

BLENHEIM

Combatting Climate Change

Blenheim's Greatest Battle in 300 Years

JOIN
THE
FIGHT



“Today’s choices make tomorrow’s world.”

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Our greatest battle has only just begun

In Climate Change, we are facing a global crisis. Without significant action now, we will have to live with its catastrophic outcomes.

We believe that Climate Change is the single biggest threat to Blenheim’s long-term survival. We are committed to doing all we can to support climate change mitigation and help safeguard this important site and its resources for the future.

But much more importantly, we believe that we have to use all of Blenheim’s resources to help the communities

around us in their battle to reach carbon neutrality before it is too late.

In 2017, we set a goal to become a net generator of green energy in five years. We have since made significant energy savings by converting to electric vehicles, insulating of a number of roofs on the estate and switching to LED lighting. We have also focussed efforts on renewable energy projects that include our use of biomass, solar, hydro power and other green technologies, which means we are on track to achieving this in March 2022.

While we are thrilled with this result, we know there is so much more to do. This report explains what we are going to do next, what we want to achieve and how we are going to do it.

Blenheim has stood proudly for over three hundred years. We owe it to the guardians who have been before, and the generations to come that we do all we can to ensure that it is still standing, just as proudly, in the centuries to come.

“Blenheim will become carbon neutral on scopes 1-3 of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol across all operations by 2027 and, beyond that, remove 230,000 tonnes CO₂e from the atmosphere by 2050.”*

“We all have a duty to do more...”

We have already invested £7m in green energy as part of our response to Climate Change. By tackling the threat through radical but proven methods, we have revolutionised the way we operate at Blenheim.

We continue to look for ways we can improve, and for our new climate pledge for 2027, we are committed to carbon reduction as the focus in coming years to achieve our goal, but off setting projects will also be required to cover the areas we cannot eliminate.

Achieving carbon neutrality at Blenheim is one way we’re addressing the global climate crisis, but we’re not stopping there. A Climate Manager will be joining our team to aid us in our journey and beyond. We are also aiming to remove 230,000 tonnes of CO₂e from the atmosphere between 2027 – 2050 through recurring carbon sequestering projects.

We’ll also be extending our strategy beyond our own carbon impact to that of our wider geographical area through a variety of different projects, including the consideration of new cycle paths, community facilities and renewable energy projects in the local area.

Blenheim is preparing for battle: join us in our fight.

Dominic Hare,
CEO, Blenheim



Our analysis

We have spent the last twelve months undertaking a detailed analysis of our carbon impact today, the likely impact of the carbon crisis going forward, and our carbon opportunity. The Blenheim Green Report is not just a report, it is a pledge from us to do more in the climate battle.

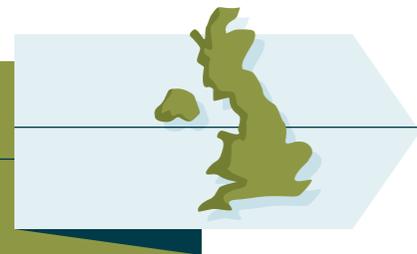
*Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG) Scope 1-3 definition:

- 1 = direct emissions from owned or controlled sources
- 2 = indirect emissions from purchased sources e.g. heating
- 3 = all other emissions



Our carbon footprint

We partnered with Pilio, an energy and environmental consultancy, to calculate the emissions of Blenheim for 2019/2020. We used the results to identify the interventions that will ensure we can achieve carbon neutral status across Greenhouse Gas Protocol, scopes 1-3 by 2027.



UK Visitor Travel

5,636 tonnes CO₂e / 18% of total carbon footprint

UK visitor travel (mainly cars) is the third most impactful sector. We expect it to fall over time as the UK continues to switch to electric vehicles.



Procurement

8,653 tonnes CO₂e / 27% of total carbon footprint

Procurement is the second most impactful and covers all purchased goods and services from suppliers.



