



IMPACT *report* 2024

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a word from our founder

I'm delighted to share the progress we've been making and our highlights over the past 12 months (plus where we can do better) in our second Impact Report. We've taken significant steps forward in areas of focus – like increasing the amount of product sourced from Europe from 35% to 44% and reducing the use of single use plastics to just 2 per cent of our latest seasonal collection.

As a B Corp, we're very much aware that we are on a journey and we're committed to making further improvements this year. Even so, it was rewarding to see the team's efforts recognised in our first major sustainability award at the Scale-Up Awards.

Bringing people together around a table is at the heart of what we do. We've always believed in the positive benefits of coming together and celebrating an occasion however big or small. And we're committed to extending the experience of gathering to as many people as possible. That's why we work with community groups and charities that seek to end social isolation among people with less opportunity to get together, whether the elderly or financially challenged. During the year, as well as supporting those groups, we started regularly hosting the local elderly community at our head office. It's something the team find incredibly rewarding and we will be continuing.

Clare Harris



OUR PURPOSE

*to inspire the world
to GATHER, and to
be TOGETHER
around the table.*

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

144

community
gatherings
supported

Gifted

100

birthday bags to
Trussell Trust

recycled 82% of office waste



421

staff volunteer hours

22,559
trees planted



New collections

98%

single-use
plastic
free

face to
face
supplier
vists

48

£600

wellness budget
for every member
of staff

78
%

of new
collection
game boxes
made from
recycled
materials

44%

products sourced
from Europe

1

Introduced
recycled glassware



2

Launched a Happiness
product guarantee



3

We launch free birthday
bags for food banks



4

We win our first
sustainability
accolade at the
Scale-Up Awards



5

The AW23
collection is 97%
single use plastic
free

our 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

9

We kick off Tea at
TT, regular get
togethers for the
elderly local
community hosted
at our offices



8

Increased the
percentage of
products made in
Europe from 35%
to 44%



7

We bring the
industry together
to talk about the
benefits of
becoming a B
Corp

6

Our Christmas
collection includes
upcycled fabric
tinsel



PEOPLE

We are committed to recruiting people from all walks of life and backgrounds. Everyone is invited and people are at the heart of everything we do. We know it's important for our people to work for a company whose values they share and that they feel a sense of community with their colleagues.

Gender pay gap

4%

National average 7.7% (ONS)

Our senior team are

*two-thirds
female*

LGBTQ+

13%

Ethnic minority

19%

Disability

10%



wellness

Everyone can spend £600 on an activity that broadens their horizons. During 2023 people went New York sightseeing in a helicopter, tufted a rug, climbed Sydney Harbour bridge, rode in a hot air balloon, visited a glass factory in Venice, made candles, hiked around Lake Como and much more.

Alice hiked around Lake Como

It gave me greater understanding of Italian history and the networks created between Milan and the Alps. I enjoyed the isolation of travelling where many of the towns were remote. And there was a sense of achievement having hiked over 50km in mountain terrains.

Percentage of team who made use of their wellness budget:

68%
in 2023





Access Aspiration

Part of the Mayor's Fund for London, Access Aspiration targets schools in boroughs where a high proportion of students are eligible for free school meals and connects them with businesses across London to provide them with experiences that will give them visibility of the world of work and also links to businesses. It recognises that not all teens have access to the social networks that are so often the route to a work experience placement, for example. We conducted mock interviews for pupils, gave career talks and provided work placement opportunities.

our learning months

Throughout the year we held four focus months designed to grow our empathy and understanding of the many individuals and communities that make up our society and our colleagues. As the calendar offers up multiple Awareness days and Celebration days for our community, we wanted to anchor some of those and help make our individual learning both fun and informative.

The events focused on caring responsibilities – whether parents or those looking after an elderly person – LGBTQ+, Black History Month and Disability. In each case, everyone was invited to a kick off meeting and to be involved in deciding on events and activities. Activities included discussion lunches, theatre, film and gallery trips, walks, team talks and resource sheets.



COMMUNITY

We believe in the positive benefits of coming together and celebrating an occasion however big or small. But we recognise that not everyone has the same opportunity to do so. That's why we work with community groups and charities that seek to end social isolation by bringing such people together, whether the elderly or financially disadvantaged. This year we're making a new commitment. For every order on our website TalkingTables.co.uk we will donate a product to a community gathering.

We host regular events for the elderly local community as well as working with a number of groups locally and nationally who bring people together.

