

URBAN | FOUNDRY

B Corp Impact Report July 2024



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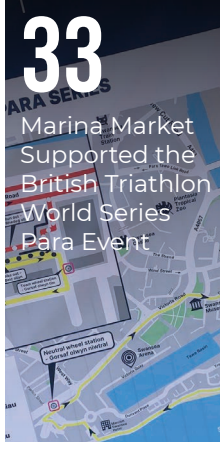
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FOREWORD BY TARA TARAPETIAN, DIRECTOR

This report marks my first year as Director of Urban Foundry, and what an exciting whirlwind year it has been!

People really know about Urban Foundry now. We have a great reputation for meaningful, quality urban regeneration. And I've loved working with Ben, who has been a great mentor, co-director, and friend.

For me, PopUp Wales has been a standout project. None of us could have predicted how it would evolve into such an impactful and widespread initiative. We're now running PopUp Wales in Swansea, Bridgend, Caerphilly, and Carmarthenshire. It's not just the geographical reach; it's the quality, detail, and thought that has gone into each space. We've transformed them into professional, stylish, and practical environments that support small businesses and the local community.

We've developed our unique version of what a pop-up is, encompassing retail, coworking, and workshops.

It's been fantastic to see Urban Foundry grow from just Ben and me in a tiny office on Princess Way to where we are now, with a fabulous space and 26 staff members (across Urban Foundry and HQ Urban Kitchen). I'm proud to have designed The Engine Room @HQ, where we also share space with other like-minded companies. Playing a part in this growth has been incredible. Our team is intelligent, brilliant, and creative - which makes for a dynamic work environment.

What excites me most right now is the development of HQ Urban Kitchen. This venture has been successfully running since 2022, and I'm pleased to see it now as a busy café and venue for events and hire. We are about to take over most of the surrounding



spaces to transform them into a social innovation hub, more venues, and office space for other purpose-driven businesses. We will all be able to work in the same area and collaborate over coffee in HQ Urban Kitchen (or a wine at our monthly networking event, Anti-Social).

The HQ Urban Kitchen courtyard garden is something I am incredibly proud of, and probably one of the most significant developments in the café. It is a beautiful mini-oasis for people working to relax in, featuring a bug hotel and three rain gardens.

HQ Urban Kitchen has also taken over the running of the café in Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, called the GV Café. We've completely renovated it, and it is stunning. You need to visit - even if just to check out the orange grouting in the tiling!

But we're not stopping there. We have other places and projects in the works, and the future looks bright and exciting for Urban Foundry. As I enter my tenth year with Urban Foundry, I look forward to seeing it evolve and continue making a positive impact in Swansea.

Tara

What an exciting
whirlwind year it
has been!

FOREWORD BY DR BEN REYNOLDS, DIRECTOR

20 years old!
Goodness, how did
that happen so fast?



When I started the company in September 2004 it was just me, a laptop, and a mobile phone, working from the spare bedroom in my house.

It was late summer 2004. I was emotionally bruised and battered from a formative early career of establishing and then running a small creative social enterprise, learning the hard way in my early 20s what to do and what not to do in a small social business (probably more of what not to do!). I'd also recently been awarded my PhD in creative urban regeneration, and I had a 'what's next?' kind of a moment.

I knew I wanted, and needed, to do something different but not exactly what that looked like. So, I decided to just start something and work it out as I went.

The business plan was essentially that I had a set of skills that I thought could help other people who want to do good things in the world. My initial marketing strategy was 'Who do I know that I can ring and see if they want some help with something?' I wrote a list of 10 people, in the hope that one would say yes - and that would give me the first bit of work, and while I was doing that, I'd try and find the second piece. Not exactly the rocket science end of the business planning spectrum, but it worked.

After an initial year or so of being world-famous in my own backyard, I went a little further afield and started to work with some larger organisations as a freelancer. I got to work on some terrific projects that I wouldn't have been able to get near when working alone - working across England and Wales, with a range of organisations, from Oxford University to the Big Lottery (as they were known then) and a whole host of public and third sector organisations, all delivering community projects for positive impact.

It gave me a broad and deep experience. Then I started to miss doing things myself in my own community (plus a growing young family by that time meant I wanted to be nearer to home for more of the time). I returned to working more in South Wales and, in what would be the first of a few steps that changed what I/we do, we created the first project of our own with the creation of Uplands Market in 2013.

At the same time, it became clear that to do nice ideas of our own alongside the stuff that actually (at that time) earned the income, I couldn't do that by myself, so we took on an intern and then following that took the leap of taking on our first employee - a shrinking violet by the name of Lucy Beddall.

The nice little community project of a street market became (in the nicest sense) a monster almost overnight - it needed way more than a few hours of time in the evenings now and again. So successful was it that it needed someone to run it, but despite its success, there wasn't quite enough income to support a part-time role. So, we created Marina Market and advertised for an administrator. We had four applications, three with lots of experience, one with very little, but there was something about that final CV, so we decided to interview all of them. The fourth one blew the others out of the water, so good was she. Her name was Tara, and she is now the other Director and a co-owner of the company with me, and we wouldn't be where we are today without her.

As we progressed along that journey - doing things for ourselves and others to make the world a bit of a better place - we came back to 'What exactly are we?' Although the purpose of what we do and the values that underpin it have never changed, it took us a while to articulate it - who we are, why we do what we do, and how we do it. We're probably still working on getting that right. But a key moment on the journey was becoming a B Corp - when I started the company it was just me, and a for-

profit, sole-shareholder structure was the right fit, but I wanted to bring with me all the values of social enterprise. However, I'd never found a satisfactory shorthand for that.

And then two fortuitous meetings - one with Matt Little of the Real Ideas Organisation who told me about this new thing (at the time) called B Corp, and then a subsequent chance encounter with Andy Middleton - then the sole B Corp in Wales at TYF - who enthusiastically told us to go for it. So, we did, and about 18 months later we became our home town's first (and only the third in Wales) company to secure B Corp Certification.

Fast forward and there have been lots more things in the meantime, continuing with our work for others throughout, but with more of our own projects, from Unit Nineteen, the addition of Mumbles Market, the 51.6 talks, the creation of PopUp Wales, the Covid-enforced South Wales Food and Drink, Swansea Library of Things, the Swansea in Gloom walking tours, and most recently the creation of HQ Urban Kitchen and the Engine Room coworking space.

It's been a whirlwind of a ride with lots of ups, but also our fair share of downs too. We've done a lot and seen a lot, and we've got lots more to come.

A heartfelt thank you to all the birthday well-wishers. We've included some of these supportive messages throughout this report.

Here's to the next 20 years!

Dr Ben Reynolds, Founder and Director

Ben





BACKGROUND TO URBAN FOUNDRY



OUR TEAM

What sets us apart is the blend of qualities found among our team members. We combine a rare understanding of regeneration theory, a strong creative streak, and a pragmatic, socially entrepreneurial 'do-it-yourself' approach to getting things done. While many other organisations excel in one or two of these areas (and sometimes surpass us), the combination of these three is what makes us unique.

At the core of it all, our purpose and ethics bind these qualities together like glue. This ethical foundation holds our three elements in harmony and ensures that we apply them to a noble cause.

We frequently visit schools and educational settings to talk about our work and purpose-driven business. Young minds often cut straight to the issue, asking, "Sounds great... but what do you actually do?"

It's easy to get lost in aspirational language, so it's important to bring it back to basics.

Overleaf outlines the three broad areas that our work fits into.

