



Community
Wood
Recycling

BUILDING A GREENER FUTURE TOGETHER

COMMUNITY WOOD RECYCLING ANNUAL REPORT 2024





“Everything we do is a reflection of the dedication of our incredible teams, and the trust of our partners who choose us for their waste wood collections.”

RICHARD MEHMED
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Looking back over the last year, I continue to be reminded of the importance of our mission, and the dedication of everyone involved in Community Wood Recycling. As we face the challenges of global warming, rising economic inactivity, skills shortages and youth unemployment, we remain as committed as ever to providing sustainable solutions for waste wood management and creating lasting change in our communities.

Our commercial waste wood collection service is making a meaningful difference, with increased collections from film and TV companies adding to our long term partnership with the construction industry. This year, we’ve collected over 21,000 tonnes of wood, helping our clients to achieve their sustainability goals and to turn waste wood into social value.

Our work has never just been about numbers or growth charts for me. It’s about the stories behind every piece of wood we rescue. It’s about the pallet slats that become a part of a garden giving a place of rest and comfort for hospital patients, or the planks from a film set that are turned into shelves for a local museum shop. It’s about the people too; those who join with us along the way, learning new skills and finding purpose and pride in giving waste a new life.

This report celebrates the many achievements of 2024. For me a particular highlight was celebrating the 20th birthday of Bristol Wood Recycling Project, the second member of our network to reach this milestone. Everything we do is a reflection of the dedication of our incredible teams, and the trust of our partners who choose us for their waste wood collections.

To everyone who has supported us this year we say thank you. You are part of this journey. Together, we’re proving that waste is just the beginning of something new.

Warm regards,

Richard Mehmed
Managing Director

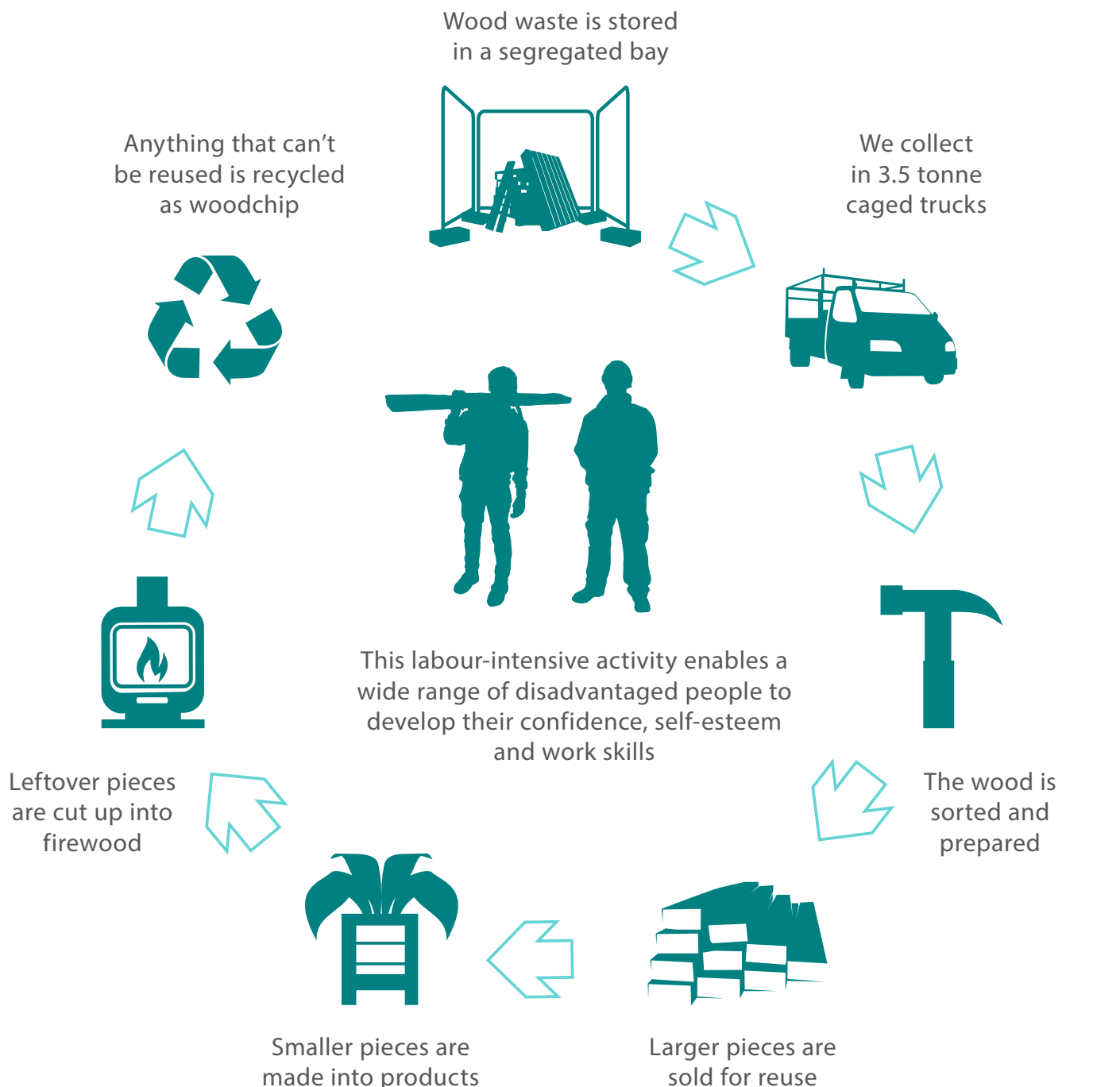


HOW IT WORKS

We have developed a circular economy approach to dealing with wood waste

Our aims are to save resources and create life changing opportunities for people, especially those from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds.

