

IMPACT REPORT

AUGUST 2022

Smith
Mr & Mrs Smith



INTRODUCTION

In 2021, I shared my heartfelt hope that Mr & Mrs Smith would have ‘a long-lasting, responsible and inclusive impact on our industry’. In the year since, we have embarked on a programme of meaningful steps to make this dream a reality – most notably in our ongoing bid to achieve B-Corp certification.

Mr & Mrs Smith has helped shape the evolution of the travel industry for the last two decades. Now, at a time when the impact of travel – both positive and negative – is under closer scrutiny than ever, we have a chance to ensure that we continue to be an active force for good in determining our industry’s future.

As we have built back during and after the pandemic, we have had the opportunity to look inward, to reflect on how we work, and to clearly define the business that we want to be. We have had a chance to examine the values that guide us and the goals that inspire us, and to identify and begin implementing the changes we need to make in order to reach them.

This report is a snapshot of where we are on the journey so far. It includes details of what we’ve achieved already, and outlines the ways in which we’re trying to have a positive impact on our community – both our own team and the wider world – as we seek to become a more sustainable, more inclusive, and more value-driven business.

We are – and always will be – a work in progress, but that’s no bad thing. Travel is about the journey as much as the destination. Thanks for joining me on the way.

TAMARA LOHAN

The travel industry has the power to be both good and bad for the world. On the one hand, it boosts economies, encourages cultural connections and forges global understanding. On the other, it has been notoriously wasteful and carbon consumptive.

At Mr & Mrs Smith, we are passionately committed to the survival of the global travel industry, while recognising the need for meaningful change and sustainable practice at every level.

More and more of our members recognise this. In 2019, a member survey revealed that:

- Smith members rated sustainability **7.5/10** in terms of importance to them.
- **63%** wanted to find out more about environmentally responsible hotels.
- **58%** were interested in donating their loyalty money to conservation projects.

Overall, both Smith members and travellers in general are more aware of and engaged with sustainability issues – and more alert to greenwashing – than ever before.

The onus is not only on them to make sustainable choices – it is on us, and others in the travel industry, to provide them.

In 2021, we undertook a review of our business practice and brand with the aim of developing a new mission, vision and purpose for the business that better reflect our ambitions and our offering.

WE AGREED THAT OUR MISSION IS:

Empowering conscious travel choices by curating the world's most desirable hotel collection. Winning loyalty with unrivalled service and a genuinely rewarding member experience.

OUR VISION IS TO:

Be the only place to book for the discerning hotel lover.

OUR PURPOSE IS:

Shaping the future of staying together.



We took a number of significant steps over the course of 2021 to ensure we have a positive impact on four key stakeholder groups: our customers, our team, our wider community, and the environment.

Here are some of the milestones...

- To underline our commitment to environmental and social responsibility, we submitted an application to be certified as a B-Corp.
- To thank NHS workers for their efforts during the pandemic, we offered discounts and launched a campaign to give them a night off for just £50, in some of our most luxurious hotels.
- We strengthened our connections to ocean-conservation charity, the Blue Marine Foundation.
- We launched a new partnership with the World Land Trust, the charity working to protect and preserve biodiversity.
- By calculating the carbon offset for all staff, press and reviewer travel to the beginning of 2019, we were able to make a donation of £27,868 to the above causes.
- In the run-up to COP26, recognising the change to come from the industry, not the consumer, we reached out to hotels around the world and gathered a series of sustainability pledges – from serving only locally sourced food, to building solar farms and single-use eliminating plastics.
- To reflect the reality of being a 100% remote organisation, we introduced flexible working for everyone in the business.
- We undertook a detailed diversity audit of our teams and used the data to create a set of goals for 2022, in consultation with diversity and inclusion specialist Kiltered.
- We updated our employee policies in a number of areas in order to make life easier for our team members where possible. We now have specific policies in place for all types of carers, for employees experiencing menopause, and for those undergoing fertility treatments.
- We increased our contributions to maternity pay (and introduced a specific Slack status for the school run!).
- To honour the religious diversity of the team, we introduced two new holidays to the company calendar – Diwali and Yom Kippur.



2022 COMMITMENTS

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

AS A TRAVEL BUSINESS,
WE ARE PROFOUNDLY
INVESTED IN THE BEAUTY
AND BIODIVERSITY OF
OUR PLANET. WE ARE
INTRODUCING A NUMBER
OF INITIATIVES TO MINIMISE
OUR OWN ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT, AND TAKE ACTIVE
STEPS TO PRESERVING AND
PROTECTING BOTH LAND
AND SEA.

Protecting the ocean

In 2022, we will continue our long-standing partnership with the Blue Marine Foundation, the NGO dedicated to securing protection for at least 30% of the world’s oceans by 2030.

Blue Marine recognises that our seas are crucial to all life on this planet. Phytoplankton and marine plants produce 80% of the world’s oxygen. However, overfishing, CO2 contamination, and the absorption of excess heat from burning fossil fuels all have a catastrophic impact on marine life, raising sea levels and compromising the oceans’ ability to produce oxygen.