“

"I've been working with Urban Foundry ever since I was elected in 2011. They've made a huge difference to the cultural and business aspects of Swansea. They're a great company to work with, great people, and they've really added value to the whole Swansea scene."

Julie James,
Counsel General Designate
and Minister for Delivery,
Senedd Cymru.



WHAT OUR WORK LOOKS LIKE

Our daily work encompasses a range of activities, including:

- **Making things happen** - engaging audiences ('stakeholders' to use the jargon), conducting feasibility studies to test ideas, supporting business planning, providing fundraising support, mentoring startups, building partnerships, and piloting our initiatives.
- **Making things last** - offering ongoing marketing and communication support, mentoring for startups and third sector organisations, conducting organisational reviews, helping diversify income streams, and providing training and workshops. We focus on sustainable urban design and integrating nature into towns and cities.
- **Making a difference** - aiming for a positive impact, we deliver impact evaluations, conduct research, and lead in deploying the Theory of Change approach to support and measure the effectiveness of initiatives.

VALUES

As well as our core values, we seek to deliver our work in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act ways of working; everything we do should:

- **Focus on the long-term** - asking ourselves how our actions can create a lasting impact.
- **Be integrated** - ensuring all our work directly contributes to our stated purpose, working with others who have a clear purpose, and helping them achieve their purpose.
- ▼ **Involve people** - always considering the range of stakeholders, including those often overlooked or without a voice.
- **Be collaborative** - working with other agencies and individuals to achieve a common purpose.
- **Be preventative** - doing all we can to address risks before they become problems and learning from where things may not have gone to plan to inform future projects.



“LocalMotion Carmarthen has been working with support from Urban Foundry on our governance and social investment initiatives. We’ve had great support from the team around potential partnerships and further community led leadership models. Urban Foundry’s work is inspiring radical local change and is at the centre of creative and economic thinking in Wales.”

Owen Griffiths, Collaboration and Change Manager, LocalMotion Carmarthen

CLIENTS

Nobody has a monopoly on good ideas or changing the world for the better, so we work with a range of people and organisations, from small community groups and start-up enterprises, third sector charities and social enterprises, through to large private and public sector bodies. Our scope is all-encompassing - from UK-wide projects to the smallest community initiatives, and all things in between.

OVERVIEW OF COMMITMENTS AND CORPORATE IMPACT THIS PERIOD

B CORP JOURNEY AND OUR CURRENT SCORE

As this brochure goes to print, we are about to start our recertification with B Corp.

The data below refers to our first recertification with B Lab during the last reporting period - our first recertification since first gaining the standard.

It was a no-less rigorous process compared to our original certification, further complicated this time as our two sister brands (Swansea Bay Street Markets Ltd and Canolfan Ltd through which we run our venue and pop-up activities) were also incorporated into our assessment.

Furthermore, the goalposts had shifted a little with new aspects of the recertification – and consequently, more areas for us to cover.

We were very pleased to increase our score from 81.5 to a new verified score of 86.6. Most businesses that complete the assessment score an average of 50.9 currently.

Certified



Corporation

OVERVIEW OF COMMITMENTS AND CORPORATE IMPACT THIS PERIOD - B IMPACT SCORES



- 86.6** Overall B Impact Score
- 80** Qualifies for B Corp Certification
- 50.9** Median Score for Ordinary Businesses



“Ben and the team, congratulations on 20 years. Our partnership with you has been massively influential in our regeneration work in Penderry over the last 6 years. In fact, without the work that you and Gordon helped us with at the very beginning, I’m not sure we would have seen the potential that was so clearly there. So good luck for the future and I very much hope you’re around for another 20 years.”

Andrew Vye, Executive Director,
Pobl Group.



“20 years of Urban Foundry! Absolutely amazing Ben. Well done to you and the whole team. All of us at TIWN think you are an inspiration, and we are absolutely over the moon to work with you and we are looking forward to continuing that. Here’s to the next 20 years. Good luck!”

Mike Kennedy, The Second 45,
Welsh Connections and TIWN
Media.

GOVERNANCE

KEY THINGS WE DO:

- As with all B Corps, our governance documents have been amended to state our commitment to considering a range of 'stakeholder interests' when making decisions. In other words, it is legally enshrined in our constitution that as a company, we must consider not just our shareholders, but also employees, suppliers, society, and the environment. Shareholder value is not the principal consideration; rather, it is balanced alongside other factors, and we must also have a material positive impact on society and the environment.
- ▼ An annual impact report is produced (you're reading it!).
- Gender balance is maintained on our Board and within our staffing team.
- Ethical purchasing requirements are written into our finance policy.
- We were early signatories of the Better Business Act.
- ▼ The movement is championed during B Corp month every year.
- A written set of company values is communicated to all staff during induction and via the staff handbook.
- All senior staff undergo GDPR training to ensure data is gathered, stored, and processed ethically.



"You're reliable, trustworthy and exciting to work with. And, without a shadow of a doubt, whenever I'm involved in a project with Urban Foundry, I know there's going to be a little sprinkling of magic. So happy 20th birthday to everyone involved."

Carl Gough, Social Business Advisor Cwmpas and Professional Storyteller.

NEW INITIATIVES WE'VE ADDED/EXTENDED:

- Signed up as a TISC report affiliate for supply chain management.
- Strengthened the commitment to data protection by securing Cyber Essentials accreditation.



WORKERS

KEY THINGS WE DO:

- ▼ A written set of values places kindness at the top of that list.
- Accredited as a Real Living Wage Employer.
- Remuneration is structured to keep pace with increases in the Real Living Wage for all staff pay.
- Regularly promote the Real Living Wage and have lobbied for it to be a pass/fail criterion in public sector procurement contracts and publicly funded grants.
- ▼ Staff receive a 50% discount on hot food and unlimited free hot drinks in the HQ Urban Kitchen venue, whether on shift or not.
- Cover the full costs of all staff training.
- Cover the full costs of any staff uniform.
- Family friendly work policies include 'term time only' contracts for some staff.
- ▼ Hybrid working policies are in place.
- Zero hours contracts are never enforced.
- Committed to the Market Research Society's code of conduct for ethical research methodologies.



NEW INITIATIVES WE'VE ADDED/EXTENDED:

- Despite inflation running at around 10% for the past two years, we managed to provide 10% inflationary pay increases for all staff for two consecutive years.
- ▼ Sponsored our first PhD (see case studies).
- Continued operating our Academy, with Daniel Harris, Tatiana Bodnar, and Lucy Osborne working with us during this reporting period on paid internships, all compensated at the Real Living Wage.
- Covered the full costs of staff attending various local cultural events as part of our 20th birthday celebrations, including:
 - Local theatre company Fluellen's Twelfth Night.
 - An album launch for local musician Gareth Lewis.
 - Our very own Derek's latest (hilarious) show.



Lucy, Ben and Tara in The Engine Room @HQ. A creative and collaborative workspace.



Some of the HQ Urban Kitchen team with Manager Laura Reynolds (second from right).

