



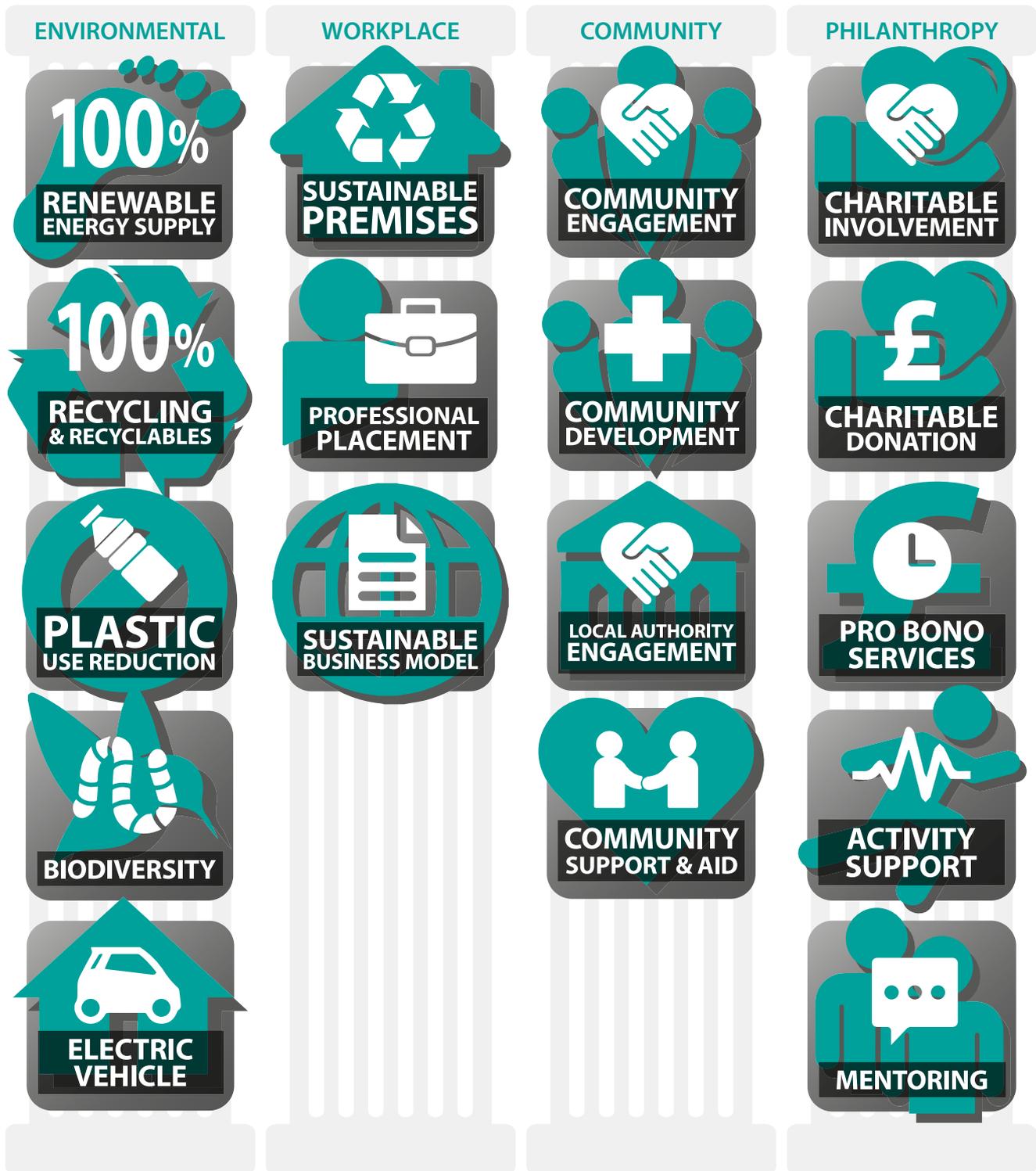
# SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

Showing what good looks like



# Your Business Needs Me

## CSR Highlights at a Glance



# Introduction



My name is Fiona Doonican and I am a Virtual Assistant based in Hazlemere, Buckinghamshire. I have a background of over 30 years experience as an Event Manager, Executive Personal Assistant and Administration Manager for both large and small companies.

