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FOUNDRY

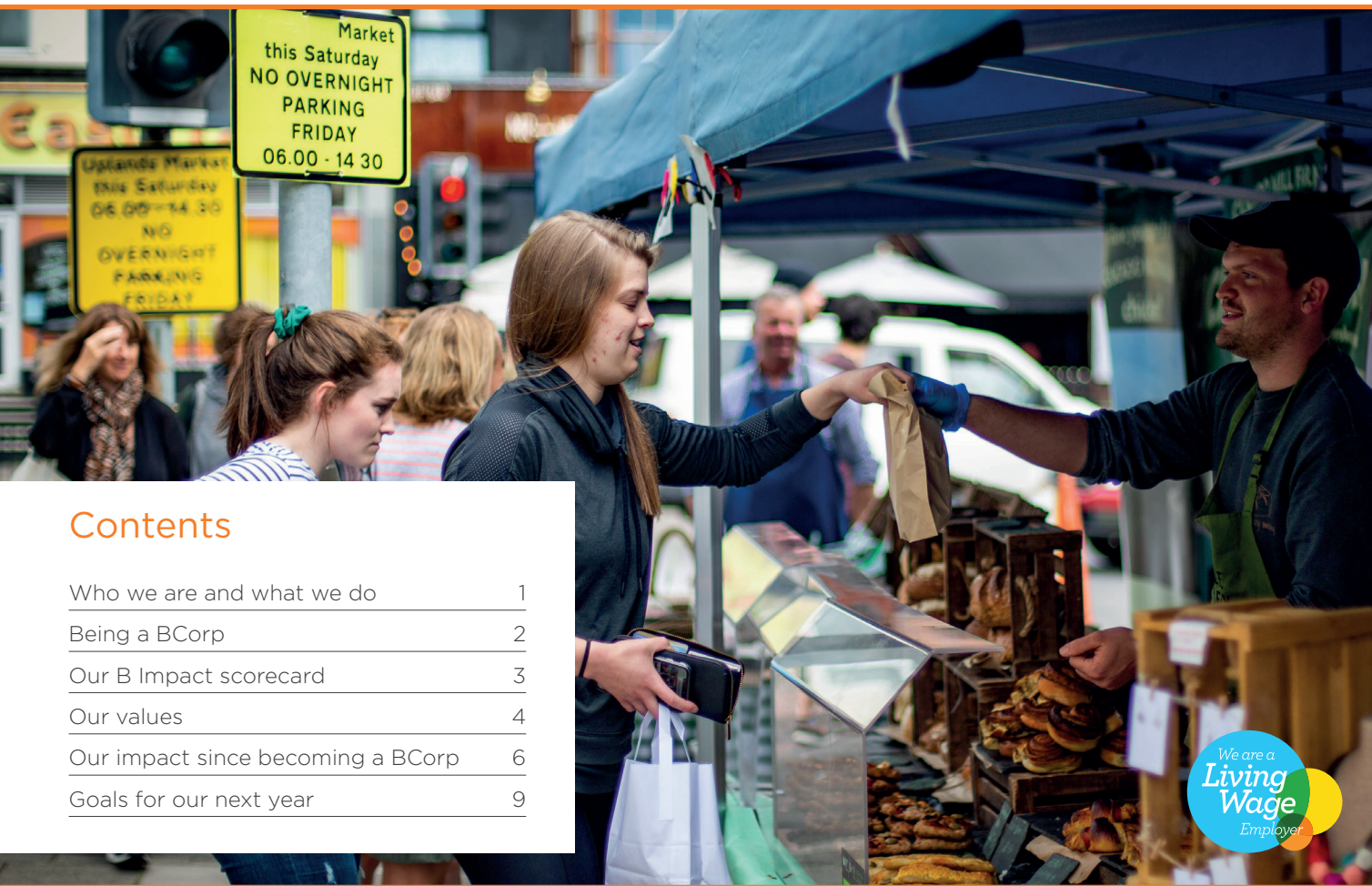
Impact Report  
2019  
October 2019

Certified



Corporation





## Contents

Who we are and what we do	1
Being a BCorp	2
Our B Impact scorecard	3
Our values	4
Our impact since becoming a BCorp	6
Goals for our next year	9



## Who we are and what we do

**Urban Foundry is a creative regeneration agency – our purpose is forging great ideas to change the world for the better by:**

- improving people’s lives;
- making great places; and
- building a more sustainable prosperity.

