



# Impact Report 2020



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# We came together in 2019 with this hypothesis: the plastic waste crisis is one of the defining environmental issues of our time. How can we build a transformative business that meets this challenge head on?

We both come from a background in sustainable business. Nick ran a technology consultancy that worked with everyone from the UN to WWF and Greenpeace. Marcus founded London BioPackaging, an award-winning biodegradable packaging company.

After extensive consumer and market research, Bower Collective was launched in January 2020, a digital first consumer goods company selling Earth's best sustainable household products in plastic-free and reusable packaging. Reuse and refill is at the heart of the Bower model.

In 2020, Bower grew very quickly from a standing start to serving thousands of happy customers by the end of the year, with an Excellent 4.8/5 rating on Trustpilot and a community of over 45,000 highly engaged consumers.

One of our mantras at Bower is that sustainability is a journey, not a destination. We know that we are doing great in some areas, and have lots of work to do in others. This report outlines where we are and our strategy and vision for the future.

At its heart, we are committed to a world without waste where everyone can live a more sustainable life.

**Thank you!**



Nick, Marcus and the  
Bower Collective team x



Our vision:

A world without  
plastic waste in which  
everyone enjoys a  
more sustainable life.

Our mission is to build the world's leading digital-first sustainable consumer goods company.

Bower helps people create a sustainable home by delivering Earth's best household products in reusable packaging.



Purposeful

We want to be true to our mission and build a successful business that delivers real change in the world.

Brave

We embody the entrepreneurial spirit, and innovate continuously to scale the business in pursuit of our vision.

Generous

We are generous of spirit in how we treat our customers and we also assign a portion of revenues to relatable causes.

People first

We always put our people - employees, customers and partners - before profit.

One of the key reports that came out in 2020 was ‘Breaking the Plastic Wave: Top Findings for Preventing Plastic Pollution’, which was published by Pew Charitable Trust and the Systemiq consultancy.

The headline message of the report is familiar - ultimately that there needs to be a complete, system-wide overhaul to address the huge volume of plastic that is currently ending up in the oceans.

“An estimated 11 million metric tons of plastic waste enter the ocean every year. Without immediate and sustained action, that will nearly triple by 2040, to 29 million metric tons per year”

This makes for pretty gloomy reading, but they do focus on outlining the range of solutions we need to focus on to reverse this trend. Top of their list for solutions is “Eliminate avoidable plastic use and expand reuse and refill systems” which is at the heart of the Bower model. The report comments that:

“A reduction of plastic production—through elimination, the expansion of consumer reuse options, or new delivery models—is the most attractive solution from environmental, economic, and social perspectives. It offers the biggest reduction in plastic pollution, often represents a net saving, and provides the highest mitigation opportunity in GHG emissions.”

This is exactly what we are doing at Bower with the support of you - our incredible customer community.

# Our approach to sustainability breaks down into four areas:



## Waste reduction

We'll demonstrably reduce plastic waste in our active markets. i.e. any customer that shops with Bower is significantly reducing the plastic waste coming out of their home.



## Ethical supply chains

We'll build the most transparent, ethical supply system in our sector.



## Low carbon

We'll be a carbon negative business within 24 months (end 2022).



## Sustainable ingredients

We'll ensure all our product ingredients are environmentally and socially responsible.



As we've been developing our strategy, we've been looking at how our impact and our commitments to people and the planet can help and support and deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs.

We identified three main goals that we actively contribute towards.



This goal is focused on being more efficient with our resources as a society, doing more with less and creating circular business models where possible, primarily through our reuse and refill system. This is at the heart of Bower's business model.



It is no secret that to achieve the goals we have for the planet and our society we must work together. Bower may be a small business in a world with large problems, but we believe through collaboration we can achieve a lot. Whether it's becoming a B Corp or forming meaningful partnerships with charities that dream of the same world we do - we are always looking for opportunities to maximise our impact.



This is one of our main goals at Bower. One of the key challenges facing the oceans is the plastic waste crisis, which our business sets out directly to address.

One of the fundamentals that defined our business model is that recycling in the UK and more widely across the world, is dysfunctional.

The widely accepted figure is that only 9% of plastic is successfully recycled globally\*.

We've been focused on closing the loop on packaging right from the outset of Bower Collective. We don't believe that plastic is an inherently bad material, we take issue with its design for disposability, with single use, which is a waste of energy and resources, and leads to terrible environmental consequences.

That's why reuse and refill is at the heart of the Bower universe. All of our bestselling cleaning and personal care products come in our reusable packaging pouches. Our customers then post the packaging back to us in pre-paid returns envelopes when they are empty.

*\*Multiple sources including National Geographic, The Guardian, Huffington Post*

When we receive the pouches we aggregate them for specialist recycling into secondary products that are widely used across the construction, agriculture and infrastructure sectors. These products are in turn recyclable, extending the lifespan of the original material over many years.

