



IMPACT REPORT

2025

The first large law firm in the UK to become employee owned, our B Corp™ Certification confirms our commitment to balancing people, planet and profit.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGING PARTNER

Our latest impact report is a celebration of our achievements from 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025, as we prepare for the recertification of our B Corp™ accreditation. It also sets out what we plan to achieve in the next financial year, from 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026.

Here at Stephens Scown, we have a long-held commitment to making sure we do things the right way to benefit our people, our planet, and our community. Achieving B Corp™ Certification sealed our existing culture of being a force for good, with our Giving Back initiative already in place to inspire and empower our people to leave behind a better world for the next generation. While we have made great strides, we know that being better is a continual journey and that we can always do more, with B Corp™ acting as an important driver for continuous improvements and bringing to life our shared values of being a purposeful business.

We were the first large law firm in the UK to become employee-owned in 2016, a decision that has reaped enormous benefits both in terms of delivering for our clients, and providing a supportive, rewarding workplace for our employees. Our employee ownership scheme remains a great source of strength, and as the number of businesses making the switch continues to grow, we have been proud to work with many organisations to support their own transition.

Our revised governance structure, implemented in 2024, focuses on creating increased clarity and agility in the decision-making process at a team leader level, while ensuring the Executive Committee (ExCom) is accountable for the day-to-day delivery of the Firm's objectives.

As a leading South West law firm, it is important that we not only grow sustainably, but that we support the prosperity of the region and the communities we serve.

ExCom's delivery is now scrutinised by a revised Strategy Board to set the direction of the Firm and measure through checks and balances the delivery against plans. It has also been great to welcome colleagues Dave Robbins and Sam Moles to our Strategy Board as the first Trustee Representatives of our Employee Ownership structure.

In 2024/2025, we achieved another record-breaking financial year, improving further on the preceding 12-month period. We were able to accomplish this unprecedented growth while maintaining and building on our existing values. We completed the purchase of our Head Office in Exeter, and the refurbishment work saw it 'A-rated' for energy performance, improving its environmental impact and creating a better workplace, built with input from our employees. We took on a new building in Truro and in Taunton, expanding our teams and client base across the Firm and have announced the opening of an office in Bournemouth before the end of this year. As a leading South West law firm, it is important that we not only grow sustainably, but that we support the prosperity of the region and the communities we serve.

Testament to the Firm's focus on maintaining a positive workplace and supporting the wellbeing of our people, our clients and communities, the Firm was once again recognised as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work in 2025. Thanks to the Firm's sustained efforts to improve employee wellbeing and provide a workplace where our people can develop and achieve their career goals, our employee engagement survey saw an increase in scores across all categories from the previous year. That's a tremendous feat, and having acted on suggested areas for improvement, the results confirmed that our efforts were worthwhile.

We look forward to pushing ahead with further enhancements in the year ahead. In doing so we are also aligning with the new B Corp™ standards, which we believe will bring even greater rigour to our efforts in this regard.

The past year has shown the positive impact of B Corp™ on our business and our colleagues, and what we can achieve with an engaged workforce of employee owners. This was recognised nationally when we were winners of the Corporate Social Responsibility trophy at the Clio Modern Law Awards, a real badge of honour and recognition of our hard work in balancing people, planet and profit, which was recognised by the judging panel as a core value of the Firm.

None of what we've done is possible without our employees and our clients, who have helped with our B Corp™ journey thus far. Not only are they helping to make Stephens Scown an outstanding place to work and to do business, but they share our passion for doing good for the environment and the local communities in which we operate across the South West.



Richard Baker
Managing Partner



OUR JOURNEY TO B CORP™ CERTIFICATION AND BEYOND

2014 A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Stephens Scown has always been a great place to work. This was reflected in our ranking for seven consecutive years from 2014 in the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For list (mid-size businesses).

2016 BECOMING EMPLOYEE OWNED

In 2016, Stephens Scown became the first large law firm in the UK to become Employee Owned – setting up a Board of Employee Trustees and giving all eligible employees an equal share in our profits. In a sector which has traditionally seen partners alone share in the profits, the move attracted interest from across the UK and massively changed and shaped our unique culture. Our colleagues all have a vested interest in the success of Stephens Scown, the service we offer, and our clients’ success.

2018 GIVING BACK

In 2018, our Giving Back programme was established, empowering employees to do good through four key pillars of; fundraising, volunteering, pro bono work, and reducing our environmental impact. We set up an internal Giving Back Committee from all areas of the Firm, driving forward on these initiatives and ensuring regular transparent reporting on our impact. This programme established and embedded these commitments:

- Stephens Scown genuinely cares about our people, local community and the environment.
- We seek to take business decisions and corporately act in a 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 are 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.

It was through this programme that Giving Back Partner, Verity Slater, first started exploring B Corp™.

2020 MAKING THE APPLICATION

Verity took the idea to the Board in September 2020 and obtained buy-in from the Scownership Trustees and Partners in February 2021. We made the formal application to become a B Corp™ in August 2021.

2021 HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT

While awaiting verification, in November 2021 Stephens Scown set an ambitious target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by the end of 2025. Since then, we have reduced our Scope 1 and 2 Carbon Footprint by 71%.

We also undertook an internal project to understand what makes Stephens Scown special – what is at the heart of our culture and values. This took detailed soundings from our people. We established four main employer value propositions that really resonate with who we are: Being Great Matters, Having Fun Matters, Owning It Matters and Doing Good Matters. Ensuring that we are ‘Doing Good’ and having a positive impact is an integral part of Stephens Scown. All our strategic plans going forward are underpinned by the need to remain true to our culture and values.

2022 BECOMING CERTIFIED

In February 2022, we also established our Environmental and Local Purchasing Policy, which supports our own drive to lower our carbon footprint and work with our suppliers to do so. These initiatives have positively impacted our own clients’ carbon footprints.

In December 2022 we became B Corp™ Certified, joining a growing group of businesses who are committed to balancing people, planet and profit.

2023 APPLYING OUR CULTURE

In September 2023, new firm behaviours launched, the practical application of our culture: what we want our people to know, feel and do on a day to day basis.

2024 ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO WORK

In April 2024, we were featured as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work (big organisation category), from our employee survey.

2025 STILL ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO WORK

Retaining our position in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work list in the big organisation category, improving or maintaining our scores across all areas based on employee surveys.

2025 RECERTIFICATION

In June 2025, we prepared and submitted our B Corp™ recertification

WHAT HAS BEING A B CORP™ MEANT FOR US THIS YEAR?

ENHANCED EMPLOYEE AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Since initially achieving B Corp™ accreditation, we have continued to ensure that every aspect of our business is aligned with, and promotes, our B Corp™ values. Taking part in B Corp™ month, we raised the profile of what we do and the role of our B Corp™ Champions through external communication and our social media channels. We also shared a reminder of what it means to be a B Corp™ at our Firm away day in October 2024 and carried out a comprehensive employee engagement campaign to support our Net Zero aspirations.



"We couldn't be happier with the support we received from Stephens Scown. Jen's clear communication and proactive approach made what could have been a complex process feel straightforward and manageable. Thanks to her support, we have complete confidence that our Mission Lock protects our purpose for the long term."

APPRECIATION OF OUR B CORP™ JOURNEY

Recognition of the hard work and effort put into the Firm's sustainable efforts came with winning at the Clio Modern Law Awards in the category of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Verity Slater, Partner in the Employment team and head of the Giving Back programme, picked up the prize. Having played an integral role in ensuring that CSR sits at the heart of the Firm and being the driving force behind our B Corp™ Certification, it was just reward for her drive and dedication in this area.

The Firm's sustainable drive has been recognised elsewhere with shortlistings for Sustainability in the Lexis Nexis Legal Awards and was one of only four businesses shortlisted in the City AM Dragon Awards for Inclusive Workplace and Employee Wellbeing – an award for businesses and individuals demonstrating a commitment to the UK's sustainability, social responsibility, environmental, social impact and governance.

Closer to home, the Firm was also shortlisted at the Exeter Sustainability Awards, which recognises and champions those in the city making strides to help the city to become carbon neutral by 2030.

SUPPORTING OUR B LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Members of the Firm continue to support and work with businesses interested in becoming B Corp™, whether helping with the application process, or attending events to talk about and share our own experience. Jennifer Short-Martin, a solicitor in our Corporate team, has been a B Local committee member for Cornwall for a year now, arranging events for local B Corps™ and working with the local community. This year, George Demirev, an associate in the Corporate team, has been appointed to the same role for Devon, where he will similarly work to promote the B Corp™ ethos.

Separately, we continue to ensure that sustainability remains high on the agenda across the South West, hosting and attending events, arranging knowledge share sessions, plus participating in and sponsoring round table events with leading business publications such as South West Business Insider and The Business Desk.



SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY ASPIRATIONS

Sharing our experience with clients and seeing that many individuals and businesses are similarly passionate about making a positive impact, our B Corp™ Champions group continues to promote the message about what B Corp™ means. Each group member volunteers from across all areas of the business and is committed to growing awareness and sustainable working practices not only within their own teams, but to expanding their understanding and knowledge of how it can apply to their work.