Put another way, regeneration is made up of social, environmental, and economic elements and our work is on things that can deliver one, some, or all of those.

Sometimes we do it for others, sometimes we do it for ourselves.



## Mission

To achieve our vision, our mission is to combine:

- our creative thinking;
- our expert, multi-disciplinary knowledge and understanding (theory); and
- our entrepreneurial approach and our experience as 'doers';

...in order to...

- make great ideas happen (whether we're doing them for ourselves or helping others to do them);
- ensure those great ideas last (in other words that they're sustainable, in the broadest sense of the word); and
- better understand and articulate how those great ideas have made a difference (in other words their impact).

"I like the transparency of working for a BCorp. There's no hidden agenda or secret mission. We obviously want to make a profit but we believe there's a kinder way to do that. By being socially conscious, it means that we can do good things but still run a business. Over the last year we've been contacted by so many other BCorps – it's a growing network. It's good to know that there are so many ethical businesses out there."

Lucy Beddall, Urban Foundry





# Being a BCorp

**In August 2018 Urban Foundry became a certified BCorp – the first in our home town of Swansea, and the second in Wales.**

We’ve always been driven by purpose, and we have always done our best to be ethical and transparent in what we do.

But we had struggled to find a shorthand to describe it that would translate simply. And then someone told us about BCorp – an accreditation for those businesses that balance purpose and profit.

Not long after that we met a real BCorp (the first – and at that time only – one in Wales) called TYF, who told us to go for it, so we did.

In our home country of Wales, it’s a movement still in its infancy (something we’re trying to change

with other fellow Welsh BCorps), but the BCorp movement is growing globally and we are proud to be part of a group of business across the world that believe, like we do, that business can and should be a force for good.

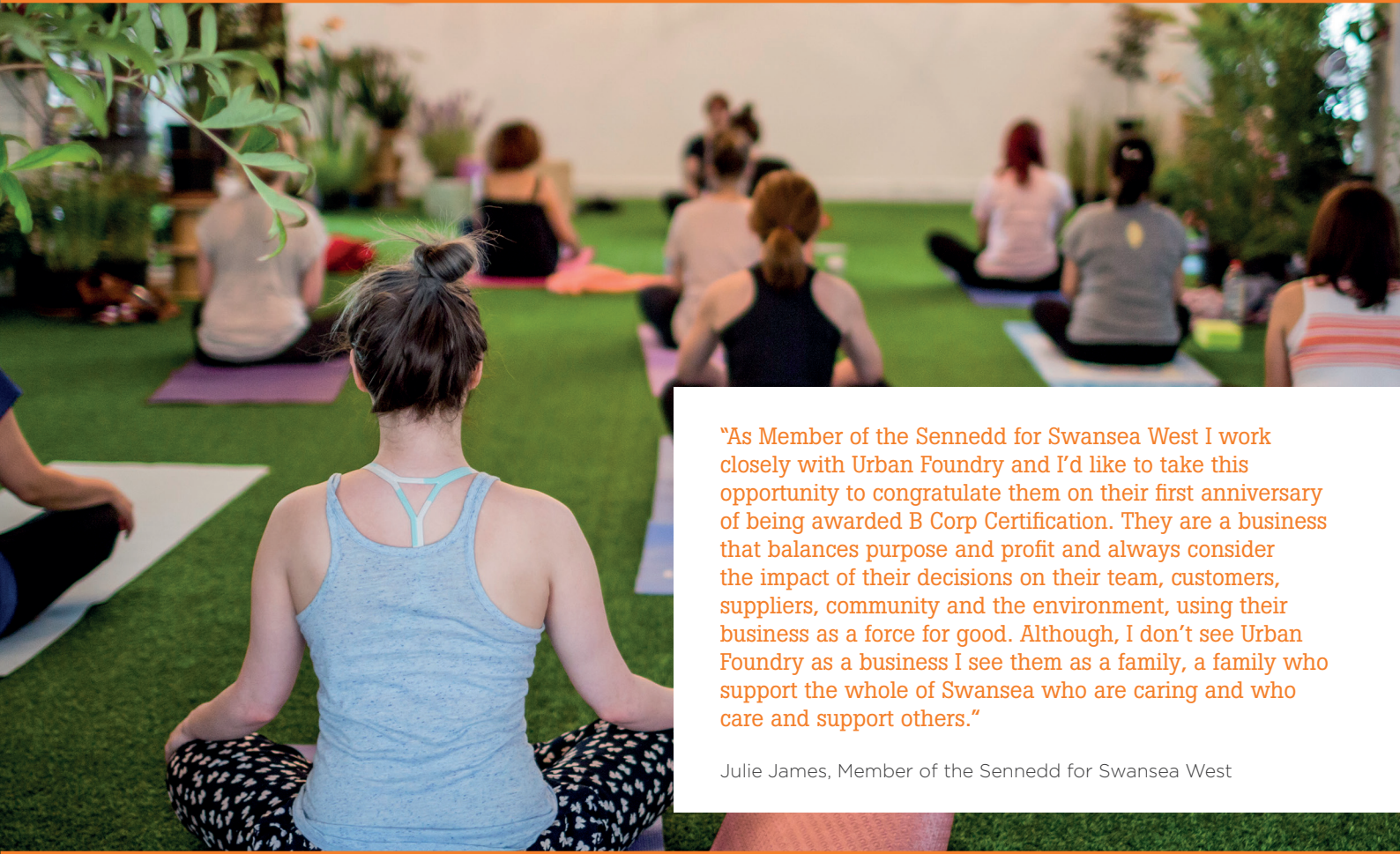
To get BCorp accreditation you have to measure your impact against a range of criteria set by the B-Lab – an independent charity, which sets the criteria and the thresholds and verifies your score.

