

Responsible Business Report

2025





Contents

People 5	Planet 19	Purpose 33	Policy 42
Our Holistic Approach 6	Highlights 20	The Burness Paull Foundation 34	Good Governance and Risk Management 43
Driving Change 7	Supporting a more sustainable future 22	Highlights 35	
Case Studies 9	Net Zero 24	Street Soccer 37	
Feature - Scottish Ballet 17	Carbon Footprint 25	Pro bono Legal Support 39	
	Energy 26		
	Travel 28		
	Waste 29		
	Sustainable Procurement 30		
	Greener Litigation and Arbitration 30		
	Championing Change 31		

Welcome

Responsible business isn't just about doing what is right. It's a commercial imperative.



Peter Lawson
CHAIR

Our clients have always expected the highest governance and regulatory standards. However, in recent years, there has been growing scrutiny of our responsible business credentials – and an expectation that we constantly improve and are transparent about our progress for accountability. This year we have signed up to insights platform Lamp House, which helps the legal sector benchmark progress and identify areas of focus for the next 12 months.

While our commitment to ensuring our clients receive the very best service primarily relates to the high-quality legal advice we provide, we are also acutely conscious of the position we hold in our clients' supply chains, the

commitments we have all made with the goal of achieving net zero, and the reporting requirements that accompany those targets.

Put simply, if we do not reduce our carbon emissions in line with our commitments, we become a less attractive option for clients in what is an increasingly competitive legal market.

Similarly, our ability to attract and retain the very best talent, which underpins our objective of being the leading law firm operating in and from Scotland, hinges heavily on the strength of our responsible business commitments.

Colleagues and prospective employees place growing importance on working for purposeful organisations that look beyond their own horizons and seek to make a positive impact.

Our belief in the power of partnerships – with our clients and like-minded organisations – is critical to this.

I was particularly pleased during 2025 that Burness Paull contributed to the [Scaling Scotland: Building the Engine for the Next 50 Years of Prosperity](#) report, led by leading entrepreneur and former Skyscanner executive Shane Corstorphine, which offers a blueprint for the development of more globally competitive companies in Scotland.

We also became the first law firm to sign up to the Pathways Pledge, an initiative created by Pathways Forward in response to the findings of the Scottish Government-commissioned *Pathways: A New Approach for Women in Entrepreneurship* report aimed at dramatically raising the participation level of women in the entrepreneurial economy.

These initiatives are a snapshot of the work that has been done this year, which we continue to set out under four headings – people, planet, purpose and policy – and is fundamental to our near and long-term success, both as a leading law firm and as a responsible employer.



About Us

As a UK law firm with a Scottish heritage, we support our clients wherever they do business across the world.



93 partners



700 high-performing employees



£93.5m annual turnover



Named UK Corporate Law Firm of the Year at the Insider Media Dealmakers Awards 2025



EcoVadis Gold medal winner



Member of Lex Mundi and TagLaw, providing access to legal expertise in 150 jurisdictions via 260 top law firms



First law firm to sign up to the Pathways Pledge



Strategic highlights: A look back on progress



Lindsay Wallace
HEAD OF
SUSTAINABILITY

As I look back on 2025, I am really pleased with the progress that we have made across all aspects of our responsible business strategy, as detailed in this report. We continue to strive to reduce our environmental impact, improve the wellbeing of our employees, be an inclusive and respectful employer and ensure that we uphold standards and good business practices. We were delighted to retain our Ecovadis Gold medal once again as recognition of our endeavours.

Our strategy continues to evolve, always focused on

the UN Sustainability Goals which provide a globally recognised framework for action. We refer to the goals to guide our efforts as well as identifying areas for improvement and we were delighted to fly the flag for the goals on 25 September 2025 and mark the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the goals by the UN member states.

It was good to discuss these goals at the UN Global compact network roadshow event in Edinburgh in September and collaborate with other members, sharing





best practices and challenges with businesses from a wide range of sectors. We discussed the clear business case for aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals ('SDGs'), including how members are using them to manage risk, attract investment, and drive innovation, as well as practical guidance on embedding the SDGs into strategy, operations, and reporting. It once again emphasised the importance of leadership, accountability, and business collaboration in driving meaningful progress.

Our pro bono relationship with SCOTLAND: The Big Picture has flourished this year and I personally enjoyed a day with colleagues visiting Argaty Farm and seeing the positive effects on rewilding in the farm setting – with amazing red kites and beaver reintroductions. Scotland has so much potential for rewilding, to increase biodiversity and help combat climate change and I am delighted that we are able to support SCOTLAND: The Big Picture in its work. For more information on this relationship, please see page 39.

This year also marked the 10th anniversary of the Burness Paull Foundation. As chair of the Foundation for a number of years, I am particularly pleased with all that has been achieved in the last decade, supporting employees with their individual good causes, donating to countless charities and our longstanding support for Street Soccer Scotland – all as detailed on page 37 of this report.

As 2025 draws to a close, so is my time with the firm after almost 20 years. I am moving on to new challenges and am very excited to be heading to Malawi to volunteer in a community project for the first few weeks of 2026. I look forward to taking my knowledge and experiences and sharing them with a project which is also driven by the UN sustainability goals. I am delighted to hand the reigns over to Michael Thomson, who becomes Burness Paull's head of responsible business.



People

Our people are at the heart of our business. We work hard to be a responsible and inclusive employer, creating a culture that values diversity, inclusion and workplace wellbeing.

Our holistic approach focuses on three key pillars:



Listening

Embedding a culture of psychological safety, underpinned by robust and accessible mechanisms for employee voice and feedback. This includes regular engagement surveys, open forums and ongoing dialogue, providing structured insight that informs leadership discussion and decision-making across the firm.



Supporting

Creating an inclusive policy and governance framework that supports colleagues from different backgrounds and identities to thrive and progress. This includes fair and transparent processes across recruitment, progression and sustainable working practices, helping to remove barriers and widen access to opportunity.



Empowering

Our programme of training, education and awareness-raising enables our colleagues to build knowledge, confidence and self-sufficiency in areas such as wellbeing, career development and other key work and life transitions. This is supported by clear signposting to tools and resources colleagues can access independently.



Driving change

Our diversity and inclusion strategy is central to our colleagues' experience and is shaped by internal feedback and best practice.



Attraction and Recruitment

Talent is everywhere but access to opportunity is not - we work with several partners to remove structural barriers and widen talent pipelines into the profession.



Client Engagement

Working collaboratively with clients on diversity and inclusion priorities ensures continuous knowledge exchange within our sector and cross others.



Continuous Learning

We foster a culture of continuous learning through a blended approach, combining mandatory compliance training with flexible learning on diversity, inclusion and wellbeing, enabled by our new Skillcast platform.



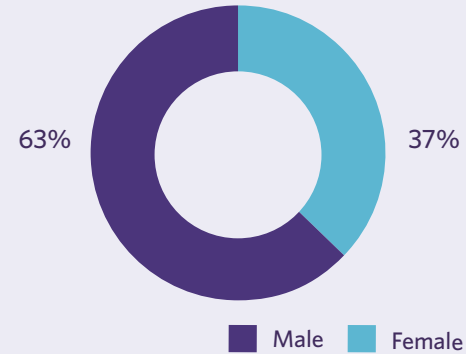
Accountability and Governance

By establishing a new strategy group which includes our managing partner and, by bringing wellbeing within the scope of our respect and inclusion agenda, we are ensuring accountability at the highest level. The strategy group sets an annual respect and inclusion action plan for the firm and meets every quarter to monitor our progress with the plan.

In the coming financial year, the action plan focuses on actions touching on the themes of gender balance, wellbeing, networks and allyship, and engagement. Michael Thomson, our head of responsible business, chairs our strategy group. He reports into our governance and strategy board on a quarterly basis, recommending the action plan to the board for its consideration and approval, and reporting to the board in our progress throughout the year on working on the action plan.



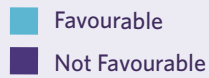
% OF MALE AND FEMALE PARTNERS



ENGAGEMENT

Equality was our strongest driver of engagement = favourable score of

8.9/10



SUMMER INTERNS



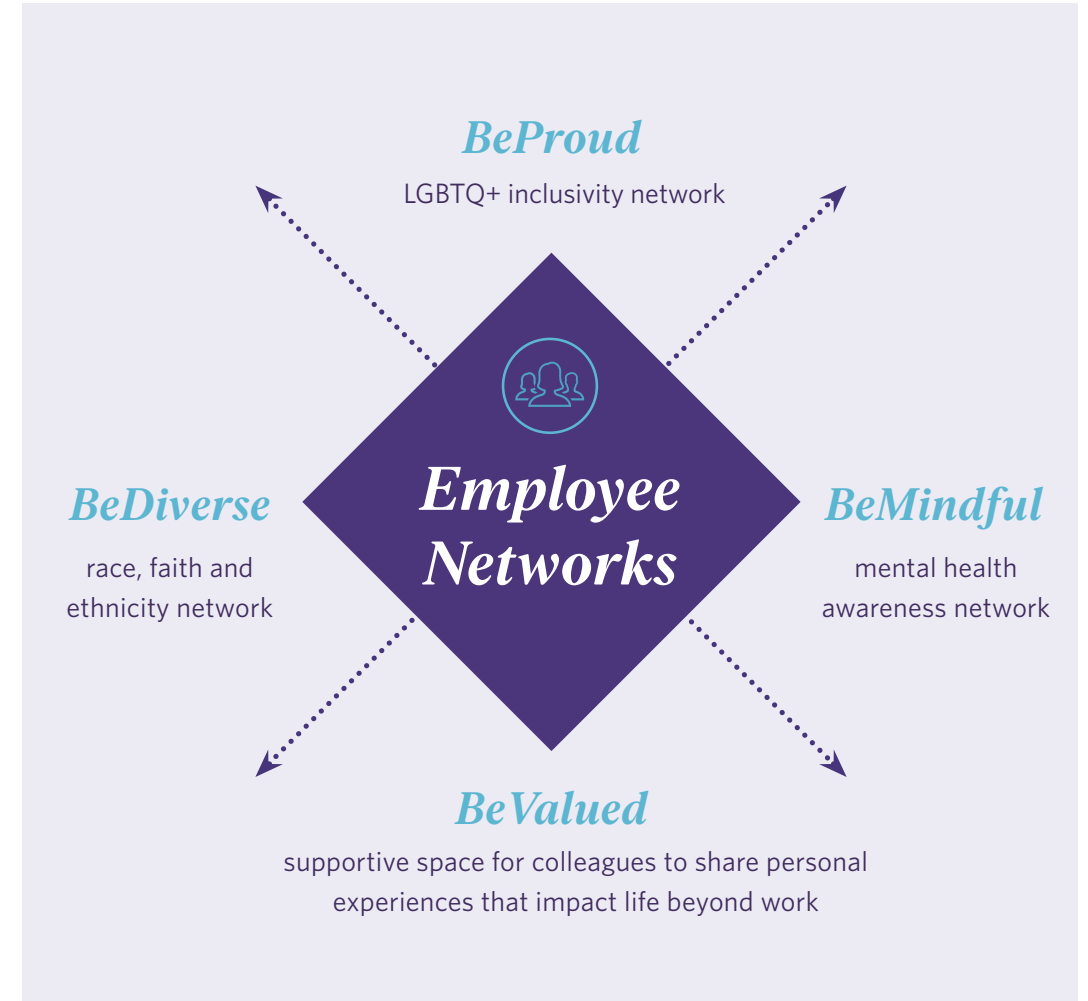
23% of offers went to minority ethnic candidates



13% to candidates with disabilities



31% from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds





CASE STUDY

Listening to help drive inclusive progression

At Burness Paull, listening is central to strengthening inclusion and improving decision-making. Colleague feedback highlighted the importance of open dialogue and transparency in supporting progression, particularly for women in senior roles, shaping where we focussed our listening activity.

As part of our commitment to advancing gender equality we undertook an anonymous qualitative survey of female partners, capturing experiences from entry into the profession through to partnership. The insight highlighted where barriers persist at different career stages and helped surface systemic themes relating to culture, behaviours and ways of working. The strength and depth of response provided a clear evidence base for action.

A cross-firm working group translated this insight into recommendations for the board, focussed on governance, progression and accountability. This work builds on earlier improvements, including support around the transition to parenthood at partner level, and is intended to create more consistent and sustainable pathways to partnership for future generations.

Listening is embedded more broadly through our recent investment in Workday Peakon, enabling more frequent feedback and ongoing dialogue. This is complemented by firmwide town halls, creating greater transparency around strategy and priorities and opportunities for colleagues to ask questions directly of senior leaders. Together, these approaches have contributed to a measurable improvement in engagement scores relating to communication and understanding of firm strategy.

In addition, we offer anonymous reporting through our external Work in Confidence platform and our active employee-led networks provide further routes for colleagues to raise issues and shape change across the firm.



*% of female partner promotions last year = **60%***



*% of current trainees
from state schools = **78%***

CASE STUDY

Supporting social mobility through partnerships

Widening access to the legal profession is a core part of our responsible business strategy and we invest in targeted initiatives to address structural barriers to entry.

Last year, we became the first Scottish law firm to partner with 93% Club, a national network for state-educated students and professionals from UK universities. The partnership enables targeted recruitment by giving us direct access to high-potential candidates who might otherwise lack visibility or networks within the legal sector.

Alongside recruitment activity, we co-host events with Scottish university societies, providing insight into commercial law careers, practical guidance on applications, and visible role models through our trainees and lawyers - many of whom have navigated similar pathways themselves.

This work forms part of our long-term commitment to social mobility, including our established partnership with The Robertson Trust. Since 2021, we have delivered a

structured legal career pathway through the Journey to Success Scholarship programme, removing barriers to entry and supporting progression into traineeships and qualification, with demonstrable impact on widening access to the profession.

This is in addition to our use of Rare contextualised recruitment and Candid applicant tracking system to ensure fair assessment of potential and adverse impact reporting.

As a result, we have more oversight of the number of applicants from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, reinforcing our commitment to building a more inclusive profession while attracting the widest possible pool of talent.



CASE STUDY

Empowering colleagues to take ownership of wellbeing

Empowerment is a core element of our wellbeing approach, focussed on equipping colleagues with the knowledge, confidence and practical tools to take informed action in areas most relevant to them.

Over the past year, we have increased flexibility and personal choice through a review of our health cashback plan, enabling colleagues to use benefits in ways that best reflect their individual circumstances. This has been complemented by a programme of expert-led training and education, including webinars on topics such as menopause and neurodiversity, with a strong emphasis on practical strategies and opportunities to ask questions grounded in personal experience.

Mental health remains one of the most significant wellbeing risks in the legal sector and a key focus of our enablement activity. We provide confidential, independent counselling through our partnership with Wellbeing Partners, offering rapid access to qualified therapists

across a wide range of issues, including stress, anxiety, sleep and relationships. This operates alongside support from trained mental health first aiders and our HR team, ensuring multiple, accessible routes to guidance and signposting.

To further build self-sufficiency, we have developed mental health toolkits for colleagues and managers, alongside refreshed line manager training focussed on encouraging open conversations, building confidence and supporting healthy, sustainable working practices.

Together, these initiatives reflect our commitment to empowering colleagues with the tools and resources to support their own wellbeing and that of others.



Levels of psychological safety remain high at = 8.7/10

**Jamie Meechan**

CHAIR OF BEPROUD

CASE STUDY

LGBTQ+ inclusivity

Championing change internally, amongst our clients and across the business community.

As chair of the firm's LGBTQ+ employee network, BeProud, Jamie Meechan leads the charge on all LGBTQ+ respect and inclusion activity within the firm. As an employment lawyer he also co-leads our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sub-team, supporting clients and other organisations in the wider equality, diversity and inclusion space. Outside of work, Jamie is a trustee of an LGBTQ+ inclusive education charity.

Over the last year Jamie has taken this combined wealth of experience and, together with our wider employment team, has taken the good work we have been doing internally out to our client base and wider industry, sharing best practice and shaping strategy in line with legislative change.

Jamie has outlined some of the highlights from the last 12 months and how he and the team continue to add value to this important issue.

"I have never been busier than over the past year when it comes to providing training or being asked to advise on equality, diversity and inclusion topics. We have worked with clients of all sizes and across a range of sectors, delivering training on general Equality Act compliance, preventing discrimination and harassment, and the new duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. We have been proactive in encouraging clients to deliver such training, not only from a legal compliance perspective but because we consider that it's the right thing for employers to do culturally and morally. There are clear benefits from an ESG and responsible business perspective and we have tried to play our part in promoting this.

One client we have supported in this way is the Electrical Industries Charity (the 'EIC'), working closely with them in relation to the new duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment in the workplace. This included carrying out policy reviews, providing training to the board,

managers and staff, working with the EIC to complete a risk assessment, providing guidance to managers, and other strategic advice. We were well placed to provide this support because of our deep knowledge of the new duty as well as the sector in which the EIC operates. We are also planning to work with the EIC to roll out similar support to the wider charity sector.



Jess Vailima
MANAGING
DIRECTOR -
EIC

"This work has gone far beyond legal compliance. It has strengthened our commitment to a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace, with practical, engaging training that genuinely resonated at every level of the organisation. The support has been first-class, and we're excited to build on this partnership to support employers across the sector."

At Burness Paull we use our values as a firm to encourage a similar culture of inclusivity and better people practices in other firms and organisations. Last year roundtables with other law firms and separately with client and contact organisations on the topic of LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion allowed honest discussions about barriers faced and strategies to overcome those within and beyond our own sector. We also welcomed guests to roundtable discussions on the equality and diversity aspects of the then Employment Rights Bill (now Employment Rights Act 2025). This brought together people from a range of sectors to discuss the legislative changes and strategies to ensure implementation as part of wider responsible business and ESG strategies. Topics included equality action plans, family leave policies and pay, and preventing third-party and other types of harassment.

We have shared our knowledge and experience on larger platforms, for example, being asked to speak at the Scottish Grocers Federation's inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Conference in April 2025 and our recent partnership with the Scottish Wholesale Association on Embracing Diversity Equity and Inclusion in relation to their members and the wider sector.



Colin Smith
CHIEF EXECUTIVE -
THE SCOTTISH
WHOLESALE
ASSOCIATION

"As an association, we recognise and understand that DE&I is rapidly becoming a vital part of any effective business strategy. Our partnership with Burness Paull has enabled us to offer our members access to high-quality information and practical support, including a dedicated helpline and a comprehensive starter guide. This collaboration has been instrumental in empowering our members to meet their legal obligations, strengthen recruitment and retention, and create inclusive workplace cultures where everyone can be their authentic selves and perform at their very best."

These important topics have formed a key part of our own events. I was delighted there was such an appetite to attend our series of diversity and inclusion conferences, bringing together speakers from other organisations and focusing on LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion in the workplace, with other conferences focussing on other topics in the works for the future. Feedback from attendees was very positive and they were able to take back strategies and ideas to their own workplaces after the events.

I also spoke at our cross-divisional risk conference on the new duty to prevent harassment, sharing top tips for business leaders, in-house lawyers and HR teams.

We recognise that we can not only support clients and other organisations when it comes to legal compliance in this space, but also to improve the people aspects of their wider ESG strategies. With the Employment Rights Act 2025 set to introduce a raft of changes of critical importance to employers throughout 2026 and beyond, in relation to issues of equality and employment practices more generally, it's never been more important for businesses to be thinking proactively and strategically in this area."





CASE STUDY

Pathways Pledge: Our commitment to equal opportunities for female colleagues

In 2025 we became the first law firm to sign up to the Pathways Pledge, an initiative created by Pathways Forward in response to the findings of the Scottish Government-commissioned *Pathways: A New Approach for Women in Entrepreneurship* report aimed at dramatically raising the participation level of women in the entrepreneurial economy.

Alongside cohort members FWB, Investing Women Angels and Cazenove Capital the firm has committed to two pledges to drive forward positive change for female colleagues across our business.

Following feedback gathered through our female partners survey, we have formed our pledges to directly address some of the barriers raised around supporting career development and traditional cultural and procedural norms not in keeping with the way we work now.

Our pledges centre around a commitment to improving equal access to work, business development opportunities

and career progression for female colleagues and to ensuring those who make positive contributions to our firm culture are recognised for this.

These pledges further enhance significant work already carried out or underway, for example enhanced support on returning to work after maternity leave and initiatives to address perceived and unconscious bias. The firm has also implemented a collaboration system to encourage positive and inclusive behaviours amongst partners, setting a precedent for how we expect all our colleagues to operate.



Nicky Clemence
PARTNER

"We are proud to be the first law firm to sign up to the Pathways Pledge. The outcome of our pledges in ensuring equal opportunities for all will directly impact the future of the firm, enabling the best leaders of tomorrow to succeed, regardless of gender. We're committed to supporting the progression of our female talent and hope that the work we are doing in this space will not only benefit our current and future colleagues but encourage positive change throughout our industry."



Ana Stewart
FOUNDER -
PATHWAYS

"We are excited to welcome our latest cohort and follow their progress over the next 12 months. It's great to see so many organisations collaborating to drive impact and to shift the dial for women in business."

Seeing a UK law firm like Burness Paull demonstrate such commitment to championing change throughout their organisation, perfectly captures the purpose of the Pathways Pledge initiative. Sharing their progress and learnings with others to accelerate further positive change showcases the true power of collective impact. I'm delighted to have them as part of the Pathways community."

In September 2025 Pathways Forward held its second annual Female Founders Growth Summit, with 300 founders and investors in attendance including some of the UK's fastest growing scaleups. Burness Paull was proud to support this event as part of a wider commitment to championing female progression across the entrepreneurial ecosystem.



FEATURE

Scottish Ballet: Inclusive events through exclusive partnerships

As Lead Next Generation Partner of Scottish Ballet, our multi-year partnership supports the company's Next Generation initiative, investing in talent to transform the future of dance. This mirrors our own strategy of inspiring and developing the next generation of leaders across the firm.

Collaboration and ensuring our external partnership strategy is joined up is key to making sure our relationships with partners are a success for all involved, and in 2025 we have enjoyed working closely with Scottish Ballet to help deliver aspects our Pathways Pledge commitment.

As part of our Pathways Pledge, we have committed to “ensuring an inclusive and fair approach to business development through evaluating and considering alternative event types”. This widens access to BD opportunities for female colleagues and expands on the range of events we offer to engage with our clients.

A guide to inclusive events has been developed and shared across the firm and we are tracking progress made in the range of events we host to ensure there are opportunities for all.





Expanding upon our existing events with Scottish Ballet which we continue to enjoy, we added a few more to our repertoire:

- In partnership with Scottish Ballet, in November we held a morning of movement and mindfulness. This exclusive event was designed to promote wellness, inclusivity and community among female clients, hosted by some of our female partners, including next generation business leaders. From being guided through a dance-based gentle exercise class that could be done at our desks to hearing from Scottish Ballet's head of performance medicine who shared how the team look after the wellbeing of the dancers, it left everyone feeling energised and inspired.
- In the lead up to Christmas, Scottish Ballet performed The Wee Nutcracker, a specially adapted version of the beloved festive ballet, perfect for children aged 5+ and their families who are looking to experience their first ballet together.

We hosted clients and their families to watch the show, then welcomed them for a very special



Paula Kennedy

PARTNER

"Achieving what we have set out in our Pathways Pledge is an important strategic objective for the firm and I am delighted that we are able to use our partnership with Scottish Ballet to help us widen the BD opportunities for all our colleagues, regardless of gender. We have enjoyed a close relationship with the team at Scottish Ballet for a number of years and they understand our business and our culture, so it is a pleasure working with them to create bespoke experiences that encompass our shared commitment to championing the next generation."

drinks reception where they got to meet the cast. It was a magical experience and enjoyed by both male and female clients and hosts, who appreciated the opportunity to include their children in the working day.



Planet

As a leading law firm, we recognise the far-reaching influence our work can have on the environment.

We continue to integrate sustainability into the way we advise clients and how we manage our operations, ensuring our actions reflect our commitment to protecting the planet.



Highlights

At the core of our operations lies a commitment to environmental responsibility, shaping how we manage our offices and the practices we require from our business partners.

In 2025 we continued to push forward in our efforts to cut emissions and align our actions with global climate ambitions. We have seen steady progress on our pathway to net zero, supported by clearer targets and practical steps to reduce our impact. As the landscape evolves so does our determination to keep improving, streamlining how we work, minimising waste across our operations and embracing smarter, more efficient ways of delivering positive environmental outcomes.

zero

WASTE TO
LANDFILL

3.1%

REDUCTION IN
EMISSIONS FROM
PURCHASED GOODS
& SERVICES

0
tCO₂e
EMISSIONS
UNDER SCOPE 1

20.44%

REDUCTION IN
EMISSIONS FROM
WASTE

20.8%

OVERALL
REDUCTION IN
CARBON FOOTPRINT
from FY23* Baseline

100%

RENEWABLE
ELECTRICITY

*Our baseline year has been updated from FY2022 to FY2023 to reflect a full year of data. Following the change in our financial reporting cycle from August - July to April - March, FY2022 represented a partial dataset. FY2023 therefore provides a more complete and more comparable baseline.

We welcomed our new sustainability manager Garima Singh, who has responsibility for overseeing and delivering sustainability initiatives across the business. Garima leads the development and implementation of carbon reduction strategies, working closely with business services and operational teams to embed sustainability into day-to-day activities.

Part of Garima's role includes engaging with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to drive meaningful environmental impact and support the firm's progress towards our net zero target. Her role focuses on turning strategic sustainability commitments into practical actions that create long-term value for the firm.



Garima Singh
SUSTAINABILITY
MANAGER

"I'm thrilled to join Burnes Paull at such an exciting stage in our sustainability journey. With experience across both public and private sectors, I've spent my career helping organisations embed sustainability into their operations and decision-making. From my first days at the firm, I've been welcomed so warmly that I already feel part of the family. It's inspiring to see what the firm has achieved in such a short time and I'm particularly excited about our membership of the Legal Sustainability Alliance and the UN Global Compact, which gives us the opportunity to showcase the firm's work and contribute to wider global sustainability conversations."



Susan Muirhead
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
ASSISTANT

I'm also pleased to introduce Susan Muirhead, our responsible business assistant, who will be supporting the responsible business team in ensuring our work is coordinated and impactful across the firm."

Supporting a more sustainable future

We are committed to reducing our environmental impact through policies and action.

CARBON REDUCTION PLAN

This year we developed our carbon reduction plan, outlining the key areas we need to focus on to reduce our emissions. Achieving these goals will take collective effort. Our environmental champions will continue to play an important role in leading by example and supporting initiatives across the firm, but real progress will come from the everyday actions of all our colleagues. By working together and making small but consistent changes we can ensure our targets translate into meaningful long-term impact. The plan focuses on:



Business travel

Encouraging lower-carbon travel choices and promoting virtual meetings, where possible



Paper printing

Continuing to reduce print volumes



Waste and recycling

Improving segregation and recycling across our offices



Single-use plastics

Phasing out unnecessary single-use items and working with suppliers to find sustainable alternatives



Supplier engagement

Strengthening conversations with our key suppliers to understand their environmental performance



Office locations

Ensuring our office spaces meet our sustainability standards and support lower-carbon operations

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

We continue to engage with our suppliers to better understand their sustainability practices. This year, we issued our first supplier engagement survey as part of our ongoing efforts to promote transparency and encourage stronger environmental performance across our supply chain.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

We have updated our sustainable travel policy, requiring colleagues to choose lower-carbon travel choices where possible, while balancing the need for lower-carbon travel choices with the wellbeing of our people. We are in the process of moving to a new travel management company, which will help us implement the updated policy.

We have seen high levels of engagement, as we develop and embed the policy and it continues to evolve, based on data and colleague feedback. After an initial trial period of the policy in action, this will inform next steps in our approach to sustainable travel.



Net zero commitment

Achieving net zero is a critical objective for our firm.

We have developed our near-term and long-term emissions-reduction targets using the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) framework as guidance and we intend to submit these targets for SBTi validation early in 2026.

SCOPE 1 AND 2 NEAR-TERM TARGET (IN DEVELOPMENT)

A 50% reduction by 2030 (from our baseline year).

SCOPE 3 NEAR-TERM TARGET (IN DEVELOPMENT)

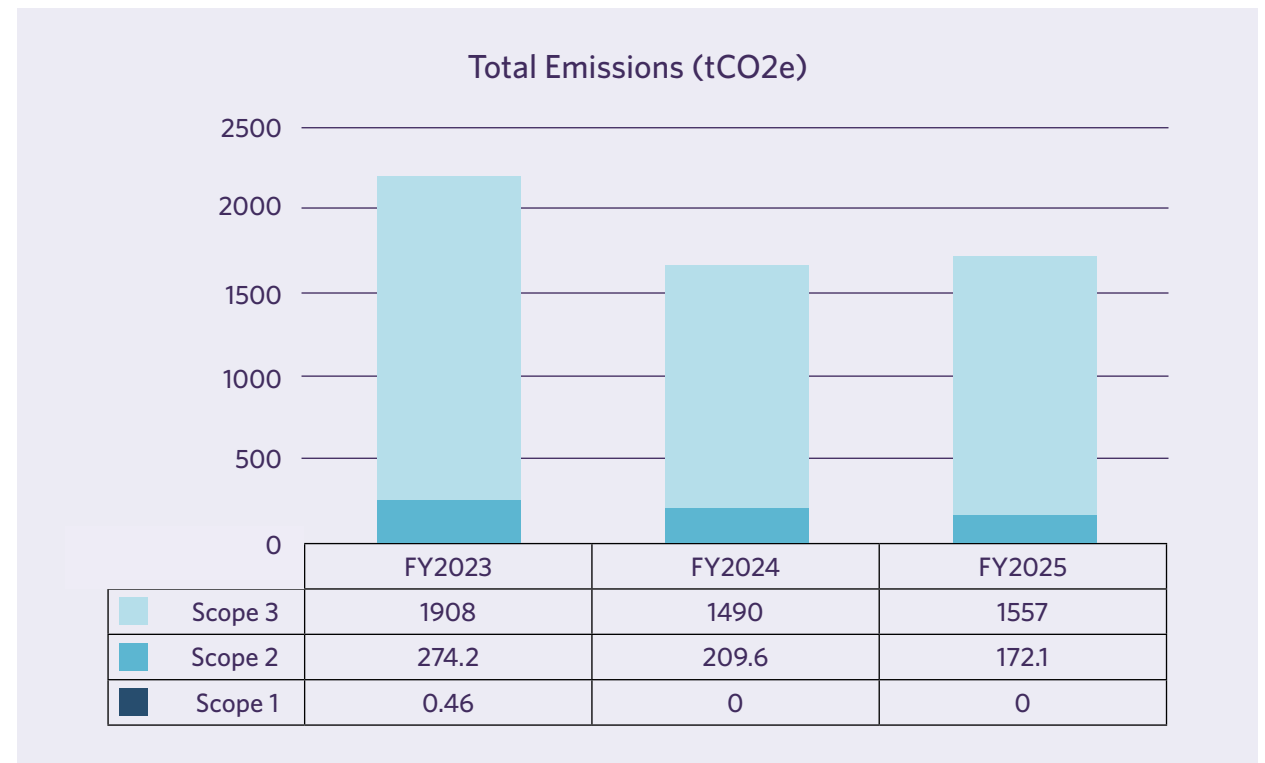
A 42% reduction by 2030 (from our baseline year).

LONG-TERM NET ZERO AMBITION

Achieve net zero across all operations and supply chain emissions by 2050, with a commitment to accelerate this timeline wherever possible.

OUR PROGRESS SO FAR

We have continued our partnership with Normative, a carbon accounting platform, to track, refine and improve our emissions data. This partnership allows us to identify key areas for reduction and monitor our progress clearly.





Carbon footprint

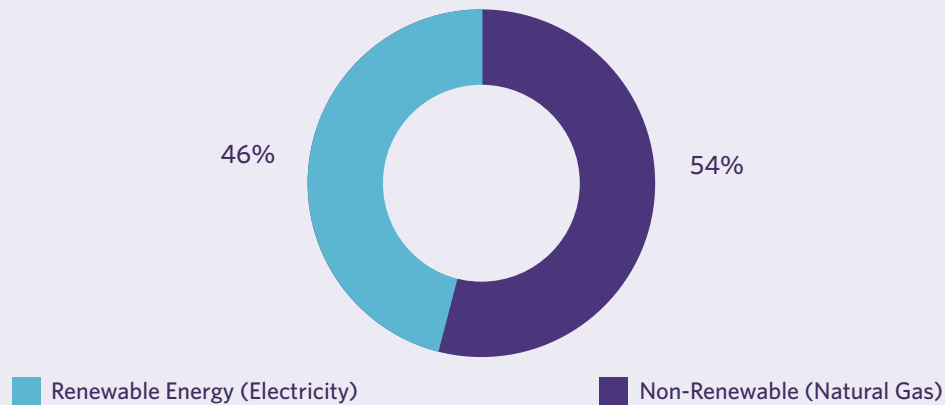
Our greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions are reported in line with the ghg protocol, providing a clear and consistent framework for tracking our environmental impact.

The table shows our emissions for FY24 and FY25, covering Scopes 1, 2, and key Scope 3 categories. We are committed to continually improving the accuracy and completeness of our emissions data. This includes refining our data collection processes and enhancing data quality year on year. You can find more details about our methodology [here](#).

GHG EMISSION BREAKDOWN		FY23	FY24	FY25
Scope	GHG Protocol Category	tCO2e	tCO2e	tCO2e
Scope 1	Mobile Combustion	0.46	0	0
Scope 2	Electricity (market based)	0	0	0
	Heat	269.3	209.6	172.1
Scope 3				
3.1	Purchased Goods & Services	1,113	869.1	842.2
3.2	Capital Goods	130.1	89.56	23.75
3.3	Fuel-and energy-related activities	109.8	90.54	77.64
3.4				
3.5	Waste generated in operations	1.79	0.366	0.291
3.6	Business travel	420.8	309.4	333.8
3.7	Employee commuting	132.7	130.5	279
Total		1,908	1,489	1,557

Energy

ENERGY MIX: RENEWABLE VS NON-RENEWABLE



We are proud that all our electricity is supplied from renewable sources, making up 54% of our total energy use, with the remainder linked to natural gas heating. As we operate in tenanted buildings, shifting to cleaner heating is challenging but we are working with landlords to advocate for greener alternatives.

Our office space is the largest contributor to our Scope 2 emissions and so is a key area of focus in our carbon reduction efforts.

We have continued to manage energy use across our offices with a practical, hands-on approach. Throughout the year we kept a close eye on how our buildings were performing, made sensible adjustments where they could make a difference and looked for straightforward ways to cut waste without affecting comfort or productivity. This ongoing attention to how we use energy is helping us run our spaces more efficiently and responsibly and we will keep building on this work as we look for further improvements in the year ahead.



100% REGO
certified
electricity



ESOS and SECR
compliant



Installed LED
and PIR lighting
across our offices



BREEAM
certified*



Electricity consumption
has reduced by 12.76%
compared to FY24



Gas consumption has
reduced by 17.42%
compared to FY24

We have continued to focus on managing energy use across our offices and this year's results show meaningful progress. Total energy consumption (electricity and gas combined) has fallen from around 1,855.38 MWh to 1,570.68 MWh in FY25 a reduction of 15.34%. This improvement reflects the ongoing attention we have given to building performance and sensible efficiency upgrades across our workspace. We will continue to build on this momentum as we look for further opportunities to reduce our overall energy demand in the year ahead.



Christmas office 2nd floor shut off savings – 5tCO₂e

This festive season, we enhanced energy efficiency in our Edinburgh office by closing one floor over the holiday period. By reducing heating, lighting and equipment use in the underutilised space, we anticipate saving 5tCO₂e, supporting our carbon reduction goals.

Throughout the year, we optimise energy use by closing sections of one floor in our Edinburgh office on Mondays and Fridays, consolidating operations into a smaller space. Combined with initiatives like smart technology and renewable energy solutions, these measures help reduce emissions while making the most efficient use of our office space.

Our facilities team has been key to making our sustainability initiatives happen. From coordinating office closures and optimising space usage to supporting energy-saving measures, helping with compliance like ESOS and leading our single-use plastic audit, their hands-on support has made a real difference.



Scott Dickson
FACILITIES
MANAGER

"Our department plays a key role in supporting the firm's environmental and social responsibility objectives by influencing how our buildings operate and how resources are used day to day. We have made targeted improvements across energy efficiency, waste management and the reduction in single-use plastics, ensuring the environmental impact is considered in all operational decisions. Equally important is our work with our suppliers, where we actively engage to ensure they are promoting sustainable practices, and responsible sourcing. Through these actions the facilities management within the business helps embed and deliver into the firm's wider commitment to responsible business practices."



Travel

Business travel and commuting remain a material source of Scope 3 emissions. In FY25, business travel emissions increased by 7.89% year on year, reflecting higher levels of business activity and in-person engagement. Despite this growth, the increase was relatively contained, supported by teams being more intentional about travel and continuing to use virtual collaboration where appropriate. Looking ahead, our new travel management company and updated sustainable travel policy will further encourage lower-carbon travel choices and support behavioural change across the firm.



***Business travel emissions higher this year
with increase of just over 7%***

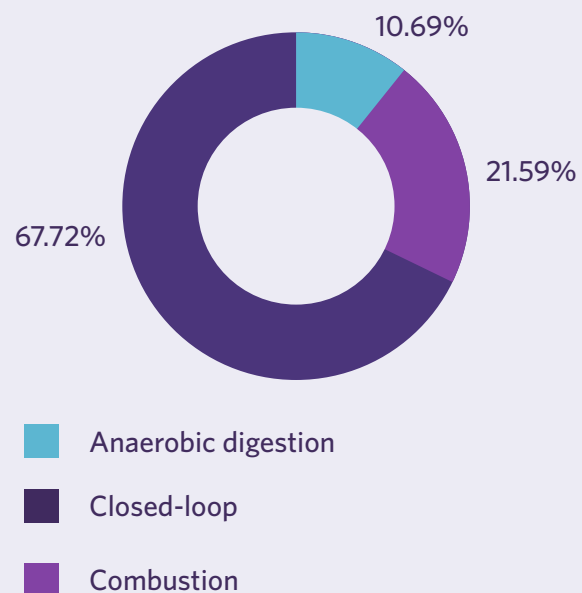
To improve the accuracy of our reporting on employee commuting emissions, we carried out a commuting survey asking colleagues how they travel to and from work. The insights gathered give us a much clearer understanding of commuting patterns across the business and will help us identify targeted initiatives to support and encourage more sustainable travel choices. As part of this, we are actively exploring options to make lower carbon commuting more accessible for our people.



Cycle-to-Work Scheme for our employees

Waste

SHARE OF EMISSIONS BY DISPOSAL METHOD, FY24/25



None of our waste goes to landfill and reducing office waste remains a priority. This year we introduced daily waste-weighing across all offices to improve the accuracy of our reporting, with results to be included in next year's report. We are also developing a broader waste management plan, including clearer bin signage and staff engagement to help meet our waste reduction targets which is part of our carbon reduction plan. At present, our target is to increase recycled waste to 30% by the end of 2026.

Our IT asset disposal policy continues to prioritise leasing and refurbishing equipment with any unused tech donated to a local charity and all toner and print consumables returned for full recycling.



Sustainable procurement

Our sustainable procurement approach is steadily strengthening, underpinned by our supplier code of conduct. So far, 180 of our 252 suppliers are confirmed to be in line with our code's standards. Over the year, we refreshed our ESG questionnaire and expanded our engagement with suppliers through surveys and annual performance reviews. As active members of the LSA Sustainable Procurement Group, we also benefit from shared insights and industry best practice, helping us to refine our processes and raise standards across our supply chain. Increasingly, we are prioritising suppliers that demonstrate strong sustainability credentials, ensuring that environmental responsibility is embedded in our purchasing decisions.

We look for evidence of a structured and credible approach to sustainability. This typically includes ESG credentials and relevant policies (for e.g. environmental, social and governance policies), whether the supplier measures and reports their carbon footprint and any

targets / initiatives in place to reduce emissions over time. We also consider broader sustainability practices, such as responsible sourcing, diversity and inclusion, labour standards and governance arrangements.

Making the case for greener litigation and arbitration

Members of our cross-divisional disputes group had the environmental impact of litigation in mind when responding to the Scottish Civil Justice Council's Call for Evidence on Mode of Attendance in court, which asks questions about virtual and in-person court hearings.

Amongst a balanced response considering pros and cons of virtual hearings, the point was made that virtual hearings are in keeping with the Greener Litigation Pledge, which Burness Paull is a signatory to. This recognises the importance of restricting global warming and commits to actions including taking steps to reduce the environmental footprint and greenhouse

gas emissions of our dispute resolution practice including litigation conducted in the courts; avoiding unnecessary travel in relation to a dispute in which we are acting; and whilst acknowledging the importance of in-person hearings to the administration of justice, actively considering for each hearing whether it is appropriate and amenable to being heard remotely, in whole or in part.

