

GONG COMMUNICATIONS

IMPACT REPORT

2021



G O N G
COMMUNICATIONS

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help purposeful organisations communicate their positive impact.

Welcome to our impact report for 2021. Quite apart from the challenges of Covid and the escalating climate crisis, we will always look back on 2021 as a positive milestone moment for Gong Communications. After 18 years focused on international business communications, Gong joined with digital innovation and consumer brand specialist Cherish PR to form The Wilful Group.

Our shared vision for Wilful is very relevant for this report. We created the new group to ensure an agile, international taskforce brand with Gong and Cherish at its core, pulling together bespoke teams to meet the needs of innovative clients helping solve some of the world's biggest problems.

Because we are a B Corp, Gong's mission is baked into our Memorandum and Articles of Association. Our new ownership structure could never impact on that. Rather the opposite in fact as we are accelerating Cherish's B Corp certification so that the Wilful Group will be de facto, a 100% certified member of the B Corp movement.

2021 was also the year Gong recertified as a B Corp amidst a tide of new UK certifications thus cementing its position as the fastest growing region for the movement globally. Launching a new agency proposition focused on the just and green transition while simultaneously scrutinising everything about our business for recertification generated positive tension between looking outward for solutions and reflecting inwards and asking ourselves, what more can we do? Since we first certified in 2017, we have been looking for ways to improve our score. We succeeded in a number of areas and our score went from 84.3 in 2017 to 91.7 in 2021.

As a service business, we have it relatively easy in that we have no scope 3 emissions. Measuring, managing and reducing our carbon footprint is pretty straightforward. The launch of The Wilful Group has created an opportunity to rethink how much office space

we really need in a new hybrid working world. We now have double the number of people in the same space, rotating through on a weekly basis so that everyone can continue to enjoy better work/life balance. That isn't going to show up in Gong's numbers in this report, but the direction of travel feels very positive, with a lower per person office carbon footprint, less overall travel to work and fewer international flights as we cling to the positive effects of the pandemic's behaviours as much as we can.

Beyond our environmental impact, we have also been focused on how we can be good citizens in terms of our contribution to society. Our pro-bono focus in 2021 was to offer a Refugee Press Office designed to help smaller charities without communications resources in house. This was inspired by the work of Refugee Support, a small but expertly focused and high impact charity we worked with in 2020. Although this activity sits in our contribution to society, it actually doubles up in terms of impacts for our 'workers' (our team in B Corp parlance). Feedback from the team has confirmed what we hoped, that people are motivated to be able to put their skills to work to address societal issues and see the time we allocate for this work as a benefit of our working culture.

Although this report is by its very nature about looking in the rear view mirror, our direction of travel is towards the critical issues of our time with each new Wilful client conversation we have. That's the best introduction we can have to the next chapter of our B Corp impact story.

OUR CLIENTS

Over the past year, we have worked with clients across a number of major themes:

GLOBAL HEALTH

SDG 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



As the Covid pandemic continued to wreak havoc, global health remained a hot topic for the world and for us. Our work with the Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE) focused on making sure malaria, polio and neglected tropical diseases were not forgotten amid the Covid response. With GLIDE's Falcon Awards for Disease Elimination, we celebrated community-driven approaches to disease elimination, shedding light on innovators in Pakistan, Yemen, Ghana and the Philippines.

2021 was also the year we started working for venture capital firm Delin which invests in game-changing life sciences innovations, supporting entrepreneurs developing new therapies in the fight against cancer and other serious diseases.

TRANSITION TO A LOWER CARBON ECONOMY

SDG 13 - CLIMATE ACTION



Solving the climate change crisis remained front and centre of everyone's minds in 2021 as the UK hosted COP26. We supported clients including Puro.earth, the world's first registry focused on carbon removals and Systems Sunlight, working on lead battery recycling and electrifying industrial vehicles. Working with the Royal Academy of Engineering, we highlighted the environmental and health dangers surrounding the open burning of waste in parts of Africa.

INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

SDG 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



We relish the opportunity to support innovators and entrepreneurs who are coming up with game-changing ideas, so we jumped at the chance to work with the UN supported SEED Awards to highlight green innovators across the global south. Our role was to amplify the stories of some remarkable winners, such as the Ghanaian start-up that converts organic waste into fuel-efficient briquettes for cooking. We were also delighted to help the Landscape Institute spread the word about its international awards, which recognised some amazing landscape designs, including rewilding projects to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

Staying with the built environment as a major contributor to CO2 emissions, we helped Finnish materials technology company Betolar communicate the benefits of a low carbon alternative to cement. As well as reducing the CO2 emissions of traditional manufacture by 80%, Betolar's approach embraces circularity, using waste from industrial side-streams rather than virgin materials in its innovative 'recipes'.

Moving to the oceans and the land, we worked for two other innovative materials companies, Oceanium and Tensei, both of which have female founders. Oceanium is a seaweed processing business which attracted funding from WWF to help scale the sustainable seaweed farming and processing industry in Europe. Tensei is developing innovative high-performance papers and packaging made from alternatives to wood pulp using agricultural residues such as straw.



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SDG 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG 16 - PEACE JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Institutes and membership bodies have long been a recurring theme in our work. 2021 was no exception with campaigns for the Royal Academy of Engineering and the British Council's Clore Leadership Scheme focused on adult learning and development. As part of our work in supporting the communications of UNESCO's 75th birthday celebrations, we focused on its Future of Education Report.

Meanwhile, our eLearning team developed the B Corp training, translating the course into 16 different languages for certified B Corps including L'Occitane and Bonduelle.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

SDG 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Our work of the last 7 years for the Lloyd's insurance market culminated in our last stint as the comms team for the international Dive In Festival which promotes diversity and inclusivity both to level the playing field for talent and to improve workplace cultures. Working with our partner agency in Nigeria, we also helped deliver the Dive In event for Aon insurance in that market which focused on gender diversity.



BIODIVERSITY

SDG 15 - LIFE ON LAND

Biodiversity has been described as the next big wave that is breaking hard after climate change. Positive stories of species recovery are few and far between, which is why we were thrilled to support the African Wildlife Foundation in developing an event to discuss the role of the private sector in conservation, creating an opportunity for the finance community to hear how Rwanda's mountain gorillas are thriving because of carefully managed programmes that also bring economic benefit to local communities.



DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AND RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

SDG 1 - NO POVERTY

SDG 7 - AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

SDG 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Across the finance sector we supported funds that invest with impact and drive sustainable development. In Africa, for example, where many countries are struggling with poverty, power deficits and a lack of infrastructure, we worked with African Infrastructure Investment Managers.



On the policy side, we supported Volans in its role as a founding member of Bankers for Net Zero, campaigning to raise awareness of the need for funding to help companies invest and transition to a low carbon future and a just and green economic future.

OUR PEOPLE

The team at Springwood Farm



With more lockdowns and phased returns to the office, 2021 was another unsettling year. But we made the most of the situation and did our best to stay connected and keep team motivation levels high.

The Wilful Wonders Awards



We hired our first group Head of People and Talent with a mandate to develop a culture capable of attracting and retaining people in a new hybrid working environment with the emphasis on continuous learning and tailored career development paths.

In support of this shift, in September our senior team headed down to Springwood Farm in West Sussex to work with progressive leadership coach, Giles Hutchins whose approach draws from the natural world to offer inspiration for organisational design and development.

Giles draws on the ideas in his new book, *Leading By Nature* to help us focus on the values and behaviours needed to support our Wilful group ambition.

To finish off the year with gratitude and recognition, we held the 2021 Wilful Wonder Awards at Christmas where colleagues collectively called out people who live our values through their behaviours. Everyone had the chance to vote for the colleague they thought should win in five different categories: Can-do attitude, Willing to go the extra mile, Consistently dependable, Others before self and Best in a brainstorm.