COMMUNITY

KEY THINGS WE DO

- Director Ben participates in the Regeneration Swansea partnership and the Swansea Development Advisory Group.
- ▼ Director Tara, along with Associate Lucy from ten:15 marketing, created and host the monthly 'Anti-Social' networking event, providing a relaxed, no-pressure environment for making connections.
- Director Ben has served on the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission (see case studies).
- As a Big Ideas Role Model, Director Ben visits schools, FE and HE institutions, and collaborates with The Prince's Trust to discuss social enterprise and purpose-driven business.
- Promoted Global Donut Day.
- ▼ Created and operate Swansea Bay Street Markets social enterprise, now in its 12th year, including the Marina, Mumbles, and Uplands Markets. Uplands Market was ranked among the top 10 street markets in the UK and featured as an exemplar in the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Guide.
- Established the HQ Urban Kitchen social enterprise café, sourcing as much local produce as possible, developing it as a community hub and a focus for purpose-driven entities in the city centre.
- Host the Design Swansea networking sessions at our HQ venue, providing a room and AV equipment in kind.
- ▼ The Swansea Employment Hub, set up in one of our pop-up spaces, continues to thrive.
- Source locally whenever possible.
- Buy from B Corps and social enterprises wherever feasible and adhere to a written ethical purchasing policy.
- Established PopUp Wales to bring life to empty spaces (see case studies).
- ▼ Signed the Swansea Pride pledge.

NEW THINGS WE'VE ADDED/EXTENDED:

- Secured UK Government SPF funding to establish a Social Innovation Hub, expanding our HQ building. The development work is underway, and we will report on it in our next impact report.
- Increased the number of PopUp Wales spaces to 38 and counting, with more to come.
- Created a free-to-attend 'Lonely Arts Club' monthly networking event at our HQ Urban Kitchen venue.
- ▼ Hosted Ffilm Cymru for their Foot in the Door Skills Hub.
- Provided input into the Hafod Morfa Copperworks regeneration proposals in our hometown.
- Hosted a Wales BSocial event at our HQ Urban Kitchen venue.
- ▼ Contributed to research conducted by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) for Welsh Government into small businesses and empty properties in town centres.
- Offered advice to the LocalMotion initiative in Carmarthenshire, a network of national initiatives exploring systems change approaches to tackle the root causes of social, environmental, and economic injustice.
- Participated in a round table discussion led by Pobl Housing Group on the future of homelessness provision in our hometown.
- Shared our B Corp journey with social entrepreneurs supported by UnLtd.
- Delivered a session for food and drink businesses supported by Cywain, discussing being a purpose-driven business and B Corp.
- Contributed to Swansea University's Festival of Social Sciences at a round table meeting discussing purpose-driven business.
- ▼ Director Ben was delighted to judge the Centre for African Entrepreneurship's Enterprise Carnival.
- Collaborated with Swansea College of Art students and Hacer to explore how Surface Pattern and Textiles students might work with the new Biophilic Building in Swansea, resulting in a feature article in Interior Designer Magazine.

- Supported the spin-out of Oriel Science from Swansea University as it seeks to become an independent charity.
- ▼ Offer a permanent blue light discount in our HQ Urban Kitchen venue as a thank you to emergency services for their sacrifices during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Provide a 10% student discount in our HQ Urban Kitchen venue.
- Ben and Tara provided free support for the 4theRegion business support event, delivering one of the breakout sessions on business as a force for good, while Gareth delivered a session on pop-ups at the same event.
- Worked with Swansea University to contribute our perspectives on purpose-driven business to the forthcoming book 'Cases on Entrepreneurship and Innovation - Unexplored Topics and Contexts'.
- Helped make the Swansea Dementia Hwb permanent following our work through PopUp Wales.
- ▼ Contributed to the Swansea University Health Board's Population Health Strategy.
- Contributed to the first editions of the Swansea Positive newspaper.
- Provided input into the Pedestrian Pound report for Living Streets on the impact of street markets.
- Offered free space for Mess up the Mess as match funding for their Arts Council of Wales funded 'Queertawe' project.
- Provide free space for a local book club to meet at our HQ Urban Kitchen venue.
- ▼ Hosted our very own Derek's latest show 'Be Careful What You Wish For' at our HQ Urban Kitchen venue, providing free help from staff and covering the costs of the venue, design/print, and social media publicity.
- Contributed to the course programme for the MSc in Marketing operated by Swansea University's School of Management, providing a purpose-driven employer perspective.
- Assisted in the development of the Swansea Creative Network.
- Operate an artist-in-residence scheme in our HQ Urban Kitchen venue and host an open mic each month.

- ▼ Provided one-to-one support to various pre-start and start-up initiatives.
- Continued to provide pro bono support to small third sector and community organisations.
- Provided a venue and support for local artist Zoe Murphy in setting up her podcast "Out Loud with Zoe." This has given her the courage to start her own business. The podcast gives voices to people who have faced huge challenges or help others with their challenges.



"I started as an intern at Urban Foundry and later was employed as a Marketing Assistant. I was inspired by their strong values, clear sense of purpose, and the team's dynamic energy. The skills and experience I gained helped me secure a First in my degree and an exciting new job, and I credit much of my success to what I learned at Urban Foundry."

Daniel Harris, former Urban Foundry Intern and Marketing Assistant



ENVIRONMENT

KEY THINGS WE DO

- Working alongside Natural Resources Wales and Swansea Council, with support from Welsh Government, we have worked to make Green Infrastructure a prominent feature in placemaking and regeneration.
- Established two rain gardens in our HQ Urban Kitchen courtyard garden.
- Written environmental policy committing us to reducing, reusing and recycling.
- Use non-toxic janitorial products.
- Use soy-based or low VOC inks for in-house print and generally seek to minimise print.
- Do not purchase any goods that contain tropical hardwood from unsustainable sources; if hardwood is required, it will be sourced locally (Wales) or from other sustainable temperate sources.
- Source clothing items for promotional or other purposes from ethical producers, and avoid purchasing promotional items likely to be thrown away/not used.
- Use recycled paper for print wherever possible.
- Do not laminate items unless it is to reduce the need for continual reprinting.
- Aim to use unbleached/chlorine-free paper products.
- Only use recyclable or biodegradable takeaway containers.
- Purchase only rechargeable batteries; inherited non-rechargeable batteries are used to the end of their lives and then disposed of responsibly.
- Purchase unbleached and sustainable napkins and toilet rolls from a certified B Corp (Naked Sprout).
- Do not print emails unless essential, and use paperless billing from suppliers wherever possible. Our own billing is paperless.
- Store and exchange documents electronically and view documents onscreen wherever possible. Aim to get as close as possible to a paperless office.
- Reuse waste paper wherever feasible.
- Business cards and other documents have a matte finish to make them easy to recycle.
- Facilitate hybrid/home working.
- Use online banking.
- Use own carrier bags rather than disposable plastic bags.
- Source electronic equipment using the Greenpeace guide.
- Repair broken items wherever possible.
- Donate any surplus to charity, including surplus food to nearby homelessness centres.
- Encourage clients to consider how many (if any) hard-copy documents are required for any reports produced.
- Seek to minimise single-use items, using refills wherever possible.
- Ask suppliers not to send items in plastic packaging or with polystyrene. Where unavoidable, these items are taken to appropriate recycling points.





- Sort waste and recycle everything possible, including composting organic waste.
- ◆ Use an accredited waste contractor.
- Use energy-efficient electronic items.
- ▼ Office and venue have thermostats to limit heating.
- Use natural ventilation where possible – opening doors and windows rather than air conditioning, and in winter keeping doors and windows closed to retain heat.
- Turn off electrical items when not in use.
- ◆ Moving towards replacing all lighting with more energy-efficient LED bulbs and fittings.
- Signed up to the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Charter.
- ▼ Expenses policy encourages use of public transport and active travel.
- ◆ For all PopUp Wales projects, switch to a renewable energy provider and (where possible) a B Corp energy provider.
- Use local suppliers wherever possible to reduce food miles and travel impacts.
- Publicly pledged to reach Net Zero by 2030.

