



greenstream
FLOORING

sustainable flooring for a sustainable future

SOCIAL IMPACT **REPORT**



CARPET RECYCLING UK
recovering carpet value

AWARDS
FOR GOOD PRACTICE
2020
WINNER

REUSE MEMBER OF THE YEAR



2020





A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER

“ Like many businesses, Greenstream had an unusual beginning. The company was born from a conversation in a pub in 2008! After a meeting of minds between a senior carpet representative and myself, and with my background in waste and communications, we started a conversation about the social/employment opportunity that could be created from capturing commercial carpet waste, sorting it, and regrading it into a potential second-life product and community opportunity.

The embodied carbon that goes into 'general carpet' is 9.76 kg per m²*, over double the weight of the physical material (commercial carpet tile circa 4kg per m²). Passionate about reducing environmental impact and creating long-term skilled employment, some 12 years later Greenstream is cited as an exemplary example of a circular business model, in which materials already in circulation are creating real social, environmental, and economic value.

However, no-one could have predicted what happened in 2020, and it is fair to say that it has been a challenge for each and every one of us. However, despite COVID-19 this was the year that we welcomed a new executive board; saw real growth in our circular supply and fitting service with public bodies in particular; and received even more recognition that our work in converting a 'waste material' into a community opportunity. It is also an important part of a wider 'towards zero carbon' context. This was also the year we saw our good friends at TPAS Cymru (previously known as Tenant Participation Advisory Service) publish the 'Floored Report' which, we hope, will have an important and positive affect on Welsh housing standards in the future. More of that later.

Most importantly, we have been able to hold onto our staff family, the bedrock of the organisation.

Finally, this was the year that we won the 'Reuse of the Year' award from Carpet Recycling UK (CRUK) for the fifth year running and, despite a national reduction in the contract flooring sector, we still diverted over 51,100m² (the size of eight professional football pitches) of otherwise wasted carpet for the benefit of the community.

So, after a challenging year for all, this report sets out what we have managed to achieve in terms of social, economic and environmental output in 2020. ”

Ellen Petts

Founder and Managing Director

Greenstream Flooring CIC

2020 AT A GLANCE...

Total material
diverted

51,100m² / 307 tonnes

Embedded carbon
savings
(CO²)

290 (GWP) tonnes

Total material
donated

5,700m²

Reused
carpet tiles

32,100m² / 193 tonnes

Our affordable
flooring
low-income tenants
supported

129

Repurposed

19,000m² / 114 tonnes

Free giveaway
events
number of days

17

Total number of
employees

11

*Source: ICE (Inventory of Carbon & Energy) V3.0 <http://www.circularecology.com/embodied-energy-and-carbon-footprint-database.html>.
Average carpet tiles @13.7 (GWP) kg per sqm, GWP = global warming potential.

ABOUT US

Established in 2008, Greenstream Flooring CIC, was set up to divert as many carpet tiles from landfill as possible. However, it is fair to say that much has changed and the business has evolved into something with social value at our core.

For us, circular economy principles underpin all of the work we do. These are:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems.

A circular economy makes better social, environmental, and economic sense, rather than the usual linear economy where we produce an item, use it for a relatively short period of time and then throw it away.

After twelve years of trading, we want to take this opportunity to look back on our achievements; and also say a big 'thank you' to all that have been part of our journey so far.

Our Mission

To maximise community benefit from the reuse and sales of flooring.

Our Vision

To be the premier provider of sustainable flooring solutions in the UK.

Our Values

At the centre of all the work we do are the principles of equality, respect, fairness, and sustainability.

We empower all our team members to be part of the business and to be involved in the decisions that affect them and the business.

We value our customers and seek to treat them all with respect and care, regardless of background or the size of their purchase.



OUR AFFORDABLE FLOORING PROJECT

Overcoming Carpet Poverty

In 2012 we started the Affordable Flooring Project as a way of supporting people in the local community with low-cost flooring.

Social housing tenants are one of the most disadvantaged groups in Wales. For many, being able to afford basic furnishings at the start of a tenancy is extremely hard or simply unachievable. Despite this, it is common practice for social housing providers not to provide them - with the most basic one being carpets or flooring. Consequently, some social tenants end up living without carpets or appropriate flooring for many years, which, in many cases, can have a serious impact on the health and wellbeing of adults and children.

We now work with eight housing associations to provide their tenants with access to this scheme, whereby they can access flooring at a low cost. These are:

- Bron Afon Community Housing
- Cynon Taff Community Housing Group
- Newydd Housing Association
- Rhondda Housing Association
- Taff Housing
- Newport City Homes
- Hafod Housing
- Orbit.