The environment and social issues have always been central to everything I do, in both my business and private life. I am a sole trader and as such, I have audited my business and personal activities against the CSR-A accreditation Four Pillars requirements. I have previously wondered what a single person can do to make an impact on climate change and through extensive research, I have discovered the power of CSR. The Four Pillars of CSR are an integral part of my business ethos and I will continue to reduce my carbon footprint over time as I wish to leave a healthier planet for my children and future generations. I have committed to spreading the word by expanding my business to offer CSR implementation to other small businesses.

Over the years I have noticed that many small businesses struggle to keep on top of their admin. Their focus is on building the business, but they can rarely afford to employ someone full time to run the administration side of things, which is why a VA is the perfect solution.

Deciding to become a small business owner was a pivotal moment in my life, as this gives me the flexibility to work alongside creative, busy people who can utilise the skills I have to help them build a better business.

**Fiona Doonican**

Your Business Needs Me

## CONTENTS

CSR Highlights at a glance.....	02
Introduction from Fiona Doonican.....	03
Environmental Report.....	04
Workplace Report.....	05
Community Report.....	05
Philanthropic Report.....	06
Heading Here.....	06
Alignment With UN SDGs.....	07
CSR Accreditation.....	07

# Environmental Report



**All household and workplace energy is sourced by Ecotricity and is 100% renewable. A smart meter is installed which helps to keep track of when more energy is being used and to make adjustments to lower the total. We have a subscription to Ecologi, which plants trees as another carbon offset for Your Business Needs Me.**

LED ceiling lights are installed throughout the house and workspace. A single LED light is installed in the workspace, so that other lighting is not required during the working day. All lights are turned off when leaving a room. All chargers are turned off at the wall when not in use. Used ink cartridges, batteries, printer paper and notebooks are recycled.

Heating is only used when required, I prefer to add an extra layer of clothing if comfortable. Loft insulation and double glazing are installed throughout both home and office and curtains are closed each evening to regulate the temperature.

I have a water butt at the front of the property. Collected rainwater is used for watering outdoor and indoor plants. All toilets are dual-flush. All household detergents are eco-friendly, preventing harmful chemicals entering the water system.

## Plastic Reduction

I use metal water bottles and never buy bottled water. I use soap rather than shower gel and I do not buy products containing parabens, micro-plastics, or sulphates. My anti-perspirant is sourced from "Wild & Free" and is fully compostable and re-fillable. There are glass bottles for hand creams, which are refilled at my local grocery refill store. I use reusable net bags for fruit and vegetable purchases to avoid buying anything wrapped in single use plastics. I bulk buy for larger items to prevent waste. I use tins rather than single use bottles and sachets as these can easily be recycled. My local refill store provides bulk pasta, rice and refills of other products. I use beeswax wrap to keep excess food fresh.

## Biodiversity

There is a small garden at the property which I have filled with trees and plants to encourage birds, bees, insects and other wildlife. I have two bird feeders to encourage smaller birds and a bird bath in which I have placed crystals to give insects somewhere to land to take on water. I have a bee house to encourage solitary bees to nest. The office is full of green house plants which help to reduce CO2 and clean the air. I have a wormery in the garden, for all non-meat food waste, garden waste and shredded paper. This prevents putting waste into landfill and provides compost and plant food for the garden.

## Travel

I have recently purchased a Hyundai Kona electric car, to further lower my carbon emissions. All my meetings are carried out online. I shop locally, have my milk delivered direct from my local dairy and other groceries are sourced from a local farm to reduce air miles. I offset my carbon footprint with Ecologi.

## Supply Chain Management

I bank with Triodos, an ethical bank, who invest in sustainable projects. Other investments are placed with ethical companies where possible. My financial advisor keeps this under constant review for me.