To celebrate our culture and introduce new recruits to our values, we launched a new, fully recyclable and sustainable welcome and onboarding pack stuffed full of goodies and information on topics including how to use your Annual Day of Activism or Volunteering Time. Typical treats from fellow B Corps include Dash Water, Propercorn, Pukka Wellness Teas and Wilful notebooks sourced from Green Print.

Welcome Pack



STRETCH GOAL

“Our Stretch Goal for 2021 was to support greater social mobility. We enrolled in the government’s Kickstarter scheme to advertise a new support role to encourage people who might not otherwise consider a career in PR to apply.

In 2022 our goal is to expand our core internship programme to reach talented individuals outside of the university education route to continue to diversify our team and open up PR to a broader base of people with different backgrounds and lived experience.”

“Our Dignify Festival in 2019 was an enormous fundraising success so we had ambitious plans for 2021, especially after Covid prevented us from getting people together in 2020. The lovely team at Gong Communications quickly understood what our priorities were and got us great visibility in the local print and online media to promote the event. Not only were they a joy to work with but they were crucial in us breaking our fundraising target!”

Eve Linieres, Trustee, Refugee



OUR SOCIETY

Our corporate social responsibility continues to be one of the most important parts of our work. We believe that business can, and should be, a force for good. That's why we donate 2% of our profits to CSR and deliver at least 160 hours of pro-bono work.

In previous years we worked with the wonderful charity Refugee Support to help them on their mission to provide aid with dignity. This year, we took things a step further and launched the Gong Communications Refugee Press Office to support as many excellent charities in this sector as possible. We act as a PR and communications resource for charities without professional communications support, helping them tell their stories effectively and amplifying their voices to reach the right people.

We continued our work with Refugee Support Europe, securing coverage for its annual fund raising Dignify Festival to help boost ticket sales. The event raised £65,000. We also orchestrated opinion pieces on 'Aid with Dignity' in Charity Today and explained why donations of clothes aren't always best in the context of the Ukraine crisis in The Independent.

We also helped Indigo Volunteers with research into potential audiences and communities to target its marketing and supported its Ukraine fundraiser with social media strategy and advice, sharing targeted research into hashtags and conversations.

We helped Refugee Consortium of Kenya to develop a social media guide for use across its owned channels.

Other organisations we were able to support included the charity Alive and Kicking on a partnership with UNHCR and a press release with EA Sports and FIFA.

OUR COMMUNITY

We want to make sure that we put our money to work in service of our values, so our stretch goal is to work with other B Corps in our supply chain by 2025 wherever possible.

In 2021 we moved closer to the goal, adding 4 new relationships to our buy-side B Corp community.

We changed our insurance broker to the independent, award-winning B Corp, Centor Insurance and Risk Management; we sourced our energy from Bulb and offset our carbon footprint with Earthly. We also started working with Timetastic, which was certified as a B Corp in May 2021 and rated the top performing B Corp for Best For The World: Workers. Not only does this do a lot for our B Corp cred, it also means we are able to go paperless. Holiday forms are a thing of the past as we use this service to manage our staff leave, absences and public holidays. We have reduced 85% of our HR admin paper and printing waste as a result. Timetastic also partners with 1% For the Planet, donating 1% of its gross monthly sales directly to environmental charities.

In terms of our community of clients, 2021 brought new relationships from within the B Corp movement including Bonduelle, InFarm, MPM Products, L'Occitane and Coutts.