The Floored Report and Carpet Poverty

This year saw the publication of the 'Floored Report,' which is produced by the two Welsh tenant voice organisations, TPAS Cymru (previously known as Tenant Participation Advisory Service) and Tai Pawb who worked in collaboration with us. This report highlights the fact that there is currently no provision for carpets provided by social housing landlords in Wales, and the effects that this lack of provision has on those unable to afford basic carpeting in their homes. The report also goes on to recommend a series of changes in housing policy in this area, and Greenstream is keen

to support further developments; particularly as we are dealing with tenants living on bare floors on a daily basis. The majority of these tenants are otherwise unable to access the basic warmth and insulation of carpet.

Saving Money

The cost of buying and fitting carpet can be high. The lowest cost for carpet we could find in a quick online search was £2.99 per m² - and that is without fitting. Based on supplying 4,872m² of carpet tiles in 2019, we have saved people at least £14,567.28 compared to purchasing new. Purely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 figure is lower, but on a pro-rata basis the effect remains the same. What is more, having carpets fitted can also help to reduce energy costs.

“ The carpet tiles laid down look fantastic. I'm thrilled, as the hallway now looks a lot warmer and welcoming. I am in a wheelchair and the hallway takes a lot of traffic and the carpet tiles are really hardwearing. ”
Hafod Tenant, Cardiff

Wellbeing

We often underestimate the benefits of carpet and the difference it can make to a person's day to day wellbeing.

Carpet absorbs ten times more airborne noise than any other flooring. With many of the people accessing our Affordable Flooring Project living in multiple occupancy dwellings, this can make a big difference. Carpet reduces 'floor fatigue' in that it feels better underfoot and psychologically makes you feel warmer.

A lack of suitable flooring or carpeting can pose particular challenges for social housing tenants with children, particularly with those aged under 5 who are unable to play on the floor, as they risk injury from splinters in wooden floors.

COMMUNITY DONATION DAYS

Our free giveaway days

In January 2017, as a way of clearing some space in our warehouse, we decided to hold a giveaway event where we offered the local community our unwanted carpet tiles for free. It was an enormous success, and we now hold these events on a regular basis.

2020 has posed a particular challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic, but our team came up with the idea of allowing our visitors to book individual time slots to ensure social distancing was adhered to; enabling events to go ahead as planned.

Supporting the local community

Our Community Donations Days are known locally as 'Free Events' and the tiles we donate at these events, which have had to run via a click and collect system in 2020, provide free carpet to all members of our community whether they be local community groups or residents.

Our carpet tiles help individuals and families who have been without flooring, sometimes for years. South Wales community groups who have accessed much needed free carpet for their projects in 2020 include regional community hubs such as Vernon Place Community Hub in Neath, to charities

and support groups such as Rhondda Food Bank and Boomerang in Cardiff, who support the homeless and prevent social exclusion and the effects of poverty via the reuse of furniture. The Community Donation days have even supported local primary schools with much needed classroom carpet in the past, as well as playgroups and start-up small businesses. Our Free Events are open to all, whatever the need.

In 2020 we donated 5,700m² of carpet tiles through our Community Donation Days.



We support local organisations on a case-by-case basis. A recent example of this was where we donated 300m² of new flocked flooring to the Vernon Place Community Hub, which was donated from flooring manufacturer Forbo Flooring Systems.



Photo credit: Natasha Hirst

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

We work closely with local organisations and employment programmes to provide employment and training opportunities to local people. Most of our current team is made up of people who have come to us via back to work programmes and have faced long term unemployment.

We work in partnership with Elite Training and others to provide meaningful work experience to people with disabilities and those groups who face disadvantages within the workplace.

We treat all employees, placements, and volunteers equally, with access to a variety of internal and external training courses. In the last year our team accessed training in the following areas:

- Manual Handling
- First Aid
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Forklift Driving
- Asbestos Awareness
- Flooring products
- Flooring fitting
- COVID care.

We seek to provide a workplace that is healthy and that cares for the wellbeing of all team members, supporting them wherever we can.

Our aim is to provide everybody who comes to work with us with a positive experience that enables them to continue to learn and remain in sustainable employment.



