

AG Impact Report 2021–2022



A year of impact, powered by purpose



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Time to do more

When AG was founded in 2010, our purpose was driven by how challenging it was to find flexible working opportunities for women in the corporate communications world. Since then, we've created and grown a business model that benefits everyone who needs flexible work opportunities.

But we didn't want to stop there. At the end of 2020, we took time to rethink what mattered to us, beyond the profit. How could we make a difference for people and the planet?

We created a new vision: **to create a better world with equality and climate action at the core of everything we do** and began our purpose journey to become net zero and B Corp certified by 2025.

November 2021 to October 2022 is our first year of impact reporting and just the start of our journey.



Lynne Ashcroft Griffiths
AG Comms Founder



What we do at AG

We help purpose-led leaders communicate, as we support equality and climate action to create a better world.



We do this by translating complex information into easy to understand messaging to drive behavioural and organisational change.

Our approach to strategic internal communication helps global organisations improve their employee experience and engagement, while navigating business and cultural transformation.



Our 30+ team of virtual experts is made up of communication, leadership, change, psychology and HR experts who have between 5-40 years' of global business experience.



Here are some examples of our work in the last 12 months:

- Developed values and purpose statements with employees and leaders for a business-wide launch and comms campaign
- Created a communication strategy and operational plan for a transformational change project in a global matrix organisation
- Provided 1-2-1 leader coaching on how to deliver important messages
- Facilitated a Leadership Team workshop on strategic core message creation and action planning
- Delivered communications and milestone updates for a global project launch
- Measured and analysed employee opinion and provided recommended activations to improve employee engagement
- Developed a training toolkit for remote managers to self-serve and improve communication impact and effectiveness



We've made progress

In the last 12 months, we started our purpose journey driven by our new vision, mission and values and consciously chose to align with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 8 and 13.



We're led by three purpose priorities

Every business decision we make is aligned to at least one of our priorities. They help us to be a better business every day and keep us focused on our mission in **helping purpose-led leaders communicate, as we support equality and climate action to create a better world.**



Be a brilliant business to work with

Committed to a business model that provides virtual and flexible opportunities to support a purposeful work / life balance for our team and offers maximum value to our clients, with minimal impact on people and our planet

Support stakeholder purpose

Helping and supporting stakeholders who align with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will educate, share experience and support others in their mission for positive impact. We will grow and invest in relationships that align with our purpose

Be a force for good

Continuing to grow purpose partnerships like 1% for the Planet, Business Declares and The Girls' Network. These partners will help us define and deliver our AG giving strategy, and support our goal to be carbon net zero and B Corp certified by 2025

Be a brilliant business to work with

To us, this means offering a brilliant **employee** experience with benefits, flexibility and personal development for a modern day professional.

It's about giving our **suppliers** (who we call AG Members) brilliant client projects that are purpose driven, with transparent day rates and support systems in place to help manage demand.

For our **customers** it's about creating a brilliant experience, with trusted partners and expert knowledge that brings value to their business purpose.

For our Employees

In 2021 we made improvements to our benefits offering:

- 38 days holiday (pro rata) and 'Gold Level' private healthcare offered to all employees
- 32 days used for on-the-job training
- Training on EDI, financial coaching and environmental awareness



“Financial coaching is the best business benefit I've ever had, and so important in the current economic climate”
[Sarah Hakewill – AG Employee, 2022]



“AG helped me relocate to Scotland and work flexibly around family, still doing what I love!”
[Emily Cusick – AG Employee, 2021]

Be a brilliant business to work with

For our Members (suppliers)

- We surveyed our suppliers and they rated AG top values as collaborative, supportive of work-life balance and doing the right thing
- When asked what can AG do to improve, having clearer processes was ranked highest, followed by help to get to know virtual members who joined during the pandemic
- 75% suppliers are women owned / women led businesses

100% of AG employees and members agree or strongly agree that we are committed to cultivating a culture where people of all backgrounds are respected and valued

“The flexible structure works perfectly for me and the clients I work with”
[AG Member, 2022]



“I love being surrounded by positivity and ambition”
[AG Member, 2022]



“AG Comms has a fun, supportive, progressive culture, with a strong moral compass.”
[AG Member, 2022]



Be a brilliant business to work with

For our Customers

It is really important to only work with customers who are working to solve the UN SDGs, who also align with our purpose, and who are already (or are transitioning toward) using their business as a force for good.

