

# LIFE AND THE HEDGE



**SLOEMOTION DISTILLERY**  
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & GOVERNANCE REPORT  
2021/22



# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & GOVERNANCE REPORT 2021/22

Sloemotion Distillery is a forward-thinking business that makes high quality, award-winning drink products under two brands, Hedgerow Spirits & Liqueurs and Finders Spirits. We also produce 4-5 white/private label contracts.

## MINIMISING IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

and where possible, enhancing it

## MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF OUR STAFF

delivering excellence to our customers and supporting our local community.

## UPHOLDING SOUND GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

to protect the long-term interests of shareholders and create enduring value for the company and all its' stakeholders.





# 1. ENVIRONMENT

ENERGY USE/WASTE/PACKAGING/BIODIVERSITY

*We came from the hedgerows, sustainability and nature are at the heart of our business.*





**Sloemotion Distillery** began in 2002 after work to enhance biodiversity on a North Yorkshire farm resulted in a large crop of sloes on the hedgerows. Already looking for ideas to grow and process food on the farm, the founding partners had the idea of harvesting the fruit and making Sloe Gin, effectively creating the seed from which the business has grown for the past 20 years.

The origins of the business and the background of Joff Curtoys, one of the founding partners, as conservationist and ecologist, means that minimising impacts on the environment (and enhancing it, if possible) has always been a central consideration in the development of the business. Subsequent investors and workers within the business have always been pleased to continue this ethos.

---

## 2022 Objectives

- Whilst the business has been extremely progressive in the way in which it manages its environmental impacts, it has not recorded data such as carbon emissions, general energy use and amounts of waste. We believe that the business is already carbon-neutral, but in 2022, the company will **commit to recording baseline impacts, confirming its carbon status, and providing data** in order to set targets for subsequent years.
  - Whilst staff are mostly engaged with our environmental ethos, we are keen to ensure that we are all pulling in the right direction. In 2022, we will plan 2-3 **30 minute training sessions** on what we can all do to **minimise the business' impact on the environment.**
- 



# ENERGY USE

Since its inception, the business has made significant choices in terms of minimising energy usage. Heating for the offices and the still itself, where the base spirits are created, are the two main energy consumers in the business. Instead of opting for a copper still as so often touted by distilleries, the business chose an ultra-modern iStill.

Copper stills are a 19th Century technology developed when energy use and waste was not a consideration. Although they look “beautiful” we considered a copper still to be a morally reprehensible choice in today’s climate crisis due to the massive conductivity of the metal.

A still that produces the same quality of liquid but does so using significantly less

energy (less than 20% of a traditional copper still) through insulation, direct heat sourcing and computer control has far more beauty to us.

In 2006 the business moved to a bigger site at Green Farm, Barton-le-Willows, where it now resides. Rather than looking for new premises, we upcycled redundant farm buildings, converting old tractor sheds into offices and adapting grain stores and barns as its production facility. During the conversion the maximum amount of insulation that we could afford was installed to minimise energy loss, especially in the office space and staff kitchen.

As a small employer with limited office and production space, minimising energy usage is something the Sloemotion

Distillery team are able to do on a personal level; managing heating systems to ensure that energy is not used when it isn’t required. Staff training is an essential part of this, so that we’re all pulling in the same direction.

We actively sourced a green energy supplier, Octopus Energy, which provides us with 100% renewable electricity, certified by OFGEM.

All fruit used in production is stored off site in a cold store at J E Hartley, south east of York. At any given time, there will be about 30-40 tonnes of our produce in frozen storage. At present we have no information regarding energy usage and environmental impacts at the facility.