We provide the most environmentally beneficial method of dealing with waste wood, focussing as much as possible on **REUSE**: getting waste wood back into use without chipping it.



OUR NETWORK

Our social enterprises make a difference where it's needed most

27
enterprises

77
vehicles

233
staff

611
volunteers



We're creating opportunities in places that get left behind. In 2024, 50% of our member enterprises were based in the 30% most deprived areas in the UK. This focus ensures that our work not only helps the planet but also supports communities facing significant economic and social challenges.

Our member enterprises in other areas specifically target pockets of deprivation within their communities. By tailoring their efforts to address local needs, they bring vital support and opportunities to people in places that are less likely to benefit from targeted government funding.

NEWCASTLE WOOD RECYCLING Transforming Walker

Newcastle Wood Recycling is located in the Walker area of the city, one of the 1% most deprived areas in the country.

The team have transformed their wood yard, a former council depot, into a sustainable, vibrant space which is an asset to the local community. They provide studio space to other creative businesses who share their environmental and social ethos, which not only creates a hub for like-minded enterprises but also strengthens the connection between sustainability and social value in the region.



TRAINING WORKERS

We provide mentoring and training to staff and volunteers, supported by training material based on years of experience

All volunteers and staff receive training via the Community Wood Recycling 12-module training programme. The programme builds confidence and develops new skills for staff and volunteers of all ages – pictured are two volunteers at Just Wood Leicestershire receiving their certificates.



“Danny thoroughly enjoyed learning new skills. He felt very comfortable, and he really looked forward to his day with you each week. It gave him confidence and a sense of pride, while being supported by a team of people who understood his needs. The calm atmosphere for his learning helped him feel worthy of his job. The fact that he was treated as a person not a subject (which was the school/college system), gave him pride in his worth as a person who can easily learn skills in the right place. Danny also started to speak a little bit more at home. I didn’t make a fuss, but my heart swelled, because I knew that this was his confidence that was built by attending the course.”

DANNY’S MUM

LEEDS WOOD RECYCLING **Training for 18–25s**

Our network members develop training schemes to meet the needs of their local communities.

Leeds Wood Recycling have created a free training and work experience programme for young people aged 18-25 living in the Beeston and Holbeck ward of Leeds, an area facing high levels of crime, unemployment and economic inactivity. They offer 120 hours of work experience including the chance to go out on collections, develop skills in the workshop and learn to deal with customers in the shop. Trainees receive support to get a CSCS card and a health and safety qualification, and assistance with CV writing and applying for jobs.



CHANGING LIVES

The opportunities created by working with us help volunteers overcome challenges and build a future

JERICO WOOD SHACK

Equiano Plus programme

West Midlands-based wood recyclers Jericho Wood Shack offer opportunities to people supported by their parent charity's Equiano Plus programme for those who've escaped modern slavery. Escaping exploitation is the first step, but many participants struggle with finding work and dealing with the trauma they've been through. Training and volunteering in a welcoming environment is the first step to rebuilding lives.

X, one of the people in the programme, lacked confidence and had trouble trusting anyone. He had no previous experience of working with wood, but it soon became clear he was a skilled worker and had the potential to be a leader.

At the Jericho Wood Shack, X learned how to use power tools and gained a sense of accomplishment. He even made beautiful Christmas decorations! Thanks to the qualifications he earned and the work experience he built up, X now has a steady job as a forklift driver. He's a confident and skilled worker with a bright future ahead, and he's finally able to find his place in the community.



NEW LIFE WOOD APD and autism

Harry, who lives with autism and auditory processing disorder (APD), experienced high anxiety levels before joining New Life Wood in Essex.

Working with the supportive team significantly reduced his anxiety. He discovered his natural woodworking skills and thrived on the challenges and busy environment.

After just 3 months of work experience, Harry secured a full-time apprenticeship with a local company.



CREATING VALUE IN THE COMMUNITY

All over the country, wood recyclers are working with local people to create a more sustainable community and support people in overcoming barriers

Social enterprises in our network are working with local communities to build a better, greener world, and to use reclaimed wood to benefit good causes from schools to animal sanctuaries.



RESEICLO

Learning disability support

Our South Wales wood recyclers Reseiclo empower people with learning disabilities to help their local community. Here is one of the team who has helped to fit handrails for an elderly local resident.