Championing change: Our people in action

Some of the highlights from the past 12 months include:

EARTH DAY

To celebrate Earth Day, colleagues took part in guided walks, jogs and runs in their local green spaces. For every participant, the Burness Paull Foundation contributed £5 to Keep Scotland Beautiful, supporting their work in education, community projects and nature restoration. In total, the initiative raised £250, encouraging colleagues to enjoy the outdoors while contributing to meaningful environmental action.





UN SDG ROADSHOW

Our head of sustainability, Lindsay Wallace and sustainability manager, Garima Singh attended the 2025 UN SDG Roadshow in Edinburgh, joining organisations from across Scotland to discuss how the UN Sustainable Development Goals can be woven more effectively into everyday business practice. The event offered practical insights into integrating the SDGs into organisational strategy, understanding Scotland-specific ESG risks and opportunities, and building stronger cross-sector partnerships to put the Goals in action.

SUSTAINABLE HALLOWEEN

Always on the lookout for ways to make a positive change no matter the season, our environmental champions organised lunchtime events in our Edinburgh and Glasgow offices to brainstorm how to have a sustainable Halloween. These workshops provided practical tips on choosing low-impact costumes, creating reusable or eco-friendly decorations and cutting down on confectionery waste. Colleagues also explored creative ways to cook with pumpkin leftovers, helping to reduce food waste at home as well as in the office.

CONSCIOUS CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be a time of excess, but the environmental champions rallied again to provide some top tips on how to be more sustainable while enjoying celebrating. They provided statistics on how wasteful this season can be, but had a greater focus on positive steps we can take to make positive change. Ideas were given on sustainable gifting, decorations and meal planning, providing examples for sustainable wrapping, homemade Christmas cards, leftover food ideas and more. This was finished with an unwanted gift swap in our Glasgow office to prevent any gifts going to landfill / waste.





Purpose

We're committed to making a positive impact on the communities in which we live and work, whether through the Burness Paull Foundation, providing legal advice on a pro bono basis or using our expertise and networks.

The Burness Paull Foundation: Celebrating a decade of charitable initiatives

In September 2025 we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Burness Paull Foundation.

Funded by the Burness Paull partnership, the Foundation is the first of its kind to be set up by a law firm in Scotland and one of the first in the UK, with employees firmly at its heart. It is governed by 14 trustees from across the firm, including our chair and managing partner and representatives from legal and business services teams.

The Foundation exists to facilitate the charitable contributions of Burness Paull on a collective basis, as well as to support the individual fundraising efforts of employees – making financial awards to help as they fundraise for worthwhile causes of their choice.

IN THE LAST TEN YEARS:



**Over 310
individual charities
supported**



**Over £500,000 monetary
donations made**

2025:



**£59.5k to 29 charities
from Jan to Dec 25**



**Caroline
Stevenson**

PARTNER AND CHAIR
OF THE BURNESS PAULL
FOUNDATION

"It is a privilege to chair the Burness Paull Foundation and a position I'm so lucky to hold. Over the last ten years our colleagues have achieved amazing things for causes that mean so much to them and it is wonderful that through the Foundation, the firm has been able to support their efforts.

Collectively, our partnership with Street Soccer is so important to Burness Paull and being part of something that brings about so much positive change is very special.

In September we celebrated the Foundation's 10th Anniversary with a month of activity and I am really looking forward to seeing what we can achieve next!"

Some of our foundation fundraising highlights for 2025

“ENJOYING NATURE” PHOTOGRAPHS

To celebrate the renewal of our partnership with SCOTLAND: The Big Picture we asked colleagues to send in photographs on the theme “enjoying nature”, with the Foundation making a donation to SCOTLAND: The Big Picture for each entry. The pictures contributed were beautiful, and a real celebration of the natural world we all want to preserve and protect.

TRAINEE POTLUCK

Our trainees across Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow put on their aprons to raise money for Young Lives vs Cancer by hosting a potluck lunch and a bake sale. Their creations were delicious and together with a donation from the Foundation, raised over £1500.

WORLD HEART DAY WALK

On World Heart Day in September, colleagues across the firm got outside for a lunchtime 5km walk to raise funds and awareness for Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland. Whether joining the group walks organised in each office or clocking up the steps remotely. For every colleague that took part the Foundation made a donation to this important cause.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

We hosted Macmillan Coffee Mornings in each of our offices, with our own star bakers providing delicious treats, raising over £1400. An annual event everyone looks forward to!





TOUR DE 4 CYCLING CHALLENGE

As part of the Foundation's 10th Anniversary month of activity, Elizabeth Cheetham, Ross Gale and Liam White took on the Tour de 4 cycling challenge, an event in Glasgow founded by Sir Chris Hoy to raise awareness and funds for charities helping those affected by Stage 4 cancer. Our team chose to cycle for the Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity.

HEDGEHOG HOSPITAL

In response to our appeal following a fire at the Forth Hedgehog Hospital, colleagues submitted hedgehog-themed photos, drawings, stories, poems and jokes, with the Foundation donating to the charity's emergency fundraiser for every contribution sent in. We raised £400 to help them rebuild their facilities.



MOVEMBER

MoBros and MoSisters from across the firm got together to champion men's health throughout Movember, growing some impressive moustaches and clocking up the miles walking, running and taking part in the Mo Run. Their fantastic fundraising efforts and support from the Foundation totalled over £11k.



CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025

For our annual Christmas Appeal, we supported local causes in each of our three cities: Carers of West Lothian in Edinburgh, Befriend a Child in Aberdeen and FARE Scotland in Glasgow. Gifts and financial contributions were donated by colleagues to help those who need it most. We also took part in Save the Children UK's Christmas Jumper Day, pulling on colourful knits and accessories in support of the cause. For every colleague who joined in, the Foundation made a donation.



Street Soccer: Part of the #SameTeam

Burness Paull enjoys a longstanding partnership with Street Soccer, a truly inspirational organisation providing training and personal development opportunities for socially disadvantaged groups across Scotland and London, using the positive power of football. This is supported by the Burness Paull Foundation and goes back over 12 years.



As well as financial support, sponsoring annual flagship fundraising events such as the annual Women Inspired lunch and Gala Dinner, we have teamed up to host joint football tournaments, held the Street Soccer Business Club in each of our offices and heard from the team at a number of our client events.

The Burness Paull Foundation is proud to sponsor the men's and women's teams from Street Soccer who represent Scotland in a range of international tournaments, including the annual Homeless World Cup. The 2025 event took place in Oslo and, for the first time, the Burness Paull Foundation also sponsored the England team.

On their return, we welcomed Team Scotland into our office to hear about their time in Oslo and from the stories shared, it was clear to see what a life-changing experience representing their country in an international tournament has been for each of the players.



KITBACK

In 2025 Street Soccer launched Kitback, a new social enterprise which is already having a positive impact on players, society and the environment. Through the collection, upcycling and resale of donated football kit, Kitback is making a difference to communities across Scotland and London, with 100% of the profits going directly to supporting Street Soccer's programmes.

The Burness Paull Foundation has sponsored the donation boxes which will appear at donation drives and shirt sales across the country. Thirty-two pop up events took place in 2025, with 750 shirts donated. And our colleagues played their part, with one of the donation boxes touring each of our offices and getting filled with pre-loved kit.



The screenshot displays the Kitback website's 'LATEST COLLECTION' page. The top navigation bar includes links for HOME, SHOP, ABOUT, and DONATE, along with a search icon and a shopping cart icon. A banner at the top features a red and white striped football shirt with the text 'LATEST COLLECTION' and a 'SHOP NOW' button. Below the banner, three featured items are shown:

- TENERIFE 00-01 HOME SHIRT (L)**: £39.99, with a 'VIEW' button.
- HEARTS 24-25 HOME SHIRT (S)**: £39.99, with a 'VIEW' button.
- MAN CITY 24-25 AWAY SHIRT (L)**: £69.99, with a 'VIEW' button.



Pro bono legal support

SCOTLAND: THE BIG PICTURE

Our partnership with SCOTLAND: The Big Picture began in 2024, founded on the firm's commitment to making its environmental impact as positive as possible.

This aligns with the charity's mission to address biodiversity loss, champion sustainable land practices and contribute to building a more resilient natural environment across Scotland's landscapes and communities.

As 'Rewilding Business Partner', we provide pro bono legal advice to support the Northwoods Rewilding Network, a pioneering initiative connecting a growing community of farmers, crofters, community groups and other landowners who currently steward over 25,000 acres of land across Scotland.

