



Community
Wood
Recycling

FROM REUSE TO SOCIAL IMPACT

COMMUNITY WOOD RECYCLING ANNUAL REPORT 2025





“While remaining true to our mission we will develop our model to meet the challenges of the next 20 years”

**RICHARD MEHMED
MANAGING DIRECTOR**

As we look back on 2025, I think about how our network continues to respond with determination and creativity to the environmental and social challenges faced by communities across the UK. Our enterprises remain deeply rooted in the places they serve, turning local need into practical action through the work they do, from wood reuse, to skills development and community support.

During the year, many members focused on strengthening their operations and widening the opportunities they offer. One of the most inspiring trends this year has been seeing individuals who first joined us as volunteers, often during difficult periods in their lives, grow into skilled and confident leaders, with some now managing enterprises of their own. This year has also highlighted the resilience of our model, with six of our member enterprises now more than 20 years old. This really shows the strength and longevity of community-led, people-centred reuse.

What makes Community Wood Recycling unique is the way environmental benefit and social value are woven together through our everyday work. As we look ahead, we remain committed to supporting our members to thrive, championing reuse as the best solution for waste wood, and collaborating with partners who share our belief in community focused sustainability. We will stay true to our mission, we will continue developing our model to meet the challenges of the next 20 years, ensuring it remains robust, responsive, and ready to deliver even greater impact in a fast-changing world.

Thank you to all our members, clients, volunteers, trainees, and supporters. It's your commitment that makes this work possible. Together, we will continue turning discarded materials into opportunities and building a fairer, greener future.

Warm regards,

Richard Mehmed

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, focusing 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

24
enterprises

57
vehicles

205
staff

600
volunteers



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UK

In 2025, our network remained focused on delivering opportunity where it is needed most. A significant proportion of our member enterprises operate within communities navigating economic hardship, while others design their services to reach isolated or underserved neighbourhoods within broader regions. This approach ensures that our environmental work continues to deliver significant social value across the UK.

RESEICLO

20 Years of Community Impact

Celebrating its twentieth anniversary in June 2025, Newport based Reseiclo Community Wood Recycling has grown substantially since its beginnings in 2005.

A major part of its impact comes from its close partnership with Reseiclo Training which provides a supportive, practical woodworking environment for adults with learning disabilities, autism, mental health challenges and dementia, so participants can build skills and confidence while producing affordable, bespoke wood products for the local community.

In 2023, the organisation expanded its reach further by introducing woodworking classes for schools and community groups.

Managing Director Karl Lovesey's journey embodies Reseiclo's values and community centred approach. He joined as a volunteer in 2010 while recovering from health challenges, and steadily took on greater responsibilities, first as a driver's mate, then as a driver, later returning as a volunteer in 2018 before progressing to assistant manager. When founder Trefor Puw retired in 2024, Karl stepped into the role of Managing Director. His journey shows the transformative opportunities that Reseiclo creates, not only for the people it supports through training but also for those who become part of the team.



TRAINING WORKERS

Our enterprises provide the tools and experience for people to support, teach and inspire each other



LEEDS WOOD RECYCLING CIC

SkillShed: Learning Skills and Helping the Local Community

In 2025, Leeds Wood Recycling launched the SkillShed, a new programme designed to help people build confidence, learn practical skills and discover new opportunities through working with reclaimed timber. With seven cohorts between June 2024 and May 2026, the programme offers up to ten people per cohort a six week journey of hands on learning, teamwork and personal development.

From their first day in the workshop, trainees are immersed in the full cycle of reuse. Timber collected by the LWR collections team is sorted, processed and transformed into useful products as participants learn foundational woodworking skills including sanding, joining, measuring and problem solving.

Alongside this practical work, people also access additional training such as CPC accredited micro qualifications and SEN awareness, supporting confidence, employability and progression.

At the heart of each cohort's journey is the

collective construction of a bike shed, built week by week as participants' skills develop. This is donated to a local school, charity or community group, supporting active travel and reducing carbon emissions.

In July 2025 the first cohort voted to donate their shed to OASIS 24/7 Crisis House, part of the Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service. OASIS provides an alternative to hospital admission for people in mental health crisis who may benefit more from a safe, homely environment than an inpatient ward, and the shed will be used by both service users and staff.

SkillShed is also strengthening Leeds Wood Recycling itself. Staff and volunteers have stepped into new roles as facilitators, building a supportive and inclusive learning environment that enables trainees to grow, succeed and become volunteers themselves, all while helping LWR to increase the amount of timber reused in-house.

CHANGING LIVES

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

NEW LIFE WOOD AND CYGNET HEALTHCARE

Creating Meaningful Opportunities Through Wood Reuse

A long-standing partnership between CWR network member New Life Wood and Cygnet Healthcare's Old Leigh House continues to demonstrate how wood-reuse enterprises can create valuable opportunities for people facing significant barriers.