---

## 2022 Objectives

- Our current policy is to minimise energy usage by making the right decisions for the business whilst at the same time thinking of the best environmental outcomes. We will **monitor and collate energy use** areas within the business to provide baseline data which we can then look to positively influence in subsequent years.
  - We believe off-setting should only be considered as a last resort, if we are found not to be carbon-neutral during the course of 2022 then we will begin to **look into the idea of off-setting**.
  - Find out more about **energy use & carbon footprint** at J E Hartley **cold store**.
- 

## ISTILL

### OUR STILL USES

# 20% OF THE ENERGY

### OF A TRADITIONAL COPPER STILL



# WASTE

As with other areas concerning the environmental impacts of the business, minimising waste is something that has, and continues to be, given serious consideration. Within 6 months of making the first batch of Sloe Gin back in 2002, instead of throwing the spirit-enriched “spent” fruit away, the team had the innovative idea of using them for other products including chocolate truffles and chutneys. At that point only the fruit stones were being disposed of, but today even those stones are put to use as one of the botanicals in our own Hedgerow Gin.

**Below are the processes for the main areas of waste within the business:**

## **Water**

In 2020 we installed a 38k litre waste-water tank. All the waste-water from the tank is supplied to a local anaerobic digester as it contains valuable sugar and nutrients that aids the functioning of the digester.

## **Fruit & Botanicals.**

All fruit and botanical waste is re-used or composted. Whilst some of the fruit does go into use in other products, (as highlighted earlier), there is still some excess fruit waste. Along with the spent botanicals from the still, the fruit is all composted on site at Green Farm and returned to the land as a soil conditioner. As the fruit & botanicals have a high alcohol content the composting process takes about 12 months longer than normal composting.

WE DON'T THROW  
FRUIT AWAY



*...we use it to make delicious chocolates and chutneys.*



## Cardboard

All cardboard waste is disposed of in an environmentally responsible way. About 5% of “waste” cardboard is re-used to help package products, the remainder is disposed of in two ways. Working with the Green Farm land manager, Richard Hudson, the team provide the waste cardboard for spreading in the farm’s pig sheds. The cardboard is “played” with by the pigs (with proven health benefits for the animals) and then gradually trodden into the bedding, the bedding is then composted and returned to the land as a soil conditioner. At busy times of year when the waste cardboard volumes exceed the demands from the pig sheds, a formal cardboard recycling skip service is used.

## Plastic

Currently we have no facility to recycle plastic that comes from the packaging of large volume components supplied to us. This includes pallet wrap and pallet shrink wrap, especially from bottle pallets.

---

## 2022 Objectives

- **Quantify** waste volumes.
  - Find an environmentally responsible solution for **pallet wrap, pallet shrink wrap and label backing paper**.
  - Assess whether a **bottle recycling skip service** for the business is viable
- 

## Glass

All waste glass is recycled using local facilities, though this may not be a sustainable solution as glass usage increases.

## Paper

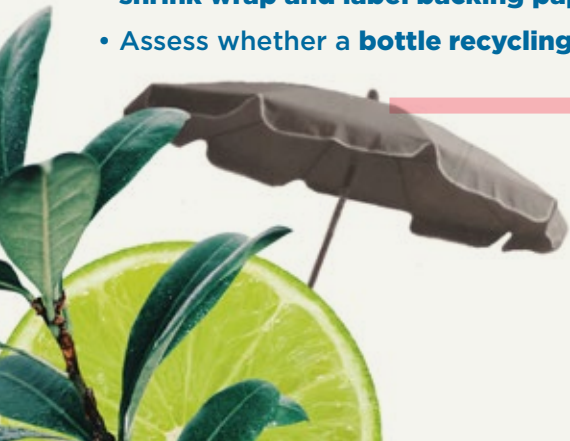
All non-sensitive paper from the office is re-used or recycled. Currently, backing paper from the bottle labelling process is not recycled.

## Staff Kitchen Waste

All food waste from the staff kitchen is composted. All packaging from staff lunch food is recycled, where possible.

WASTE CARDBOARD IS

*played  
with by Pigs*  
AND LATER  
COMPOSTED.



# PACKAGING

This is an area that has come into focus in the past couple of years and the business is making strides to improve performance here.