“ I started working at Greenstream on a 6-month Jobs Growth Wales contract, with a chance of full-time employment. After the end of that time I had learnt so much, and then Greenstream decided to take me on full-time. Since then I have gone from strength to strength. I had no qualifications and now have a lot! Since working I have become more independent, confident and continue to learn every day. ”

Lloyd James, Sales Assistant



ENVIROMENTAL IMPACT

Approximately 15 million squares of new commercial carpet tiles are laid in the UK every year, with some 80% of these replacing previous commercial carpet tiles. Less than 1% of the total used is recovered, which means that over 99% are either buried or burnt (figures from Carpet Recycling UK).

This year, as in every year we guarantee we will not burn or bury any material that we manage and 2020 was no different. Out of the 51,100m² we diverted/managed none were sent to energy from waste (EFW), incinerated or landfilled. At present, material unsuitable for reuse is repurposed to be used as equine surface material within the UK. In relation to our Circular Supply and Fit service, we support clients to design out waste through the reuse/recycling of carpet tiles already in situ.

We also help support our clients to create innovative spaces that incorporate reuse and reduce the need for new material, where possible. Larger clients in 2020 have included Swansea, Cardiff and RCT Councils, all of whom have benefited from substantial environmental and economic savings of using a circular flooring provision.

Since we began, we have saved 634,000m² of carpet/2.5 million carpet tiles from going to waste. That is a pile over 6 miles high!



SINCE THE BEGINNING...

**634,000m²/
2.5 million**

carpet tiles
diverted from
landfill

88

professional football
pitches worth of
carpet saved for
reuse or recycling

41,375

average rooms worth of
otherwise wasted carpet
supporting an estimated
**12,000 projects and
residents**



OUR CUSTOMERS

Since its formation in 2008, Greenstream Flooring CIC has worked with hundreds of clients, providing flooring and reuse options to public and private organisations in Wales

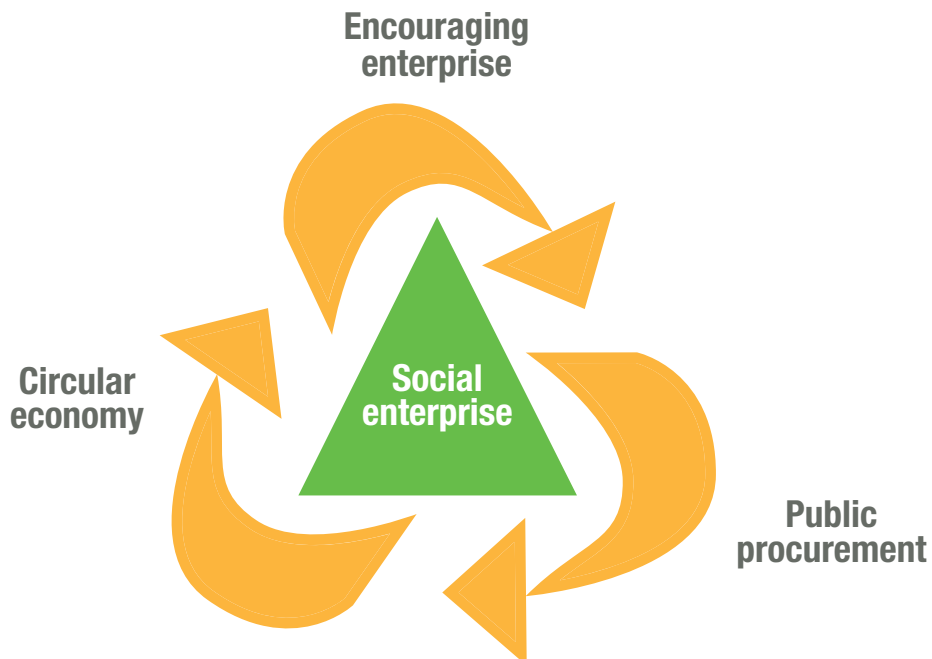
and beyond. Providing social, economic, and environmental value at the heart of every project.



OUR ADVOCACY WORK

Based on our position as a successful trading social enterprise in Wales which works with housing and the public sector, as well as with corporates to deliver a circular product and service, we have always been a passionate advocate for social enterprise and resource recovery.

This year we found ourselves even more in demand to support efforts in a triangle of influence; and our founder spoke this year at the Social Enterprise UK, a number of Wales Co-operatives, Bevan Foundation and UnLtd events around our three areas of interest/experience:





DID YOU KNOW

Greenstream Flooring CIC is on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter?

Facebook: Greenstream Flooring CIC

LinkedIn: Greenstream Flooring CIC

Twitter: @carpetCIC

Please follow us and share our posts so that we can generate a positive impact by diverting flooring from landfill, providing employment, and helping those in need.

You can also subscribe to receive our newsletter by scanning the QR code below:

