



BUSINESS
DESIGN
CENTRE

IMPACT REPORT 2024

Our Company

The past twelve months hold many highlights for the Business Design Centre. In addition to welcoming a number of new team members and businesses to our portfolio of events and showrooms, we have seen continued investment in our facilities and were proud to have been recognised as the Best UK Venue by our peers at the Exhibition News Awards.

The biggest news of the year is undoubtedly, that following almost forty years of family ownership, the Morris Family took the decision to find new owners for the BDC, passing on the mantle to our new colleagues at Excel London. This exciting next chapter for the business enables our team to continue in delivering world-class events for our clients as well as further innovating and developing the way in which we provide an unparalleled experience for all our customers.

As we move into our fifteenth year as a carbon neutral venue, we look back on a journey that has taken us to within reaching distance of becoming net zero. Over the next five years, we aim to focus on greater collaboration with those we work alongside and to continue to refine the way in which we measure ourselves as a business.



Dominic Jones
Chief Executive



100+
Events



4
Trophies



834k
People through the doors

25
Charities & CICs Supported



39
Staff Members

103
Resident Businesses



2024 Highlights



Our carbon footprint measured a 75% reduction since our baseline year, we successfully trialled no disposable cup days and planted phase one of our kitchen garden on the roof.

Our Environment:
Page 4

Working alongside various partners in the past twelve months, we enjoyed participating in many volunteer opportunities. From festive lunches to mentoring and fundraising.

Our Community:
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Six new team members joined in the last year and we elevated our physical and mental wellbeing programme to incorporate more wellness, including yoga, sound bath experiences as well as more formal policies.

Our People:
Page 6

From permanent inclusive spaces and becoming a Disability Confident Committed employer, we celebrated cultural events across the calendar.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:
Page 7



Investment in our facilities saw two new bar areas and a new online ordering platform launched. Collaboration with our catering team also meant the full roll out of carbon labelled packages.

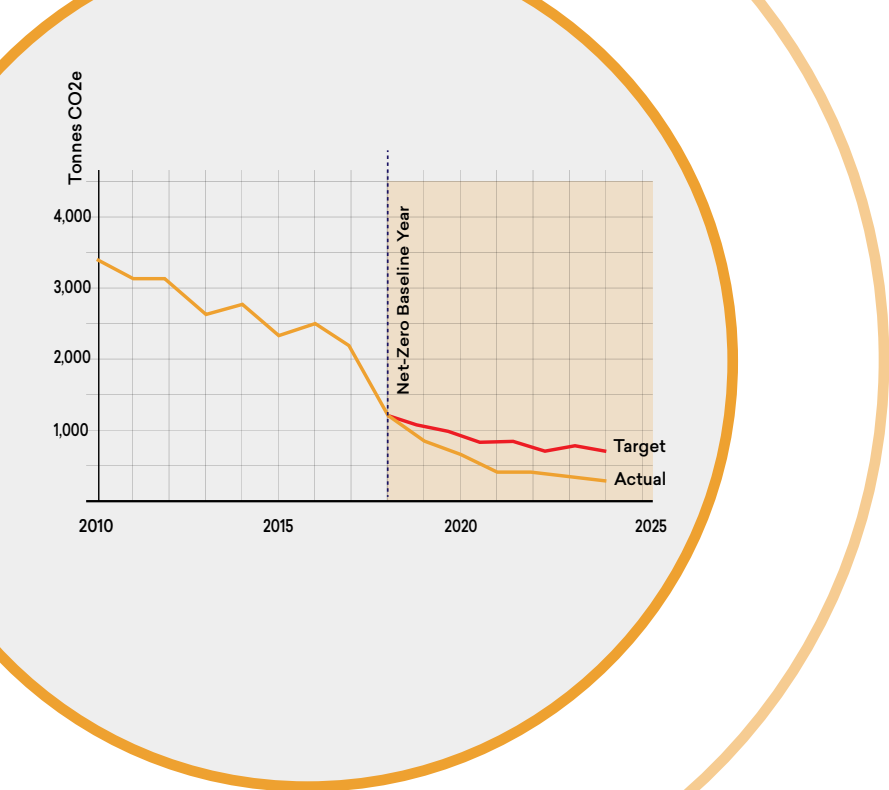
Our Clients, Suppliers & Industry:
Page 8



We were delighted to pick up four trophies this year: Best UK Venue (Exhibition News Awards), Sustainability Award & Best Event Venue Customer Service Over 500 Theatre Style - Bronze (Conference & Events Awards), Venue Partnership of the Year (EN Supplier Awards).