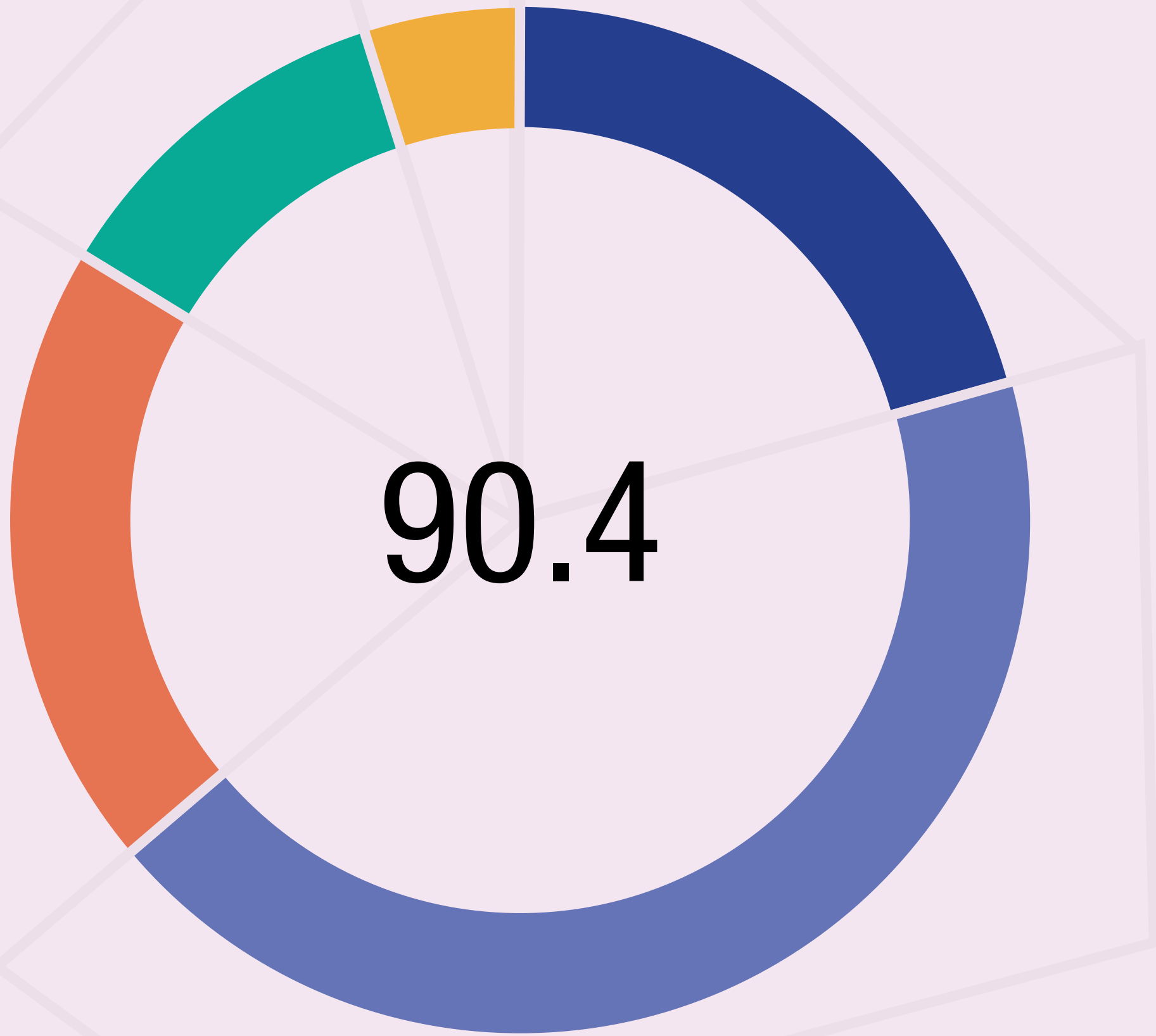
Once gained, this knowledge and specialist legal advice is shared with clients, helping them to achieve their own sustainability goals.

Jennifer Short-Martin worked with a communications agency on its B Corp™ application process. She helped with the Mission Lock, updating the company's articles to incorporate B Lab UK's wording.

The client gave the above quote about this work and added

"We highly recommend them to any business aiming to solidify their commitment to a values-driven future."

OUR 2022 IMPACT ASSESSMENT



GOVERNANCE	18.7
MISSION AND ENGAGEMENT	1.9
ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY	6.8
+ MISSION LOCKED	10

WORKERS	38.7
FINANCE AND SECURITY	14.6
HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SAFETY	9.0
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	4.4
ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION	7.8

COMMUNITY	18.1
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION	6.7
ECONOMIC IMPACT	4.3
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND GIVING	4.5
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT	1.9

ENVIRONMENT	10.2
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT	3.2
AIR AND CLIMATE	3.1
WATER	0.5
LAND AND LIFE	3.2

CUSTOMERS	4.3
CUSTOMER STEWARDSHIP	4.3



OUR GOALS FOR 2025/2026

B Lab has strengthened its standards for business impact, equipping businesses to drive meaningful, sustainable change.

The new B Corp™ requirements, effective from 2025, shift the focus from a points-based system to mandatory minimum standards across key impact areas. As a result, our goals for the next financial year are setting our foundations in these areas, while recognising what remains important to us.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Review whether our practices could fall under the B Corp™ definition of Lobbying and if so, plan appropriate action to meet new standards.
- 25% of all staff undertaking volunteering, focusing on team and Firm volunteering events.
- Complete 12 or more Pro Bono Projects

CLIMATE ACTION & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- Achieve Net Zero/Carbon Neutral by December 2025.

PURPOSE AND STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE

- Create an overarching Code of Ethics and ensure colleagues are aware of the details, are adhering to appropriate standards, and are clear on how to raise concerns.
- Prepare a Stakeholder Engagement/Governance Policy, to be approved by the Strategy Board and communicated to colleagues. Ensuring we are clear on what stakeholder engagement we will do and how to consider stakeholders in our decision making. Stakeholders include workers, suppliers, clients and community.
- Launch a publicly accessible Grievance Procedure to enable stakeholders to safely raise concerns.
- Clarify our Purpose Statement with the Strategy Board.

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Publish a Human Rights policy and process to escalate concerns. A new B Corp™ requirement, we will develop what is already in place to make it more robust.
- Reviewing the consultants we work with to ensure compliance with the Living Wage and establish an annual review process for this.

FAIR WORK

Pay Transparency Early Steps, to ensure our pay is fair:

- Continuing to ensure that we have clear internal salary bands/ranges and are closely examining for areas of inconsistency.
- Set a policy not to ask for wage history or wage preference on recruitment.
- Improve our active communication to colleagues on the mechanisms for reviewing and setting wages.

JUSTICE, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- Create a Justice, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) Public Commitment Statement that is approved by the Strategy Board and applies to the Firm's policies and practices across operations, clients, and community.
- Create a JEDI area on our internal communication platform Scown Zone with info on our ED&I plan.
- Carry out a minimum of one day training on JEDI-related topics and improve the knowledge and capacity of the HR team and one other senior group such as Board, Partners, or Team Leaders.
- Increase the number of women in senior roles through merit appointments through:
 - Increasing coaching and mentoring and track participation by women in the Firm.
 - Seeking feedback on the blockers from colleagues.
 - Maternity returners additional support trial.



GOVERNANCE

OUR SCORE: 18.7

2024/2025 GOALS



ACHIEVED

Strategy Board to review key performance indicators on the Firm’s societal or environmental performance.



OWNING IT
MATTERS



NEW STRATEGY BOARD

This year, a governance audit led to the formation of a new Strategy Board and the appointment of new roles, including the Firm’s first ever trustee representatives and board advisors. The audit ensures that we have independence on the board and accountability structures as we grow. This is important to keep us true to our Employee Owned and B Corp™ culture.

Having shown a real passion for embedding the values of employee ownership into the heart of the Firm through their former roles as trustees, Dave Robbins and Sam Moles have been appointed as the Firm’s first trustee representatives on the strategy board. Through their new role, Dave and Sam are working closely with Managing Partner, Richard Baker, and the broader executive team while ensuring the ‘voice of colleagues’ is considered when the board is evaluating and making strategic decisions.

Reflecting on why they feel as employee representatives that it’s important to review KPIs on the Firm’s societal or environmental performance, they said, *“The long-term success and viability of our business is tied to our community and our environment. Strategically, we’ve committed to this position through our B Corp™ certification, but also, we know as an employee-owned business, that delivering for our community and environment is something that people are passionate about, it goes beyond business. Therefore, to ensure that we are objectively meeting this standard, we need to have KPIs in place and we need to review our performance against them.”*

On their experience as Strategy Board members, the duo said, *“The meetings are really positive and open, with appropriate challenge where needed. Nothing is ‘off the table’, so lots of different ideas get discussed and worked through, all focused on the long-term strategy of the Firm. Alternative experiences and viewpoints are really welcomed.”*

OUR STRATEGY BOARD



Stephens Scown Strategy Board 2025. Left to right: Verity Slater, Paul Morrish, Joy Vollans, Dave Beaumont, Alex Mackie, Thomas Chartres-Moore, Sam Moles, Dave Robbins, Ellie Hibberd, Richard Baker, Bill Wilkins, Brian Dolan.