International Visitor Travel

14,955 tonnes CO₂e / 47% of total carbon footprint

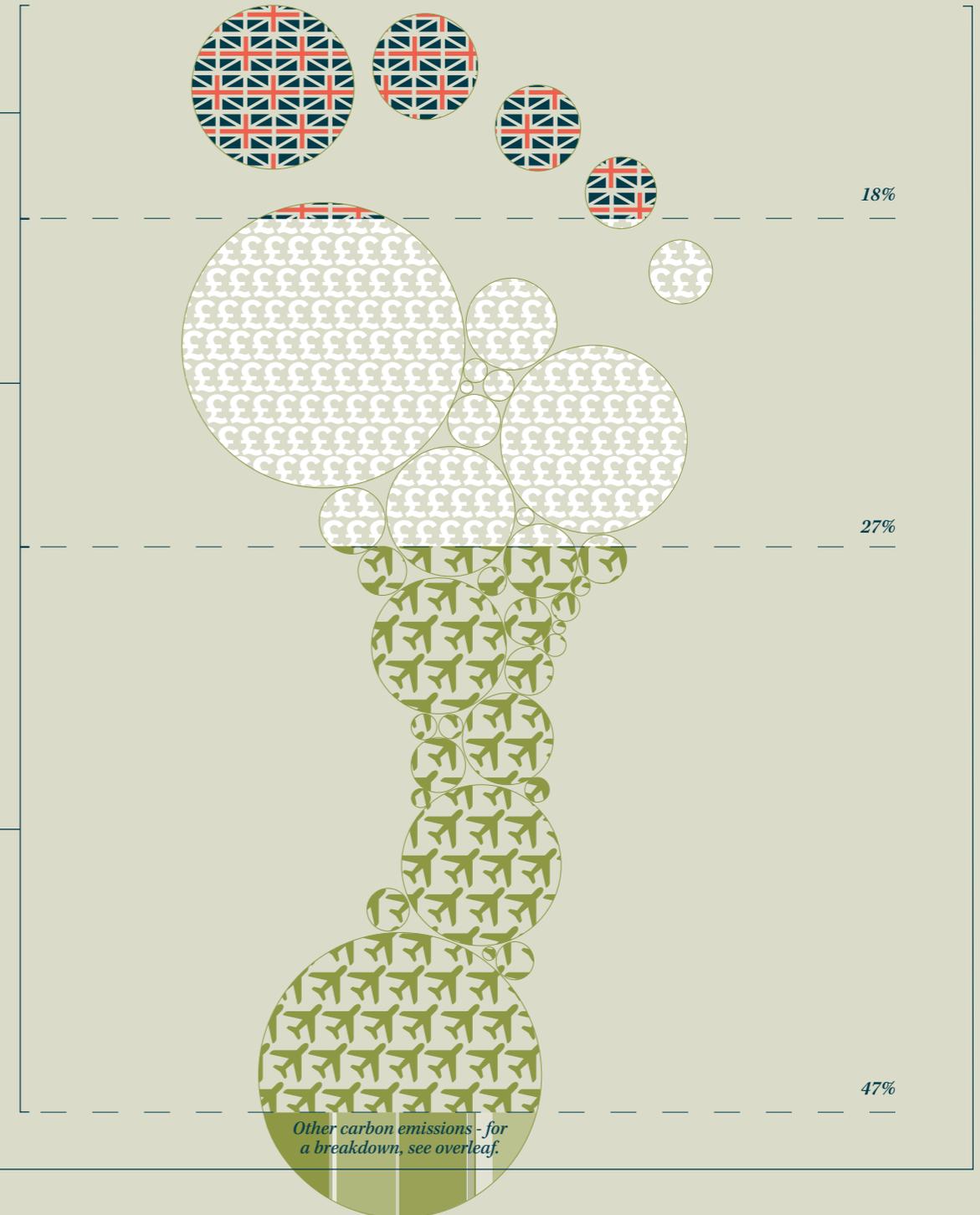
International visitor travel has the most impact on our emissions, and is the most difficult for us to calculate. Current assumptions are that every international visitor stays for 4 weeks and spends 1 day at Blenheim. 1/28th of visitors' international flight emissions are associated with Blenheim.