*Community
events hosted/
gifted*

2022	2023
117	144

Re-engage

We're aware that not everyone has a diary chock full of social invitations. It's often the case that elderly people can feel quite lonely and disconnected from their communities. Which is why we work with Re-engage, the charity that brings the socially isolated over 75s together via tea parties.

Trussell Trust

We know a lot of people are strapped for cash and buying those little extras that make a birthday special are out of reach. Which is why in 2023 we donated 100 birthday bags, including party decorations and tableware and games, to our local Trussell Trust food bank. And we followed up at Christmas with festive decorations and tableware and games donations. Many of us were fortunate to volunteer in the run up to the holidays, helping get out the hampers, and it was a Christmas highlight for many of us.

Lifeline

Lifeline is attached to our local church St Pauls in Clapham, South London and provides just that for the elderly local community. We host a big summer party for them at our offices, along with quarterly afternoon tea events and also decorate and volunteer at their Christmas party. It's great fun.

tea at TT

In 2023 we launched Tea at TT, which sees us regularly hosting the elderly community at our offices. The events are hosted by departments and kicked off with a Christmas afternoon with tea and carols organised by our supply chain team. We followed this up with a Valentines get-together hosted by finance and customer service. They're a talented bunch and guests were treated to a Strictly Come Dancing style dance presentation as two of the team and their partners performed a rumba, the jive and salsa and then gave an impromptu lesson in some dance steps.



Will preparing bud vases at the
National Garden Scheme charity gala



National Garden Scheme

For the third year running, we sponsored the NGS's Great British Garden Party, which encourages people to host an event in their back yard or garden to help raise money for nursing charities. We also dressed their annual gala and donated profits from our popular Truly Scrumptious collection.

The Long Table

The Long Table in Gloucestershire want to make sure that everyone has access to great food and people to eat it with, regardless of social or financial background. It welcomes everyone in the community to eat together at long tables and invites those that wish to do so to fund meals for the less advantaged, they call it 'pay a meal forward'. We dressed a number of their special get-togethers like their summer party and Halloween get together.

*the amount we donated
financially to charities during
the year:* **£34,570**

Some of the charities we donated to:



Everyone has two paid days to give back. During the year we beach cleaned, litter picked, helped out at Trussell Trust, served tea at elderly get togethers and more.

Helen helping out at the Trussell Trust food bank

volunteering hours

2022: 343

2023: 421



VOLUNTEERING



RECYCLING

We work with recycling group First Mile to recycle as much as we can and are pleased to have achieved gold status for the year. In 2023 we had eight recycling streams including: glass, general waste, mixed recycling, napkin, paper, food, cardboard and Oatley cartons.

What there is of general waste is burnt to create energy rather than going to landfill.

Everyone who joins Talking Tables goes through a recycling induction and we report monthly on how we're doing.



Target: 80%

Achieved: 82%

2024 target: Maintain Gold status

Grace manages our recycling and proudly holds our First Mile Gold certificate

PARTNERS

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. Talking Tables has held an FSC licence for 11 years and we use FSC paper for our paper products.



We source our organic cotton from a supplier who is signed up to the Better Cotton Initiative, the largest cotton sustainability project in the world. It helps cotton communities survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring the environment.

We are an accredited Living Wage employer. This means that we ensure our employees and contracted workers are paid a fair day's wage. The Real Living Wage is independently calculated on an annual basis.



We are proud to be accredited by the Good Business Charter (GBC). The GBC consists of ten components; including ethical sourcing, prompt payment of suppliers and staff wellbeing.

We support the Better Business Act, which is lobbying to change the law so that companies become responsible for benefitting workers, customers, the community and the environment while delivering profit.



Products of Change helps us keep up with key sustainability developments via articles and training sessions. It is a global educational hub driving sustainable change.

In a world of green washing, we believe that B Corp status provides customers with the assurance that we are walking the talk.



Talking Tables is a B Corp...

... One of over 8,000 companies worldwide committed to using business as a force for good. To become a B Corp you have to pass a rigorous assessment of your practises known as an impact assessment. We were certified with a score of 87.5 in September 2022 (you need 80 to pass). During 2023 we worked on being better and increasing our score and believe we have now reached 94.6 points, although this will not be verified until we recertify in 2025. Just some of the initiatives we undertook in 2023 included; supporting the next generation with five internships, compiling a local purchasing list of suppliers, decreasing the use of single-use plastic and creating a product guarantee for customers. It's a continuous journey of improvement and we intend to make further progress this year.



ECOLOGI

Ecologi

We work with Ecologi, the reforestation group who believe that we can all individually and as small and medium businesses make a difference that collectively adds up to a huge impact. In five years it has planted 78 million trees and avoided 3 million tonnes of CO₂e and those figures speak to the success of its mission.