NEW THINGS ADDED/EXTENDED

- Established a third rain garden in the HQ Urban Kitchen courtyard.
- ▼ Committed to the SME Climate Hub.
- Measured our carbon footprint and are refining the approach for future years.
- ◆ Enhanced the courtyard garden with pollinator-friendly planting, funded by Swansea Council.
- ▼ Successfully piloted the Library of Things project, which has now been transferred to Swansea Environment Centre for ongoing operation, creating an exit strategy for the initiative.
- Director Ben has delivered several talks on 15-minute cities and the (re)creation of more sustainable places.

CLIENTS, PROJECTS & INTERESTING THINGS

Our commitment to positive change

All our work is dedicated to supporting individuals and organisations that aim to create positive change in the world or strive to be better corporate citizens.

We seek partnerships with businesses that share our sense of purpose and ethics. The following section presents a variety of case studies, illustrating the work we've undertaken during this reporting period and the impact we've made.

While we couldn't feature all our projects, we've chosen a diverse selection to highlight the breadth of our efforts. Regardless of sector or company size, we are united in our belief that business can be used as a force for good.

WELL-BEING FUTURE GENERATIONS - #CYMRUCAN

In early 2023, Derek Walker was appointed as the new Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, a unique role created under The Well-being of Future Generations Act. This role involves promoting sustainable development and ensuring that public bodies and the government consider long-term implications in their decision-making.

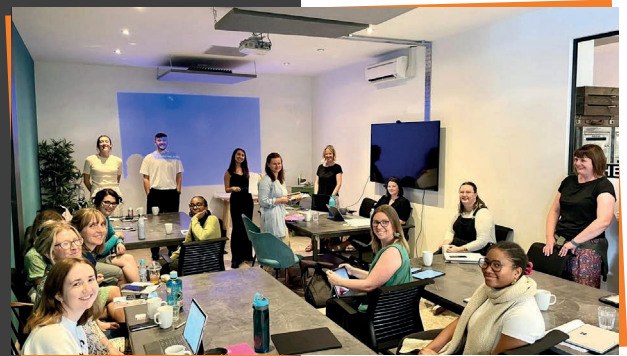
The Office wanted to use Theory of Change as a tool to help define their strategic focus with the new Commissioner in place. Urban Foundry was selected through a competitive tender process to provide them with support.

Urban Foundry Associate Amy Shephard facilitated a series of Theory of Change workshops with the Office. The objective was to assist in shaping the future direction of travel for the team.

Our work took place over Summer 2023 and built on the extensive stakeholder involvement that had been undertaken to help shape their 'Our Future Focus' approach. Alongside helping to develop the areas of work for the Office, we also built the capacity of the team so they could confidently use Theory of Change in their broader work.

Our approach was met with high praise from the Office, highlighting our understanding of the issues and commitment to making a real difference. The full results and future impact of this collaboration will unfold over the seven-year term, but the immediate outcome has been a set of clear, measurable tasks for the Office to focus on, summarised in their recent 'Cymru Can' publication that outlines their focus for the next term.

These tasks simplify a complex array of challenges into manageable actions, showcasing Urban Foundry's leadership in applying Theory of Change methodologies.



"I highly recommend Urban Foundry as experts in the Theory of Change model, as consultants helping with organisational change, and as a B Corp organisation caring for people and planet. Ben was great in setting the work parameters and Amy got the spirit of the organisation and our remit very fast. She has managed perfectly the different groups within our team and helped us design a whole Theory of Change model for our strategy within very tight deadlines. Her work and attitude were appreciated and praised across the whole organisation and she became one of us very fast. We will miss working with her on a daily basis but she leaves us with long lasting change and an amazing set of new skills."

Marie Brousseau-Navarro, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Commissioner

SWANSEA PLACEMAKING CONSULTATION

Urban Foundry
helping shape
Swansea's future.

We were invited by Swansea Council to help engage a range of people and organisations with their Swansea City Centre placemaking plans. This was part of a consortium led by Carter Jonas and involving a range of other consultancies, including architects ACME.



We set up and ran the Future Swansea drop-in centre at the former Cranes Music Store in Swansea. These sessions created a welcoming space for residents, business owners, and stakeholders to share their visions and concerns, ensuring everyone felt involved in the planning process.

We also provided play activities for children to allow them to have their say through play and so that adults could focus on giving feedback - something that worked extremely well.

The sessions were a huge success - they were really busy and engaged over 800 people.

As well as the public drop-in, we conducted invite-only workshops for businesses and organisations, where our experienced facilitators guided participants through activities to gather valuable insights and ideas.

The feedback from these sessions is now shaping Swansea City Centre's future.

SWANSEA BIOPHILIC BUILDING

Hacer's Biophilic Living development in Swansea, designed by Powell Dobson Architects, and being delivered alongside Pobl Group, is a pioneering urban regeneration project that integrates nature into city living. Funded by the Welsh Government's Innovative Housing Programme, it aims to enhance environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

This mixed-use development includes affordable housing, retail, and commercial spaces, along with an urban farm operated as a social enterprise.



Urban Foundry's Tara and Hannah have been supporting the project with both the design and strategy for their downstairs venue, and we provided fundraising advice at the start of the project.

Tara also worked with University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Surface Pattern and Textiles students to explore how their students could contribute to interior design ideas for the ground floor of the new Swansea building. Using sustainable materials and found objects from the build, the students intertwined natural and man-made elements, reflecting Swansea's industrial story, resulting in a feature article in Interior Designer Magazine.



“It’s been great working with Urban Foundry on the Biophilic Project. Creative, inventive, and really good to work with. There is an urgent need for housing and mixed-use developments that are sustainable in terms of their environmental impact and economic viability, as a response to the climate emergency and to ensure greater resilience and well-being for urban communities. This project will prove what’s possible, showcase new technologies being developed locally, and blaze a trail for others to follow across Swansea City Centre and beyond.”

Carwyn Davies, Director of Hacer Developments.

TATIANA BODNAR – OUR FIRST PHD STUDENT

Tatiana Bodnar recently joined Urban Foundry as our first PhD student. Originally from Baltimore in the USA, she is studying a collaborative PhD at Swansea University in Human Geography - made possible through the support of the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership for Wales and co-sponsored by Urban Foundry. The PhD is titled 'Urban Acupuncture in South Wales: Pinprick Solutions for Urban Regeneration'.

The PhD seeks to draw parallels between a city and a living body, suggesting that just as acupuncture targets specific points in the body to heal and invigorate, similarly, swift, precise and strategic interventions in certain parts of a city can create vitality and a stronger sense of place.

The idea is to identify and implement quick, strategic actions that can have a ripple effect on the wellbeing of the city and its inhabitants.

Tatiana is looking into how this approach can be applied in South Wales, examining the work of Urban Foundry and other similar organisations. The focus is on the creative and local efforts to regenerate areas, to see how these small-scale interventions can collectively contribute to the larger urban tapestry, benefiting both the physical spaces and the community that interacts with them.



“Being part of Urban Foundry means being in a creative space where ideas can become reality. The environment is dynamic, and the ethos of the company is lived and breathed by everyone here. The team at Urban Foundry is inspiring – they are full of ideas and have a practical approach to ensure longevity in their projects.”

Tatiana Bodnar



POPUW WALES



PopUp Wales collaborates with local authorities and landlords to transform empty spaces into vibrant, high-quality hubs of activity. These transformed spaces not only look fantastic but also bring a new lease of life to town centres.