We won’t lie; even though we do evaluation for a living, it was harder than we thought it would be. Whilst we weren’t complacent, we had always been driven by purpose – changemaking is what we have always done. It’s never been an ‘add on’; it’s just who we are and what we do. So we thought we’d sail it.

But doing it and proving that you do it aren’t the same thing. We did though, and we were immensely proud to pass the threshold and become a BCorp.

A first task was that, like all BCorps, we legally enshrined our commitments to a wider definition of ‘value’ into our governing documents. That means that we are formally committed to considering the impact of our decisions on our workers, customers, suppliers, community and the environment.

Part of the commitment of becoming a BCorp (amongst other things) is to complete an annual impact report. This is our first – we will produce them annually from now on.



“As Member of the Sennedd for Swansea West I work closely with Urban Foundry and I’d like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their first anniversary of being awarded B Corp Certification. They are a business that balances purpose and profit and always consider the impact of their decisions on their team, customers, suppliers, community and the environment, using their business as a force for good. Although, I don’t see Urban Foundry as a business I see them as a family, a family who support the whole of Swansea who are caring and who care and support others.”

Julie James, Member of the Sennedd for Swansea West



## Our B Impact scorecard

The BImpact Assessment is a set of questions and criteria developed by the Blab – it measures your progress against a series of indicators and gives you an overall impact score.

Here's our scorecard for our first B Impact assessment, which passed the threshold for BCorp registration and led to our accreditation as a BCorp:



## Impact Area Scores

Governance

5.9



Customers

21.1



Environment

6.0



Community

25.4



Workers

22.8





## Our values

We articulate our values in terms of the things we will always do, and the things we will never do. Discussing and understanding these values are a key part of the induction for anyone who comes to work with us, whether it's as a member of staff, on a temporary placement, or as an associate who delivers work to support us.

### We will always:

- be friendly, kind and respectful in our dealings with everyone;
- do our best to support the wellbeing of everyone who works for us;
- give our best effort to deliver the highest quality service we can for the people we work with and for (which includes delivering on time and in budget);
- be aspirational and positive – seeking to achieve the best outcomes we can and to add value to people we work with at all times, whilst remaining grounded and realistic;
- support each other in our work – maintaining a team approach at all times;
- pay at least a living wage and do whatever we can to procure services from others who do the same;
- maintain the highest standards of integrity – being honest, trustworthy, and transparent in our work (including transparent charging/billing and paying people on time);
- encourage collaborative/cooperative approaches;
- be clear in our decision-making and communication;
- be as environmentally friendly as we can by reducing, reusing and recycling and from time to time carbon offsetting what we can't avoid;
- uphold the highest standards of equalities and expect the same of those we work with;
- be tolerant towards and learn from our mistakes (including recognising that we will make them) and minimise the chances of them occurring again insofar as we can;
- continually seek to improve what we do and continually look for new and better ways of doing what we do (innovate);
- maintain an environment that means we have fun doing what we do; and
- seek to work with and encourage others to do business in the same way (especially promoting/working with other BCorps wherever we can).