We have planted 38,881 trees with Ecologi. We offset the paper used to produce our napkins but have a number of other initiatives like gifting trees on team birthdays and for people signing up to our newsletter.

We're also working with Ecologi on more immediate impact carbon projects like wind farms. This year, we contributed to a project repairing water boreholes in Eritrea (pictured below). Only 19% of people in Eritrea have access to clean water close to their homes. The boreholes are used to access safe, clean water from underground. Providing access to these boreholes means people don't have to boil water using wood fuel and inefficient burners that release carbon.



In 2023  22,559 trees planted  286 tonnes of CO₂e avoided

PRODUCT

paper decorations and tableware

We aim to ensure that where products aren't reusable they are recyclable. For example all of our napkins are recyclable and come in recyclable card packaging (we also offset the paper in our napkins with tree planting). All of our crackers are plastic free and recyclable as are our paper cups unlike most paper cups which contain a plastic inside.

Go green, or red, or yellow.... Going green doesn't need to be brown

This year we are launching a napkin made from white recycled tissue. Previously only a brownish coloured tissue was available. We believe that sustainable design shouldn't be a compromise. Or as we like to say, it's the bright thing to do. We're also sourcing it in Europe, cutting down on distribution carbon impact.

recycled materials

Around 3% of products were made from recycled materials, this has already grown to 7% for spring/summer 24.

reusable

We are increasing the mix of reusable products in our collections. Reusable product is durable and long lasting and reduces the need to use virgin materials. In 2023 41% of our tableware and decorations were reusable. Within our reusable offer, 3% were made from upcycled materials, including a Christmas advent bunting and 'tinsel'.

games

We reduced the box depth of two of our Host Your Own big box games by 10mm.

- This saves 40g of paper per product
- This is 10% of the original box weight
- Across a 3,000 unit order of a new item, this saves 120kg of paper vs last year.

100% of our new games in 2023 were single use plastic free and 78% of their boxes was made from recycled materials.

All of our games are either made from paper from FSC sustainably managed forests or from recycled materials.



Our games are designed to last and we encourage people to enjoy, replay and give away for further play (we put this message on back of pack). In 2023 we launched a social initiative to encourage people to take any games they have finished with to a charity shop so others can enjoy them. Take a game to a charity shop, take a pic outside and tag us on social and we pledged to plant a tree in your name.

2

We redesigned one of our long term best sellers Prosecco Pong to lessen its carbon impact, saving 175g of paper and 55.5 of plastic per game. This will save 4,025kg of paper and 1,276kg of plastic per year.



Our Easter bunny basket is made from recycled paper. Look out for Halloween cat and Christmas reindeer versions.

3



4

Our felt flowers and trivets are from our first World Fair Trade supplier. Hatale is based in Nepal, employing local women and funding the education of 100 local children.



1

Our upcycled fabric 'tinsel' offers a sustainable alternative to traditional (plastic) tinsel.



our product HIGHLIGHTS

Single use plastic free

Over the year only four products contained single use plastic and these were cannons and ice fountains.

SS22 collection: 87%

AW22 collection: 91%

SS23 collection: 99%

AW23 collection: 97%

5

Debuting in our kids collection, Bug Bingo and Bug Mash Up are our first games to use FSC recycled certified card material in both product and packaging.



SUPPLIERS



From the very beginning of our sustainability journey it has been key for us to take our suppliers along with us. We do this through collaboration and engagement. There are lots of things with our supply chain that we can't control directly but we can effect change through collaboration.

In October we held a supplier conference in China. During the event we held a supplier led panel to discuss sustainability. Called Talking Together, it was modelled on a format we regularly host for the UK giftware industry bringing people together to discuss and share experiences around important topics like sustainability and sourcing. It's important for us not only to talk to our suppliers but to get them talking to each other and sharing experiences, contacts and how they have implemented changes.

Each year we review how our suppliers are performing in terms of their social and environmental impact and this year we broadened the scope of this survey to have more focus on net zero and carbon tracking. In 2023 we discovered...

66%

of suppliers provide
community or charity
support

39%

take part in
tree planting
initiatives



49%

offer staff volunteer hours

73%

have waste reduction targets in place

22%

suppliers we
have worked with
for +10 years

5%
record their
green-
house gas
emissions

10%

have set net zero targets

11%

of supplier
are female
owned (we
will be
setting new
targets to
increase this)

46%

suppliers
we have
worked
with for +5
years

the Talking Tables way

All of our suppliers are signed up to our code of conduct, called the Talking Tables Way. We check they are complying with it via audits, information requests and visits.