All office cleaning supplies are ecofriendly and I use biodegradable tea bags or leaf tea, the waste from which is placed in my wormery. All paper products (toilet rolls, kitchen roll, tissues) are made from sustainable bamboo from whogivesacrap.org who donate 50% of their profits to build toilets across the world.

## Waste

I recycle all plastic/metal/glass and card using kerbside collections and take all soft plastics to be recycled at my local Co-op. All non-meat food waste and garden waste is placed in my wormery to reduce landfill. I donate any unwanted electrical items to charity or give to Freecycle. Vacuum cleaner contents/hair are placed in the wormery rather than in the bin.

Any unwanted clothes or make up are donated to charities who re-purpose them. Whenever I go out for a walk, I take along a bag, which I fill with discarded plastic bottles/cans and take them home to put in my recycling.



*Some of the trees and shrubs we have planted to attract birds and insects.*

*The electric Hyundai Kona.*





# Workplace Report

**Having worked in the corporate world for over 30 years, in 2016 I decided to take the step of setting up my own business and running it in an ethical way.**

As a sole trader, I do not have any staff, however I commit to flexible working and a healthy work-life balance. I work a maximum of 25 hours a week, which leaves me time to pursue my hobbies of photography, singing and seeing the world with my children.

## Work Placements

Laura Woolhouse left University in 2020 during the pandemic and was unable to find work. I took her on as a part time, self-employed associate to help me with social media. I paid her well above minimum wage and gave her a laptop to ensure that she could work from home. Whilst working with me, I gave her training and experience of working in an office environment, and in turn, she brought her newly learned skills and enthusiasm to my company. I am delighted to say that she has now secured a full time job in Marketing. I am now looking for a new associate.

## Supply Chain Management

All documents (insurances, bank statements, etc) are delivered online to avoid printing and postal delivery. I delete or store offline, to prevent storing unnecessary items in a data centre, and all the energy costs associated with that.

All technology is turned off at the plug at the end of the workday or when not in use.

Zoom and Teams calls have replaced face to face meetings, which has reduced travel costs. All paper products are sourced from sustainable bamboo sources.

I have recently purchased a Remarkable 2 electronic notebook to further reduce my paper usage. I have recently ensured my web hosting is green and have changed to Ecosia search engine.



# Community Report

**I am a member of several business groups that provide advice and support for PA's, EA's and VA's around the world. These groups exist to primarily support one another and provide encouragement for people who may need it.**

I have recently joined the Parish Council & Climate Emergency Working Party and I have set up monthly climate talks for my local community.

During the 2020 pandemic, I set up a WhatsApp group for my neighbourhood to ensure that anyone who may have been vulnerable or shielding could be looked after. This was mostly used for grocery shopping, prescription pick ups and to make sure that everyone was fit and healthy.

I have also set up a book club in the neighbourhood so that those living on their own have some contact with their neighbours each month.





# Philanthropy Report

**I financially support several charities with monthly donations. World Wildlife Fund, The Woodland Trust and Friends of the Earth, and also support their customer facing events and shops.**

## Pro-Bono Work

I like to give my time and expertise freely to help local causes. Between 1999 and 2011 I was on the Parent's Society Fundraising Committee at Pipers Corner School (Charity No: 310635), where I utilised my event and organisational background to organise fundraising events for the school. Between 2016 and 2019 I was on the fundraising committee for the Wycombe Homeless Connection (Charity No: 1156211), for which we held events to raise money which was used to help house the homeless.

I have also signed up to be a mentor with House of St Barnabas to empower a homeless person to transition to paid employment. The mentoring is a commitment of 12 days per year.

## Donations

I send wish list items to ZSL London and Whipsnade Zoos. Every other year, I take on a challenge to raise money for a chosen charity. In 2017 I raised money for the NSPCC by walking the Great Wall of China as part of a group.

In 2022 (Covid permitting) I will be cycling from Vietnam to Cambodia, and have walked (virtually) from Lands' End to John O'Groats to raise a target of £5,000 for the House of St Barnabas (Charity No: 207242) as part of a CSR initiative for one of my clients.