## Bottles

Up until summer 2021 the business had been sourcing bottles from Slovenia and France respectively. With issues around Brexit and for positive environmental impacts, the business now sources 100% of its' bottles for its own brands from Allied Glass in Leeds, less than 40 miles from the distillery.

The business is also actively encouraging our most significant white label customer to source bottles from Allied Glass too, having previously sourced from France. The company hopes this will come to fruition in 2022.

For the Finders range of products in 2021 the company switched glass type from white flint to standard flint glass which is composed of 49% recycled glass; it's more than a little bit green!

The Finders range uses plastic capsules.



100%  
OF OUR BOTTLES ARE SOURCED

*locally*





## Stoppers

The Hedgerow range of products has always used natural cork/wood stoppers. The benefits to the environment of using wood are well documented, the benefits of cork are less obvious. The Cork Oak forests of central Spain & Portugal are globally important habitats for wildlife, especially birds. This ancient form of agriculture provides habitats for birds such as Spanish Imperial Eagle, Black Kite, Lesser Kestrel, European Bee-eater, Hoopoe and Calandra Lark whilst still being able to produce commercially viable amounts of cork. Sloemotion Distillery is proud to be a businesses that supports this vital, eco-friendly form of agriculture and the people within it.

In 2019 we switched the Finders range of products from plastic stoppers to the same wood/cork stoppers.

## Parcel Packaging

In 2018 we removed all use of plastic tape and packaging from all our direct-to-consumer orders. We use a system called Flexi-Hex which provides a simple, yet highly protective cardboard solution designed for heavy but valuable postal items, along with paper tape.

The business still uses plastic tape for all white label packaging and plastic pallet wrap for all pallets leaving the business. Biodegradable pallet wrap has been investigated however, it is non-recyclable and causes big problems in wrap recycling systems doing damage to the environment as a consequence.

---

## 2022 Objectives

- Switch to **paper tape** for all packaging of our business-to-business orders
- Encourage our **white label customers** to follow suit
- We are about to begin work with a nationally significant packaging firm to help them test the efficacy of a **non-plastic pallet wrap**
- Look into the efficacy of using **standard flint glass** (with 49% recycled glass) for our Hedgerow range of bottles.
- Encourage our white label customers to convert to standard flint glass.
- **Stop** the use of **plastic capsules** on our Finders range, replacing them with paper tamper seals.





# BIODIVERSITY

As documented earlier the business only came about after work to help wildlife yielded a crop of sloes on hedgerows on a North Yorkshire farm, so concern for wildlife is deep within the business' DNA.

## Sloes

Sloes are the fruit of the Blackthorn and are not commercially cropped, so all sloes are wild by definition. Sloes like other fruit can only be produced on second year growth so can only be harvested on hedgerows that are cut less often. Such hedges are better for wildlife as they are more "dense", providing shelter, as well as other fruit and vegetation which produces food sources and a richer habitat.

Sloemotion Distillery uses between 30 & 40 tonnes/year of sloes, meaning that the company is probably helping to protect 1000's of kilometres of wildlife-rich hedgerows. We have tried to calculate the impact, but it is very difficult as hedges aren't entirely composed of Blackthorn and the plant is naturally capricious.

The business sources sloes from across Europe. The company has long-held ambitions to source more fruit from more local sources, though at this stage it's impossible to get fruit entirely from the UK due to limited quality hedges and availability of labour and suppliers.

CONCERN FOR  
*wildlife*  
IS DEEP WITHIN OUR DNA



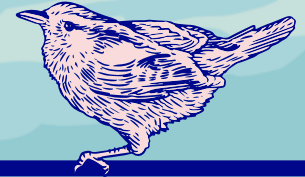




CASTLE HOWARD



Yorkshire  
Wildlife Trust



### Green Farm

Richard Hudson, who farms the land around the business site has a similar outlook on the enhancement of biodiversity. With input from Joff, Richard has created lots of dedicated wildlife habitats including species rich grasslands, wild bird feed crops, woodlands and wetlands around the farm. Green Farm is alive with wildlife. Joff has also created species-rich mini meadows around Sloemotion Distillery buildings. Species-rich meadows are one of the fastest declining and most biodiverse habitats in the UK.