### We will never:

- knowingly deliver less than our best to the people we work with and for;
- have an environment that is unpleasant to work in (whether for our staff or those we work with/for);
- deliver cynical approaches to 'doing good' (e.g. those that are only really focused on achieving good PR and nothing else);
- knowingly support, court, work for, or procure services from anyone whose ethos and/or activities seriously conflict with our values (unless in procuring us they are actively trying to change that);
- make promises that we can't keep/renege on agreements we have made;
- have 'hidden charges' for our work;
- allow our passion for delivering good ideas to override our pragmatism – we want to be aspirational, but we always remain grounded and practical and not do 'pie in the sky' work that will never happen;
- be knowingly wasteful; or
- seek to cover up or blame anyone else if we make a mistake.





"I always wanted to work for a company that has a positive impact on the environment, community and people. Being a BCorp isn't just a badge, it's important that we practice what we preach. All our projects are driven by the ethos of 'business as a force for good' but it also drives our life in the office. We try to make good ethical decisions whether that be the coffee shops we meet clients in, or where we order office supplies from. Being a BCorp has made me super aware of other companies and how they work. I'm proud of how we do business and that makes me happy to come to work."

Tara Tarapetian, Urban Foundry



## Our impact since becoming a BCorp

**Our financial year-end falls at the end of September, so we're going to align our annual impact reporting with our financial year – this first one covers the period since we became accredited as a BCorp in August 2018 up to the end of September 2019. We will aim to report on our impact within three months of our financial year end.**

### During that period:

- we celebrated our first anniversary as an accredited Living Wage employer and encouraged others to join us through publicity and through our engagement with our local regeneration partnership;
- our Director Ben became a Big Ideas Wales Role Model for Welsh Government, and he has visited schools, further and higher education settings and community projects to talk about his journey as a purpose-driven social entrepreneur;
- our Unit Nineteen pop-up venue went from strength to strength, following on from events earlier in the year with the BBC's Horizons stage, we hosted a delegation from Ireland as part of our work with University of Wales Trinity Saint David on the Wales-Ireland Interreg funded Catalyst programme

seeking to support food and drink businesses in south West Wales;

- we came together with others to form a Food and Drink Partnership for our local area – our input came from the dual but complimentary sources of being the founders and deliverers of Wales' largest regular street markets as well as our consultancy work delivering support to artisan micro-businesses, most of them social businesses, in Wales;
- we sponsored the showing of the 'We have rather been invaded' film at Swansea Pride;
- we continued our Academy placements, this year welcoming Roisin Hannon from University of Wales Trinity Saint David's business school and Kate Howson from Swansea University's Centre for Innovative Ageing;

- we supported the formation of the South West Wales Circular Economy Club by providing free help and support to its conveners (EFT Consult) for the development and delivery of the first event, with Director Ben sitting on the panel;
- we supported our clients the Morris Trust to develop an exemplar housing scheme drawing on sustainable urban design principles, which has been adopted in Swansea's Local Development Plan;
- we grew our street markets initiative by adding two new street markets – in Mumbles and Port Talbot – to our collection, taking the number of monthly on-street local produce markets we run in our local area to 4, and creating more opportunities for Welsh artisan traders. We also evaluated the impact of our Uplands and Marina street markets social enterprise project by working with the business school of University of Wales Trinity Saint David to research its impact and the Uplands Market was featured on ITV's Coast and Country bringing



- huge exposure to the local area;
- we supported our local Council for Voluntary Services to develop a feasibility study for establishing a third sector hub in our home town;
- we chaired the Artist Newsletter annual event, this year held in our home town of Swansea;
- we delivered (very quickly indeed!) a feasibility study for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, which helped the Authority to secure £260,000 of Heritage Lottery Funding for its 'Lost Peatlands' initiative that seeks to reinstate 540 hectares of ancient peatland landscape;
- we delivered a workshop with Social Business Wales and their marketing suppliers that helped them better understand and set goals for their business succession employee buyout support scheme;
- we worked with the Mission Gallery to explore their post-funding arts education future, delivering training on outcomes approaches and marketing;
- we supported the Swansea Fringe Festival – accommodating events in our Unit Nineteen venue and providing outlets for musicians with paid busking gigs at our street