I recently supported the Woodland Trust by buying and planting 3 trees for my garden and planted wildflowers as part of an award winning neighbourhood project and donated to my local primary school for them to buy paint for outdoor equipment.

# Moving Forwards

I am delighted that, alongside my CSR-A Gold Accreditation, I have also won two awards for CSR. I was named the BBO-PA network CSR Champion of the Year and I also received a Gold Award for Micro Business in the CSR Excellence Awards 2021. I am proud to have been recognised for the steps I have taken as a small business, and plan to expand the sustainability side of my business in 2022.

I have already started working with other VA's to encourage them to become accredited and to use their unique position to encourage their clients to embed CSR into their businesses. I am guiding two of my VA clients towards CSR accreditation in the New Year and I am working with my local Parish Council on several environmental projects for 2022.

My personal plan for the next 12 months includes installing Solar Panels and continuing to make my garden a haven for insects and birds.



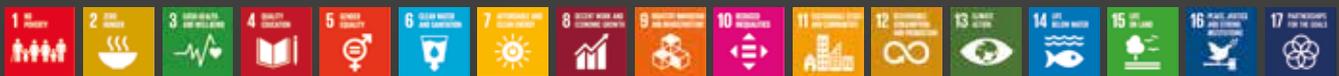
# Your Business Needs Me activities align with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

Your Business Needs Me directly corresponds with the following SDGs



All 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are;



## Your Business Needs Me has achieved a Gold CSR Accreditation



### What is CSR Accreditation?

CSR Accreditation is the perfect way to collate what you are already doing in regard to social responsibility. The application process helps you easily report on your organisations sustainable and community engagement and provides a simple template where you can record activity against the Four Pillars of **environment, workplace, community and philanthropy**. Each Pillar is designed to help you measure, record and impact report on areas such as energy performance, recycling, staff engagement, health and well-being, diversity, community engagement and supporting local and national charities. Successful applications become CSR Accredited and receive our members pack. The CSR Accreditation Mark should be displayed on your website, in your reception and throughout your literature, proudly showing that your organisation has been independently recognised for its CSR endeavours. Members are encouraged to take full advantage of our benefits package which includes access to thought leadership and insight pieces, consultation for ongoing activity and re-accreditation at the end of a three year cycle. A tree is planted for every accreditation by Green Earth Appeal and 5% of the application fee goes to charity.

Your application report subsequently becomes an invaluable **CSR policy / Social Impact Report** which you can use to show all your audiences that you are a caring and responsible organisation.

This is a fully holistic and inclusive approach that allows for all organisations – private, public and third sector and is for all sizes from sole traders to large corporations. It employs a white paper approach that promotes an organisation's CSR personality and individuality.

ACCREDITATION DATE **30/03/2021**

# Values driven organisations ensure sustainable profitability

Driven by heightened consumer awareness of environmental issues, coupled with tightening government regulations and reduced funds available for community projects, companies are now looking for innovative ways to meet their social responsibilities. It is clear that organisations who understand their social responsibilities and explore ways in which issues can be built into strategy are more likely to reap the rewards of enhanced competitive positions in the future. Benefiting not only their shareholders but all stakeholders involved and society at large.

There is now increasing recognition of the fact that social responsibility can be used as source of competitive advantage through good corporate governance, effective execution of innovative social projects and ethical management. In order to maximise this potential, it is essential for organisations to smartly communicate their efforts to ensure that consumers view them as driven by intrinsic (genuine) rather than extrinsic (profit led) motivations. The importance of integrating social responsibility into the culture, governance and strategy development initiatives of a company along with current management and incentive structure is clear. This requires considerable corporate commitment, with senior management leading the implementation of strategic socially responsible efforts to ensure organisational engagement.

This **Social Impact Report** was created by **CSR-Accreditation** on behalf of

## YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS ME

To produce a similar report for your organisation please call **01494 444494** or visit **[www.csr-accreditation.co.uk](http://www.csr-accreditation.co.uk)** and find out how we can benefit you.

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