



# GIVING BACK POLICY

CORPORATE & SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY

## **Giving Back Policy (Corporate Social Responsibility)**

*You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give back.*

### **Our Commitment**

Stephens Scown genuinely cares about our people, local community and the environment.

We seek to take business decisions and corporately act in way that is consistent with this care and long term view.

We support our colleagues to follow their own passions for community and environment, to enrich their lives and increase the positive impact we can have.

We dedicate a significant proportion of our resources and energy to what we feel passionate about.

We wish to be an organisation that actively demonstrates this care, with a long term vision of becoming a leader in this field.

### **Why?**

We are a responsible business. Our core values include acting with integrity and seeking to be sustainable. As a firm we try to act and make decisions based on guiding principles that include taking a medium to long term view and acting in a fair manner when considering the consequences of our decisions. We also seek to do things efficiently and without waste.

We believe in people: which is reflected by our culture, Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work For ranking and our unique employee share ownership - 'Scownership'. We are passionate about the South West – see our Love Where You Live campaign.

We want to see our communities and colleagues flourish.

We want to leave behind a world that the next generation can enjoy.

These concerns are increasingly important to our colleagues, clients and contacts.

There are shared benefits for the firm and society – CSR can bring business benefits in terms of external reputation, staff recruitment and retention, driving innovation and productivity and opening up new client markets or opportunities.

### **How?**

We have a specifically appointed CSR Partner, who leads our Giving Back Team. That team meets quarterly and has its own autonomy and budget. Its remit includes developing our program into the future and reporting on progress.

We encourage firm decision making to be undertaken with our above Commitment in mind, in line with our firm's brand, values and strategy.

## *Environmental*

We are on a journey towards Zero Carbon - seeking to lower our carbon footprint. This involves:

- measuring our current Carbon Footprint;
- seeking to encourage behaviours of colleagues that reduce carbon emissions and which also save resources;
- seeking to make each team 'Paperlite' via our E-Filing Project; and
- voluntary awareness sessions in each office at a lunchtime – alerting colleagues to how they can contribute to carbon reductions both at home and at work.

Given the firm's strength in the renewables sector and our Commitment above, the firm is exploring moving to a 100% renewable/green electricity tariff.

We are a member of the Legal Sustainability Alliance: <https://legalsustainabilityalliance.com>.

Some examples of our activity in this area:

### *Eco Mugs and Bottles*

To reduce single use plastic this September, we have given all our colleagues a reusable metal water bottle.

This adds to the reusable Love Where you Live Coffee Mugs made for colleagues since 2017, to support Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's war on waste. Colleagues gave a donation of £2.50 for each Mug, given to Children's Hospice South West.

### *Buildings & Resources*

St Austell Office has been built to conform to the BREEAM Standard. All offices have measures to save resources, such as LED lights and sensors. Our PaperLite Scheme is now being trialled in most teams to reduce paper filing. None of our waste goes to landfill and all offices recycle. Even our confidential shredding is recycled – last year we saved 399 trees through this program.

### *Transport*

Lightfoot is installed in all Pool Cars to help save fuel and the environment through reduced emissions. Free car parking spaces were given at our Truro office for 6 ½ months this year for those that car shared. All offices have bike store facilities and cycle to work schemes as well as video conference facilities to reduce unnecessary travel. We are a member of the Exeter City Futures Goals to make Exeter energy independent and congestion free.

## *Pro Bono Work*

Pro Bono work is professional work undertaken voluntarily and without payment or at a reduced fee as a public service. The firm undertakes Legal Aid work for individuals at greatly reduced rates and has a history of undertaking wider pro bono work.

Teams are encouraged to undertake pro-bono work for specific charities or community interest companies. This can be applied to all the work undertaken for the project (so it is free), or as a part pro-bono (where it reduces the fees).

Relevant criteria for such work include:

- a. What the project is and the community/specific benefit?
- b. Simple means testing
- c. A check on the effectiveness of the work being proposed – will it be likely to make a difference? In what way?
- d. Timing and capability of the relevant team.

Some examples of our activity in this area:

### *Turn to Starboard*

A group of passionate yacht masters and ex-veterans approached us wanting to help Armed Forces personnel affected by military operations by getting them on the water. We acted for them in acquiring a beautiful 91 foot wooden gaff rigged schooner, *The Spirit of Falmouth*, from the Prince's Trust. The charity is now providing sail training and RYA courses to those affected around the beautiful Cornish Coast. The charity is now in partnership with a number of national organisations including Help for Heroes.

### *Community Energy*

Partner Sonya Bedford has been awarded an MBE for her services to community energy. She was responsible for assisting in a large number of innovative projects in order to ensure the continued deployment of renewable energy, including the first grid consortium in the UK, local supply initiatives and grid sharing. In her spare time she sits on the board of five community energy groups including Exeter Community Energy, South Dartmoor Community Energy and Bath and West Community Energy.