- markets;
- through NRW we reviewed two Hywel Dda health board sites to explore how they might incorporate green infrastructure to develop more sustainable, people-focused external environments on their sites in west Wales;
- we worked with Swansea Rural Development Partnership's multi-stakeholder group to develop a Theory of Change to review its work and set impact goals for its development;
- we established our 51.6 series of events ([www.51point6.co.uk](http://www.51point6.co.uk)) – focused on driving more civic entrepreneurialism, and to get more people on board with making a difference in the world. The first two events were with Sam Conniff, author of 'Be More Pirate', and Matt Callannan, who established the Make Good Happen kindness project;
- we supported Natural Resources Wales engaging a wide range

**“Working with you has been a great experience in helping us really think about how the people living in our communities interact and connect with place, space and each other. You have challenged us to understand the huge potential in our communities for creating great places to live and thrive.”**

Andrew Vye, Director of Tai Gwalia –  
Pobl Group Housing Association

- of stakeholders to develop their Area Statement for the south west Wales region;
- we completed a regeneration strategy for a local Community Council, which focuses their spend on impact and will provide a framework for their spending for the next 10 years – an early 'win' has resulted in significant funding for play and sports facilities at a local park;
- we donated two soup urns to a local homelessness charity;

- we delivered an outline appraisal of placemaking in a Council housing estate in Swansea, providing recommendations for securing





homes by improved public realm design;

- we continued to provide free support to the Batley and Spen Youth Theatre as it followed-on from its inaugural event to deliver legacy activities – our Director served on the Board and the group delivered a series of summer activities for young people in the area, including a trip to the Hamilton musical in London;
- we supported the Pobl Housing Association Trust to review its Trust funding – with our support they developed a plan based on a clear articulation of their impact goals;
- our Director Ben gave his time to support the 4theRegion initiative by providing a free workshop to help the organisation in articulating its purpose and mission, and later speaking at 4theRegion's city centre regeneration conference in Swansea, with a talk entitled 'the 10 Commandments of Regeneration', which proved hugely popular;
- probably our biggest change in the year was that we finally moved – we miss our old office mates, but we took the plunge and relocated to new offices at our new home in Swansea's National Waterfront

Museum doing our (very small) bit to support a lovely part of our town's heritage. We aimed to make our offices as environmentally friendly as possible, creating furniture from recycled wood, upcycling and recycling as much as we could, and settled;

- we increased the amount of our waste that can be recycled whilst reducing our waste overall;
- we switched to a 100% renewable energy supplier (and fellow BCorp!) for our power needs, and our new offices also make the most of solar gain, which means our energy useage generally is much lower anyway;
- we moved to 100% environmentally friendly (non-toxic) janitorial products;
- we proudly saw Siobhan Thomas and Victoria Phillips – both former Academy interns and staff members – graduate from University;
- we celebrated and promoted BCorp month in February 2018; and
- we had lots of fun doing what we do.



“Working with you has stimulated fresh ideas across departments in Natural Resources Wales. The project, which was completed as part of our trial into natural resource management has provided us with a set of principles to help NRW sustainably manage our natural assets in the urban environment for people, the environment and the economy. Working with you has allowed our staff at local level to create connections with other organisations in your network for future collaboration. Your staff were very communicative throughout the project and have a creative outlook, which has encouraged local staff in NRW to be more flexible and innovative in our approach, seeing opportunities not barriers. The local knowledge not only of the surrounding environment but, also the many organisations who worked within the project area was invaluable. A professional high quality report was delivered to schedule, which is appropriate for us to use in our discussions with a range of stakeholders from community members to local Councillors and Assembly Members. A pleasure to work with.”

Fran Rolfe, Environment Officer -  
Natural Resources Management Team -  
Swansea, Natural Resources Wales





"I joined Urban Foundry as an intern as part of my Event Management Degree. When my internship finished I was offered a part-time job with them running their Unit Nineteen venue. It has given me new skills and confidence. It's been a fantastic experience."

Siobhan Thomas,  
Urban Foundry Academy recruit



## Goals for our next year



### By this time next year we want to have:

- further expanded our street markets social enterprise to create more opportunities for local artisan producers;
- delivered more 51.6 events;
- integrated more and better Green Infrastructure into all of our physical urban regeneration work;
- continued to deliver sessions through Big Ideas Wales to encourage young people to pursue purpose-driven business as a career option;
- built on our hugely successful Unit Nineteen initiative to establish more of a culture of Meanwhile Uses as an approach;
- made more and better links with other changemakers;
- continued to support local initiatives with pro bono support;
- updated our B-Impact scores to compare with our initial totals and to develop a plan for further improving before our first formal review by BLab in August 2021; and
- continued to have fun in doing what we do.