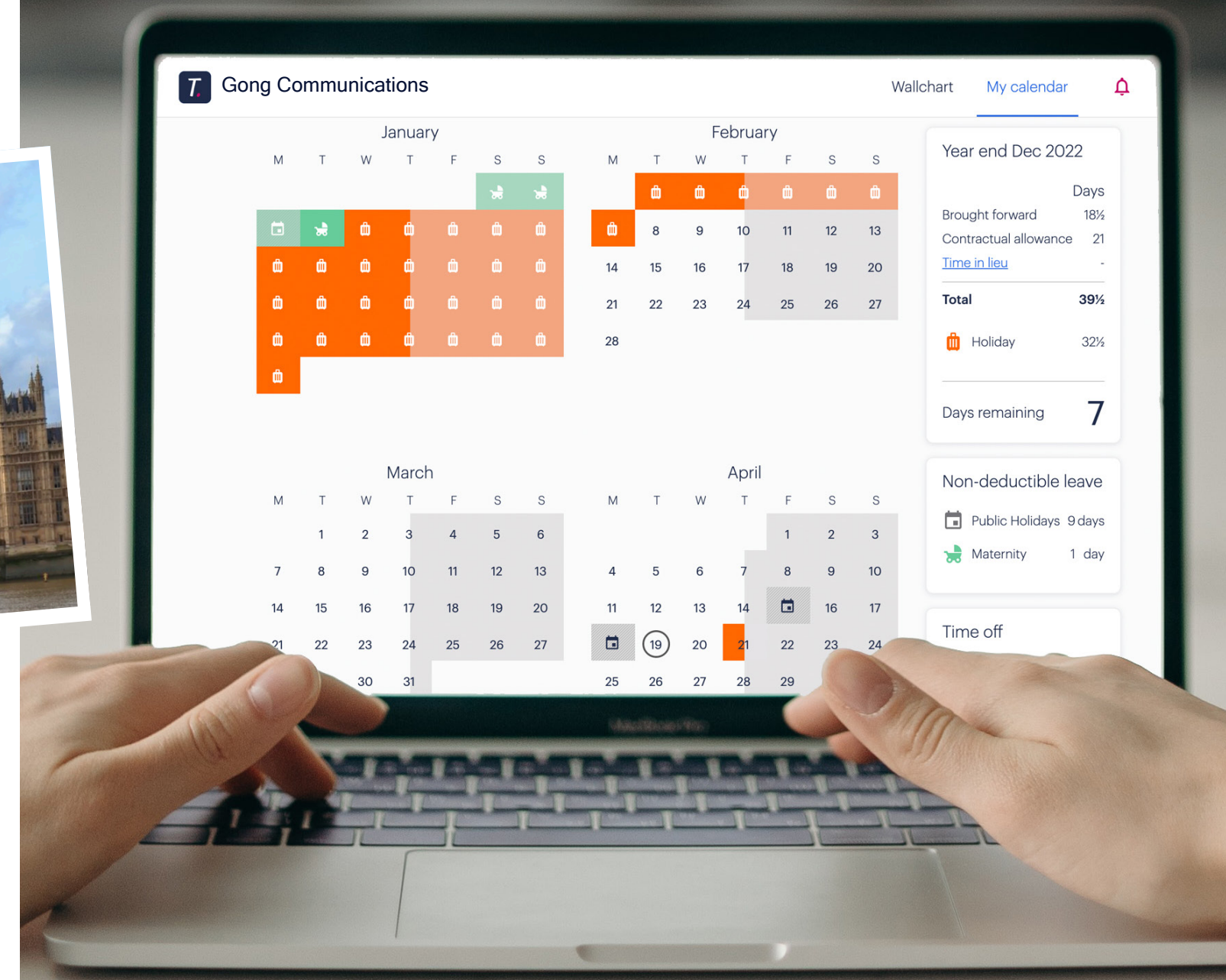
We also played our part as engaged B Corp citizens, we actively campaigned as a signatory to the Better Business Act initiative and used our voice as an advocate for the B Corp movement in our social channels during B Corp month in March.

Better Business Act



STRETCH GOAL

“To work with other B Corps in our supply chain by 2025 wherever possible.”





OUR GOVERNANCE

As part of our B Corp commitment, we held quarterly meetings to update everyone on business highlights and to share the company's financial performance transparently.