### Castle Howard

Joff sits on the Castle Howard Rewilding & Conservation Advisory Committee. Castle Howard is a large country estate 5 miles from the Distillery. They are planning to re-wild a significant part of their land and adopt a new environmental strategy for the productive areas.

### Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

The business is a corporate member of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. In 2019 we donated 50p/bottle for a limited-edition product raising £450 for the Trust.

### 2022 Objectives

- The business has a planned **programme of tree planting** on Green Farm. With obvious benefits in terms of carbon capture, the trees provide good habitat but also a team building and training exercise for staff.



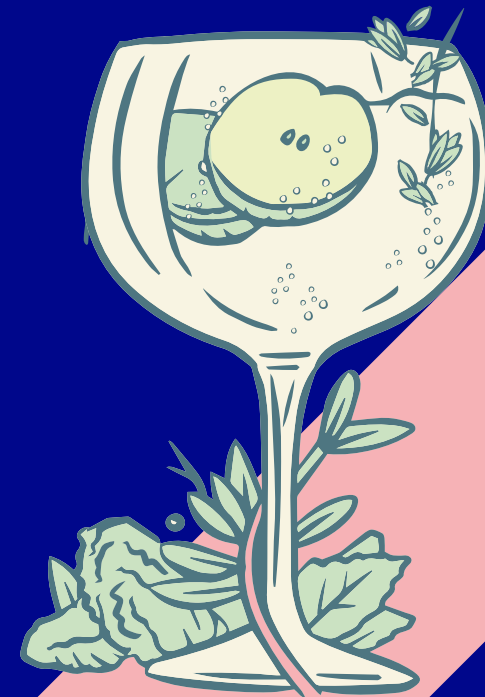




# 2. SOCIAL

PEOPLE/COMMUNITY/PRODUCTS & CUSTOMERS

*Maximising the potential of our staff,  
supporting our local community and  
delivering excellence to our customers*



# PEOPLE

Our staff are the most important resource the company has. It is imperative that we build an inclusive business where the employees are safe, where they feel valued and heard, where they can thrive and grow professionally, and where they can take pride in their work and the company.

The company has 19 members of staff, including the Senior Management Team.

## Learning & Development

The company strongly believes in investing in its employees through development, training opportunities, ensuring they grow alongside the business.

In terms of the production team, the company has held British Retail Consortium (BRC) Accreditation for the past 3 years, certified A++ in 2021. The BRC accreditation has a Food Safety Culture element. Making a product that people put inside their bodies requires

significant care and carries great risk, so this policy actively encourages positive staff engagement to ensure that the manufacture of goods is done so in a safe manner.

## Sloemotion Distillery's Food Safety Culture policy

requires training for all staff to levels that are the highest standard of food production in the UK. The policy actively empowers staff at all levels to report and engage with food safety and product quality issues and requires the business to have:

- a robust Whistleblowing Policy and Confidential Reporting Policy.
- training and technical information exchanges between all levels of staff
- a 6 monthly anonymous questionnaire regarding the food safety culture within the company

The BRC framework has allowed us to think more progressively about our staff in the manufacturing side of the company and the roles they play within its success.



## Diversity

The company believes everyone has a voice and every voice matters. We look at diversity and inclusion as a means of building a stronger company by having a wide breadth of experiences, backgrounds and perspectives that can contribute to the shared vision of the company.

Sloemotion Distillery is an equal opportunity employer that hires and promotes the best candidates without regard to race, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or sexual orientation. While we strive to hire locally and promote from within whenever possible, our focus remains on hiring or promoting the best candidate.

The business has an approximately 50:50 gender split. This diversity extends through all aspects of the business from production through to sales and at all levels. However, we lack females at senior management level and on the Board of Directors.

There is **no gender bias**, in terms of pay.