KPIS

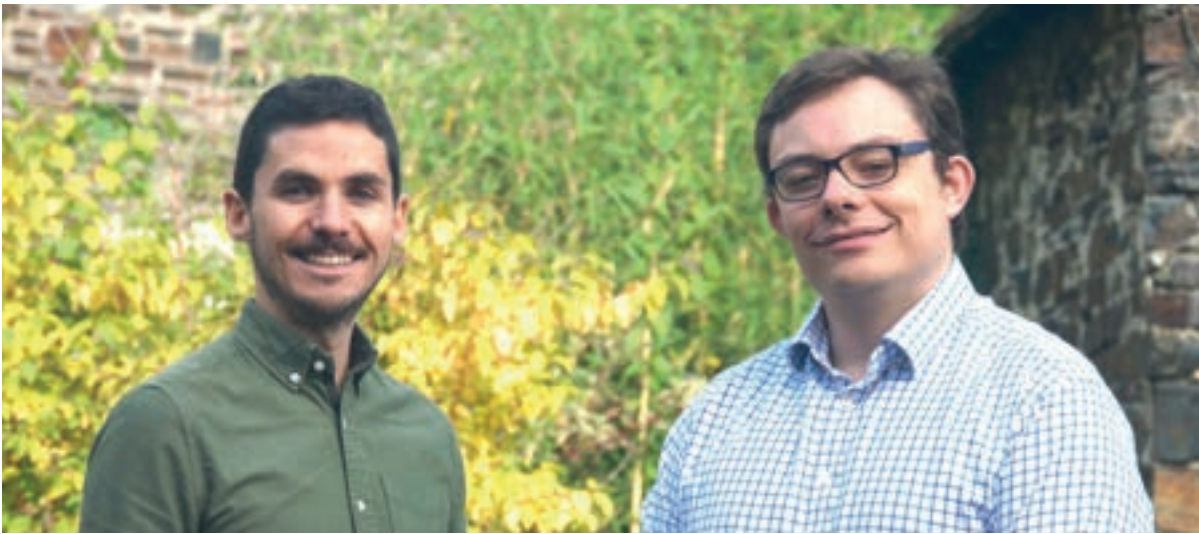
Our Strategy Board now has a specific set of KPIs that we review annually. This includes data on our carbon footprint and waste use, plus other metrics including our attrition rate, employee satisfaction score, charity giving, diversity statistics and pay ratios. This ensures that our highest Board has overall oversight and can drive forward our strategies in this regard.

The long-term success and viability of our business is tied to our community and our environment.

EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP

Positive work has also been done this year to work on updating our employee ownership constitution in conjunction with the Trustees.

Our employee ownership scheme, which we call Scownership, is all about giving everyone who works here a real stake in the business. No matter what role someone has, we are all part of the same team. Everyone’s contribution is equally important, and everyone receives an equal share in the eligible profits. This year, Trustees have continued to represent the interests of all colleagues and facilitated open and transparent communication through all levels of the business. They have also acted as custodians and role models for our values and behaviours, celebrating this at our Scowner Socials and away days.



OUR PEOPLE

OUR SCORE: 38.7

2024/2025 GOALS

-  **ACHIEVED**
Plan trial of a Firm wide sabbatical programme.

However, it has not been launched given ongoing concerns about capacity within the Firm and how to get this to fairly work in practice. This has also been reviewed as part of a holistic benefits review by ExCom and Scownership Trustees and compared to other benefits, it was not seen as a priority. This was due to the small number of persons it would support each year (based on length of service and minimum numbers to ensure our clients were not adversely affected).

The proposal will remain under review to see if an amended version of the policy could be rolled out in future.



OWNING IT
MATTERS



OUR VALUES

We know from our Employee Value Proposition, created with input from our colleagues, what it means to be a Scowner and what makes Stephens Scown the unique place it is.



BEING GREAT
MATTERS

We go beyond expectations, helping our clients achieve great things matters.



DOING GOOD
MATTERS

We are B Corp™ Certified, because balancing people, planet and profit matters.



OWNING IT
MATTERS

We are employee-owned, because empowering our people matters.



HAVING FUN
MATTERS

We make the most of every day, because a life enriched by work matters.

These values create a positive culture through a happy and stimulating work environment where our colleagues feel emotionally connected to each other and the business.

These underpin our behaviours and overall strategy. We have continued through this year to embed our Firm behaviours arising from these values, through:

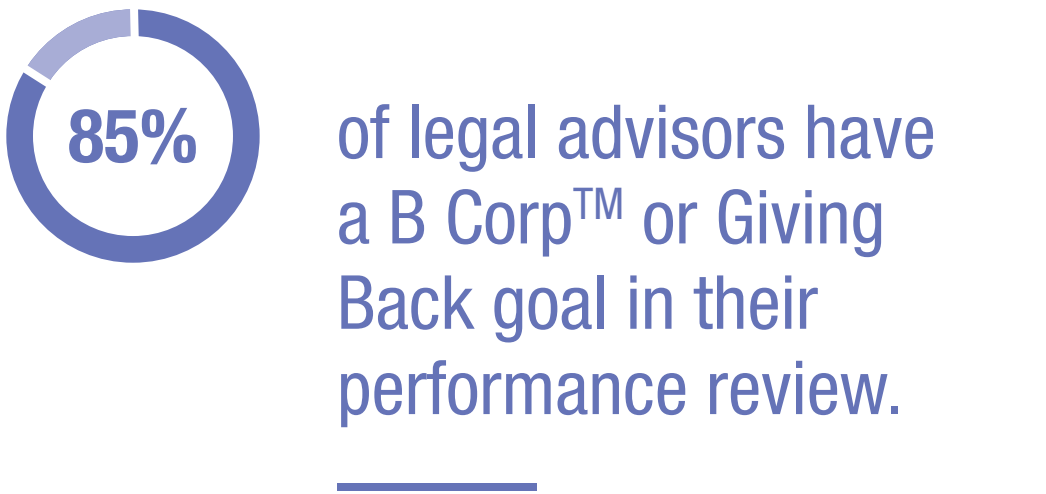
- Positive postcards and intranet shout-outs
- Fun themed activities
- Away day awards
- Gifts to Scowners and team based on our behaviours

The behaviours are:



We have also embedded these within our annual appraisal process, with all colleagues being asked to give an example of where they have shown a great performance or contribution through displaying these behaviours. The new appraisal process also asks all colleagues including Partners to set a B Corp™ or Giving Back goal for the year.

This has resulted in 85% of our legal advisors, and 56% of all colleagues, having such a goal this year, which is increasing our impact. This also shows all colleagues that taking time to be involved in these aspects is just as important as their usual day job.



SUNDAY TIMES BEST PLACES TO WORK

This year, we were again named as one of the Sunday Times' Best Places to Work 2025. Our engagement score was 84%, a whole 10% above the industry average.

All of our scores are marked in the 'Excellent' range. We are proud to say that we are significantly above the industry and global average on each of the six pillars covering:

- Job Satisfaction
- Instilling Pride
- Empowerment
- Information Sharing
- Wellbeing
- Reward and Recognition

In the area of employee retention, we were scored as having a low flight risk of 7% against an industry (legal service) average of 41%. This means less risk of colleagues leaving the firm. This was based on 4 questions around fair pay, job enjoyment, relationships with managers and career development. This score reflects our focus this year around supporting our people achieve their career goals and to ensure fair pay. It is really important to us that we provide excellent career opportunities and support our colleagues to live in the beautiful South West. Having a consistent colleague group also builds our culture and provides stability for our teams, clients and projects.

The survey showed we also have a low wellbeing risk index, 8% against an industry (legal services) average of 40%. That's a 2% improvement on last year's figure.

This score is based on the four questions around wellbeing, levels of anxiety or depression, feeling safe and happiness levels. The score reflects the continued focus on this. It is really important to our Firm to keep all colleagues happy and healthy, to help reduce sickness absence, to help us all be productive and to work for our clients and support each other in a sustainable way.



Wellbeing support includes:

- Private medical insurance
- Free one-to-one counselling with an external provider
- Free, confidential helpline to access support on money management, consumer rights, emotional wellbeing, and practical support
- Our hybrid working "Best of Both Worlds" model allows Scowners to work at home and in the office
- Mindful Employer Charter member
- Wellbeing element to team away days
- Charity fitness challenges



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

We are passionate about identifying and harnessing key talent and supporting Scowners in their aim to achieve excellence.

Individuals are encouraged to take ownership of their career progression, and to continually improve and progress through the use of Personal Development Plans.

Training and development is open to all Scowners. We offer a raft of training, learning and development opportunities, from black letter law training, to soft skills training, including e-learning, webinars, training courses and seminars, through to funding for qualifications, mentoring and on the job training. The cost of professional subscriptions is covered by the Firm.

We also support the development of our people through apprenticeships, CILEX, trainee solicitor programmes and by funding qualifications such as the SQE.