- 92% of our customers are solving for UN SDG #3 Good Health and Wellbeing
- 100% have Net Zero targets and climate action plans
- 66% of leaders we support are women

“Internal Comms is incredibly critical, for internal and external success. AG is a key member of our team and we feel really grateful to have you working with us”
[Corporate Affairs Client, 2022]

Our people are everything

We couldn't do what we do without them. That's why it's important that we create a culture where everyone is listened to, opinions are valued and our differences are celebrated!

“So proud of the transformation we are on as a business and the positive impact that's having on me as an individual”
[AG Employee, 2022]



Support stakeholder purpose

This is about AG helping and supporting our stakeholders' purpose. These are people and businesses who already align or want to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here are some of our stakeholders, which we supported in our first year of measuring impact.

We set up a sustainability business network

We are part of a Science and Tech park in North West England called Alderley Park. With 200+ businesses based here, we have made it our mission to connect, to collectively use our businesses as a 'force for good'.

Alderley Park Force for Good Network:

- 20 members
- Six face to face meetings per year
- Free learning sessions on B Corp, UN SDGs, measuring carbon footprint, waste management and recycling

AG | our purpose | who we are | how we work | our clients | contact | Alderley Park for Good

Welcome to the Alderley Park for Good Network
The go-to site for companies based at Alderley Park who want to use their business as a force for good

Free network for Alderley Park businesses to discuss and share ideas on all things social and environmental

We meet six times a year to discuss and share ideas on all things social and environmental for employees, customers, suppliers and communities. We look at what it takes to become a **Copy certified** with our Cheshire B Leader, **Donna O'Keefe** from **UK for Good** and get updates from the Bruntonwood Sustainability Team.

[Request to join](#)

Lynne Ashcroft Griffiths (ESG Impact and B Corp Consultant) is supporting SME businesses to develop and improve their Environmental, Social and Governance with the goal of increasing all SME's impact for people and our planet, trained in B Corp Certification and Leadership for Good. Lynne is also an Impact Consultant for **UK for Good**.

Book your 20-minute discovery call with Lynne to understand how your business can be more sustainable and the steps needed to get there.

[Book your free 20 minute discover call](#)

Free consultancy for Alderley Park Businesses: Understanding your social & environmental impact

[Click here](#)

Lynne Ashcroft Griffiths
AG Comm Founder
UK for Good Impact Consultant
Alderley Park for Good Network Founder

Upcoming Events

- Poster Day (Alderley Park)** - Tues 9 May, 16:00
- May Network meeting (Alderley Park)** - Thurs 25 May, 10:00
- People, Planet, Pint (Alderley Park)** - Thurs 22 June, 17:00
- July Network meeting (Alderley Park)** - Thurs 20 July, 10:00

www.agcommunications.co.uk/alderley-park-for-good

Support stakeholder purpose

We've joined business memberships

We became members of social and environmental impact groups. We support their mission through sharing content, engaging in activities and helping to grow their networks:

- **UK For Good** – a UK business community learning how to use business as a force for good and achieve B Corp certification
- **Business Declares** – a UK business community aligned to net zero targets and declaring a climate emergency
- **1% for the Planet** – a global community committed to climate action by donating 1% annual turnover to environmental non-profits and charities



We're business activists lobbying for change

We have actively supported:

- **The Better Business Act** – In April 2022 we went to Parliament and met with our local MP to gain support to amend section 172 of the Companies Act, to make all UK businesses accountable to all their stakeholders, alongside shareholders
- **The Local Electricity Bill** – Supported Power for People by writing to MPs asking them to 'back the bill' and allow community energy projects to sell renewable power back to local communities at lower prices
- **Open letter to COP 27 Presidency** – supporting the SHE Changes Climate team, we asked for equal gender representation in all Climate Leadership and decision making



Support stakeholder purpose

The Better Business Day April 2022

Lynne and Sarah joined 350 members of The Better Business Act at Westminster to officially lobby our MPs and ask them to back the act.