Our Board is the primary source of our governance. Our Chair is an external non-executive director who brings perspective to the leadership team decision making. We are 80% female and 20% ethnically diverse.

Our lived experience is also diverse, we come from different social backgrounds and education routes, we are carers, working parents and mentors. 10% of our profits are shared with everyone on the team.

To mark our Wilful Group launch, instead of branding loads of merch, we distributed Beebombs of seeds to the whole team to plant pollinator friendly flowers in our outside spaces.



Beebombs



OUR ENVIRONMENT

Along with a whole host of other B Corps across the world, we are committed to achieving net zero by 2030 at the very latest. This year we have been working hard to do our bit, signing up to be a climate friendly business with Earthly. The carbon we have offset has avoided **108.63 tonnes of CO2**, which is **10% more than our measured footprint.**

The revenue from the credits we've bought supports the Kasigau Corridor, a REDD+ project based in Rukinga, Kenya.

It protects over

200,000

hectares of dryland Acacia-Commiphora forest, which is home to

2,000

elephants.

The project avoids

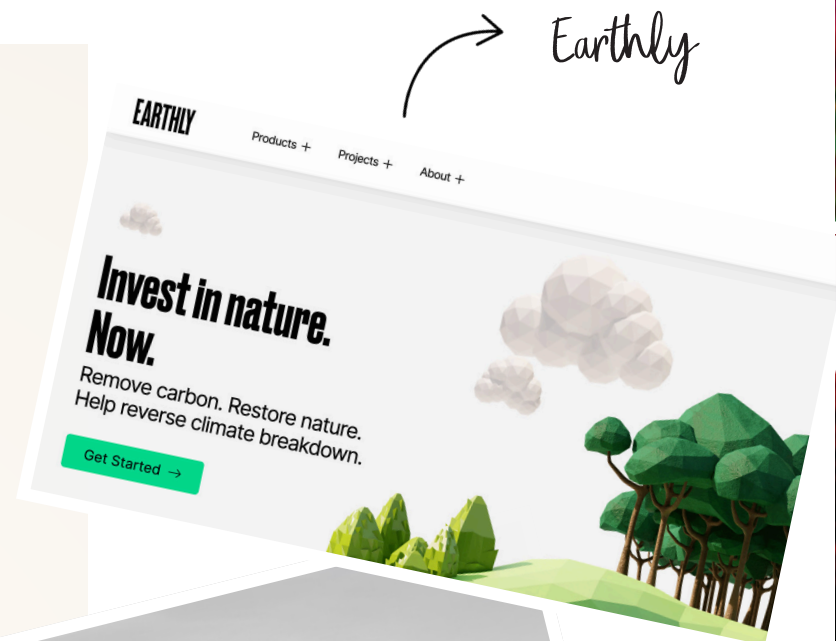
1,700,000

tonnes of CO2 emissions annually and provides social programmes which reach more than

116,000

people. The money from the carbon credits is used to support education, protect wildlife, manage the project, make eco-friendly products, help farmers and grow trees.

Closer to home, Gong staff have been busy making their own positive impact on the environment. Every little helps!



Earthly



Elephants, Rukinga, Kenya

STRETCH GOAL

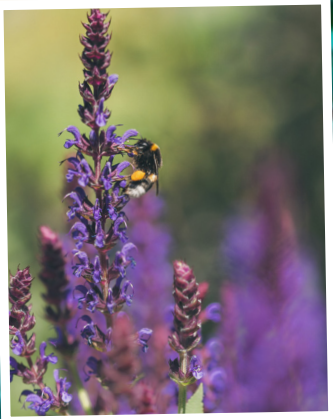
“We have avoided 108.63 tonnes of carbon, which is 10% more than our measured footprint.”



“I’ve switched to loose-leaf tea after realising that tea bags

can contain as much as 25% plastic and are not as compostable as I thought. The tea tastes better too!”

“As soon as Spring had sprung, I was straight out in the garden planting bee-friendly flowers for the pollinators. I also order fruit and veg from Oddbox, a B Corp which reduces food waste. And I find walking to work is a great way to get some fresh air and exercise in the morning sunshine (or rain!).”