With regard to **ethnicity**, the company is broadly reflective of our regional community, which is predominately white, British, though we employ a black, African and a Polish member of staff.

## Recognition & Rewards

The company is committed to providing a competitive total compensation package that drives employee engagement and performance which then helps to deliver the business strategy and success.

Pay levels are driven by company financial metrics which align to company performance. Currently, the company uses the UK Government Living Wage as the baseline guide for pay.

The company operates an ad hoc bonus scheme which applies to all levels and all areas of the business, to individuals as well as teams.

THE BUSINESS HAS  
AN APPROXIMATELY  
**50/50**  
*gender split*

## 2022 Objectives

- We will undertake an **Employee Engagement survey** to ensure employees are committed to the company's own goals and values, motivated to contribute to success and able at the same time to enhance their own sense of wellbeing
- Where possible the Company will seek to improve the gender split within the **Senior Management Team** and at **Board level**
- The company plans to become one of the 9000 **Living Wage Foundation** companies in the UK, adopting their Living Wage as the baseline guide for pay.
- We will adopt the following **9 pillars of Company Social Development** to help us deliver business success

## OUR 9 PILLARS OF COMPANY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TO DELIVER BUSINESS SUCCESS



SHARED VISION



STRATEGIC CLARITY



ROLE CLARITY



KNOWLEDGE SHARING



BOTTOM-UP INNOVATION



OPERATIONALLY DISCIPLINED



CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT



REWARDS & RECOGNITION



SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP



# COMMUNITY

We are based in the small rural village of Barton-le-Willows, 11 miles north-east of York, near the local market town of Malton, in the region of Ryedale, North Yorkshire.

The company regularly recruits staff from within this region, most live in the region and many of our suppliers are based there.

## Village

Barton-le-Willows is a residential village of 60 or so properties, with a farm and a small metal work fabricator. Unsurprisingly, Sloemotion Distillery is the biggest employer in the village. The business prides itself on being a good neighbour and has built a large element of goodwill in the area.

We have a responsibility to ensure that all our operations do not unduly impact on our neighbours, including the daily vehicle movements of staff, delivery and collection of goods, especially when this involves large vehicles on what are country lanes, and noise from factory operations.

We regularly take part in, and donate goods for, charity purposes at village events. We offer discounts on company products to residents.

As referenced elsewhere we have good relations with Castle Howard a few miles up the hill. We are corporate sponsors, and get involved in events and regularly share expertise.

**WE HAVE A  
RESPONSIBILITY  
TO ENSURE THAT ALL OUR  
OPERATIONS DO NOT UNDULY IMPACT**

*our neighbours*





## Town

Malton is a small market town with all the incumbent issues that carries. However, over the past 10 years it has undergone a small rebirth emerging as the self-titled “Food Capital” of Yorkshire, run by Tom Naylor-Leyland heir to the Fitzwilliam Estate. Whilst not based in the town, Joff Curtoys and the company were centrally involved in providing advice, expertise and help in getting the food initiative off the ground.

The company now regularly takes part in events, running our own events and operating stalls and the event bar (with Brass Castle Brewery) at the Malton Food Lovers Festival. Over 40,000 people now attend annually. The town itself and its overall popularity has risen sharply

attracting new enterprises such as shops & restaurants and people from far and wide. This has significantly contributed to Ryedale becoming one of the most sought-after residential areas in the UK.

## County

Greater Yorkshire covers a vast area and has a strong and positive reputation for its landscape, wildlife and for its food businesses. Sloemotion Distillery is proud to be a regionally recognised business with many loyal customers, including farm shops, delis, food halls and individuals. We have also supported and been a member of Deliciously Yorkshire, the regional food group, from its inception in 2006. As mentioned elsewhere the company is also a member, supporter and donor to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.