With the routes for qualifying as a solicitor wider and more accessible than ever, Stephens Scown has a long, successful history of working with apprentices, offering roles throughout the organisation for those interested in working across all areas of the business. Currently supporting six Solicitor apprentices across the Firm, December 2024 saw the qualification of our first ever solicitor apprentice, Lowenna Spears, who celebrated her well-earned status as a newly qualified solicitor following years of hard work.

We have a successful Mentoring Programme with 35 mentors across the Firm. Our Mentoring Programme is open to everyone and is an opportunity for our mentors to share their skills, knowledge and experience to support the development of their mentee, and to help them achieve successful career and life goals. Women seeking to advance and those returning from family care leave are actively encouraged to join the mentoring programme.

TRAINING CONTRACTS

Our trainee recruitment policy is inclusive, accepting applications from a range of different degrees and not exclusively law degrees. We do not set a minimum grade classification to apply, and all applications are manually assessed before candidates are invited to an assessment day. Our assessment day is crafted to ensure that there are tasks tailored to suit a diverse range of personality types, in recognition of both diversity and inclusivity. Our trainees and apprentices all have quarterly catch ups with their Graduate Recruitment and Apprenticeships Officer.

We also have a training team that consists of Partners and Associates from a range of different backgrounds and legal teams who oversee the training journey. The training team conduct biannual appraisals with our trainee solicitors to ensure they are developing the skills they need for a bright future.



COMMUNITY

OUR SCORE: 18.1

2024/2025 GOALS

 **ACHIEVED**
Set and monitor diversity improvement goals.

 **ACHIEVED**
Obtain data on how many of our managers and directors identify as being from an underrepresented social group.

 **ACHIEVED**
Assess spend on local suppliers – such as how many are within a 50-mile radius of one of our offices.

 **ACHIEVED**
Policy advocacy on social and environmental standards specifically thought leadership on the Better Business Act.

 **ACHIEVED**
Sustain volunteering at 25% or above and increase the amount of time spent volunteering by 10%.

 **ACHIEVED**
Undertake 10 pro bono projects.

 **ACHIEVED**
Ensure 80% of our facilities have gender neutral or gender inclusive restrooms



DOING GOOD
MATTERS



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Diversity Improvement Goals

We have this year established an EDI Dashboard that shows how our data around diversity is changing.

This has resulted in the recognition that we do not have the same proportion of women in senior roles as we do throughout the rest of the Firm. This was openly communicated to the Firm and a target set that over the next five years we should work towards having the same demographic of women and men at all levels of the Firm as are in our area of South West England.

In relation to ethnic diversity, we have more colleagues working with us from non-white backgrounds than is within the demographic for the South West (3.52%). 9.8% of our workforce identified as being from a racial or ethnic minority up from 9% last year. We believe this increase is from specific focus on our recruitment process and website imagery.

16% of our workforce identified as part of another under-represented social group (excluding gender and ethnicity, including LGBTQ+, religion and beliefs and disability).



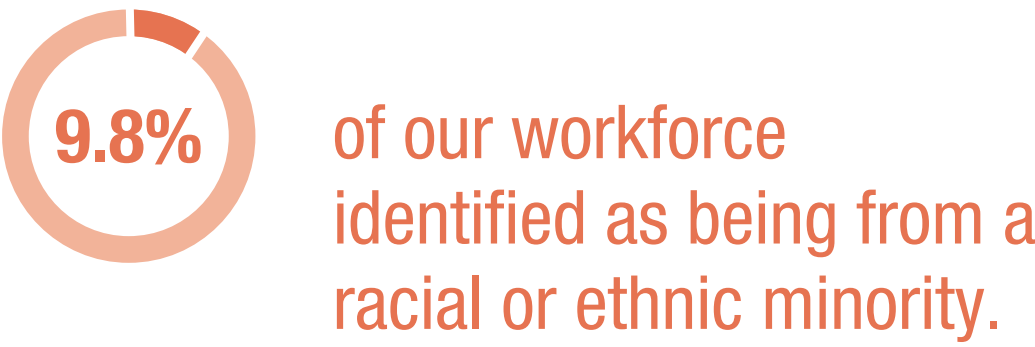
Diversity in Board and Management

- In January this year, we surveyed our Board and Managers for diversity on an anonymous basis.
- 42.5% of our managers identify as female.
 - 49.09% of the managers responding to our survey come from other under-represented groups which includes non-heterosexual, disabled, non-white, born outside the UK or from families with reduced social mobility (for example where their parents did not attend university).
 - 29% of our combined Executive Committee and Strategy Board members are female. This is less female representation than in previous years.
 - 42.9% of these combined Boards come from an under-represented group (save for gender), with 75% not attending an independent fee-paying school and the same amount confirming neither of their parents attended university.

These results were quite surprising as a common stereotype is that lawyers are men that all come from middle class backgrounds and went to fee paying schools. Clearly that is not the case in our Firm.

Gender Inclusive Restrooms

We are continuing to review this given our various office moves and For Women Scotland Supreme Court ruling.





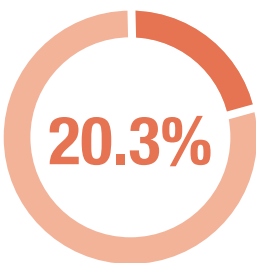
PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLIERS

This year for the first time we measured our spend on local suppliers.

20.3% of our total expenditure is spent with independent suppliers local to our Devon, Cornwall and Somerset offices in the last Financial Year, excluding rent, utilities or taxes. Much of our spend is with national organisations like Practical Law Company and Microsoft (for IT licenses) which are not possible to be bought locally.

We have a Procurement Policy (including an Environment and Supplier Policy) that was brought in in January 2025 which seeks to ensure that suppliers adhere to B Corp™ principles and that they can assist with our Scope 3 carbon reporting. Where price and quality are equal, preference is also given to those that are local.

This was applied when we moved to a new IT managed service provider in June 2024. We chose Commercial by Nature, with their environmental credentials a key deciding factor for this key contract for the Firm.



of our total expenditure is spent with suppliers local to our Devon, Cornwall and Somerset offices.

POLICY ADVOCACY

Continuing to act as thought leaders on issues of social and environmental standards, this year we hosted two roundtable events on the Better Business Act (BBA). We invited a combination of clients and close contacts, comprising business leaders and owners from a range of B Corps™ and other businesses to hear their thoughts on the BBA and what this would mean for their business, the commercial landscape as a whole and the UK’s sustainability goals.

The BBA would change the default position for all companies through the Companies Act so that directors would be required and empowered to advance the wider society and the environment alongside their shareholders. The amendments proposed by the BBA require a statement in an impact or strategic report for each financial year which describes how the company has balanced people, planet and profit.

During our really frank sessions, we talked through the pros and cons of the BBA. With open discussions from both businesses that were a long way down their sustainability journey as well as others who were less engaged.

There was a great deal of positivity around the BBA but there was also a recognition of the challenges.

There was a general agreement that whether the BBA goes through as is or is adapted, the more we get around the table as businesses and share best practice, the better we are able to make a positive impact on the world around us.

Some areas where clarity was needed were also flagged along with the need to align this with existing legislation.

The findings of the talks were sent to B Lab, who are leading on the BBA. Lucy Hall, the Campaign and Events coordinator for the Better Business Act said,

"A huge thank you to you and everyone involved in the roundtables and pulling this together. It's brilliant to see so much energy coming from the business community to discuss the campaign and your insights are super helpful."



VOLUNTEERING

Colleagues across the Firm are involved in many charitable and community organisations. This year our Scowners held 50 appointed roles in those organisations, including acting as School Governors and Trustees including in local schools, charities and sports clubs.

Scowners have three days’ paid volunteer leave to take part in volunteering activities of their choice. Scowners can take time out of their working day to take part in team or firm volunteering events, individually arrange volunteering or alter their hours to undertake voluntary work more easily in their free time. This is also a great way for Scowners to spend time getting to know one another and meet like-minded individuals from other organisations who are also volunteering.

In our 2023/24 financial year, 72 full-time employees in the Firm undertook paid volunteer leave, around 25% of our total full-time staff at the time. This was a 7% increase from the 2022/23 financial year when 18% of our full-time staff volunteered.

We are delighted that after a real drive to engage all our teams this year, the total number of full-time employees that undertook paid volunteer leave was 82. This is 35.50% of our full-time staff. This is how B Corp™ measures volunteering numbers.

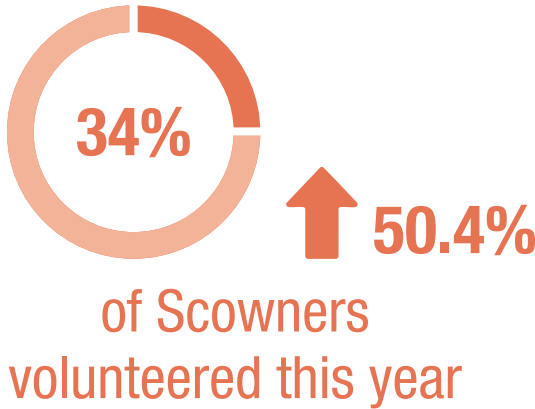
Looking at the whole staff group, the total number of Scowners who volunteered in the 2023/2024 financial year was 83. This year (2024/25), the number was 117, with an additional 34 Scowners volunteering. This is amazing to have so many colleagues involved – which means a massive 34.21% of all our Scowners did some volunteering in 2024/25.