“I have reduced my meat consumption and I cycle everywhere – it benefits me and the environment. I also always make sure to look for products that are organic, ethically produced, plant-based or low to zero waste. Not forgetting to reuse, recycle and upcycle as well!”

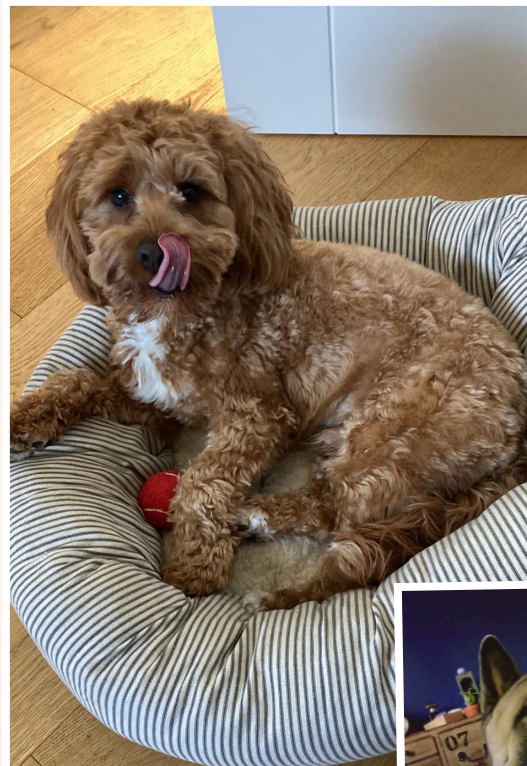
“I have recently decided to start walking to work rather than taking the bus. Not only does this positively impact my personal carbon footprint, but it gives me the chance to clear my head before the working day begins.”

SMALL PEOPLE & PETS

2021 was a bumper year for Gong babies with the arrival of Ariya, Florence and Iyaaz. We would also like to acknowledge our other precious mood enhancers, our lovely pets who kept us sane through another tumultuous year. To the little things who keep us grounded, where would we be without you?!



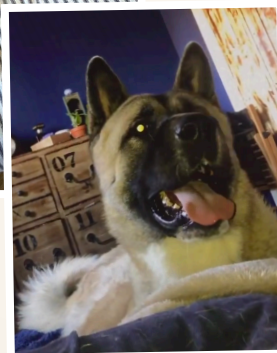
Iyaaz



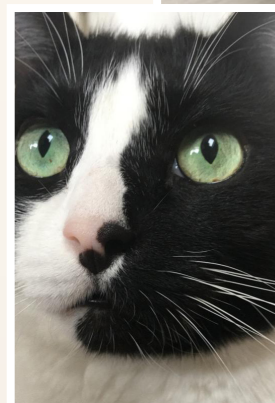
Barney



Mabel



Simba



Mojo



Leo & Bobo



Florence



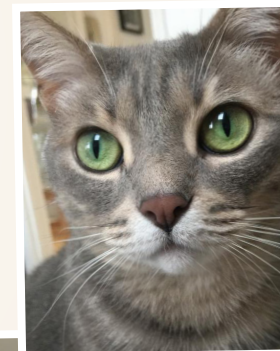
Rudy



Logan



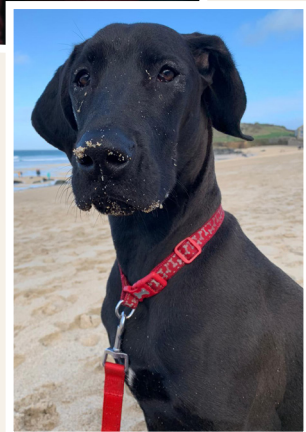
Rosie



Milly



Mutley



Gigi



Ariya

If you're interested in working with us or maybe you simply want to find out more about our sustainability journey, please do get in touch.

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