## 2022 Objectives

- The business will encourage staff to engage in the **village litter pick** in March
- Joff Curtoys with Richard Hudson (farmer, Green Farm) will be running a **village biodiversity and environment event**, outlining the work that the farm and company undertake in the village.
- The business will be expanding its involvement with **Castle Howard** including the joint running of a visitor experience and events





# PRODUCTS & CUSTOMERS

## Delivering excellence to our customers

Sloemotion Distillery's BRC accreditation upholds the most stringent food safety standards in the UK, ensuring that the products are always consistent & safe.

The company prides itself on its ability to engage with and deliver our products to our customers and consumers. We have now had 20 years in business and are still dealing with many customers who joined us back in 2002 for the start of our journey.

# 20 YEARS

IN THE BUSINESS







# 3. GOVERNANCE

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

*Upholding sound governance practices to protect the long-term interests of shareholders and create enduring value for the company and all its stakeholders*

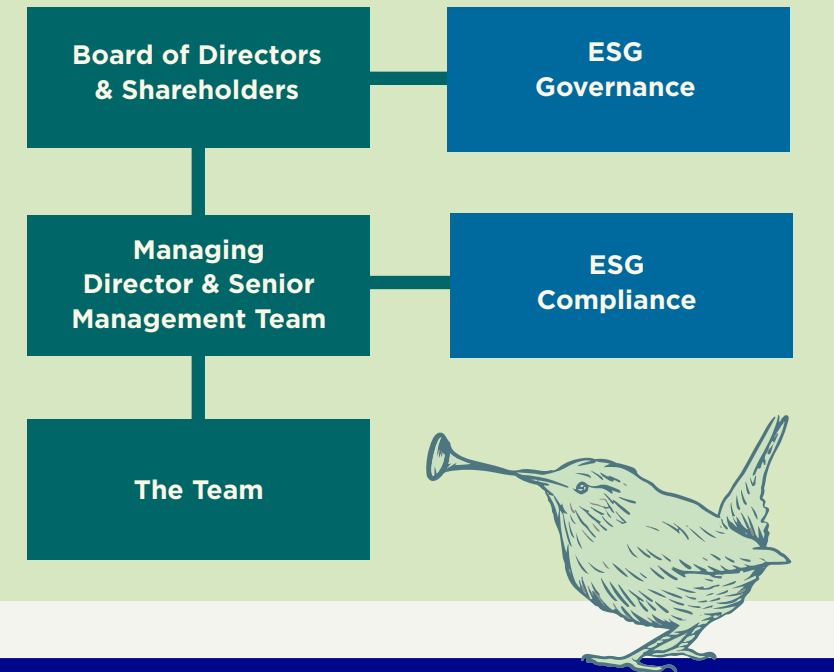
Sloemotion Distillery is committed to creating a workplace that promotes our core values of Integrity, Respect, Collaboration, Value Creation and High Performance, and encourages employees to speak up and report any known or suspected violations of company policies and applicable law.

Governance of ESG responsibilities at Sloemotion Distillery goes to the highest level of our company. Our board of directors set policies and oversee management’s decision-making on sustainability topics related to the company’s operations, including those associated with economic, environmental and social issues.

Joff Curtoys, Founder, Shareholder and Board member oversees ESG compliance for the company as well as producing the annual report.

As a company, we are intentional about what we value. We strive to demonstrate our core values through the way we engage with our shareholders, customers, communities and colleagues. We continuously work to reinforce these values through leading by example, training and incentivising positive behaviours, using our values as a filter through which we assess potential new employees and constantly striving for continuous improvement in these areas.

## SLOEMOTION DISTILLERY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



**Sloemotion Distillery’s approach to ESG issues also reflects these core values that guides everyone in the company, informing and directing decisions and actions every day.**

### INTEGRITY

We operate in a fair and transparent manner, embracing the highest ethical standards in everything we do.

### RESPECT

We are committed to creating a diverse, safe and inclusive organisation where all are treated with dignity.