The success of this project has been incredible and has far exceeded our initial expectations in terms of both positive impact and geography.

The long-term benefits of PopUp Wales have already been seen in Swansea, Bridgend, and Caerphilly, and it is now expanding into Carmarthenshire. This initiative enhances public perception of town centres, supports start-ups and businesses, and revitalises empty shops.

The project has created jobs, saved landlords over £500,000 in business rates, and led to long-term lets.

It helps entrepreneurs and businesses by:

- Providing a space to work and hold meetings.
- Offering a shopfront to sell products.
- ▼ Running classes and workshops.
- Hosting film screenings.
- Serving as a networking space.
- Avoiding the burden of high rental fees and legal complexities.

On the following pages are some of the PopUp Wales projects that have been both considerable and successful in this reporting period.





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Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU



POPUW WALES BRIDGEND – ADARE STREET

PopUp Wales had already successfully run projects in the area and assisted some of the Indoor Market traders to find new space following the need to relocate due to roofing issues. This was a significant success, filling the Rhiw Shopping Centre with these traders, at least temporarily, and boosting the centre with new shops.

The new PopUp Wales in Adare Street has also made a huge impact in Bridgend:

- 67 days of activities and events.
- ▼ 10 days of workshops to support entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Over 1,250 visitors through the door.
- 103 tickets issued for events.
- ▼ 26 small businesses supported in the space.
- 8 films screened.
- 12 artists exhibited.



“PopUp Wales is a transformative project for Bridgend County, offering tangible support to the heart of our local economy - our start-ups and small businesses. By providing accessible pop-up spaces, workshops, and business support, we are not just nurturing business growth, we’re building economic resilience. The success speaks volumes about the entrepreneurial spirit in Bridgend.”

Vicky Jones, Local Enterprise Co-ordinator,
Bridgend County Borough Council.



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POPOP WALES BARGOED

Urban Foundry's PopUp Wales initiative partnered with Caerphilly County Borough Council to launch a new space on High Street in Bargoed.

The new PopUp Wales space in High Street, Bargoed, is a multipurpose area for desk space, pop-up events, and training, which has significantly supported new and small businesses by removing some of the barriers to growth. This six-month pilot project includes a 12-week after-hours business support programme (by Welsh ICE). Marketing workshops have been held to support entrepreneurs and small businesses.

It's a flexible and low-risk environment for new businesses to trial their services. It has also welcomed pop-up shops with small businesses hiring one of the retail pods to sell their products.



"We're working to reduce empty buildings in our town centres, and as Bargoed has a higher number of vacant premises, this space has been recognised as an area for intervention."

Cllr Jamie Pritchard, Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration, and Climate Change



"It will give entrepreneurs a base where they can test the water before deciding to open a shop in the town. I wish all the traders well and hope that residents and visitors will support them. We will then be able to look forward to a more vibrant town centre."

Cllr Dawn Ingram-Jones, who represents Bargoed and Aberbargoed





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POPUW WALES - SWANSEA

Following the success of the initial PopUp Wales work in Swansea, we are continuing to work with Swansea Council to transform empty retail units in the City Centre and areas such as Mumbles, Sketty, Morriston and Gorseinon.

Bay Clothing

Sustainable clothing company The Bay Clothing started life as a trader at our Uplands Market and Mumbles Market in 2020.

They received support from PopUp Wales, which matched them to their first pop-up shop in High Street Arcade in Swansea. This allowed them to test-trade before committing to a permanent bricks-and-mortar shop.

The shop was well received and allowed Max to try out his designs and products to shoppers. He is looking for a new space via PopUp Wales.



“I am very happy to work with Urban Foundry, who share my ethical values. They have supported me throughout my journey from street markets to this new pop-up shop. The new shop has been very successful, and there is real excitement about my clothing. PopUp Wales is a brilliant initiative, allowing us to test-trade and scale our businesses without some of the risks that most new businesses face.”

Max Howell, owner of
The Bay Clothing





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Llywodraeth y DU



POPUW WALES - CARMARTHENSHIRE

As this brochure goes to print, we are really pleased to announce that PopUp Wales is now working with Carmarthenshire County Council.



RESOLVEN

We delivered a feasibility study for Resolven Miners' Welfare Hall.

Funded by the Pen Y Cymoedd Community Fund, we assembled a multi-disciplinary team of engineers, architects, and quantity surveyors to assess the condition of the building, establish what the community wanted from the facility, and prepare a business plan and materials to help them make the case for external funding. The work was very well received by the client.



“At Resolven Miners Welfare, we have a dream! It seems like a pretty crazy one most of the time. But thanks to Urban Foundry we are edging closer to it becoming a reality. We are grateful to Ben for his energy, enthusiasm, expertise, ideas and positivity, but mostly for his patience!”

Sian Jackson, Committee Member,
Resolven Miners Welfare



SILCG



The Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth (SILCG) project is a Swansea Bay City Deal funded programme led by Neath Port Talbot Council, supported by Swansea University and the University of South Wales. It aims to drive innovation and build a low-carbon economy through a series of interlinked projects.

Urban Foundry worked closely with the client to create a brand identity for the main SILCG brand and its eight sub-brands. This included designing logos, brand guidelines, and writing a marketing plan, providing a clear roadmap for raising awareness of this important initiative.

As part of the process, we conducted extensive desk research, interviews, and a Theory of Change workshop with key stakeholders. The brand identity and marketing plan were well received, and the client was extremely happy with the outcome.



“I was really impressed and more than satisfied with the brand identity that was developed for the SILCG programme and its 8 individual projects. The process was thorough, thoughtful, well researched and took a range of stakeholder views into account. The values of Urban Foundry really resonated with myself, and they more than met our expectations. All the stakeholders were happy with what we achieved together and I would have no hesitation in recommending the business to others.”

Dr Brett Suddell, Programme Manager,
Neath Port Talbot County Council



SANDFIELDS RAINGARDEN

Natural Resources Wales and Swansea Council asked Urban Foundry to help with engagement and consultation for a new raingarden planned on Burrows Road. This natural filtration system, designed for an unused end of the road, cleanses water runoff from the streets.

The raingarden provides a sustainable drainage solution, enhancing resilience to climate change and contributing to nature recovery.

To ensure inclusive and accessible communication, we created an engaging information leaflet in five languages, which was hand-delivered to the local community to keep them informed about the project.



Artist impression of how the raingarden will look by Summer 2027.

Your new raingarden on Burrows Road

Your street has been chosen for a new raingarden!

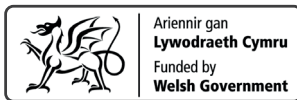
Designed to fit at the unused end of the road, it won't take up any car-parking spaces and will help drainage.

As a natural filtration system, it will clean the water from our roads.

A selection of shrubs and flowers will offer food and shelter to pollinators all year round and enhance the area with splashes of colour throughout the seasons. The existing tree will remain as part of the scheme.

Committed to the health and wellbeing of our residents, the raingarden will also act as a sustainable solution to upgrade the street's drainage system, actively building resilience to climate change as well as contributing to nature recovery.

The scheme is set for completion by the end of February 2024.



“Engaging the local community of Sandfields in the new raingarden was really important to us. It allowed them to feel part of the process. Thanks to the engagement work by Urban Foundry, it was well received and we are working on more green infrastructure initiatives in the same area.”

Fran Rolfe, Senior Green Infrastructure Officer, Natural Resources Wales.