We were pleased to renew our partnership in 2025 and our lawyers provided pro bono advice on:

REWILDING LEGACY

Providing guidance on succession planning, exploring the potential to protect pioneering Northwoods partners' rewilding projects long after their founders have passed away. This guidance could safeguard natural habitats for generations to come, ensuring that hard-won ecological gains are not lost but instead form a lasting natural legacy - for nature, climate and people.





SCOTLAND: THE BIG PICTURE OFFICE REGISTRATION

Supporting with office registration at a critical point in SCOTLAND: The Big Picture's journey, helping to stabilise operations during a period of growth and transition.

IP AND VIDEO RIGHTS

Drafting clear intellectual property guidance stating that all creative assets produced for SCOTLAND: The Big Picture,

from film and photography to written content, sound recordings and design work, remain the sole property of the charity.

As well as providing expertise to help SCOTLAND: The Big Picture overcome challenges and accelerate progress, we have raised funds and awareness through Foundation activities such as our "enjoying nature" photography initiative and activities led by our environmental champions such as the "Why not Scotland?" film night held in each of our offices, showing a feature-length documentary produced by SCOTLAND: The Big Picture for the Scottish Rewilding Alliance's Rewilding Nation campaign.

A highlight of the year was when a group of colleagues had the privilege to visit one of the Northwoods network sites at Argaty, a working farm and rewilding estate in Perthshire. Argaty is home to the award-winning Argaty Red Kite project and the visit was a fantastic opportunity to witness firsthand the meaningful impact of our partnership and the ongoing rewilding efforts of SCOTLAND: The Big Picture.



Lisa Chilton
CEO -
SCOTLAND:
THE BIG PICTURE

"We are delighted to continue our partnership with Burness Paull and have their legal support as we continue our work to restore Scotland's natural landscape. Their guidance has helped us facilitate the creation of vibrant ecosystems and sustainable land management practices, and their commercial advice has been invaluable as we have grown. It has been fantastic to engage with the firm's employees through educational and social activities and I really look forward to seeing what we can achieve together next."

In addition to our pro bono partnership with SCOTLAND: The Big Picture we have continued to support many clients through general pro bono legal advice.

***Over the last 12 months:
Over 164 hours of pro bono
support, with a value of
£32,000***



Some highlights include:

SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS/VARIOUS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Over £5,500

We continue to operate a legal ‘helpline’ for SCVO (Scotland’s national membership organisation for the voluntary sector) through which we offer pro bono support directly to SCVO members across a wide range of legal issues. Over the last year, the helpline has seen us provide advice on issues such as constitutional documents, legal structures, subsidiary arrangements, governance matters and employment law issues.

DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND/ VARIOUS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Over £4,000

For some of the period we also operated a legal ‘helpline’ for DTAS whereby member organisations could access pro bono legal support. Examples of support given include advice relating to available grants, contractual terms, legal duties, charity trustees, employment law, legal structure and similar matters.

ILM (HIGHLAND)

Over £3,500

We were instructed to negotiate a lease of ILM Highland’s new retail unit, located in Scotland’s first Training and Reuse Village. The Reuse Village will feature pre-loved retail outlets, a bike repair hub, a tool library, a café and a training kitchen. ILM Highland is an independent charity and social enterprise providing home improvement, electrical recycling and retail services to the Highlands of Scotland. All profits are reinvested to support elderly, disabled and veteran residents to live independently.



Policy

Risk management and good governance is central to our business and our decision making.

Good governance and risk management regime

Good governance and risk management is at the heart of our operations and decision making.

The governance and strategy board, under the leadership of our chair Peter Lawson, has responsibility for overseeing the strategic direction of the firm. Our managing partner, Mark Ellis, along with our operations board, is responsible for executing the strategy and ensuring the firm's effective stewardship.

This year the firm appointed Noel Jordan as its first chief operating officer.

Jill Moore, our general counsel partner, oversees the GC team and the wider anti-money laundering and compliance team, which feed into our operations board and governance and strategy board as appropriate.

In June 2025 Alison Clarke was promoted to head of risk, underlining the importance of risk management to the firm.

Within the team, we also have a dedicated information security manager and a data protection officer.

Noel Jordan

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Alison Clarke

HEAD OF RISK



The general counsel team conduct a detailed risk review exercise twice a year and report to our governance and strategy board and risk committee.

Some key risks and the current risk mitigation steps:

BUSINESS CONTINUITY, RISK OF CYBER ATTACKS AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Ensuring we are adequately prepared for a business interruption event such as a serious cyber attack, leading to a ransom attack and restriction of access to our systems, remains a key priority. We recently completed an extensive business continuity testing and planning exercise with external consultants. This involved a full review and refresh of our existing incident response and business continuity plans and the preparation of several supporting tools culminating in the testing of our plans. The exercises focussed on three key areas: (i) IT incident

response; (ii) senior management incident response; and (iii) overall business continuity. We continue to develop and test our security, incident response and business continuity plans.

We recently completed the recertification process for ISO27001 and are now fully compliant with 2022 version of the standard. In our most recent audit, we received zero minor non-conformities and zero opportunities for improvement. In addition to ISO27001, we continue to hold Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus, which is further demonstration of our commitment to our cyber controls and protection of our clients' information.



We implemented a market-leading provider of security awareness training, to strengthen our current position and deliver more regular, targeted training. This has been rolled out firm wide. To strengthen our information security posture, we are currently investigating other security based frameworks which we can layer on top of ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials. The firm is also investigating and performing a gap analysis for LOCS:23, a legal specific data protection and information security related framework, which has been approved by the ICO.

DATA PROTECTION AND DEALING WITH SENSITIVE/HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL DATA

We keep our policies and procedures relating to data protection and the sharing of sensitive and/or highly confidential data under regular review. We continue to monitor the measures which must be taken (i.e. when sharing data, highly confidential information such as insider information, commercially sensitive information, bank details, information relating to any high-profile individual or special categories of personal data). We also provide regular training on these key topics.

ONBOARDING, SUPPLIER PROCESS AND ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND SANCTIONS REQUIREMENTS

Ensuring we are fully compliant with the law and regulations in respect of anti-money laundering, terrorist, financing, and sanctions legislation remains key.

We have an experienced AML team (the majority of whom have passed with merit the ICA International Advanced Certificate in Anti-money Laundering) and a dedicated conflicts team which has responsibility of carrying out conflict checks and who all have substantial AML experience. The AML team use several sources to carry out manual sanctions and politically exposed person(s) checks.

We have robust onboarding and supplier processes in place to ensure that responsible business factors are considered fully and appropriate diligence is done. Our supplier process includes a risk assessment in relation to environmental risks and where appropriate further follow-up information is requested and factored into our risk assessment.





SUPERVISION

We understand that getting supervision right is not just important to mitigate the risk of error but also in terms of employee wellbeing. We ensure we are in line with the SRA workplace culture guidance, and carry out training on supervision on a regular basis for solicitors and business services employees. We regularly evaluate how well supervision is being carried out in practice through our external audits.

TERMS OF BUSINESS, ENGAGING OTHER LAW FIRMS AND LIMITING LIABILITY

We have training in place to instil in our fee earners the importance of issuing a timely and properly drafted engagement or scope letter to clients. Given the global nature of many of our clients we often engage with law firms in other jurisdictions and the general counsel team regularly provide support to fee earners to ensure we engage in an appropriate manner. An appropriate liability cap is always included in our terms of business. Our monthly external audits review our engagement terms to ensure that these are appropriate for the circumstances and that our policies and processes have been properly followed.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST PROCESS AND OWN FIRM CONFLICTS

To ensure the rigorous management of legal and commercial conflicts, we have a dedicated and experienced conflicts team (supervised by the general counsel team) who carry out all necessary conflict checks.

Our conflicts committee deals with any potential conflicts and determines whether we can act or not, with decision making properly recorded. This committee is made up of a number of partners from across the business including members of senior management including our chair and managing partner and all members of the general counsel team. Within the last year we also carried out training on conflicts for our conflicts team and specific training on own firm conflicts for key divisions as needed. Our head of risk also assists our client relations partner with any client complaints and claims.

LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND AND SRA INCREASED REGULATORY REACH

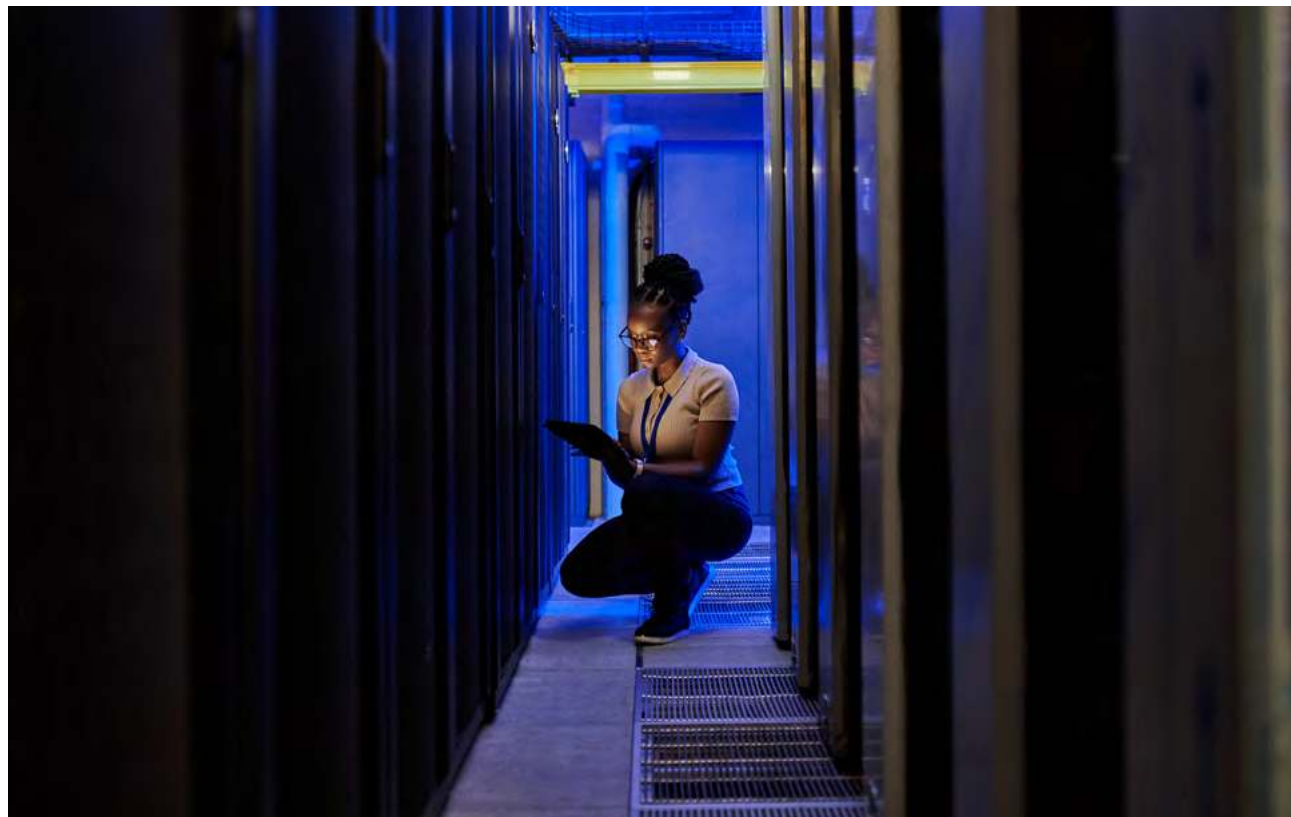
It is clear from SRA decisions and updates/guidance published that the regulatory reach of the SRA is increasing – and that the SRA requirements are very relevant for all of our employees and partners and not just those who are individually SRA regulated. Our general counsel team keeps up to date on all Law Society of Scotland and SRA developments and guidance and provide training as needed. We keep all policies and procedures updated in accordance with Law Society of Scotland and SRA guidance.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

Although we are very keen to harness the benefits of AI where it is beneficial to our clients and our business, we take a strict and careful approach to any new technology in terms of risk. Our counsel for risk, Nikki Weir achieved the Law Society Certificate in Ethical Artificial Intelligence in March 2025, which has been extremely helpful in shaping our policy in this key area. The appointment of Noel Jordan as COO in 2025 is also helping to drive this key area forward.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE ECONOMIC CRIME AND TRANSPARENCY ACT 2023 ('ECCTA')

Our counsel for risk has undertaken a full review in relation to the requirements of ECCTA and the failure to prevent fraud. We have carried out a full risk assessment including evaluation of who our associated persons are and how the requirements impact us as a firm. We are carrying out training for all staff on this topic and will keep our risk assessment under review.





COMPULSORY TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND KNOWLEDGE

We provide compulsory compliance training for new starts, all employees and partners on an ongoing basis. We recently implemented Skillcast, a firmwide portal to assist us in providing regular and targeted training. This includes training on:



Anti-Bribery



Anti-Money
Laundering and
Compliance



Information
Security



Modern Slavery
(including for those
in business services,
supplier management)



Respect and
Inclusion
(including diversity and
unconscious bias)



Risk



Client
Engagement



Conflicts of
Interest



SRA regulation



Generative AI



Supervision and
delegation



Failure to
prevent Fraud



Our knowledge team consists of 14 knowledge and development lawyers, responsible for legal training and development across our business. Each KDL runs a series of tailored training programmes for their division and for NQs. We also run a firmwide knowledge programme which covers legal developments and commercial topics.

Our trainees follow a dedicated training programme to meet the requirements of the Law Society of Scotland, ensuring they are given training and assistance on a wide range of practice and risk management issues as well as the law for their trainee seats.

In addition to this we run a firmwide training programme for newly qualified solicitors to ensure they have the knowledge and skills we expect of an NQ.

MODERN SLAVERY

We are committed to ensuring that modern slavery has no place in our firm or supply chain. We undertake regular review of our suppliers and request that they sign up to our supplier code of business to ensure that terms are in place to cover compliance with all applicable modern slavery, anti-trafficking and labour laws or alternatively have in place their own materially equivalent code.

All staff undergo refresher training on recognising key indicators of modern slavery and how to raise questions and report concerns. We continue to work on developing our existing supplier ESG risk rating system to include specific modern slavery indicators to classify suppliers by risk level and use this framework to conduct targeted audits of any higher risk suppliers.

FILE AUDITS

Over 40 of our client matters are audited monthly by an external auditor. These audits focus on compliance with our policies and regulatory requirements. The general counsel team ensure that any matters flagged in the audit are followed up as needed and that audits are carried out in respect of any new or increased risk.

INSURANCE

We carry comprehensive insurance, including PII, appropriate for our type of business. Our general counsel team consults with our insurance brokers regularly on risk and compliance matters and any changes in the legal landscape. Our brokers also provide us with regular firmwide risk training.

Looking ahead: A refreshed focus for 2026



Michael Thomson
HEAD OF
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS

To me, responsible business means doing business in line with ethical, fair and sustainable values, working in a way that builds trust between me, my colleagues and my clients. I want to protect our firm, our people and our environment for the future, and do business in a way that makes a positive impact on society.

This is the approach that I intend to follow when I take over from our brilliant, outgoing head, Lindsay Wallace, in leading on responsible business at Burness Paull.

Our focus on being a responsible business means driving positive changes across a number of areas: respect and inclusion; health and wellbeing; the environment; pro bono and community work; governance; and our support of charities and local organisations that are important to us. It shapes how we work with our partners, for example developing the next generation of leaders alongside Scottish Ballet and supporting the life-changing work Street Soccer does to help the players in our communities.

Our people and clients want to work with a business that has serious ambitions to do business responsibly, and measures how it's getting on in achieving those ambitions.

In evaluating our progress to date, we know that we're becoming more advanced in some areas, building strong foundations in others, and also identifying some where we need to develop. For example, being the first law firm to sign up to the Pathways Pledge is a hugely positive step but we now must ensure we deliver on our commitments.

As responsible business-related expectations and regulations evolve, there's an ongoing shift: to increased transparency, from our work in this area being voluntary to it being regulated, and to measuring our efforts instead of just declaring them. To help ensure we focus our efforts, we have invested in Lamp House, a research and data tool to evaluate our strategy, identifying where we are performing well and where we have not made as much progress as we would have liked, giving us the opportunity to address this. We'll continue to push ourselves on where we can go further, and utilising the Lamp House platform, challenge ourselves to measure and improve the impact that our efforts have.

We're looking forward to showing what more we can do. And so much good can come of having discussions and collaborating in this area. So I welcome any feedback on our report, or the chance to discuss. Please feel free to get in touch.



Partnerships & Accreditations



 Burness Paull