Thus far, the foundation has succeeded in establishing two of the world’s largest marine reserves in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as well as the largest fully protected marine reserve in the Atlantic. Its ambitious global projects range from developing marine parks in the Caribbean to restoring oysters to the Solent.

“It’s long-standing partnerships like this, between Blue Marine and Mr & Mrs Smith, that allow Blue Marine to edge closer to its mission of securing effective protection for at least 30% of the ocean and ensuring the remaining amount is responsibly managed. We’ve known James and Tamara and the rest of the Mr & Mrs Smith team for a long time, and know they share our same core values. We must protect the ocean to secure our future and thanks to partnerships like this one, we are moving a little closer to restoring the ocean to health.”

We pledge to donate a minimum of £10,000 to the Blue Marine Foundation in 2022.

Protecting the land

Currently, only 15% of the land on Earth is protected and four of the five regions that have been identified as essential to preserving biodiversity are still unprotected. Half of the world’s rainforests have been lost to deforestation in 40 years, resulting in biodiversity loss, reduced oxygen production, and increased likelihood of threats such as pandemics.

In 2021, we entered into a new partnership with the World Land Trust, which strives to protect ecosystems around the world through initiative such as the Buy an Acre project. This enable donors to purchase an acre of land for £100, ensuring it a lifetime of environmental protection.

Since its foundation in 1989, the World Land Trust has secured more than 881,000 acres of threatened territory and funded 82 reserves in 20 countries.

“The scale of the protected area we have funded is a continuing testament to the hard work of our international conservation partners and the partnerships we forge with companies like Mr & Mrs Smith in order to tackle the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. Thanks to support from Mr & Mrs Smith we are able to prioritise the ecosystems that the UN state must be prioritised to succeed against global warming; to be active in the regions that scientists say are key to saving life on Earth.”
Emma Douglas, WLT Director of Development

We pledge to donate a minimum of £10,000 to the World Land Trust in 2022.



Other actions

- Our donations to the Blue Marine Foundation and the World Land Trust will be funded by calculating carbon offset costs for all staff travel, hotel-review trips and our content-creating partners’ journeys – standard practice at Mr & Mrs Smith since 2019. We believe that these causes represent a more active and meaningful environmental intervention than more transactional carbon-offset schemes.
- To reduce our own footprint, we are pledging to phase out all plastic in Smith gift cards, and now donate £5 to our environmental partners for every e-gift card (£1 for regular gift cards) sold in a bid to reduce packaging.
- We will be introducing a donation mechanism to our booking system, enabling members to support our sustainability partners directly.
- We will also be introducing a carbon-offsetting facility into the booking process, giving customers the option to compensate for their travel at the moment they book it.
- Mr & Mrs Smith’s servers are powered using renewable energy sources, and we are now exploring an incentive programme to encourage our employees to switch to green energy suppliers.

The success of our business goes hand in hand with the wellbeing of our team. We are determined to ensure that Mr & Mrs Smith is a supportive, inclusive and inspiring place to work for everyone.

A new way to work

We have undergone a period of immense change, and shifted from a centralised office to a fully distributed workforce – making the leap well before many businesses even contemplated the move. This unfolded against a backdrop of intense stress across the team, as we all reckoned with uncertainty about our health, our jobs, and the future of the travel industry as a whole.

Every member of the Smith team is empowered to live their life in the way they want to. In 2019, Mr & Mrs Smith staff were based in just four locations around the world. Today, our team is truly global, with people working in 8 countries. We measure their success, not by the hours they work, but their output – this allows everyone to build their working practice around the needs of their lifestyle, and gives them the freedom to be anywhere they want.

Nurturing our team

We have built, more or less from scratch, a fully remote international office, in which every Mr & Mrs Smith team member is freed from the life limitations of a commute and empowered to work in their own way, on their own time.

Such a far-reaching operational overhaul has demanded a thorough audit of our employment policies to ensure they are rooted in compassion and geared to promote wellbeing and mental health as much as productivity.

As a consequence, working at Mr & Mrs Smith is becoming:

- **More compassionate** – thanks to the roll-out of much-needed policies for on issues such as caring responsibilities, menopause and pregnancy loss.
- **More supportive** – thanks to one-on-one professional coaching available to all every month.
- **More inclusive** – thanks to ongoing work with Diversity & Inclusivity specialist Kiltered, and a detailed diversity audit conducted with Peakon in order to inform recruitment policy.
- **More open** – thanks to regular voluntary steering-committee meetings exploring the topics that affect us all, more channels of communication to raise concerns and discuss issues, and a 360° assessment programme incorporating peer review.
- **More empowering** – thanks to the introduction of departmental development maps that give everyone in the company a clear view of their progression path and what their next professional steps could be.

Over the coming year, we aim to:

- Rebalance gender diversity in three departments identified as imbalanced by at least one person in each
- Improve management support to younger employees (measured through our anonymous third party provider, Peakon)
- Increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ representation across the business
- Extend Agile project-management methodology to more teams, reaching 50% of the organisation by 2023.
- Achieve accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation.



NURTURING OUR COMMUNITY

As a travel business, Mr & Mrs Smith has the potential to influence the lives of thousands of people around the world – both directly through our actions as an organisation, and indirectly, through the actions of the hotels we represent.