SWANSEA POVERTY TRUTH COMMISSION

For the last few years, Ben has been a Civic and Business Commissioner for the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission (SPTC). The project has aimed to place those affected by poverty at the centre of decision-making.

The goals were to:

- ▶ Understand the nature of poverty in the area.
- ▶ Identify some of the underlying issues that create poverty.
- Explore creative ways to address these issues.

The project is now in transition to the recommendations and legacy phase, where they will work on embedding the insights gained.

This was a Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SwanseaCVS) and City & County of Swansea Council initiative.



“As one of our Civic and Business Commissioners, Ben brought a unique and insightful perspective to Swansea Poverty Truth Commission. His vast experience as Co-Director of Urban Foundry, supporting, amongst other things, the development and support of new and existing local small businesses and social enterprises, was a constant asset to the group.

As the only Commissioner from the private sector, Ben was able to share his expertise on a diverse range of subjects, including the importance of ethical employment practices in reducing poverty. His knowledge of the local cultural and economic context, awareness of longstanding structural and systemic inequalities, and his passion for innovation and creative problem-solving, brought an exciting dynamic to conversations throughout the duration of the Commission. Ben's contributions highlighted the necessity and value of involving private sector representatives in any approaches seeking to tackle poverty.”

Kay Lemon, Swansea Poverty Truth Commission Coordinator



Image by Andre Van Wyk

SUPPORTING POP-UP THEATRE

Urban Foundry's Derek Palmer is also a talented writer, director, and actor. As part of our commitment to supporting local theatre and the arts, we were more than happy to support his new comedy sketch show, "Be Careful What You Wish For."

To help Derek, we provided our venue (HQ Urban Kitchen) and assisted with marketing (posters and social media). Our team also acted as Front of House on the nights. The show was a sell-out success every night, receiving great reviews.

Affordable ticket prices make shows like these highly accessible, attracting a diverse audience. Our social media promotion broadens the reach, increasing ticket sales and supporting actors. This visibility boosts the local theatre scene's profile, revealing a strong community demand and interest in the arts.

We look forward to the next show.

Derek Palmer presents
Be Careful What You Wish For
 A comedy sketch show

ADULT CONTENT

April 25/26/27 • Doors 7pm • Show 8pm

Scan for tickets £12 (+ booking fee)

HQ Urban Kitchen, The Old Police Station, Llys Glas, 37 Orchard St, Swansea SA1 5AJ

AVANT CYMRU



HQ URBAN KITCHEN

HQ Urban Kitchen opened in 2022 as a PopUp Wales space. It is now an established and successful venue in Swansea City Centre, known for its commitment to the local community.

As a Real Living Wage employer, it has created numerous local job opportunities and is fully inclusive. The menu features fresh, locally sourced ingredients, overseen by the chef Fran, with vegan and gluten free options.

The venue offers various spaces for hire, from small meeting rooms to a large function room, suitable for events like parties, talks, and meetings. Enhanced with a new raingarden and plants, the courtyard garden adds to the venue's appeal and makes it more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

There's now a programme of regular events and community activities, such as Lonely Arts, Swansea in Gloom walking tours, Tai Chi sessions, Saturday Sessions, and Open Mic nights, that further integrate HQ Urban Kitchen into the local community.



- ▼ Accessible and inclusive venue.
- Real Living Wage employer.
- Fresh, locally sourced ingredients.
- ◆ Vegan and gluten-free menus.
- ▲ Support for local suppliers.
- Affordable space for hire.
- Hosts a variety of community events.

“

“20 years! Congratulations Urban Foundry. What a journey you've been on and it's been an absolute pleasure to have been part of that journey with you so here's to another 20 years!”

Austin Walters, Digital Expert who ran some PopUp Wales Workshops.

MARINA MARKET SUPPORTED THE BRITISH TRIATHLON WORLD SERIES PARA EVENT

In June, Swansea hosted the 2024 British Triathlon World Series Para Event. To support this accessible and excellent event, we were invited to run a special Marina Market on Kings Road.

The market showcased the best of the market's street food, produce, arts, and crafts, significantly boosting the reach of our local traders to the large crowds who attended on the day. The market added another dimension to an exciting and vibrant event with visitors who had come to cheer on their athletes.

It also demonstrated our commitment to supporting community events and enhancing the local economy.



“The traders put their heart and soul into what they do, and it was amazing to see large crowds not only enjoying the sporting event but also exploring our Marina Market. It was great to be interviewed by local broadcaster Kevin Johns - a fan of the sourdough bread apparently - and he also shared his excitement about this happening in Swansea. And athletes from all over the world sampled some of South Wales' produce and products.”

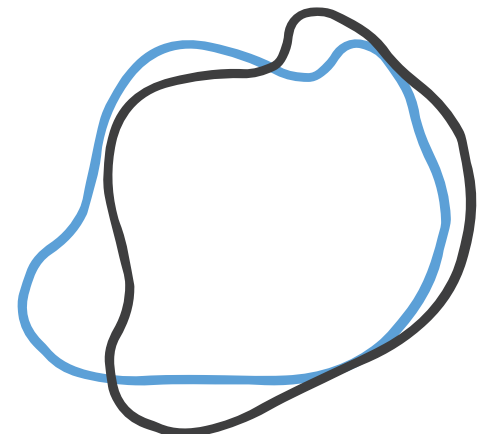
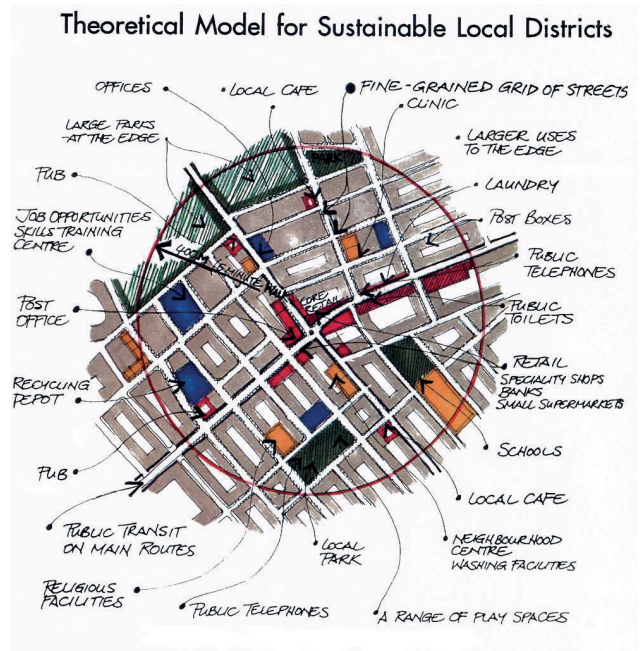
Susie Johnston, Swansea Bay Street Markets Manager



15-MINUTE CITIES TALK - PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE URBAN LIVING

The Royal Institution of South Wales invited Ben to deliver a talk on '15-Minute Cities' at Swansea Museum.

A 15-minute city is an urban design model where all essential services and facilities are accessible within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from any point. This concept aims to improve the quality of life by reducing car reliance, increasing local services, and promoting health and environmental benefits by decreasing traffic congestion and pollution.



HAFOD HOUSING

We delivered two Theory of Change workshops for Hafod Housing for two of their key regeneration sites - one, an established estate near Treharris, the other a new build development in Cardiff. The workshops focused on generating a clear rationale for their approach, to inform their work but also to set a long-term strategy and to ensure everyone was 'on the same page' and also co-producing solutions to the problems identified.