We met with Ester McVey (MP for Tatton) and spoke about the impact of business on our environment, the cost of living crisis and its impact on local businesses. We also talked about how so many businesses are already looking out for the interests of people and planet alongside shareholder profits.

Esther was supportive of using business as a force for good, and believes large businesses should be first to commit, but SMEs need more support and frameworks to achieve this – especially during the cost of living crisis.

We also requested to meet MPs for Congleton and North Thanet, but they didn't accept our requests and we therefore followed up in writing later.



Left to right: Sarah Hakewill and Lynne Ashcroft Griffiths (AG Comms), Mary Portas (BBA Co-founder) and Esther McVey (MP for Tatton)

better business
act

Be a force for good

We are committed to all of our stakeholders by doing what's right socially, ethically, economically and environmentally. Our goals are to be carbon net zero and B Corp certified by 2025, and we are making progress toward achieving them.

We're Certified Climate Neutral

- We measured our Carbon Footprint from May 21 to May 22 at 137t CO₂e and have a reduction plan to be Net Zero by 2025
- We have offset 137t of carbon through Climate Neutral projects which avoid deforestation, support wind energy and capture methane gas from landfills, which is then used to power local homes



We've donated

- £27,470 to 1% for the Planet non-profit partners
- £1,000 to the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) to help people in Ukraine get food and warm blankets

We've volunteered

- 52 days have been used for paid employee volunteering
- 17.5 of the 52 days were used to support The Girls' Network through mentoring

We've submitted our B Impact Assessment (BIA)

- In July 2022 we submitted our BIA with B Lab UK for our B Corp Certification. See more about this on the next page

We amended our Articles of Association

- We have future-proofed our business and changed our legal structure to account for all stakeholders (people and planet) in all business decisions and how we run AG Comms in the future

Be a force for good

On our way to B Corp Certification!

We believe that B Corps are the future of business and can't wait to join this incredible community, all using business as a force for good. As we publish our 2021-2022 impact report, we're currently at the Verification Stage of our B Corp certification – two years ahead of our 2025 target!

Our journey so far:

- December 2021 – First attempt at the B Impact Assessment (BIA)
- January 2022 – Joined UK for Good to get insights and learn more from B Leader, Donna Okell
- March – Started B Corp Accelerator Programme with B Leaders Donna Okell and Andy Hawkins
- July – Submitted our BIA with 104.5 points, although it's likely our score will change during our B Lab review

What we've learned:

- Be open and transparent – this is a detailed process that examines every part of business operations and strategy
- There are no shortcuts – the process is rigorous and needs energy and time committed to the journey
- Involve all stakeholders – they will be impacted by the journey and the positive changes made
- Gather data and evidence – it doesn't count until proof can be shown
- Pace the process – this is a marathon, not a sprint, and ongoing improvements are found along the way

We don't know when certification will happen, but when it does, it will be a big day for our small business. **Watch this space!**



SDG Impact

It's always been about more than taking action. From the start, we wanted to understand the impact of our actions, and how they directly align with our three SDGs.



5 GENDER EQUALITY



We prioritise Gender Equality by supporting women and girls within our business, across our supply chain, with our customers and through the non-profit purpose partnerships we have

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



We are committed to providing paid work and development opportunities for our employees, our supply chain and by supporting our local communities

13 CLIMATE ACTION



We have made changes to the way we run our business, making sure we have the lowest impact on our planet. We also actively support, lobby and donate for causes to help reduce the climate impact on our planet



SDG 5 Impact

We drive gender equality and empower all women and girls.