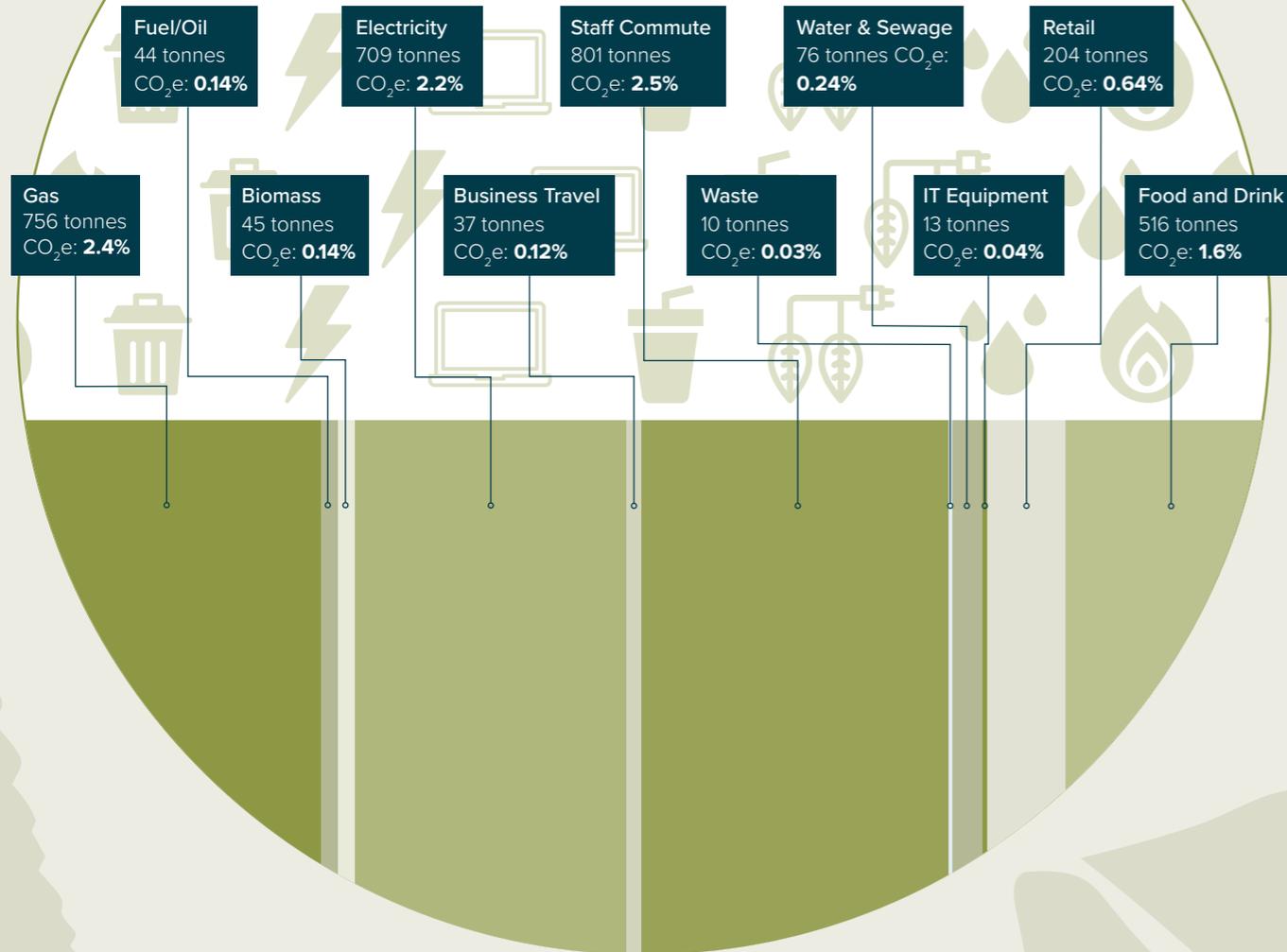
Blenheim's total carbon footprint for 2019/2020 was:

32,000 tonnes CO₂e

Note: Blenheim's carbon emission results are based on the calculations of our last normal years' trading from 1st April 2019 - 31st March 2020.



While their individual emissions percentages may be small, all of these sectors will be included when considering how we can reduce our carbon footprint.



“Environment is no one’s property to destroy; it’s everyone’s responsibility to protect.”

