

Sustainability Champions



Taproom using recycled and upcycled items



'Beer with Purpose'

Cotswold lakes Brew Co

Danni Brotherston, Director & Sustainability Lead

Cotswold Lakes Brew Co is an independent craft brewery that was just a vision five years ago. Director and Sustainability Lead, Danni Brotherston, explains how they put sustainability and responsibility at the heart of their highly successful, award-winning, growing business.

How do you minimise the carbon footprint of your beer?

"We use leftover bread from local restaurants and bakeries in our beer, replacing around a third of the grain. This stops unused bread from going to landfill and helps reduce the carbon footprint of the beer, due to the reduction in grain. Also, any spent grain from our brews goes to compost and local farms.

"We're a 100% green energy powered brewery and have also recently started brewing with rainwater that is UV treated on site."

Tell us about your other sustainable business practices

"When we built the taproom, we used recycled and upcycled items throughout. We rescued doors from skips, made the bar from old scaffolding boards, and even turned old beer kegs into urinals!

"We use enzyme-based cleaning materials, which are not harmful to the environment and are compatible with our off-grid bio digester system.

"There are cycle racks on site to encourage

people to use sustainable transport, serving both the seasonal campsite, as well as the brewery taproom.

"We commit 1% of our gross revenue to support the incredible conservation work of Cotswold Lakes Trust and have achieved B Corp status in recognition of our commitment to high standards of environmental and social performance.

"Most recently, in November 2024, we started canning on site, so all our beer can now be produced and packaged on site, further reducing the impact of our beer."

How do you support and network with other businesses interested in sustainability?

"We host monthly *People, Planet, Pint* meetups, they're informal gatherings of local like-minded individuals and business owners committed to sustainability.

"We're also supporters of other local sustainable businesses, especially food & drink producers who we stock in our taproom bar. For instance, we are host to a milk vending

machine from local family farmers Moos on Thames."

What are you hoping to do next?

"We're planning further on-site brewing with rainwater and increasing our on-site fermenting capacity, to remove our requirement for contract brewing services.

"We're aiming to become 95% self-sufficient for our energy needs through installation of a solar panel array.

"With the support of Seedling, we're also aiming to more accurately measure our carbon footprint, in order to develop a comprehensive environmental strategy."

Are staff involved in your sustainability work?

"Our bar team focus on recycling and further improving our taproom environment, whilst our brewing team focus on the efficiency of the brewing process, and how they can minimise water usage. All of the team are proud of our 'Beer with Purpose' mission and understand the benefits of our B Corp certification."

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Grains for brewing



100% green energy powered



Left over bread for our beer



Range of beers



Danni Brotherston

Cotswold Lakes Brew Co

continued

Do you get comments from customers about your sustainability practices?

"We regularly get interest and positive feedback from customers across all our sustainability features, and they are a central part of our regular brewery tours."

What is your advice to businesses who are starting on their journey?

"Just make a start! Any small steps can be celebrated as progress."

"Seek support from other local businesses around you – sharing the journey is part of the fun!"

"Get involved in local sustainability meet-ups – there are *People, Planet, Pint* and *People, Planet, Pastry* groups for the Cotswolds who meet monthly for informal conversation and peer support on the sustainability journey."

"It's not about being perfect, it's about committing to make a difference and improving gradually over time."

What quick wins would you suggest?

"Look at your supply chain and ask questions about their own practices; it will open-up a new type of conversation, even with your longest, most trusted supplier relationships. You may be surprised at the influence you could have and the things that you might learn from your suppliers' experiences."

"Engage and inspire your people around sustainability – you will have natural champions for sustainability within your business if you start the conversation across the team."

"Undertake an initial high-level carbon footprint assessment – Small99 offer a brilliant free calculation tool on their website."

"Ask your customers what matters to them when it comes to sustainability; you will learn a lot from what they already value about what you do and what more they would like to see in future, as well as building greater loyalty and advocacy for your business."

"Look at the Good Business Charter as

a great place to start your commitment to sustainability."

"Tell your sustainability story to all your stakeholders – you will be surprised how much engagement you will get from your team, your customers and the community around you – especially if you provide regular updates on your progress and what you learn along the way."

Is there anything you'd wish you'd known or done from the start of your journey?

"We started the business with a sustainability journey at the heart of our planning, so it has always been important to us, but we wish we had joined some local sustainability networks sooner to share our experience and learn from others."

cotswoldlakesbrew.co.uk