We are striving to achieve this by directly supporting **129 women**:

- **5 schoolgirls** – We mentored five schoolgirls from April to December in their career planning and progression into higher education and the workplace through our partnership with The Girls' Network
- **5 employees** – We offer flexible, virtual working for our employees to be able to juggle work around their home-life needs, with additional paid care-giver days off
- **20 suppliers** – We have created a virtual business model that supports everyone to work flexibly around home-life needs
- **75 clients** – We support senior women leaders to communicate and raise awareness of their successes and achievements
- **6 non-profit leaders** – We have facilitated and coached women leaders in their communications impact
- **18 x business community members** – Through our pro-bono Alderley Park for Good Network we have provided support, awareness and training on how to use your business as a force for good, using the principles of B Corp

“I value feeling encouraged, supported and motivated to work each day. I also value the flexibility to manage work and home life.”
[Melissa Penn, AG Employee & mother, 2022]





SDG 5 Impact: Case Study



Enabling women in all their diversity, to lead just climate action globally.

In June 2022 we nominated SHE Changes Climate as a non-profit partner to 1% for the Planet. We felt a strong alignment to their mission and wanted to support a global movement. Now other 1% for the Planet business members across the globe can also support the SHE Changes Climate team and their mission.

We supported their campaign for gender equality at all levels of climate decision making:

- Delivered and facilitated a session with four female founders to identify strategic activity for impact at COP27
- Provided pro bono comms and design support used in their global campaign
- Called for equal representation of men and women at future COP delegations through supporting and signing their petition.



“Everyone from AG Comms has been incredibly supportive and encouraging. They provided critical guidance beyond what was required and helped SHE Changes Climate achieve direction and success this year.”
[Frances Storey, SHE Changes Climate, 2022]





SDG 8 Impact

We promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In January 2022 we restructured our business and created two new full-time roles and one new part-time role, that resulted in two new hires and one internal promotion.

60% employees live local to where we are based

83% suppliers are local to where we are based, with 13% being located in the wider UK and 4% in Europe



We provide employment and decent work for our members locally:

- 60% of employees live local to where we are based (NW England)
- 83% of suppliers are local to where we are based (NW England), with 13% being located in the wider UK and 4% in Europe
- All employees and suppliers are paid above the Family Living Wage
- We offer paid volunteer days to all employees and in 2022 this was 52 days, focusing on inclusive sustainable growth through The Girls' Network, SHE Changes Climate and Power for People
- We surveyed all our employees and suppliers on our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy and offered free DEI training to all. 100% respondents said they now understand how bias can impact decision making and the training provided them with a broader understanding of the principles of Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity, Equity and Belonging



SDG 8 Impact: Case Study



We chose to partner with The Girls' Network through our commitment to UN SDG 5 – to achieve Gender Equality and empower all Women and Girls and SDG 8 – to promote decent work and economic growth.

The Girls' Network mission is to inspire and empower girls from the least advantaged communities, by connecting them with a mentor and network of professional role models who are women.

In April 2022 we donated £30k (1% from our 2020/21 turnover) which was used to fund salaries for employees at The Girls' Network in the North West region.

Last year, all our employees trained and became mentors to girls aged 14-18. We delivered a 10 month mentorship programme, using our paid volunteer days, meeting monthly with mentees from two schools in NW England.

“We want to thank you for showing us what it is like to work in the private sector. We loved your business and the values it is built upon. It was very inspiring to the girls that attended and made us feel more confident in the workplace as young women.”
[Spring 2022 Mentees]





SDG 13 Impact

We take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

We have raised awareness of the role of an SME businesses in climate change, engaging with over 100 businesses in 2022:

- We shared our small business journey to B Corp Certification for NatWest customers' on-line accelerator programme (June)
- We showcased our small business 'Social and Environmental Plan' at the Business Declares members learning event (October)

We have invested in environmental non-profits which are directly tackling climate impact:

- £27,470 donated to 1% for the Planet non-profits
- 100% employees' pensions have been moved into ethically invested funds through NEST

We have grown our AG Forest to 13,000 trees with our Ecologi membership which equates to 172.07t of carbon reduction in addition to us being certified Climate Neutral.