The total number of hours spent volunteering amongst all Scowners this year has also greatly increased to 734.25 hours, a 77% increase from the 2023/24 financial year, when it was only 413 hours.

The amount of time our legal advisors have time recorded against the CSR and Charity Code has also gone up this year to 733.6 hours – from 369.90 last year.

These are fantastic increases from the volunteering figures recorded from our 2023/24 and 2022/23 financial years. We believe it is due to the combination of improvements to tracking and recording of Scowners' volunteering efforts and encouragement from team leaders that has dramatically improved engagement.

We have shared internal articles to encourage colleagues to volunteer and provided a list of possible volunteer opportunities that colleagues could access. In addition, we have seen an increase in teams incorporating volunteering activities into their away days and socials and more senior members of staff taking time in their workday to volunteer. This shows that volunteering continues to be a priority within teams and reflects the key values of our Firm.





Trispen Fun Day Committee

Last summer, Jake Trethewey, Publicity Officer of Trispen Fun Day, helped to set up the field and marquee, run games, print and display posters and signage across the venue and helped to coordinate volunteers. As a group, over nearly 30 years, they have helped to raise over an estimated and minimum of £105,000 for local charities, village groups and sports clubs so far.



Perranporth Beach Clean

Scowners from our Corporate, Family and Employment teams volunteered part of their Tuesday morning to clean Perranporth beach with Finisterre and Surfer Against Sewage as part of their Million Mile Clean. The team said the beaches were relatively clean but still managed to fill the time collecting rubbish from the beach up to near the sand dunes.



Planning resource support for charities

Our Property Litigation team worked together with Groundsure to complete a ‘mapping’ session. Mapping involves selecting a project associated with a natural disaster or conflict and mapping out on an open street map what they need for that project to provide support. This assists charities with planning where resources are required.



Supporting Next Stage Somerset on World Book Day

Scowners attended a local school to take part in their World Book Day activities by reading books to children to support the charity Next Stage Somerset. Feedback included that the children were really engaged and it was heartwarming how much they loved hearing the stories.



Clearing birch trees at Haldon Forest Park

In March, our Children Family team volunteered at Haldon Forest Park (Forestry England) clearing the birch trees in an area of heathland on one of their viewpoints.



Painting, raking and clearing animal barns at Porfell Farm

Our Employment team spent a day volunteering at Porfell Farm, which is an animal rescue centre, in April. This included the team being separated into groups and either painting, raking or clearing animal barns throughout the course of the day and a break for lunch and team meeting.



Organising clothing donations at Cornwall Hospice Care

Our Commercial Dispute Resolution team volunteered at Cornwall Hospice Care’s donation centre in St Austell where they sort through hundreds of donations into categories to be kept or sold.



Another Million Mile beach clean!

Scowners in Exeter used their volunteering leave to attend a beach clean at Dawlish as part of the Million Mile Clean initiative. This included Scowners from across both legal and business support teams who not only collected multiple bags of rubbish, but also made sure they travelled by train or car share as part of our Net Zero initiative.



Gardening at Children’s Hospice South West

Scowners in Cornwall volunteered at Children’s Hospice South West in September for half a day by gardening and tidying the grass around the edges of their lovely outdoor space.



Support for Charity Strategy Day

Natalie Vizard, Communications Manager at Stephens Scown, took a volunteer day to support Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI), where she serves as a Trustee. The day involved a range of group activities, working alongside fellow trustees and charity staff with the goal of developing an authentic and people-driven strategy.

Natalie said of the day: *“It was great to spend time with the fantastic staff that drive the impact that ECI has every single day. The work has culminated in a powerful strategy document, including who we are as a charity, our purpose, our vision, mission and values, our priorities and next steps. It was a very uplifting day and underlined the importance of the work the charity carries out in our community.”*



Choirs singing in Exeter and Cornwall

Our firm choirs (Scown Roses in Cornwall and Rolling Scowns in Exeter), frequently take time out of their day to sing at local care homes and fundraise in local areas for the community to enjoy.

We are passionate about encouraging employees to make a difference in the communities that they live in. With every Scowner having three days’ paid volunteer leave each year.

PRO BONO

Pro bono work is professional work undertaken voluntarily and without payment or at a reduced fee as a public service. Teams are encouraged to undertake pro bono work for charities or a Community Interest Company (CIC). 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).

The Firm also undertakes Legal Aid work for individuals in the family sphere – which provides them with free legal advice. This particularly supports those who have suffered domestic violence and represents children, particularly those who are subject to care proceedings. We strongly believe that in doing this work we are supporting those most vulnerable in our community: this also has a commercial impact for us given the remuneration received by the Legal Aid Agency is around a quarter of the usual rates.



The Wave Project

Using the power of surf therapy, The Wave Project improves the mental health and wellbeing of young people, supporting 2,151 children and young people in 2024 alone.

The Employment team at Stephens Scown is proud to have been able to offer pro bono services to the charity to support them in maximising their people potential. A crucial component as part of their journey as a growing and evolving charity. With the NHD reporting a staggering 1 in 5 children in the UK having a probable mental health condition, the work done by The Wave Project is more important than ever, a recent donor crediting the charity with saving the life of their son through the work they did with him.

The Wave Project CEO, Ramon Van de Velde, said, *“It is key for us to get great advice. The support we have had from Stephens Scown has been very good, and we wish to continue to build on this relationship.”*



Chris Morse



Mark Roby



Isabel Gibson



Kensey Woodland

After Paul Rutter was left unconscious on the street after an unprovoked assault and following a long period of recovery and planning, Paul and his wife Sarah purchased three acres of woodland, which is being turned into a sanctuary for victims of trauma, and a place to provide mental health support. There will be open air workshops featuring bushcraft, woodworking projects, strength and conditioning, yoga and breathwork, all in the calming woodland environment.

The Firm helped with the conveyancing of the purchase. Paul said, *“We are really grateful that Simon Trahair-Davies and Farida Rashwan of Stephens Scown represented us by covering all our legal fees under a pro bono agreement. This was so generous of them as we then only had to cover the search fee costs, so a big thank you to them.”*



Simon Trahair-Davies



Farida Rashwan



The Cornwall Stork Project

Cornwall Stork Project

A newly established charity, which aims to enhance the biodiversity of Cornwall with the reintroduction of White Storks to the county’s thriving ecosystem.

Having been set up at the end of 2024, the Firm supported the charity with advice on its application to the Charity Commission, and on agreements with landowners for the animal’s space.



Tom Graham



Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Believing in a wilder future for Cornwall, where wildlife and wild places are cherished for all to enjoy, the charity implements projects on land and at sea, conducting campaigns and managing wild spaces to ensure nature in the county thrives for future generations.

The Firm helped the charity with title and boundary checking, and with first registration of some of its 56 nature reserves.



Tim Atkins



Sustainable Product Design

As part of our connection and links with local education providers, we continue to give a free lecture to second-year students on this course, connected to corporate-related matters and to issues around intellectual property.



Tim Lane



Farm Cornwall

Supporting the farming community across Cornwall, the charity has built a solid and trusted reputation in helping with financial, farming business, relationship and health issues, with over 600 farms supported.

The Firm gave advice on a proposed restructure. That includes advising on job descriptions for a proposed new role, comparing the new role to an existing role, and advising on the process of consultation with the affected employee.



Chris Morse



Exeter Community Initiatives

A local charity which, through its projects, helps people to improve their wellbeing and build skills, supports families facing challenges and hardships, and helps communities to thrive.

Natalie Vizard, who is a Trustee of the charity as mentioned in the volunteering section of the Impact Report, approached Stephens Scown’s commercial property team with the request for pro bono support. Working with the charity, the Firm assisted with a new lease for the charity’s children’s retail outlet, Jelly, located in Exeter City Centre.



Toby Pool



Longmead Community Farm

The charity’s work is best described as ‘family respite therapy’, with volunteers working alongside visitors to help heal family relationships.

The work was to help with advice on a lease for the charity so that it could continue to help families build the confidence and capability to face and overcome difficulties.



Lydia Hart



SRA Advice

Responsible for regulating the professional conduct of solicitors and individuals at more than 11,000 firms, plus those working in-house at private and public sector organisations, the Firm helped a Mexican lawyer who has refugee status in the UK pursue a complaint against them.

It was for delays in recognising her qualifications and allowing her to be registered as a foreign qualified lawyer.



Richard Bagwell



Disabled Sailing Association

A charity run for the disabled, by the disabled, its aim is to give everybody the opportunity to enjoy the experience of sailing in a safe and pleasurable environment and encourage them to be involved in an activity from which they may believe they are excluded.

Stephens Scown provided advice in respect of lottery funding for a new boat for the charity. The work involved assistance with the grant funding documentation, which meant negotiation of a grant funding agreement, legal mortgage and legal charge, and agreeing to register the charge. Additionally, the provision of a legal opinion and a certificate of title to the Lottery.

The team also acted on the vessel purchase, agreeing terms with the dealer alongside the client, with the boat being built to order in Germany.