In summer, we welcomed Chris Harris in a new role for the venue. As Sustainability Lead, Chris has already begun working alongside our team and onsite suppliers. Hear from him on Page 4.



Our Environment

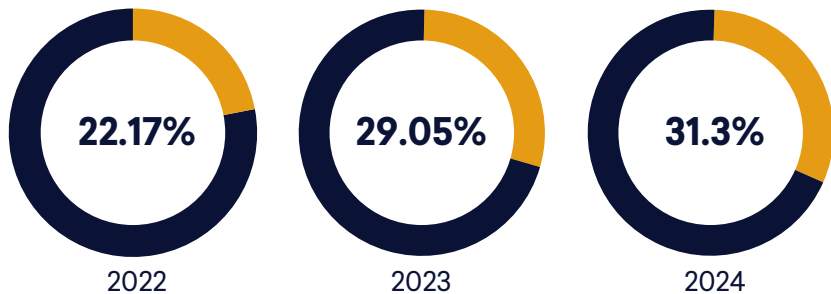
The BDC is entering its fifteenth year as a carbon neutral venue. Over this time, we have continued to reduce the footprint of the business and offset residual emissions. We have been working with carbon consultants at ecollective and have a plan in place to continue to reduce our footprint in order to reach net zero by 2030. Our reporting has now changed to the calendar year and in 2024, we reached a 75% reduction since our baseline year in 2018.



Over the past six months since joining the BDC, it's become very clear how far along on the journey the BDC is. It's a very exciting point to have come on board and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead over the coming years in supporting the business in reaching net zero.

Chris Harris
BDC Sustainability Lead

Overall Recycling Rate



We trialled 'no disposable cup days' removing compostable take away cups from service with our catering partners at the Good Eating Company. We're aiming to roll this out on non-event days at the venue, reducing the amount of waste from our onsite restaurant, Jack's.



Outdoor space on our roof was transformed to provide space for a new kitchen garden. The plants, which are now in soil, will supplement the Good Eating Company with a range of herbs, fruits and vegetables that can be added to onsite meals.



We took home the Sustainability Award at the Conference & Events Awards 2024. Judges commented, "A very impressive track record from this venue, showing real dedication to sustainability." We were also finalists for the EN Award's ESG Award and the Best Sustainability Initiative at the AEO Awards.



We continue to champion Meat Free Mondays and Fish Fridays in Jack's and rolled out carbon labelled catering options on conferences, supporting organisers to make more informed decisions about their impact.



Our team held a B Corp Month panel session, inviting businesses to hear from local B Corp's on the certification. Following our recent change in ownership, the BDC is about to undertake recertification in 2025.

Our Community

The team at the BDC have a passion for giving back; whether that is through volunteering their time or fundraising, and 2024 was no exception.

Staff took on the Twilight Walk across London in aid of The Brain Tumour Charity, raising an amazing £3,825, which will fund vital research in accelerating a cure for brain tumours.

We hosted local businesses over two days, where more than 2,000 crackers were assembled with locally donated prizes and gifts and then sold at local stockist including by our own BDC reception team, who raised £740 for Islington Giving's Winter Appeal. The campaign was a collaboration between the charity, BDC, Angel's Business Improvement District and other organisations, raised over £8,000 for isolated and vulnerable Islington residents.

With joint fundraising from across the BDC, residents and staff wore their festive sweaters on Christmas Jumper Day and raised £261.39. Supporting One Day At Christmas for a second year, with the help of AGE UK Islington, Help On Your Doorstep, the Stuart Low Trust, Solace Women's Aid and the Peel Institute, we welcomed over 330 guests to enjoy a festive day of lunch, music and entertainment.

Think Forward returned to the BDC twice in 2024; the team volunteered to support young people with learning disabilities, helping them to prepare for short mock interviews. The second workshop focused on building confidence and empowerment for young women entering the workplace.