We have, throughout 2020, been washing and reusing a proportion of our packaging. However, we have learned that the wash process is neither environmentally or economically scalable in its current form. We are now, with the help of funding from Innovate UK, working on our next generation reusable packaging system, which will allow us to do reuse and refill at scale. In this way we ensure a closed loop and that no packaging ends up in landfill or the natural environment. We hope to launch our new packaging in the first half of 2021.



At Bower Collective, we're committed to providing our customers with Earth's best products from an ethical, sustainable supply chain. That's why we created the Bower Standard.

# The Bower Standard is a set of guidelines for all the products we sell:

## Sustainable

Sustainability is at the heart of the Bower mission. All of our products and suppliers are carefully vetted to ensure they meet our sustainability criteria:

1. Waste reduction
2. Low carbon
3. Ethical supply chain
4. Non-toxic
5. Transparency

## Look good, feel good

Our products have all been rigorously tested to ensure that they are of the highest quality, we believe that natural and sustainable products look better in your home and feel better when you use them.

## Effective

Our sustainable products do the job as well as the non-sustainable alternatives. They have been rigorously tested and are loved by thousands of happy customers!





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**Corporation**

One of the first things we did as a business was sign up to join the B Corp process.

Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps form a community of leaders and drive a global movement of people using business as a force for good.

We were already active members within the wider B Corp community, attending events and workshops and we knew it was the right framework for our business.

Becoming a B Corp is a very rigorous process, covering everything from your supplier selection through to energy usage and corporate governance. We appreciate the rigour and the guidance it gives us for making better ethical business decisions every day.

We submitted our full Impact Assessment for certification in December 2020 and are now in the pipeline of businesses waiting for approval, watch this space!

Another founding principle and one of our core values is generosity and supporting mission-aligned initiatives.

The driving inspiration behind Bower Collective is the elimination of plastic waste from the natural environment, most notably from our oceans. So when we began our search for our charitable partner, we wanted to make sure that all of our customers could contribute to a campaign that focuses on protecting the marine environment.

That's why we've partnered with the Marine Conservation Society, the UK's leading charity for the protection of our seas, shores and wildlife. For every purchase our customers make with Bower Collective, we make a donation to help protect 1m<sup>2</sup> of endangered seagrass. [You can read more about our partnership here.](#)

In 2020, with your support, we helped protect 8039m<sup>2</sup> of endangered seagrass in UK coastal waters. That amounts to just shy of 1 hectare of seagrass, which according to a [report in the Economist](#), will sequester as much atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> as 15 hectares of rainforest. That is why top marine scientist at the MCS Dr. Jean-Luc Solandt, describes seagrass as "[the lungs of the ocean](#)".

We worked with a researcher from Oxford University to help us build a model based on multiple data sets, so that we could accurately measure our impact, and specifically the amount of plastic waste we are saving through our business.

The first thing we did was build our [Plastic Waste Calculator tool](#), to help our community measure the potential volume of waste their household was currently producing. We used a wide range of independent data sources to calculate the size and weight of equivalent single use plastic conventional products on a product by product basis. [You can view the list of data sources here.](#)

The second phase was to expand our model and map it against our sales data, so that we could accurately report on the amount of plastic waste that we are saving from potentially ending up in landfill, incineration or the natural environment.

Reducing waste is our primary goal but only represents one of our impact metrics. We are also fully focused on eliminating toxic chemicals and becoming carbon negative. Measuring our impact in these areas is currently underway!

**6643kg**  
Of plastic waste saved  
from landfill and the  
natural environment.

**25148m**  
Of plastic waste saved, if  
you stacked it end to end

**8039m<sup>2</sup>**  
Of endangered seagrass  
protected through our  
partnership with Marine  
Conservation Society.

In 2020, with your support, we have already made a significant impact in reducing single use plastic waste from ending up in landfill, incineration or the natural environment - thank you!





Central to our strategy is developing a community of highly engaged conscious consumers around our brand - that's you!


This has been really exciting for us and at the time of writing we have over 50,000 people in our community, directly engaging with our mission and products and making strong commitments to creating a more sustainable world.

One of our core values is being people first - we always put our people - employees, customers and partners - before profit. For us, community comes first, whether it is delivering outstanding customer service to ensure all of our customers are happy, or ensuring we focus on employment opportunities for local people, which we do with 85% of our workforce being based in the South West of the UK.

## Community comes first: we always put people before profit

One of our goals for last year was to organise Bower Beach Cleans with our partner the Marine Conservation Society, however due to the lockdown and social distancing constraints we were unable to do this - but will definitely be kicking these off when we are able to in 2021!

We also focus on developing key content for our community which has included Q&A with sustainability experts, wellness advice from our supplier partners and free Bower Yoga classes.



We always say that sustainability is a journey, not a destination, and we are delighted to have tens of thousands of people across the UK actively participating in this journey with us. We are really proud of what we've done in just 12 months, we couldn't achieve the impact we do without the Bower community, so thank you!

Together we can create a more sustainable world and achieve even greater impact in 2021 and beyond.



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