Tim Lane



Taunton East Development Trust

The Trust’s purpose is to make a positive impact on the daily lives and futures of both local residents and volunteers. This is done by improving self-respect, self-confidence, and quality of life, whilst also providing the opportunities for personal development in order to maximise potential.

The Firm helped with advice on employment issues, and helping with the creation of the Trust’s employee handbook.



Stephen Wray



Matt Huggett

Taunton East Development Trust

In a separate piece of work for the Trust, Stephens Scown worked with a resident to assist with litigation and representation to set aside a judgment.



Stephen Wray



Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support

With a dedicated team of coordinators, caseworkers, volunteers, and a Board of Trustees, the charity ensures that asylum seekers can seek sanctuary in Plymouth while the government decides on their claim.

The charity aims to promote independence, prevent destitution, and encourage integration. The firm gave advice regarding immigration matters and on sponsor licences.



Lisa Mulholland



Abigail Grace



Konnnect Communities CIC

Working with young people and adults in Cornwall and Devon, the organisation brings together a range of core services to create person-centred support for individuals with complex needs and multiple barriers. It creates positive, lasting changes; allowing people to live fulfilled lives.

The firm supported the CIC with advice on a redundancy and disciplinary matter, and discussions around providing HR support through the HRExpress service available.



Chris Morse



The Royal Institution of Cornwall

A Learned Society in Truro, the charity owns and manages the Royal Cornwall Museum, home to a permanent display on the history of the county.

Stephens Scown worked with the charity to advise on the termination of a build contract for roofing works.



Guy Michell



Go Beyond

The charity provides breaks for children who care for their ill parents, worry about where their next meal will come from, or who fall behind at school and struggle to make friends. It has given over 20,000 vulnerable children a break across the 32 years of its work.

The Firm helped the charity by giving advice in respect of construction contracts for a project that would add to, and refurbish, its existing facility in Cornwall.



Jim Gorrod

CHARITABLE GIVING & SPONSORSHIPS

Overall, our Firm Charitable Giving over the last financial year was

£27,356.30

This includes donations that we make to support charitable events or organisations, donations made to support our own colleagues’ fundraising efforts and monies raised by our Charity Committee.

In this period, the Charity Committee raised £6,136 for our three Firm charities, who this year were:



Events run by the Charity Committee this year included the Christmas auction, Christmas gift raffle, bake sales, pancake and ice cream days, the tuck shop, a car wash, and the European Football Championships sweepstake.

Alongside the firmwide and office fundraising campaigns, colleagues can receive up to £100 as a Firm donation towards their personal fundraising efforts for charities that often have personal significance. Some of the colleague fundraising supported by the Firm this year has included Scowners taking part in the London Marathon, a Movember team (which alone raised £2,188), the Taunton swimathon, running and walking on behalf of the WWF and cancer research.



B Local Devon

The Firm helped the B Local community in Devon, supporting events throughout the year including a beach clean at Exmouth.



Dive Project

Dive Project Cornwall’s work is to challenge and empower young people, through the process of learning to scuba dive, to become more resilient day-to-day; taking important life-skills from the Project and continue to thrive in their own lives. Providing a life-changing opportunity to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people throughout the UK, our sponsorship helps the work to continue.



South West Charity Conference and Expo

With a theme of ‘community’, this was the 7th annual TBE South West Charity Conference & Expo. The aim was to bring everyone together to discuss and look at what fundraising activities are trending, to learn from past high-profile activities, and look at what tools are available to drive engagement in the sector. Olivia Miller from our Corporate team, and Mark Roby from our Employment team hosted an afternoon session on the topic of The Relationship between CEOs, Charity Trustees, and Charity Culture.



Food Drink Devon Awards

Celebrating Devon’s amazing food and drink industry, and open to both members of the Community Interest Company and non-members, the awards recognise the most influential and passionate food and drink producers and establishments.



Phoenix Heart Awards

Phoenix Learning and Care works with children and young adults giving opportunities for life and living, a real sense of achievement and a pathway to an independent future. The Phoenix HEART Awards is their annual event to recognise and honour the remarkable achievements of their Team Members in bringing the values of Nurture – Flourish – Grow to life. As one of the key sponsors, we were able to help shine a light on the fantastic work being done.



Moonlight Memory Walk

Organised by our Cornwall Charity, Children's Hospice South West, the Firm was proud to sponsor this event. Moonlight Memory Walk is a special evening to remember your loved one. The evening starts with a beautiful memory ceremony followed by a 4k walk in the lit paths of Heligan, with special points along the way to pause and remember by completing an activity in your loved one's memory.



Arts on the Beach

Taking place across a weekend and hosted by Watergate Bay, Arts on the Beach was a free creative family festival, celebrating the ocean and the need to protect the marine environment.

As one of the main sponsors, the Firm is proud to have played a part in helping to work with the local community to promote what proved to be a fantastic weekend for those families in attendance. Our choir also sang as one of the acts!

Scowners can receive up to £100 as a Firm donation towards their personal fundraising efforts for charities that often have personal significance.



ENVIRONMENT

OUR SCORE: 10.2

2024/2025 GOALS



ACHIEVED

Work with Taunton and Exeter landlord to implement energy efficiency/waste water/waste reduction programmes.



PARTIALLY ACHIEVED

Campaign to reduce the amount of waste produced in the offices, looking at changing both Scowners’ and suppliers’ behaviours.

Successful Net Zero Hero Campaign – see below. We did not manage to tackle our suppliers, however. This is now being considered as contracts are renewed on our procurement cycle.



ACHIEVED

Produce a list of green hotels for employees to stay in for Exeter, Truro, London, and Birmingham.



PARTIALLY ACHIEVED

Seek to reduce our Scope 1 and Scope 2 footprint by a further 10%.

Scope 1 reduced by 93%. Scope 2 increased by 20%. Overall, Carbon Footprint (scope 1,2 and 3) reduced by 26%.



NOT ACHIEVED

Track whether conservation or energy efficiency improvements led to energy savings for our facilities. If so, how much?



PARTIALLY ACHIEVED

Screen/evaluate significant suppliers for social and environmental impact, seeking to ascertain and tackle the largest Scope 3 emissions emitted via our supply chain with the specific suppliers.

We have recently screened and evaluated our significant suppliers and started to work with them on their carbon footprint. However, we have not been able to tackle the Scope 3 impact.