The Talking Table Way covers:

People

Including fairness, child labour, working hours, pay and employment practises.

Safety

A safe and hygienic working environment; including building, accident and injury prevention and a trained health and safety rep.

Environment

A demonstrated care for the environment.

this year

We're working with a sustainable audit company in China who are going into our factories and undertaking a bespoke environmental audit of suppliers.

Key focuses are:

Neto zero commitments

Product data

Renewable energy (eg solar panels)

Sustainable innovation

Suppliers will be rated Bronze, Silver and Gold and so far one factory has been audited.

5 *supplier audits*

2024 target

We love visiting our suppliers and meeting them face to face.

48 **50**
visits in 2023 2024 target

Sourcing from Europe

We are working on sourcing closer to home in order to reduce our carbon footprint.

35% **44%**
2022 2023



Three suppliers have installed solar panels.

Encouraging our suppliers to go over to renewable energy is a major focus for us.

SPREADING THE WORD



We are leading the change in the giftware industry and are committed to bringing others along with us. We are open to sharing our journey to help others get on the path. Working with the Giftware Association, we host Sharing Lunches for industry brands to share experiences and raise standards. During the year we brought 30 brand leaders together to two events to discuss Harnessing the Power of B Corp and How to Succeed in the US. Previous topics have included Sustainability and Sourcing.

We also spoke at two B Corp events at Spring Fair, the industry's leading show. Daniel Fagan, our director of supply chain, joined a B Corp hosted panel discussion on Understanding B Corp and also a B Corp Certification Clinic.



Our goals 2023	What we said	What we did
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Governance

Update employee induction pack to include recycling guide, volunteering days and net zero targets.



Elect a new starter ambassador to manage employee onboarding.

**Workers**

Written policy with number of training days and add categories to training tracking, eg skills based, life skills, professional development.



Add a check on indoor environmental quality to the head office Health and Safety audit.



Support the next generation with five intern placements.



Increase score from 75% to 80% in Great Place to Work survey.

**Community**

Celebrate inclusivity internally around carers, LGBTQ+, Black History Month and disability.



Pay equity to go on website.



Create a local purchasing list for the office.



Add supplier diversity to supplier questionnaire and track.



Set a diversity target for suppliers to increase annually.



Review new sustainable certified bank options.



Invite customers and staff to help select charities through polls and questionnaires.



Set the guidelines for a charity screening policy.



Gift 200 community events with paper decorations and tableware.



Our goals 2023	What we said	What we did
-------------------	-----------------	----------------

Environment

Achieve First Mile Gold status on recycling (80%).



Use 10% less energy and water at head office.



Measure the lifecycle of key product categories. Identify the carbon impact of every product and launch carbon tracking.



Complete a chemical study of core product categories.



Launch upcycled product and recycled glass product.



Decrease use of single-use plastic in new season collections from 9% to 4%.



Reduce China production dependency to 62%, increasing EU production to 36%.



Increase B Corp score from 87.5 to 90.

**Customers**

Create a product guarantee for Talking Tables public website shoppers.



Add product reviews to our websites.



Encourage customers to extend the life of games by taking them to a charity shop (10 trees planted if image shared).



Set up customer focus groups and incorporate feedback into product.



Our goals for 2024

During 2024 and beyond, we will have a special focus on greater use of recycled materials, of longer lasting product, and sourcing closer to home.

Governance

Complete a stakeholder engagement survey.

Annual training on the anti-corruption system.

Workers

Qualify for Great Place to Work.

50 news user manuals to aid staff.

12 new tools to aid staff.

Support the next generation with six intern placements.

Community

Host quarterly Tea at TT events at our HQ for the local community.

Every order on TalkingTables.co.uk supports a community gathering pledge.

Hold two industry Talking Together events improving standards and sharing.

Set a supplier diversity target for suppliers to increase annually.

Host a European supplier conference.

Environment

Maintain First Mile Gold Status.

Five suppliers to have completed Talking Tables environmental audit and installed solar panels.

60% of Talking Tables packaging to use recycled material.

Single use product to be 100% plastic free or use recycled plastic.

Increase B Corp score to 100.

Increase closer to home european production to 40%.

Move to plastic free paper tape for all Talking Tables inner and outer transport cartons.

Measure the lifecycle of key product categories.

Customers

Complete a customer survey and understand their recycling habits.

Deliver 100% within customers' Service Level Agreement.

Customer pulse satisfaction surveys.

GET IN
TOUCH

we'd love to hear from you

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Certified



Corporation

 Talking
Tables
host it. love it.