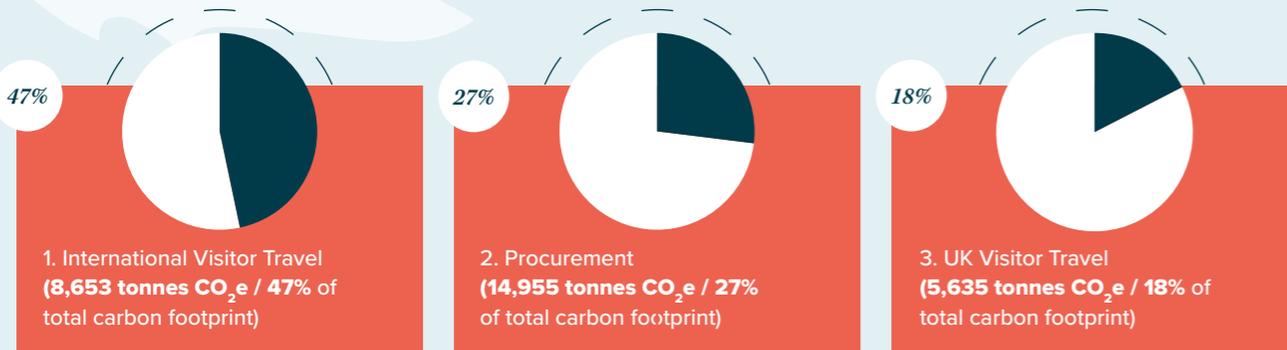
Mohith Agadi



Our plan of action for change

Carbon reduction

The three key areas of Blenheim's carbon emissions are:



Achieving major carbon reduction

We will reduce these carbon emissions by 5% year on year by:

- Helping at least **50% of our visitors** to make carbon friendly journeys to us by 2027 (or help them offset their carbon if they cannot)
- Encouraging **staycation visits** rather than day trips for those making longer journeys
- Supporting and moving to local and **low or zero carbon suppliers**
- Implementing an **internal carbon tax** to drive decision-making in our businesses
- **Improving the energy efficiency** of our existing buildings, constructing buildings and homes to carbon neutral standards.

Carbon offsetting

Carbon reduction is the primary focus at Blenheim. We will work as hard as we can to reduce our carbon emissions, but we also need to invest in projects that will help us offset the carbon we cannot eliminate. A carbon offset is a reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases made in one place to compensate for emissions made in another. Being a landed estate, we have a number of initiatives that will enable us to begin offsetting carbon:

Solar Farms

2,500 tonnes CO₂e saved per year



26 hectares of solar farms to minimise carbon in our energy supplies.

Our aim is that Blenheim will generate more than two times the energy that it currently uses.

Regenerative Agriculture and Wetlands

5,200 tonnes CO₂e saved per year



Moving at least 600 hectares of land to full regenerative agriculture and restoring at least 30 hectares of wetland.

Forest and woodland

8,700 tonnes CO₂e saved per year



Planting 358 hectares of additional forests, with an estimated 600,000 trees, which are open to the public offering c32km of new footpaths and cycleways.