### *TEDxTruro*

Our Marketing Director founded and curates TEDxTruro, the first TED type event in Cornwall, under licence from TED in the US. Colleagues also volunteer to organise the annual event with the aim of spreading good ideas.

## *Volunteering*

Many of our colleagues use their free time away from work to support charitable causes or to support those in need. This is recognised, celebrated and supported by the firm and colleagues are often asked to take up external voluntary roles as part of their personal development. Colleagues may also use our flexible working policy to alter their hours so they may undertake voluntary work more easily in their free time.

We also encourage all staff to undertake volunteering *during* their work time via:

1. Firm organised volunteer days/sessions. This is organised by our Charity Committee.
2. Allowing every colleague with more than 6 months service to have up to 3 paid days per annum to undertake their own volunteer work for a registered charity or CIC. This is applied pro rata for those that work part time. Colleagues book this time via our HR Self Service system in the same way as holiday.

Recent colleague volunteering projects have included:

### *Gardening for Age UK Exeter*

Some of our Exeter colleagues pulled on their wellies and got their hands dirty helping Age UK Exeter to tidy up its allotment. The team helped to clear brambles and weeds and dug over the ground for winter. This allotment is a great space where the charity runs a project for dementia sufferers and their spouses. The people who use the allotment really appreciate this time to socialise and be outside being active and doing something productive.

### *Beach Cleans for Surfers Against Sewage*

Staff volunteered to help with the SAS Beach Clean Ups in Falmouth and Newquay... on the whole, the beaches were in pretty good condition, but a lot of plastic and fishing wire were picked up in the clean. The weather was kind to both groups on both days and SAS was really impressed with the number of volunteers who turned up.

### *Truro City Clean up Week*

In April 18, the Truro office participated in a litter pick up organised by Truro BID and together with other businesses in and around Truro. Our volunteers helped to pick up litter, remove stickers, cable ties and general tidying up of the city.

From May 16 to April 18 our fee earners gave 1,022 hours of their time to Charitable and Corporate Social Responsibility work.

Our colleagues currently hold 120 charity and board positions, including: Under Sheriff of Cornwall, Non Executive Director of the Eden Project, Scout Commissioners, Business Start Up Mentors, Town Councillors, School Governors and Trustees of Theatre Companies.

### **Charitable Giving by Firm**

The Giving Back Team have a budget to distribute to colleagues who are involved in personal challenges to raise money for charity. The contribution varies per challenge as follows:

Tier 1 - Bake sales, 3k runs, bungee jump or physical events with little training.	£10 contribution
Tier 2 - Sky diving, physical events that require training for a shorter period (say up to 4 months)	£50 contribution
Tier 3 - Marathon, Climbing Kilamajaro, any other event that requires more than 4 months training	£100 contribution

The firm also pays the entry fees for team or group events for our Charity of the Year and financially supports numerous local community groups and events.

One popular annual community event is the Truro 5 November fireworks. The firm sponsors the event and a large number of our staff from the Truro and St Austell offices help out. The event is very popular with local families but also raises significant funds for local charities.

We are proud to be corporate members of:

- Cornwall Community Foundation (100 club)
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Regen South West
- Devon Environmental Business Initiative (DEBI)

### *Workplace Choirs*

Our choirs practice during work hours and each has a musical director funded by the firm. Both choirs have sung at numerous charity and community events this year – including the Devon Choir performing in Exeter city centre to raise funds for a colleague for a cancer charity: a cancer survivor herself who ran the London marathon. The firm match funded all the money raised by the performance. Our Cornwall choir sung in 2 local care homes, giving the residents a Christmas and summer concert. The choir loved the way the residents and staff joined in with the singing.

### *Charity of the Year & Charity Ambassadors*

Every 2 years our colleagues choose a Firm Charity of the Year and one Devon and one Cornwall Charity of the Year to champion in line with our Charity Strategy. The Charity Ambassadors (who are all colleague volunteers) organise regular fundraising events, find volunteer opportunities with these charities, and help build awareness of what these charities are seeking to achieve.

Our current charities are:

Firm: Alzheimer's Research UK

Devon: FORCE cancer charity

Cornwall: Cornwall Air Ambulance.

Recent fundraising events have included: 'I'm a Partner, get me out of here', a YMCA dance performance, bake sales, cream teas, guess the baby photo, desk bingo, Christmas jumper day and an Easter raffle.

Total Funds raised by these events for our firm charities in period May 2017 to August 2018 was an amazing £7,556.60.

Colleagues have also helped out at Cornwall Air Ambulance's CAAT charity shop by sorting bric-a-brac, pricing items, window dressing and arranging items on the shop floor. It was a good insight into what goes on behind the scenes.

Our Exeter colleagues also showed their support to FORCE at the Great West Run half marathon by manning a water point, 6.5 miles into the race.

For the most up to date news or further information on our Giving Back activities please see our Website or the Giving Back page of the Scown Zone.

[www.stephens-scown.co.uk](http://www.stephens-scown.co.uk)

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