### COLLABORATION

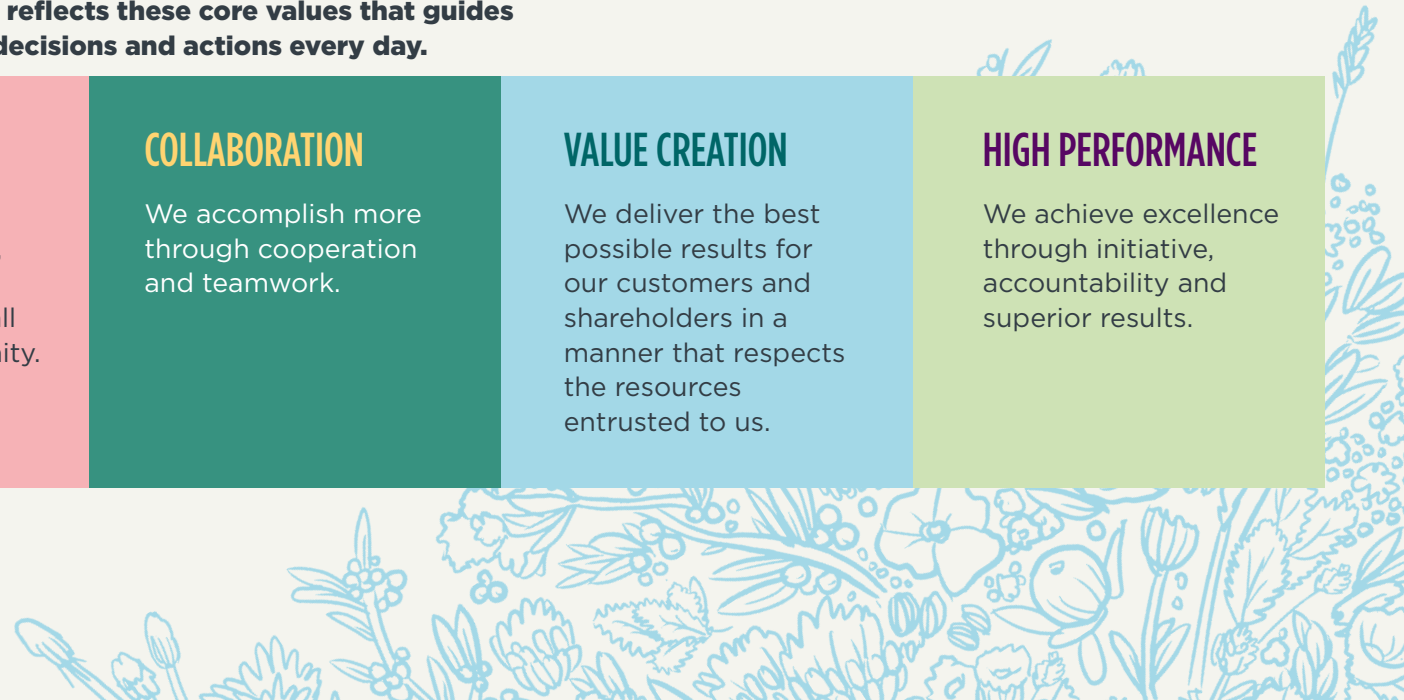
We accomplish more through cooperation and teamwork.

### VALUE CREATION

We deliver the best possible results for our customers and shareholders in a manner that respects the resources entrusted to us.

### HIGH PERFORMANCE

We achieve excellence through initiative, accountability and superior results.







Just before dusk in the magic hour  
lens flare  
sun glare  
when the light is gold and the day is old  
but never quite over  
the countryside comes to laughter and life.

If it forgets you're there  
mad hare, wise owl and distant dog howl  
will give up their secrets  
of hedgerows, orchards and sloes  
of fairy tales and foragers  
and then, forever, the fields are yours.

Trees lay down their laden limbs,  
of oozing damson, plum and the english cox  
and the clever fox  
fixes the clocks  
so the magic hour is forever more.

HEDGEROW SPIRIT

FINDERS

SLOEMOTION LIQUEURS