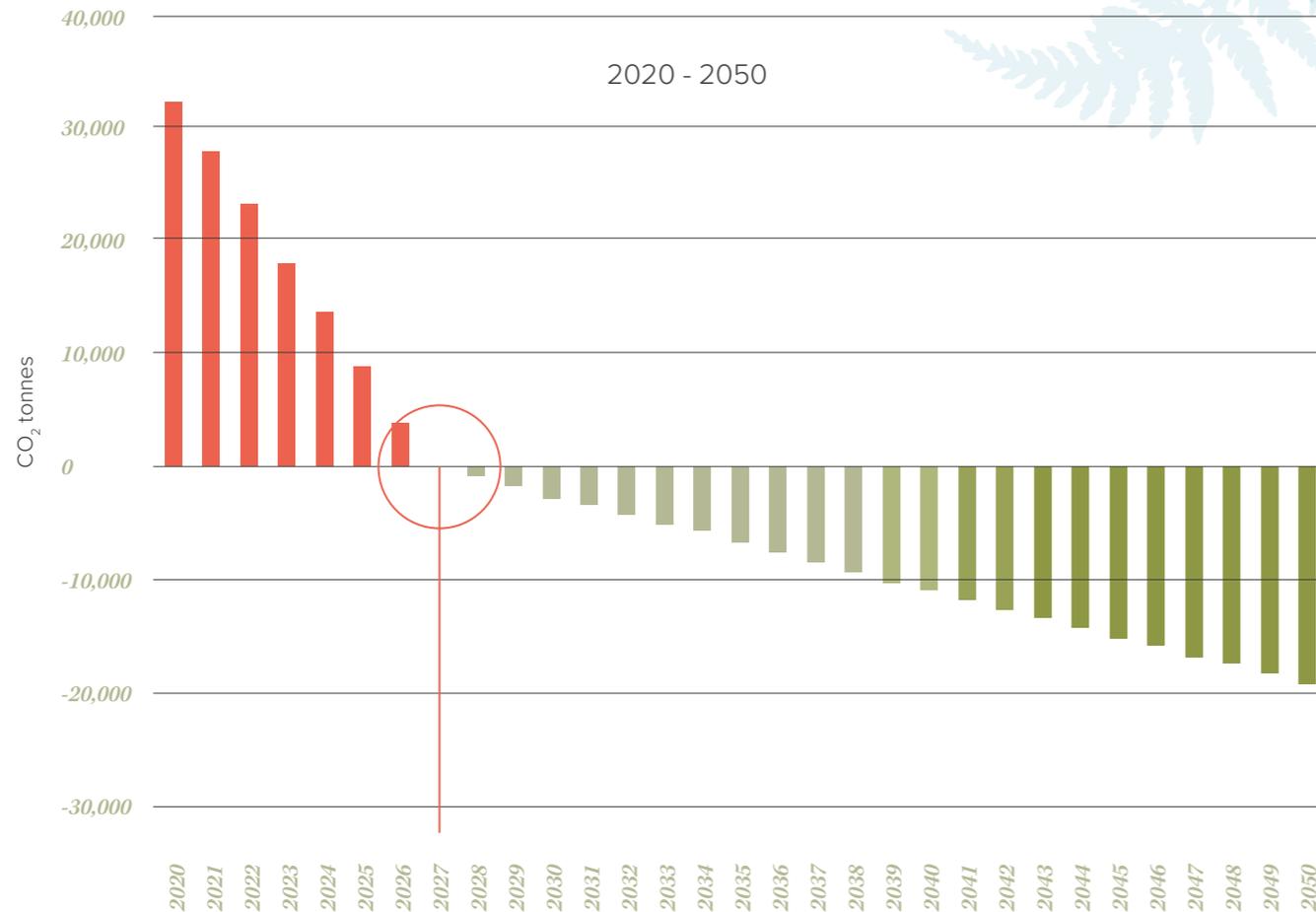
Total CO₂e savings per year from 2027

16,400 tonnes CO₂e saved per year from 2027



Our projections – carbon impact

Our net emissions from 2020 to 2050 are shown below. Reducing our carbon emissions and completing our offsetting projects by 2027 will lead to approximately 230,000 tonnes of CO₂e sequestered in the years beyond 2027.



Note: There is great uncertainty in the current sequestration figure (around our ancient woodland) and we will work hard to quantify this going forward and expect a modest contribution from this.

Our investment and returns

Blenheim will make a huge investment to save our planet – it’s a price that has to be paid.

Project	Cost £m	Outline business case
2 solar farms, 1 under way	10	We expect to make an acceptable return from direct investment in solar, especially given the additional carbon benefits.
Regenerative agriculture	0	The returns from regenerative farming are similar to conventional farming but the land is left in much better condition.
Wetland restoration	0	Working in partnership with several other bodies, we will restore a wetland in the Evenlode catchment – creating a fully working natural floodplain.
9 new woodlands (in partnership with MSG)	0	In partnership with Morgan Sindall Group we are creating nine new woodlands, planting more than a quarter of a million trees to transform the land and it will sequester a total of 22,000 tonnes of carbon across a quarter of a century.
Our own new woodland	4	We expect to invest circa £4m into woodland creation. These woodlands will enhance the capital value of the land and of the property we own around it.
Visitor carbon friendly journeys	2	From this point forward we believe our visitors will want to travel in a more sustainable way to help the environment. We hope our visitors will support us in our encouragement to change behaviour around travel. In the meantime we will provide financial incentives for carbon reduction or offsetting, and will invest in visitor transport links from rail and coach stations. We believe this approach will encourage additional visitors, so will be ultimately self-funding.
Low carbon suppliers	1	It is unknown yet but assume we will shift half to new local suppliers and half will be sourcing new low carbon partners and products.
Efficient buildings	2 - 4	Reducing energy bills should offer a 2 - 5%+ return. Where we can we will look to work with partners or seek grants to make our buildings efficient, although we know this will always be a challenge when it comes to the Palace (which was not built with energy efficiency in mind).
Building Passivhaus		We will invest an estimated extra 5% in build costs to deliver the maximum amount of green efficiencies in our new homes. We believe our customers will join us in supporting these new ultra-efficient homes which will be near carbon zero in operation. We will also move to offset the remaining carbon from construction. Part of this cost will be offset by higher purchase costs/rents over time.