Playing an active role in the community has always been important and we continue to be represented as one of Islington Council's Anchor Institutions across their working groups, and alongside Angel Islington, our Business Improvement District team, we play a role on their Angel Responsible Business Network



Over six weeks, BDC team members volunteered with local school, Beacon High in partnership with Local Village Network's Amplify Me programme. To date, the BDC's work with LVN has supported over 500 young people from Islington.



I can't thank the Business Design Centre enough for everything they've done for us. It's a brilliant example of how a local business can give hope and inspiration to the young people of Islington.

Rachael Box

Founder & CEO

Local Village Network

Morris Charitable Trust

A total of £94,040 was donated to local charities and projects through the Morris Charitable Trust (MCT) in 2024. The Trust, established in 1989, supported the community across the London Borough of Islington, home to the Business Design Centre and was managed by members of the Morris Family and BDC staff. Some fantastic projects were funded in the last year across a range of themes and requirements.

Almeida Theatre Company works with schools across Islington helping young people to embark on creative careers. Support from the Morris Charitable Trust, allowed them to run a bespoke careers programme in Special Education Needs & Disability Schools.

The Ben Kinsella Trust was set up following the tragic murder of Ben Kinsella in 2008, with a vision of a society where no family or community suffers the loss of a life to knife crime. Through workshops and an exhibition, they educate young people of ages on the dangers of knife crime, helping them to make positive choices and to stay safe.

Mahi Devi offer regular guided nature walks with a yoga practice to improve the wellbeing of children with additional needs and their parents. The project supported fosters a deeper connection with nature, builds children's confidence.

The Stuart Low Trust's 'pArticipate' year project enabled one hundred Islington residents experiencing mental health issues to participate in art through fortnightly workshops and guided visits to public galleries, culminating in an exhibition of participants' work.

Following the BDC's change in ownership and the subsequent closure of the Morris Charitable Trust, the Trust's remaining funds totalling £108,542.96 have been donated to Islington Giving, to continue the important work that is being done for the benefit of those across our community.



Business Design Centre are an incredible partner to Islington Giving. Core funding through the Morris Charitable Trust ensures we can fund grassroots local organisations working to reduce isolation and improve access to support and opportunities for local people – helping us to reach some of the most vulnerable residents in Islington. In addition, the team at the BDC are always on hand to support our work in other ways – from providing space in the building for charity activities, to supporting the design, creation, promotion and sale of over 2,000 Christmas crackers through our Angel Cracker fundraising initiative, helping to raise over £8,000 as part of our latest winter appeal.

Isobel Miller
Fundraising Manager
Islington Giving



Our People

We welcomed six new members of staff in 2024 and are pleased to be continuing our internship programme, with Lucy Ridley joining us from Manchester Metropolitan University for a one-year placement in the Venue Services Team.

We prioritise the physical and mental wellbeing of all staff with a wide range of benefits including Headspace or Calm App subscriptions, and health cash plans through to private support. Our team can also choose to enjoy weekly yoga classes, quarterly chair massages and now biannual sound bath sessions. During Mental Health Awareness Week they could also choose from their choice of Kind Patches as a self-care gift from the company.

We continue to evolve in addressing the needs of the team. Updates to our employee guidance in 2024 included a Menopause Policy as well as improvements to flexible working arrangements, carers leave and paternity leave. Professional development and training programmes are in place across all departments, with personal development also incorporated into annual goals setting days. Our team were invited to join a group session with Joyologist, Donna Easton to help them discover the tools to elevate their energy, mind and vibe to build resilience and ultimately live happier in her Joy Equation Workshop.

Company breakfasts continued, with our teams sharing departmental updates and plans for the year at our favourite local café. These meetings form part of a wider calendar of both formal and informal opportunities to come together and celebrate each other's and the Company's successes.



Over the course of each year, we take the time to ensure the whole team have access to professional development as well as new and innovative ways to connect with themselves and prioritise their mental and physical wellbeing. This is done through finding ways to bring staff together, to talk and more formally, by putting in place policies and practices that support them to live their lives in the way they need and want.