All employees and 80% of suppliers have measured their home / business carbon impact through Giki Zero and we now have a tracker to measure and reduce this as part of our annual Social and Environmental plan.



SDG 13 Impact: Case Study



1% for the Planet enables partnerships between businesses and environmental non-profits, to drive the urgent, collective action needed to tackle the climate emergency.

We became a member in December 2021, and now support six environmental partners. In early 2022 we asked our employees and AG members to choose our first two partners.

"Between December 2021 and October 2022, we gave £27,470 to our partners through a mix of donation and pro-bono work."
[Lynne Ashcroft Griffiths, AG Founder]

Employee and Member Vote



Campaigning to change the Local Electricity Bill to allow community groups in the UK to sell renewable energy to local people. We have supported them through donations and pro-bono communications support



Their vision is to 'Think Big, Act Wild' – with 30% of land and sea restored for nature by 2030. We are supporting rewilding projects through our donation and also raising awareness of their work within our business community



Helps businesses and consumers eliminate global carbon emissions using an annual reduction plan. We are proud to be a Climate Neutral Certified business, supporting their work through our certification



Have a 50:50 vision for equal gender representation in leadership and climate decision making at all levels. We support their mission through pro-bono communications, strategy and leadership consultation



Raising awareness across the business sector to inspire, encourage and accelerate action to address the climate, ecological and social emergency. We became a member and declared a climate emergency on World Earth Day 2022



The non-profit organisation supporting businesses to become B Corp Certified. We support B Lab UK through our donation and share the positive impact that B Corps have on people and planet

And this is how it all comes together

Be a brilliant business to work with

Support stakeholder purpose

Be a force for good

5 GENDER EQUALITY



100% employees are women and AG is a majority women owned / led business



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



All employees and suppliers are paid above UK Family Living Wage



86% suppliers are from our local community

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Being better for people and planet in 2023

We are continually learning, changing and improving our impact for people and the planet. Next year, we have set ourselves some goals to be better and to keep us accountable:



- Make an accurate plan to become 'Net Zero by 2025' by relying less on offsetting and more on reducing
- Start measuring and reducing the carbon impact of our communications activities and projects and share this with our clients
- Work with more businesses which are focused on purpose, to help drive impact for the UN SDGs
- Understand the role of employee activism and develop a policy for our business that we're proud of
- Help more businesses become a force for good by sharing, supporting and offering free impact consultancy
- Improve our processes and share them with AG Members who don't regularly work in AG systems
- Mentor more women and girls to improve equality, equity and inclusion
- Offer decent work and career opportunities to a young person (18-25 year old)

**We've said them out loud now,
so you can keep us accountable too!**

Our 2021-2022 impact journey

Founded the Alderley Park: Force for Good Network at a site with 200+ organisations to support them become a force for good through meetings, collaborations and idea sharing

Declared a climate emergency and joined Business Declares. We have a Net Zero target by 2025

Submitted our Business Impact Assessment!

Nominated She Changed Climate as 1% for the Planet non-profit partner and provided pro-bono comms support for their COP27 campaign



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Lobbied for legislative change of the Companies Act 2006 so all businesses are legally accountable for all stakeholders

Launched our new vision and purpose to AG Employees and our Supply Chain

Joined mass lobbying of Parliament, met with MPs from Tatton and Cheshire East and asked for their support on the Better Business Act campaign

Certified Climate Neutral by measuring our carbon footprint offsetting (+15%) and announcing our reduction goals

Attended the BeYou event at Liverpool FC as a partner of The Girls' Network – helping girls aged 14-18 have unlimited futures



We're proud that our business is powered by purpose, but we recognise that collective action is what's needed if we want future generations to thrive.

Get in touch if you'd like to share people and planet ideas, ask any questions or simply become purpose pals. **We'd love to hear from you!**

hello@agcommunications.co.uk