Through the collaboration, two people supported at Old Leigh House have been working alongside New Life Wood's skilled mentors, learning traditional woodworking techniques such as sanding, joining and constructing items from reclaimed timber. They have made shelves, planter boxes and other handmade pieces, building practical skills and also strengthening confidence, routine and connection.

Cygnet Healthcare highlighted the impact of the partnership, noting:

"The people supported feel very relaxed and comfortable working together with their experienced mentors and are always excited to talk about their wood-work experiences. This partnership has been invaluable, giving our individuals meaningful work experience, a sense of achievement, and the opportunity to contribute to a charity that makes a real difference to both people and the planet."

ST ALBANS WOOD RECYCLING

A New Start and Steady Work

Steve first came to St Albans Wood Recycling on a work-experience placement arranged by his Jobcentre, after nine years out of work following the breakdown of his marriage. Quiet and reserved, he quickly found his place in the workshop, denailing and sorting wood alongside the team. He enjoyed the supportive atmosphere so much that he asked to return for a second placement. As his confidence grew, he shared that he had previously driven 3.5-tonne vehicles for the council, which led to a work trial and eventually a full-time job as a driver.

With training from the team, Steve gained his CSCS card, refreshed his driving skills and learned to work confidently on construction sites. Now approaching pension age, he is still a valued member of the team. As he has grown older, the organisation has adapted his duties to ensure his work stays manageable and fulfilling, allowing him to continue contributing meaningfully right to the end of his working life. In Steve's own words,

"St Albans Wood Recycling really did change everything for me."



WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

As we work to build a circular economy, engaging communities, and especially young people, is central to our mission.

Our projects regularly welcome children and young people to learn about reuse, discover the value of reclaimed timber and try out practical skills for themselves.



Youth Engagement Across the Network

Projects across the country are running initiatives to introduce young people to the power of reuse. In Wales, Reseclo Training has been working with local children to build bird boxes and swift boxes, teaching practical skills while helping nature thrive. Further north, Newcastle Wood Recycling has welcomed pupils from Percy Hedley School, a specialist school for children with additional needs, offering them the chance to explore the workshop, see how reclaimed wood is transformed, and experience the supportive, inclusive environment created by the network. And in the south, Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling built an outdoor classroom for a local school, funded by Shanly Homes creating a year-round space for outdoor learning.

These initiatives show how Community Wood Recycling projects nationwide are helping young people build confidence, learn new skills and understand the impact of sustainable choices in their own communities.

GLASGOW WOOD Schools Open Week

Every February Glasgow Wood throws its doors open to local schools, giving pupils a hands on introduction to reuse and a taste of woodworking. During the five day event in 2025, visiting groups tested Play & Learning Equipment and saw how repurposed timber can enhance classrooms and outdoor areas.

Pupils took part in free workshops building bird boxes, planters and window boxes from reclaimed wood, while teachers received advice and discounts on sustainable furniture, equipment and bespoke signage. Competitions added a fun element, with prizes such as a Giant Teepee and Buddy Bench made from reclaimed materials.

The Glasgow Wood team gave every group a short introduction to the organisation's story, helping young people understand how they rescue waste wood, create jobs and support their local communities.

SAVING RESOURCES

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



21,102
tonnes of wood
collected in 2025



36%
reused



18%
recycled



46%
biomass

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 like furniture and firewood, or donated to the community.

Non-reusable wood was sent on to bulk recycling stations to be chipped, with most ending up as biomass, providing renewable baseload power, and the rest recycled into products like particleboard and animal bedding.



34,000
gal. diesel saved

A 3.5 tonne caged vehicle uses only around half of the fuel of a skip lorry per mile and can carry more wood, which means lower emissions of CO₂, CO, NO_x and particulates.

Wood reuse made easy



99%
would
recommend

In 2025 we surveyed over 170 collection sites and 99% of respondents said they would recommend the service, with each of our key service area questions (on time, collecting everything, value for money, satisfaction) exceeding 95% positive responses.

The UK produces around 4.5 million tonnes of waste wood every year. While the recognition of wood waste as a valuable feedstock for power generation has resulted in more wood being recycled than ever, sending wood straight to the chipper can shorten its life, missing out on creating work, locking in carbon, replacing virgin timber, and of course brightening our homes, businesses and gardens. When it eventually reaches the end of its usable life its value as fuel remains, but the wood will have been on a journey providing much more than just electricity.



TOUCH WOOD

Closing the Loop at Dunham Massey

Touch Wood demonstrates how powerful reuse can be when materials are kept in circulation. After collecting timber from the National Trust at Dunham Massey - including the distinctive half-post tree protectors that shield young trees from the resident deer herd - the team was commissioned to create a series of wheelchair-accessible planters for an educational partnership with Piper Hill SEND School.