MID SUSSEX WOOD RECYCLING

Garden Army

Sussex-based charity Garden Army provides horticultural therapy to ex-service people suffering from PTSD, and to anyone else facing challenges in life who can benefit from working to grow things in a supportive environment. Mid Sussex Wood Recycling is a key supporter of the project, donating rescued timber to help create their therapeutic farm and kitchen garden.

WILTSHIRE WOOD RECYCLING

Early Earth Protectors



Wiltshire Wood Recycling has been supporting Early Earth Protectors for ten years. This Chippenham-based group for children who are passionate about the environment offers activities from litter picking to water testing and is developing a youth community garden. Children learn about wildlife and biodiversity and can take part in campaigning activities.

In summer 2024 the group attended local festivals including Womad and Shambala. They created a children's speakers' corner to allow children to talk to people about their vision for a greener future and handed out wildflower seeds. Wiltshire Wood Recycling donated more than 100 pieces of reclaimed timber which children painted with hearts as part of the BLUE campaign to rewild the country's gardens.

ST ALBANS WOOD RECYCLING

Earthworks

Earthworks is a charity supporting people with learning disabilities (known as Earthworkers) alongside volunteers, to help manage 3.5 acres of beautiful eco-gardens in St Albans. St Albans Wood Recycling helps make it all happen by donating timber and pallets for them to reuse.



ROOTS TIMBER REUSE

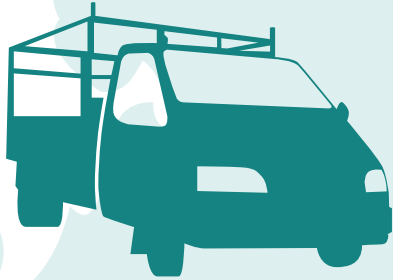
Second Chance Animal Rescue

Roots Timber Reuse CIC is a community interest company which provides waste wood collection services to the Dartford, Gravesham and Medway areas. Some of the timber they collected was donated to the local animal sanctuary, Second Chance Animal Rescue to make shelters and enclosures, and to build fencing to keep the animals secure. Roots also donate to prisons and local charity groups.



SAVING RESOURCES

Reusing wood saves waste, reduces pressure on forests, and cuts down on transport distances, reducing emissions



21,102 tonnes
wood collected in 2024



34%
reused



66%
recycled

CO₂

10,000t
CO₂ equivalent averted

Most of the wood that was earmarked for reuse was sold on to the public for DIY, and the rest was used to make products or as raw materials for our firewood-making activities.

Our methods save fuel and cut both upstream and downstream emissions. We estimate that we save around half a tonne of CO₂ per tonne of wood collected.



34,000
gal. diesel saved

A tightly packed 3.5 tonne van uses only around a quarter of the fuel of a skip lorry per tonne of wood hauled, which means lower emissions of CO₂, CO, NO_x and particulates.

Client satisfaction



99%
happy with
the service

In 2024 we surveyed over 250 collection sites and 99% of respondents said they were happy with the service, with each of our 5 key service area questions exceeding 90% positive responses.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We're proud to continue to be recognised by other organisations as a contributor to wellbeing and the environment



WOOD RECYCLING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2024

We were honoured to be named the winner in the Wood Recycling Business of the Year category at the letsrecycle.com Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management 2024.



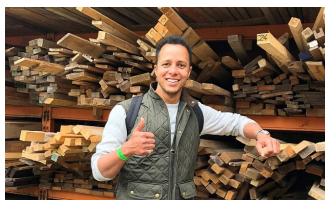
SUPPLY CHAIN CLIMATE ACTION AWARD 2024

Our Glasgow member enterprise, Glasgow Wood, was awarded the 2024 Supply Chain Climate Action Award by Morgan Sindall Construction Scotland.



MINISTER VISITS WOOD SAINTS

Our Wolverhampton-based member Wood Saints welcomed Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth Stephanie Peacock MP and partners from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to show them their work to improve the wellbeing of local people.



WILL KIRK VISITS WOOD@ALDINGBOURNE

Will Kirk, known for his work on the BBC's The Repair Shop, visited the Aldingbourne Country Centre (home to our member Wood@Aldingbourne), to share ideas about reuse and meet some of the people with learning disabilities supported by the charity.



RICHARD MEHMED SPEAKS AT BAV CONFERENCE

Our founder Richard Mehmed spoke to the Bundesverband der Altholzaufbereiter und -verwerter e.V., the German Association of Recyclers and Processors of Waste Wood, about our wood reuse model, which currently has no equivalent in mainland Europe.

Your support can help us do even more!

If you are in an industry generating wood waste, you can help promote our wood collection services in your organisation. If you have time available, you can volunteer with us, and if you're looking for wood for a DIY or building project, or for furniture, decorations or gifts, please consider buying sustainably from one of our social enterprises, where you'll find an Aladdin's cave of reclaimed timber.

Find out more at:

www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk

 **Community Wood Recycling**

Or call our national office on:

01273 20 30 40