DOING GOOD
MATTERS



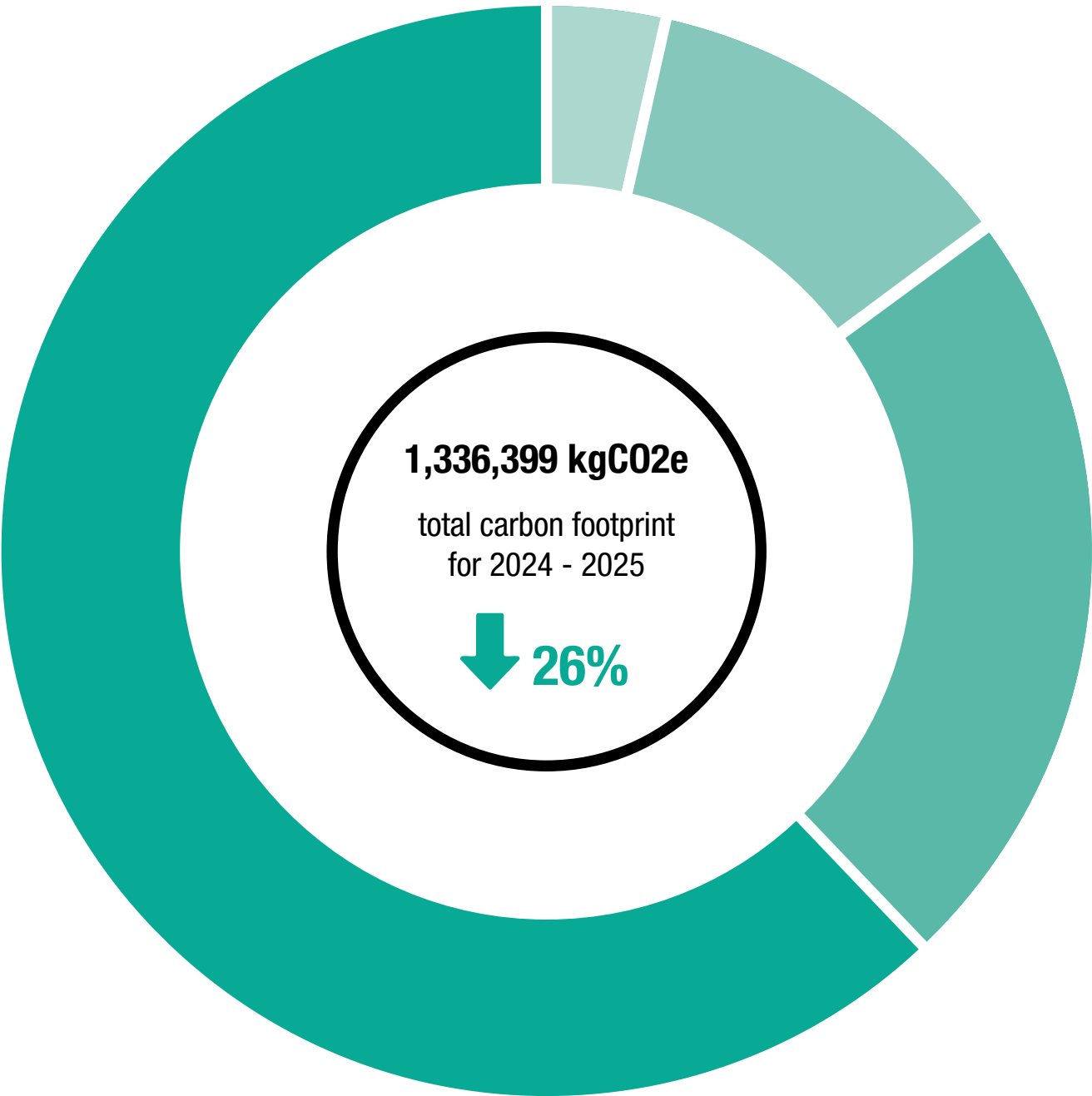
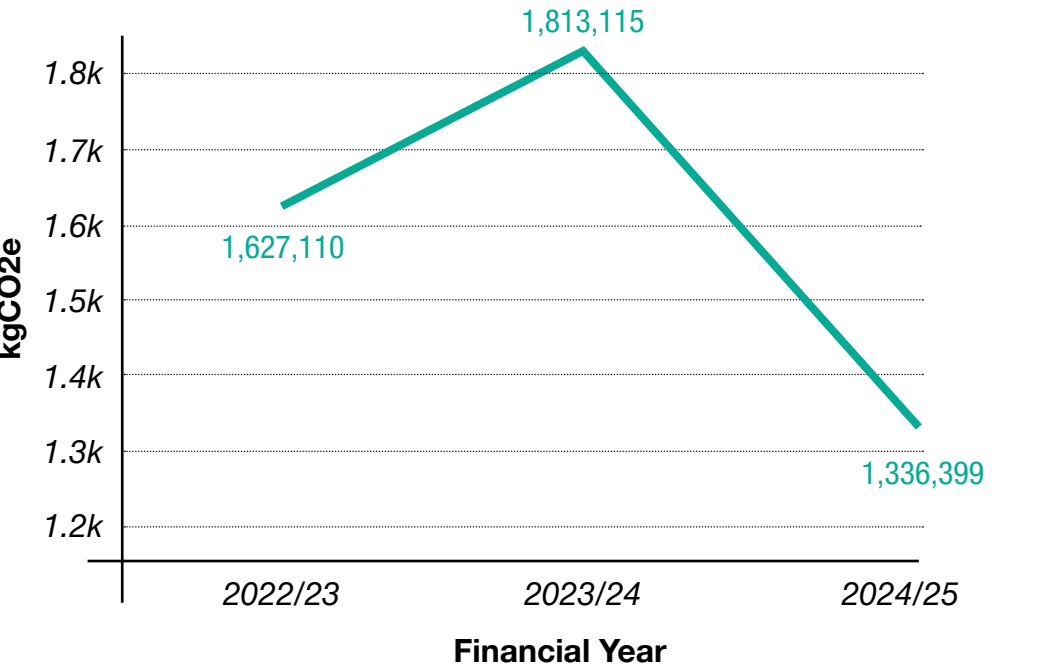
CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCING

We are on a journey towards Net Zero Carbon – seeking to lower our carbon footprint, having committed to being Net Zero by the end of 2025. We are on track to achieve this.

When we evaluate our carbon footprint using the parameters we have used since 2019-20, our limited Carbon Footprint for this year (24/25) is 43,794 kgCO2e. This is Scope 1 and Scope 2 and some of Scope 3 (business travel).

Since 2022-23 we have measured our carbon footprint more comprehensively as part of our drive to Net Zero. Data has been recorded across scopes 1,2 and 3 and the footprint independently verified each year by Chris Philips of Exeter University.

This year’s results and those obtained from last year are more extensive and accurate across the board, providing us with a much clearer and precise account of the Firm’s energy usage and carbon emissions.



	kg CO2e	KWH
Suppliers and Services	64.7%	9.1%
Staff Commuting	21.3%	47.3%
Waste	10.4%	23.0%
Business Travel	3.1%	6.9%
Accommodation	0.2%	0.5%
F-Gas	0.2%	0.5%
Electricity	0.1%	10.6%
Gas	0.0%	2.1%
Water	0.0%	0.0%
Scope 1	0.2%	2.5%
Scope 2	0.1%	10.6%
Scope 3	99.6%	86.8%

CARBON PER SCOWNER

As the Firm continues to grow, it is only natural that our energy usage and carbon emissions will be negatively affected by this. Whilst we have been able to counterbalance this with investment in energy efficiencies and carbon reduction methods, we will need to look at further KPIs to measure our environmental impact and whether the changes we are making are having a positive effect. Therefore, we will also report on the amount of carbon produced per employee during the year. The table below shows the previous three reporting years:

Year	Average Count	Carbon Footprint	Carbon Per Person	% Change
2022/23	317	1,627,110	5,132.84	
2023/24	332	1,813,115	5,461.19	↑ 6%
2024/25	342	1,336,339	3,907.42	↓ 28%

We have managed to reduce our carbon footprint per person by almost a third. This provides evidence that we are making the correct choices as a Firm in reducing our carbon footprint and pushing for Net Zero.



CARBON WINS THIS YEAR

- The refurbishment of Curzon House saw the decommissioning of the gas boilers and installation of an air source heat pump.
- Our use of electricity is fundamental to the running of our Firm. Apart from the electricity procured at our serviced office in Taunton all energy consumed is produced by renewable sources. Our actual use of electric is 6% lower compared to last year, due predominantly to the refurbishment works at Curzon House that required half of the building to be closed for almost nine months and improvements to the building fabric such as new doors and heating systems.
- There has been a 20% increase in carbon emissions at our Taunton office as use increased (both by ourselves and the shared office overall). However, the carbon emissions are relatively small and our new Taunton office, due to be occupied in the second half of this year, will allow us to not only control our energy usage but also reduce our carbon emissions as we will be in control of the energy procured.
- An electric pool car is now in place.



NET ZERO HERO CAMPAIGN

Stephens Scown has made a commitment to reducing our emissions to as low as we can go, before offsetting the remainder to reach our Net Zero goal of being carbon neutral by the end of 2025.

As part of a comprehensive employee engagement campaign, in October we launched a 6 month ‘Net Zero Hero’ campaign. Identifying the three key areas where our people could have the greatest impact, we targeted actions that everyone could take.

- **Business/Commuting Travel** – encouraging employees to travel sustainably and car share wherever possible. This has now become a standard reminder when events are booked or details about firm events circulated.
- **Energy use** – encouraging our people to switch of screens, lights and conserve energy wherever possible. A screen saver went on every screen reminding colleagues to turn them off.
- **Waste produced in the office** – introducing crisp and pen recycling and food waste collection and encouraging use of re-usable mugs, water bottles and cutlery.

To incentivise employees, we awarded e-raffle tickets of differing values for every good deed done, which were then put towards entry into a prize draw. The most engaged Scowners were then presented with a local produce hamper or e-vouchers to choose their own eco gift via a social supermarket. Colleagues were also encouraged to measure their own carbon footprint and to try different methods of getting into work such as bus, train and cycling. A new commuting car share page has also been added to our intranet.

The results of the campaign were mixed: colleagues did engage with this and the buzz around the offices supported that colleagues were thinking about this and looking at changing behaviours. Thanks to the introduction of a new bin system, our recycling has increased and general waste reduced.

It was hard to see if it made much difference from the data:

- On our business travel, although we are still 44% less than pre-pandemic levels, the amount of business travel has continued to increase year on year with a further 11% increase since last year. 94% of all journeys are also by carbon emitting vehicles. Our plans to open an office in Bournemouth are likely to further impact this so a further focus on car sharing and using our new fully electric pool car will be necessary next year.
- In relation to waste, the carbon figure over this year has dropped from 552,122 kgCO₂e to 138,288 kgCO₂e. It remains at 11% of our overall annual emissions. However much of this will be related to office refurbishments and as the accuracy of the data varies depending on the methods used to calculate this. Where possible in refurbishments and office moves, all office furniture has been reused or gifted to charity.
- The stats on electricity show an increase this year from 1,122 kgCO₂e to 1,666 kgCO₂e. Although we made savings by switching things off, there was a greater overall impact from the increased non-renewable energy used at our Taunton office.



CLIENTS

OUR SCORE: 4.3



2024/2025 GOALS

 **ACHIEVED**
Increase the number of matters covered by the Service Level Guarantee.

 **ACHIEVED**
Get a formal policy in place to review the accuracy and ethics of our marketing and advertising.



CLIENT LISTENING

Building on the client experience (CX) work undertaken over the last year, our innovative system has led to some of the following client care highlights for the last 12 months:

- The process of surveying clients throughout the matter from the start to its conclusion has seen us with a current client satisfaction score of 8.32 out of 10, an increase on the previous year.
- A bespoke form created for the enquiries team automatically emails a team or legal advisor if a call is unable to be taken, helping to manage the volume of calls and improving overall organisational effectiveness.
- Our innovative referral dashboard helps to facilitate and encourage cross-team referrals.