Touch Wood were able to incorporate the original tree protectors into the new planter designs. When the planters were returned to Dunham Massey, staff were thrilled to see their own materials given a meaningful second life. Students from Piper Hill then filled the planters as part of their work-experience programme, leaving a visible and lasting contribution at the entrance to the estate.

As Senior Programming and Partnerships Officer Helen Lomas said:

“I loved the concept that the wood being used to make the planters was recycled and re-purposed back to its original ‘home’... the project has been a great success.”



ACROSS THE NETWORK

Cutting-Edge Technology

Increasingly, our enterprises are making use of equipment like laser engravers and CNC machines to produce items such as trophies, awards, signage and bespoke gifts.

Not only does this allow our workers to build highly-valued CAD and CAM skills, but it also greatly enhances the range of products we can produce and the types of wood we can work with, turning offcuts that might otherwise have been chipped into high-value products.

Patrick, workshop manager at Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project enterprise shared:

“We might worry that we won’t find what we need for a particular project, only for the perfect pieces to arrive unexpectedly. We were recently asked to make checkout dividers for our local health food shop, Infinity Foods. Who would have guessed that we’d find exactly what we needed in a collection from Glyndebourne Opera House? It’s amazing to think that staging for world-leading opera would have a new life among the carrots and quinoa at the tills.”

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

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

This year we've seen recognition across our network, reflecting the growing influence of community-led wood reuse and the impact our enterprises create every day.

BRISTOL WOOD RECYCLING PROJECT CROWDFUNDING SUCCESS

Bristol Wood Recycling Project marked a huge moment by paying off its crowdfunded mortgage, securing long-term stability after years of dedicated community enterprise.

JERICO WOOD SHACK NAMED COMMUNITY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

In the Midlands, Jericho Wood Shack celebrated its 15-year anniversary and alongside the other enterprises run by Birmingham-based charity Jericho was named Community Business of the Year at the 2025 Social Economy Awards, recognising its outstanding commitment to breaking down barriers to employment.

WILTSHIRE WOOD RECYCLING VOTED RECYCLING SERVICE OF THE YEAR

Wiltshire Wood Recycling was voted Recycling Service of the Year in the 2025 Prestige Awards, celebrating excellence in sustainability, customer service and innovation.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CRAWFORD AND COMPANY WINS AWARD

Crawford & Company, in partnership with Community Wood Recycling, won the ESG: Sustainability Claims Initiative of the Year at the CF Awards 2025.



FOUNDER SPEAKS AT RESTORE 2025 AND DFT SME SUPPLIER EVENT

Our founder, Richard Mehmed, was invited to speak at several key national events, reflecting the growing influence of our model within government and industry. At the Restore 2025 Conference and Expo in Manchester, hosted by our partners at Crawford & Company, he joined contractors and insurers to share best practice on sustainable materials management and the social value of reuse. Richard also spoke at the Department for Transport SME Supplier Event in Birmingham, where it was inspiring to see government and industry united in support of VCSE suppliers, thanks to an invitation from Kier Infrastructure.

In addition, he was invited by the Government's Circular Economy Taskforce to contribute to discussions on how we can save more of the 4.5 million tonnes of waste wood generated in the UK each year for reuse, ensuring that reusable timber is kept in circulation.



PARTNERSHIP WITH EGGER TIMBERPAK

Thank you to our friends at Egger Timberpak who contribute to our work by supporting our Leeds, Newcastle and Glasgow members with disposal of the wood we can't reuse. This assistance really makes a difference to our mission to save resources and change lives.

"We've had nothing but great experiences with Egger. They always accommodate our needs, and the gentleman who comes to carry out the changeovers is fantastic. We are very grateful for their support for our work."

DANIELLE FLETCHER

MANAGING DIRECTOR, GLASGOW WOOD



WORKING TOGETHER

In December wood recyclers from around the country met at St Albans Wood Recycling for our annual meeting. It was a chance to share experiences, learn from each other and plan for the future, as well as celebrating the network's achievements over the year.



STRENGTHENING OUR VOICE

Our relationship with the Wood Recyclers' Association (WRA) continued to deepen, with Development Manager Elizabeth Green being elected the board of the organisation, highlighting the essential role community reuse plays in saving resources and creating social value across the sector. Visits from the WRA team to our network underlined the importance of strong collaboration across the wood recycling landscape.



We also strengthened our own governance, welcoming our Operations Director Julie Saunders to the Board as a new director, bringing valuable expertise to guide the next stage of our development.

Your support helps us go further. Together, we're proving that sustainable choices can change lives, strengthen communities, and build a greener future.



Community
Wood
Recycling

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