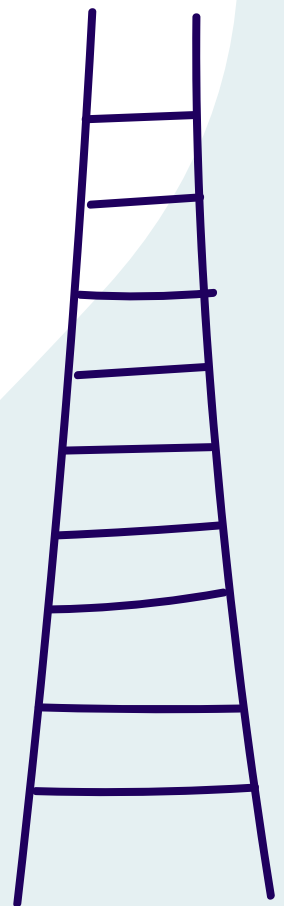
**BETTER BUSINESS ACT**

0.72G OF CO<sub>2</sub>

# DEVELOPING A DEVELOPMENTAL CULTURE

This year, we took the radical step of hiring a team coach at Wholegrain. Already a positive organisation with a focus on growth, we wanted to shift this focus internally, to invest in the individual growth of each of our team members. After all, while the whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts, investing in each part (person!) can help to make the whole greater, and, as such, benefits us all - individually (team members) and collectively (the business, our clients).

This new way of approaching the team's development can be challenging but with the support of our team coach and cultural architect, we hope it will pave the way for positive growth. We're still at the beginning of this journey, so look forward to updating on how it's going in a year's time!

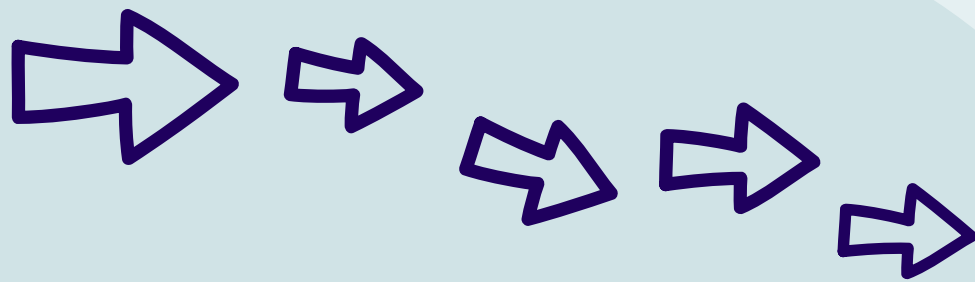




# VOLUNTEERING

Due to the challenges of coming together during this financial year because of COVID restrictions, we didn't manage to do any in-person volunteering as a team this year. We hope that we can make up for this during the 2021-22 financial year - watch this space!





# LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to 2021/22, we intend to keep pushing ourselves to make an even **bigger impact**. We are honoured and humbled that our ongoing work in raising awareness of digital sustainability is steadily gaining momentum and we are creating waves in the industry, seeing more and more organisations paying attention to their online impact and how we can move towards a greener digital future.

In the coming year, We also hope to launch a third version of our website carbon calculator to ensure we effectively respond to increased demand, and we're looking forward to launching several exciting new web projects with positive organisations.

Naturally our travel is likely to increase next year as COVID restrictions ease. While we are all looking forward to coming together and meeting with clients and partners in person, it will be interesting for us all to learn how we adapt and what impact this has on our overall emissions as a company.