“I attended Anti-Social here ages ago, then I used it as a venue for my live podcast shows. Now, I hold all my meetings in here - I love the coffee, the wine, and the food is incredible. I have become a real HQ Urban Kitchen fan. Their ethos is impressive, and it is always friendly.”

Zoe Murphy, Out Loud with Zoe and INSPIRE Training.



OTHER THINGS WE HAVE DONE:

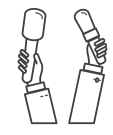
- Conducted a feasibility study for Treorchy RFC to establish new changing room and clubhouse facilities, navigating challenges like land covenants and new flood risk maps in a geographically constrained area.
- Supported Swansea Environment Centre in developing a Theory of Change and evaluation framework for one of their projects.
- ▼ Concluded the handover of Swansea Library of Things to Swansea Environment Centre for a sustainable future.
- Collaborating with Grand Ambition on their business development.
- Assisted Re-Live with their business plan, helping them secure core funding from the Arts Council of Wales.
- ▲ Considering a second phase for the popular Swansea in Gloom project.
- Director Ben continued as Swansea University entrepreneur in residence, judging Big Pitch sessions and mentoring students.
- Delivering a feasibility study for Mawr Community Council to develop a strategy for local projects.
- Uplands Market was credited with contributing to Uplands being listed as one of the 12 trendiest places to live in Wales in 2024.



2017
BECAME A
REAL LIVING
WAGE
EMPLOYER



1 PHD
CREATED



6 PRIME
TIME NEWS
INTERVIEWS

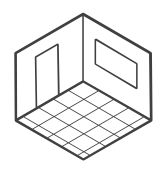


SWANSEA'S
1ST
CERTIFIED
B CORP

URBAN | FOUNDRY IN NUMBERS



2 SPIN-OUT SOCIAL
ENTERPRISES
CREATED



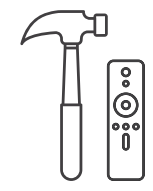
38 POP-UP SPACES
DELIVERED
(MORE ON THE WAY)



26 JOBS
CREATED



20 ACADEMY
PAID
INTERNSHIPS
DELIVERED



1 LIBRARY
OF THINGS
CREATED



OVER **£100M**
TO SUPPORT
REGENERATION
PROJECTS



1 ENTREPRENEUR
IN RESIDENCE AT
SWANSEA UNIVERSITY



16,300 CUPS OF
COFFEE SOLD IN
OUR HQ URBAN
KITCHEN VENUE



OVER **300**
SWANSEA
BAY STREET
MARKETS
SINCE 2013



750+ SMALL
BUSINESSES
SUPPORTED



20 YEARS
FORGING GREAT
IDEAS

URBANFOUNDRY.CO.UK
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WE SAID/WE DID

In last year's impact report we said we would...

What we achieved

... improve the monitoring of our carbon footprint, water usage, and waste to create a more measurable framework for our environmental impact.

We measured our carbon footprint (see earlier section), and we know what we need to do to improve further on measuring this.

We have not yet managed to improve our systems for measuring our water consumption.

We have made some progress in improving our measurement of waste, but we need to do more to turn this into an accurate figure (though we do know it is low because we're small enough that we can all physically see it!).

... further enhance our existing efforts to create more walkable and cyclable places, particularly focusing on our hometown.

We have worked with Swansea Council on developing its placemaking strategy and ensured that this incorporates the Design Commission for Wales placemaking standards, which include consideration of movement and, within that, the importance of active travel. We continue to publicly make the case via our various marketing channels for more active travel. We held a staff training session on making sustainable places, part of which included movement within places. We delivered a public talk on '15-minute Cities'. We have also been working on the Swansea placemaking strategy as part of a consortium for Swansea Council - that process will conclude during our next reporting period.

... improve local places in Wales by reducing the number of empty shops by further developing our PopUp Wales initiative.

We have significantly increased our capacity and we have now delivered 38 pop-up (meanwhile) spaces with venues in Bargoed, Bridgend, Carmarthenshire and Swansea, with more coming into the scheme continually.

In last year's impact report we said we would...

... improve the support infrastructure in our hometown to support change-making individuals and organisations.

... further develop Green Infrastructure as a key sustainability component of towns and cities in our part of the world.

... create a better measurement approach to engage our staff in evaluating our impact using the Most Significant Change technique.

... better articulate our impact by directly mapping what we do to the Well-being Future Generations targets and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

What we achieved

We have secured SPF funding from UK Government's Levelling Up programme to develop a social innovation hub, expanding operations at our HQ venue. The project will open in autumn 2024.

We have commenced on a Green Infrastructure capacity building initiative working in partnership with Swansea Council, Natural Resources Wales and Pobl - the work started at the end of this reporting period, and so we will feature it in more detail in our next impact report.

Done - We asked our staff what the most significant changes they felt Urban Foundry has had in the past year - they were: the expansion of PopUp Wales beyond our hometown; the creation of biodiverse habitat and rain gardens at our HQ venue; and 'breaking through' as a trusted brand known for quality, creativity and making an impact.

We have started on this, but it's still a work in progress, so it's on the way, but not completed yet.

WHAT'S WORKED WELL...

We grew (in relative terms for us) significantly in previous years, and this last year has allowed us to consolidate a little - to work out what is and isn't working well.

We shifted our focus to a smaller number of larger projects, enabling us to take a longer-term approach. We have been able to secure several medium-sized pieces of work that have allowed us to adopt both a longer-term view and a more impactful approach.

After a very steep learning curve, we've settled our HQ Urban Kitchen venue, developing a strong reputation and building a community around it - a work in progress still but significantly beyond where it was this time last year. We are proud to have achieved a 5-star food hygiene rating, and we have a great staff team who really care about the quality of the venue.

We've sponsored our first PhD, which is a big achievement we're really proud of, and we have a fantastic recruit in Tatiana Bodnar, who has added so much to our team already - bringing new ideas and different perspectives, and being lots of fun and an all-round lovely person who is a joy to have around.

Our brand is increasingly being recognised as one that creates genuine impact.



“Happy 20th birthday Urban Foundry! On behalf of us all at Swansea College of Art (UWTSD) it is always an absolute pleasure to work with you. You are an organisation who demonstrates your values each and every day through the behaviours of all of your staff. You are inspiring, open, honest and fun! We look forward to another 20 years working with you!”

Caroline Thraves, Academic Director, Swansea College of Art (UWTSD).

WHAT'S NOT WORKED SO WELL...

It's not all been plain sailing. It took some time for the street markets to recover after Covid, with many of our traders being hit very hard by the pandemic, which meant they ran the markets at a loss for some time, and the smaller ones didn't survive. However, the three larger markets at Swansea Marina, Mumbles, and Uplands are once again thriving.

The hospitality world has been exceptionally tough in the post-Covid environment, and energy costs have been (there's no other word for it) horrific in the past year, sending many small independent food and drink businesses under. We have weathered that storm with our HQ Urban Kitchen venue, but at significant cost, and it remains an exceptionally tough trading environment. However, there are positive signs of utility costs coming down.

The sources of funds that have fuelled much of our ability to get larger projects are time-limited, often with unrealistic timescales imposed. Despite our best efforts as market leaders in using Theory of Change as an approach throughout our 20 years, much of the work is still heavily output-driven, focused on counting numbers rather than actual impact.

We know we are achieving impact regardless, but bureaucratic systems that aren't designed for quick, light solutions - the type we are very good at - can hold back projects from fully realising their potential.