Sherry Thomas
BDC People Manager



Staff Benefits and Wellbeing Support includes:

- Rental Housing Deposit Loan Scheme
- Free Weekly Lunchtime Yoga Sessions
- Complimentary Quarterly Chair Massages
- Free Sound Bath Group Sessions
- Weekly Fresh Fruit in the Offices
- Staff Quiet Room
- Auto-Enrolment Pension Scheme
- Private Healthcare (BUPA)
- Healthcare Cash Plans (Healthshield)
- Travel Season Ticket Loans
- Cycle Scheme Loans
- Flu Vaccinations
- Free Eye Tests
- Non-contributory Company Life Insurance
- Free Subscription to Calm or Headspace Apps
- Out of Hours Meal Provisions

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

We rolled out the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower training for frontline team members, supporting a better understanding of hidden disabilities and how we can help people enjoy a supported visit to the venue.

The BDC became recognised as a Disability Confident Committed Employer at Level One. The scheme shows that employers have taken steps to think differently about disabilities and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

We improved our AccessAble profile, ensuring it best reflects the venue; this ensures visitors can find granular information on getting around the venue from steps and facilities to who to contact.

We marked holidays such as Easter, Eid and Diwali, when our staff, alongside our tenant community came together for lunch cooked by people from across the venue and supported by businesses that call us home.

We made our quiet room a permanent space and provided a larger room for those who wish to pray. Both rooms were given consideration on the kinds of furniture and layout needed to ensure they are utilised to their full potential.

Partnering with the local council as an Islington Anchor Institution, we provided another mid-term internship. The programme this time allowed a young adult with additional needs to gain valuable work experience in an office environment over a three month placement.

Our DE&I lead, Leanne Pettyfer, was shortlisted at the end 2024 for DEI Champion of the Year at the AEO People's Awards, recognising all her work in furthering diversity and inclusion initiatives the BDC and in the local community.



The past year has been really great when it comes to our diversity and inclusion initiatives. Welcoming new members of staff has brought with it new ideas and I am delighted to champion such an important part of our business. Collaborating even more with our community this year, it was great to join important discussions and make plans for celebrating Pride month and religious festivals like Diwali.

Leanne Pettyfer
BDC Office Manager
& DE&I Lead



Our Industry, Suppliers & Clients

Our team continued to share knowledge and represent their areas across the AEV and Cross Association Working Groups. Participating in wider networks was a focus in 2024, with attendance at both the UFI Conference and Women In Exhibitions World Summit as well as representation on panel sessions at beam's ESG Summit and on the isla stage at Event Sustainability Live.

We hosted isla's Mastering Waste Measurement Action Group Launch at the BDC and participated in their ongoing mission to support event professionals to reduce and better manage waste.

Investment in our facilities continued, completing two new bar units for use by both events and resident businesses. These locations particularly support clients in attracting visitors up to the Gallery Level, which in turn provides greater footfall to the exhibitors situated in the Gallery Bays.

The resident event calendar was developed further; the annual charity quiz night, summer barbeque and Christmas lunch, was joined by a five-a-side football tournament and a design showroom networking luncheon. Networking breakfasts also continued on a more frequent basis, with the opportunity to present their services.

Following a year in the planning and build, the new online ordering system for exhibitor orders and event requirements was launched. The new site updates the previous service to be more user friendly, tailorable to specific show and streamlined for both organisers and their clients.

Alongside our catering partner at the Good Eating Company (GEC), we ran a showcase day to highlight the new opportunities available on events. Working with GEC we have also made strides in providing carbon labelled delegate catering packages and continue to pursue trials that would directly reduce the footprint of an organisers show.

In addition to One Day At Christmas, the BDC supported industry charity event, Sticky Wicket. The annual cricket tournament fundraises for the Lord's Taverners and takes place each summer with venues, suppliers and organiser competing for the trophy, all the while doing so for a great cause.



We've worked alongside our web developers at March and PilotBean to create a brand-new online ordering system that can be more closely tailored to the type of exhibition we are holding. Since launching the platform in 2024, we have been delighted with the feedback and know that it will continue to evolve to the needs of our organisers and their clients on the shows we host.

Hayley Constable
BDC Deputy Head of
Venue Services





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