It means enquiries are allocated to an appropriate legal advisor much faster and with a better understanding of what the client needs, providing a more accurate match between the two and with the right skillset and cost established from the outset.

Legal advisors have full details of the matter, making them better prepared for the initial meeting and the client gets more time receiving advice, saving them money, and saving our advisors' time.

Enquiry volumes and details being automatically recorded provides real-time management data on the volume of calls and outcomes to create KPIs, allowing resources to be allocated to specific departments as needed.

All the above has seen us achieve a **net promoter rate of 65+** and a reply rate that is 23% higher than the industry standard.

REPORTING AND BEST PRACTICE

Building further on our success, we launched a new and comprehensive client feedback survey, pushing client experience to the top of our agenda. The new ‘always listening model’ offers clients the opportunity to give feedback regularly throughout a matter, enabling us to identify issues early, addressing or resolving them to improve client experience, resulting in better retention and higher advocacy.

We only ask clients for feedback every four months to ensure that repeat clients aren’t overwhelmed. Using sentiment analysis, we will be able to report on our clients' feedback and perception of not just the whole Firm, but by team, sub team and advisor. This will support overall strategy as well as offer invaluable feedback for teams to further improve client experience, improving retention and winning more business.

It all means that no matter how a customer chooses to contact Stephens Scown, they are assured of a first-class experience and a swift response to their queries. We hold ‘CX Lunch & Learn’ sessions across our offices, to help maintain our focus in this area and exchange best practice internally.

To ensure our service delivery is of a consistently high quality, we also use a third party to carry out mystery shopping. The same scenarios and scoring system are also used with our competitors. We analyse the results and work closely with our teams to continually assess and improve levels of service.

ETHICAL COMMUNICATIONS

This year, we created a formal policy regarding the ethics and accuracy of our marketing and advertising.

It sets out the Firm’s commitment to ensuring that all activity is legal, decent, honest and truthful, and that consumer confidence is maintained.

SERVICE LEVEL GUARANTEE

As part of our commitment to provide excellent service to our clients, we’ve updated our standard terms and conditions for the business to include a **service level guarantee**. This applies to all matters undertaken on standard terms, holding the whole Firm to account on service levels in writing. The number of matters covered by the service level guarantee has increased dramatically to 93% of all we do.

SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

Our bespoke, custom-built streamlined enquiry system has now been in operation for three years. It ensures enquiries received are allocated to legal advisors faster and with a better understanding of the client’s requirements, allowing for a better match of advisor and client.

This means that legal advisors receive full details of the matter, so are better prepared for the initial discussion, and the client gets more time receiving advice, saving them money. It places the client at the heart of each legal advisor’s day with particular focus on how clients are feeling at specific stages of their matter.

Since its launch, this year saw us hit the milestone of 10,000 new enquiries taken. With a dedicated team to take new enquiries, we’re also able to ensure a client’s requirements are recorded at first contact, improving client experience.



AWARDS

Over the last year, we have celebrated numerous awards and shortlistings, recognising our work and its impact on our clients, our people, our business, and our sustainability efforts.



Cornwall Law Society Awards
Winner of Commercial Property Lawyer of the Year, and Family Lawyer of the Year



Cornwall Chamber of Commerce 30 Under 30
Kara Shaw and Lexie Williams winners, Ellie Parnell and Megan Eaton shortlisted



Devon Chamber 30 Under 30
Kara Shaw winner



LexisNexis Legal Awards
Highly Commended for Law Firm of the Year and for Wellbeing



Clio Modern Law Awards
Winner for Corporate Social Responsibility, Highly Commended for Client Care (26+ Employees)



Business Leader South West Awards
Winner for Employer of the Year



South West Insider Media Dealmakers Awards
Winner for Small Deal of the Year (sub £10m)



Modern Law Private Client Awards
Highly Commended for Law Firm of the Year

IMPACTS ARISING FROM OUR WORK

Stephens Scown continues to work with the Legal Aid Agency to provide legal aid to clients who have very limited income and assets or those at risk of significant harm.

This includes cases where the Local Authority is considering removing or has removed children from a parent’s care due to concerns about the child’s safety and wellbeing. We frequently represent parents and children themselves acting through their Children’s Guardian. Our work ensures that children’s rights are represented through what is always a difficult time.

- Benitia Knowles-Wright from our Family team has been hard at work setting up a project to support neurodivergent clients and using that to upskill other members of the team. The work involves providing clients with participation directions, proposing court alternatives, or private rooms where clients are able to feel more comfortable. She is producing video guides to the courts where proceedings are held in order to better prepare neurodivergent clients for what they will experience.

Another project she leads on is the Modern Families Group. Similar to the work for neurodivergent clients, her work is around ensuring material such as articles better reflects the structure of families. This takes into consideration language used when talking about married couples, and that the idea of heterosexual couples is not the default setting.

- Resolution Together is a wholly advice-based service that allows a couple to work with one lawyer when seeking advice to help them make a consensual decision about the outcome of their separation. This avoids the risk of each spouse consulting separate lawyers and then becoming polarised, each striving for their best-case scenario, resulting in a lengthy, stressful and costly negotiation/court process only to meet in the middle anyway.

The head of our specialist Family Finance team, Sarah Atkinson, now offers a joint advice service for divorcing couples, not representing either’s individual interests, to advise them on a fair outcome for them both, considering the current legal principles and the approach a court would take.

- Jade Kent from our Corporate team remains a Championing Social Care Ambassador, an area close to her heart. She spreads the message of the incredible value of the social care sector and demonstrates how professionals can support those on the front line to make the sector even better. She’s used her role to write articles and attend key events – spending time to support those who make a tangible contribution and difference in the healthcare field.
- Our Employment team promote B Corp™ values through running regular Ethical HR Breakfast events, meeting with HR professionals to discuss how they can find ethical ways to deal with challenging situations in their jobs, and thinking about the difficult questions, for example around mental health, duty of care, and balancing the needs of others, with those of the organisation.
- We continue to share the benefits of being a B Corp™ through networking and social events, and our communications with clients, from website articles comparing the values of B Corp™ and Employee Ownership, and using our advertorial spend to share our B Corp™ journey.

Other examples of impactful work this year include:

- Supporting fellow B Corp™ businesses to protect their values and ethos on obtaining external investment.
- Supporting businesses in using corporate governance frameworks to embed and shape their purpose and adhere to their values so that ESG considerations are consistently integrated into their operations, stakeholder relationships and supply chains.
- Supporting clients through transition to employee ownership.
- Working with businesses to change their legal constitution to reflect balancing people, planet and profit, which involves working with boards and leadership teams to help explain what this means as well as making the required legal changes.
- Our Intellectual Property and Data Protection team supported purposeful businesses protect their intellectual property and implement the necessary policies and contractual terms.
- In collaboration with specialist search providers, our Real Estate lawyers are supporting clients in understanding their legal obligations and in adopting appropriate provisions in their documentation, having regard to their ESG strategies, as well as flagging the potential for physical climate risks.
- Our construction teams have been working with clients to consider the environment impact at an early stage and to include contractual provisions ensuring sustainability demands are met.
- We have a long history of helping private landowners put renewable energy solutions onto their land. This involves specialist contracts and negotiation and consideration of best protecting the land used while maximising the renewable energy potential. We also advise on battery storage projects and EV charger deployment and development of brownfield sites.

- Our Rural team is increasingly working with clients interested in protecting the natural habitat. We advise on the evolving opportunities for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain contracts and around sustainable diversification working closely with clients, their advisors and our Planning and Development Teams. We also support wildlife trusts to preserve their land assets and protect them going forward.
- Our Regulatory team has been supporting clients to meet their regulatory duties, working closely alongside the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs to avoid and minimise damage to people and planet.
- We have signed up to the Greener Litigation pledge. It supports the courts and court users in becoming carbon neutral, and ultimately carbon negative, and encourages lasting change in litigation practice.



As part of our commitment to service excellence for our clients, we've updated our standard terms and conditions for the business to include a service level guarantee.



OUR CONCLUSION

As we approach the process of recertification, each year we have strengthened our internal processes, making positive changes, and seen colleagues embrace B Corp™ in all they do. Indeed, our external promotion of the accreditation has been cited by many as a reason for new colleagues wanting to join the Firm and be part of our continued journey.

While challenges remain, so too does our commitment to driving forward the Firm’s sustainability goals. We believe that we are continuing to make progress thanks to the efforts of colleagues from across the organisation. Our annual reports act as a marker and celebration for what we have achieved and what improvements we are determined to make.

Ever since initially becoming B Corp™ accredited, it is clear that the certification has only been positive in terms of helping our clients with their own sustainability efforts, enhanced internal engagement, and helped support our communities across the South West. Additionally, it has boosted our financial success, with increased turnover and profits in every financial year since achieving the certification. It has proven that profit does not have to come at the expense of people or planet, and that our culture and ethos of wanting to do good isn’t being eroded.

We look forward to the next report and our first after recertification.





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