Beyond 2027

Our Estate wide projects to reduce our emissions and offset those we cannot eliminate will lead to carbon neutrality in 2027. As we look beyond this, we will be generating recurring surpluses for every year thereafter with approximately 230,000 tonnes of carbon removed from the atmosphere by 2050, helping others in their own fight against climate change.

Our ongoing renewable energy projects will provide enough green energy to take the Palace off-grid, supply homes in West Oxfordshire and begin reducing the pressures on our electricity network.

By making the choices we have in this pledge we commit to protecting Blenheim, but also enhancing the local area around us by helping to provide access to open space, fresh air and clean water. We will work to connect local communities via new cycle paths across our land, and providing work hubs in a number of those communities.

Working with great partners

It is not possible to achieve our goal without working alongside partners who share the same vision and focus surrounding the climate emergency. We have some great partnerships in place with organisations we trust. Together we will make a far more powerful impact.

Pilio work with businesses to develop and implement energy saving & environmental insight, strategies and support accreditation awards, they delivered Blenheim's carbon emissions report.

Morgan Sindall Group PLC are a leading UK construction and regeneration group, who Blenheim have partnered with to plant new woodland for carbon off-setting.

Nicholson's and the Forest Canopy Foundation are our garden design and forestry partners who will lead our woodland planting.

“He who plants a tree, plants hope.”

First year actions

It is incredibly important to us that we communicate each step of our green journey to you. We want you to be informed and to hold us accountable. This is a list of actions that will be implemented in the next year across our three key business areas - visitor, land and property.

Visitor:

- Offer visitors a variety of significant discounts and incentives if they have travelled by public transport to reduce car emissions
- Deliver an offsetting option for those visitors who travel by car
- We will work to develop market-leading carbon friendly guidelines for all of our events so that they act as exemplars to all attendees
- Retain our gold Green Tourism accreditation, which proves we are operating in the best possible way across our visitor business
- Increase our recycling rates by 10% each year.

Land:

- Begin our first regenerative farming project on land north of Woodstock which will enhance the health of our soil to increase climate resilience
- Deliver the UK's first 'stage zero' project using nature based solutions to reconnect flood plains back to their rivers and, in doing so, hold back flood waters and capture carbon
- Complete our first scale solar park in the initial step to take Blenheim off-grid
- Work with our partners to plant 280,000 trees in 300 acres of new woodlands and for the first time at this scale of planting, use plastic free tree guards
- Open up grass routes to connect 17km of circular paths
- Continue to shift fossil fuel vehicles to electric and, where we cannot, move them to HVO fuel reducing emissions by 95%.

Property:

- Start the largest rural Passivhaus development in the UK. Passivhausing offers residents far better air quality, a lower carbon footprint and a much lower fuel cost
- Launch our new Church Farm community in Radley where each home will include an air source heat pump, solar panels and access to electric car charging – reducing the carbon footprint across the entire site
- Bring 10% of the lettings portfolio with an EPC rating of less than 'C' (126) up to 'C' rating in the next 12 months
- Reduce the carbon footprint of all new homes started in the next 12 months by 10% and offset 100% of what we can't eliminate.

This report will be the first of many we will be releasing over the years to come. Each report will keep you informed of our continued progress and of the further steps we are taking in our response to the fight against climate change.

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blenheim.org/green

Combating
Climate Change
Together