The cost of living crisis has hit us too - our costs rose by almost 25% in the space of about 18 months. Much of that was our own choice - our biggest overhead cost is staffing, and we kept pace to ensure that our staff didn't lose out. While as a Real Living Wage employer we are formally committed to keeping pace with inflation for the lowest-paid staff members, we feel that all staff salaries should keep pace with the same increases, and so we do that for all our staff.

But with two years in a row where inflation was running around 10% each year, that was incredibly difficult and put a lot of additional pressure on top of already spiralling external costs for utilities, labour, and materials (especially with one of our projects being a hospitality venue where margins were already incredibly tight). But we achieved it nevertheless!

We continually keep all our work under review to ensure that it aligns with our purpose, and in the past year, we've taken the difficult decision to move away from some contracts where we felt that the clients were not sufficiently aligned with our purpose.

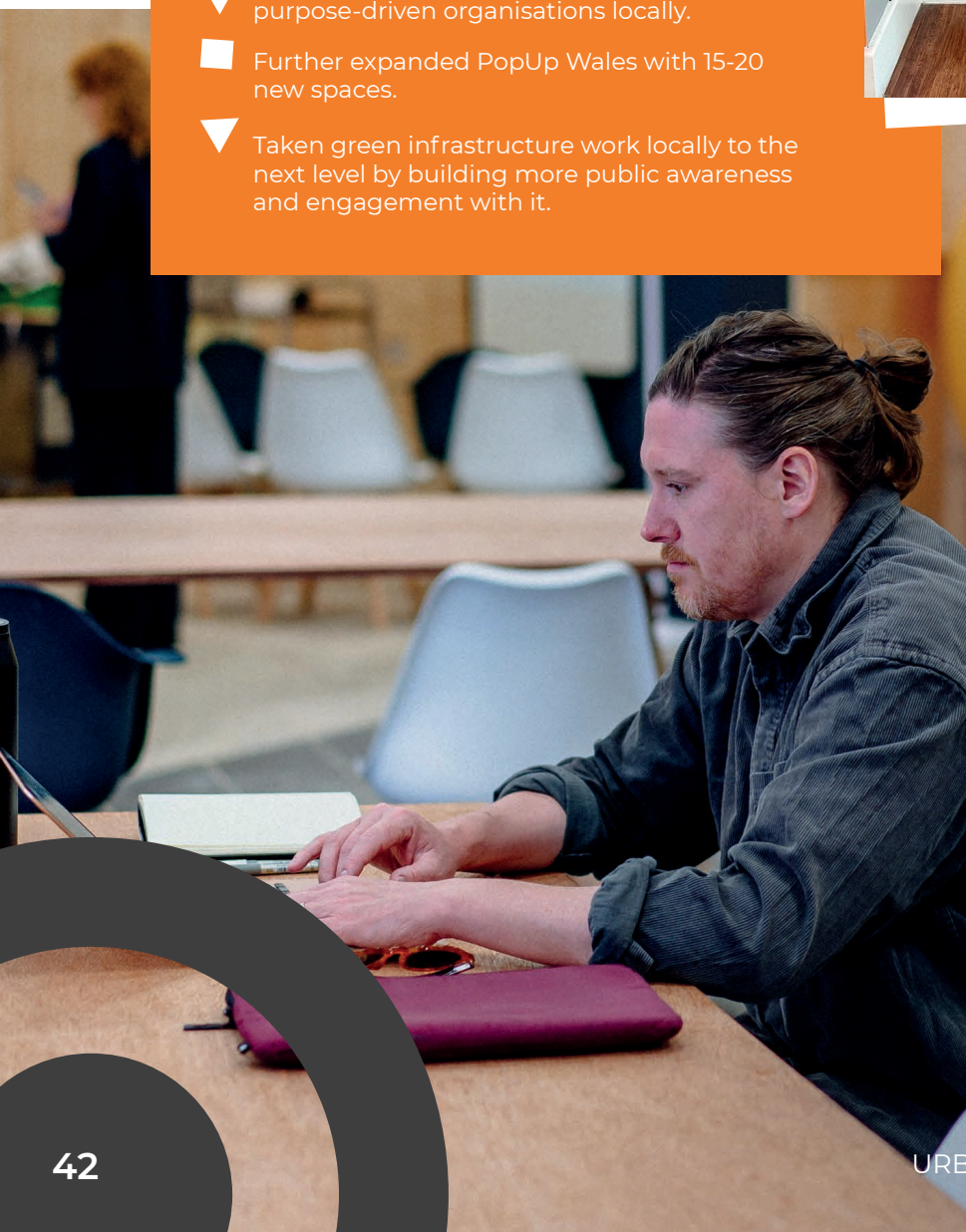
As we've grown, we've also encountered increasing complexity, and the pace of this complexity is accelerating. There's been a lot to learn as we become responsible for multiple spaces, not least our own building, with complicated and onerous lease arrangements that bring lots of positive benefits but that also carry significant risks with them. The costs of materials and labour for capital works have far exceeded the average inflationary increases in the past two years, making what previously seemed generous budgets extremely tight indeed.

The cost of living crisis has significantly hampered our pop-ups approach - just as we reduced costs of entering into premises by addressing rent barriers, in came eye-watering utility fees to eat up a huge chunk of that saving (sometimes more) for new start-ups and causing many to throw in the towel. Achieving a net gain has been challenging in an environment where external costs, beyond our control, have been spiralling, sometimes seemingly without end. However, we've made it work and continue to adapt to the evolving conditions in town and city centres.

LOOKING AHEAD/ NEXT STEPS

By the time we next report on our impact, we intend to have:

- ▼ Completed our next recertification with B Lab.
- ◆ Improved our quantification of our impact in terms of carbon offset (we are doing it, but it can be better refined), as well as quantifying our water and waste levels.
- ▼ Finished the work of mapping the Well-being of Future Generations Act against the SDG goals and relating these to our B Corp impact.
- Opened our Social Innovation Hub initiative.
- ▼ Established more training and support for purpose-driven organisations locally.
- Further expanded PopUp Wales with 15-20 new spaces.
- ▼ Taken green infrastructure work locally to the next level by building more public awareness and engagement with it.



“Happy birthday Urban Foundry. 20 years... amazing! I just want to say a big thank you to Ben and the team for all the support you’ve given our students over the years from guest lecturing, work experience, mentoring and supporting our research. Keep up all the good work that you’re doing and enjoy the celebrations.”

Beth Cummings, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Academic Lead, Swansea University



Local musicians performing at HQ Urban Kitchen's 'Saturday Sessions'



“Happy birthday to Urban Foundry. It’s been great working with you on the Biophilic Project. Creative, inventive and really good to work with. Looking forward to working with you more in the future. Happy birthday!”

Carwyn Davies, Developer,
Hacer Developments.



Queertawe entertaining a Saturday crowd at HQ Urban Kitchen



HQ Urban Kitchen's recent Artist in Residence: Nazma Botanica

“Urban Foundry – they are great guys! Ben is brilliant! 20 years! Thank you so much to Urban Foundry for everything you’ve done. You helped kick start Oriel Science all those years ago. I can’t thank you enough. Thanks again, all the best for the next 20.”

Professor Chris Allton, Personal Chair,
Physics, Swansea University.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US AND OUR WORK AT:

www.urbanfoundry.co.uk

You can also visit the websites for our
dedicated projects at the following sites:

www.hqurbankitchen.co.uk

www.swanseabaystreetmarkets.co.uk

www.popupwales.com

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20 YEARS
FORGING GREAT
IDEAS