Our goal is to be recognised as a force for good in the world, having a positive impact on all of the communities and individuals we connect with.

Travel connects the world

Tourism is the economic backbone of thousands of communities around the world, both large and small. No other industry has such power to break down barriers, promote shared understanding, and draw attention to the causes and campaigns that need our most urgent attention.

Mr & Mrs Smith is privileged to have an international network of hoteliers and a global platform – and with them the power to reach millions of people.

Over the coming year, we aim to:

- Address ongoing persecution and discrimination on the basis of sexuality and gender identification with a partnership with the Human Dignity Trust , as well as making improvements to LGBTQ+ representation among our reviewer network.
- Continue to encourage our hotels to consider their impact on the local community, and provide an editorial platform to those that are actively supporting local causes.
- Facilitate opportunities for our environmental partners Blue Marine Foundation and World Land Trust to showcase the work they do to our hoteliers.
- Sponsor a hospitality student on a scholarship, who might otherwise be unable to pursue a travel career.
- Offer at least one permanent role to someone identified as being from an underprivileged background.

It goes without saying that providing our customers with exemplary service and unforgettable travel experiences is the cornerstone of Mr & Mrs Smith’s mission, but empowering them to make informed choices that have a positive impact on the world is a key part of this.

New curation standards

From the start of 2022, Mr & Mrs Smith’s hotel curation process will take additional sustainability credentials into account, so members can be confident that environmental and social values are embedded in the hotel’s ethos, not bolted on after the fact.

In order to help determine whether a given property is appropriate for inclusion in the Smith collection, the hotel acquisitions team will now consider four new values:



DOWN-TO-EARTH

Guests don’t always need to know how their waste water is used, or what kind of lightbulbs the hotel has chosen. An eco-friendly hotel will inform, share, show and guide where necessary, and there should be transparency – but nobody wants a lecture.

COMMUNITY-SPIRITED

Does this hotel give something back? Does it employ local staff and support local projects? Ethical awareness, conservation of all kinds and respect for the larger regional community count.

INNOVATIVE

Buildings that are not just carbon-neutral or low-impact, but which also lead the way architecturally; pioneering use of new technology or a showcase for traditional methods; trailblazers in the eco-hotel sphere.

INSPIRING

Watching turtles hatch, or rare sharks swim over a protected house reef; marvelling at a pristine landscape in the knowledge that you are not also polluting it; meeting people who have benefitted from community projects – a hotel that can make these moments happen is to be celebrated.

We are fortunate to represent and work closely with some of the most environmentally progressive hotels and resorts in the world, and ensure that the trailblazing properties are actively championed to our audience and their efforts are fully acknowledged.

Such hotels include:

- **Oasyhotel** in Tuscany, which infuses back-to-nature hospitality with conservation, eco-sound agriculture, breeding programmes and scientific research.
- **Hotel Manapany** in St Barths – a shining example of walk-the-talk low-impact hotel, sourcing everything possible from the island surroundings, from ingredients to electricity.
- **Hotel Britomart** in Auckland is the first hotel to have been awarded five Green Stars by the New Zealand Green Building Council, making it a national benchmark for sustainable architecture.
- **Dexamenes Seaside Hotel** in the Western Peloponnese occupies the site of a 1920s industrial winery and offers a masterclass in retrofitting as the most energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive way to create a characterful and luxurious boutique retreat.
- **The Bull & Last** in London leads the way in sustainable local sourcing and championing eco-minded independent suppliers – from compostable vegan coffee capsules to recyclable beds made by the UK’s first carbon-neutral manufacturer.

- **The Brando** in Tahiti could well be the world’s most eco-friendly private-island hideaway. Named for the island’s sometime custodian, Marlon Brando, it combines a luxury retreat with a fully fledged environmental research centre.
- Colorado’s **Zapata Ranch** is managed by the Nature Conservancy, and aims to protect and enrich its grassland surroundings. Every ingredient featured in its food – including the beef reared on-site – is local and ethically sourced.
- Rooted in Sumba’s culture and community, **Cap Karoso** maintains a three-acre organic farm that both supplies ingredients and serves as a school for locals to learn organic farming and permaculture.
- **Château Capitoul** in Narbonne is an inspiring story of garden restoration, having planted around 65,000 plants and 300 trees, and maintained the extraordinarily rich biodiversity of the setting.
- In the Dolomites, former sanatorium **Forestis** operates in perfect harmony with its surroundings: carbon-neutral construction, zero-waste cuisine, and a tree planted every day you push the ‘no housekeeping button’.

Over the next 12 months, we have committed to updated content for each existing hotel in the collection to ensure that all relevant sustainability and community-support information is included, accurate and up to date, so members can be confident in their choice.



Editorial and comms programme

Our communications platforms – including online editorial, social media and member emails – offer ongoing opportunities to engage, inform and educate our members about sustainability and community issues and highlight the brilliant work being done by hotels around the world.

This might include timely emails containing content relevant to specific calendar events (eg Earth Day), editorial features on a hotel's impressive eco innovations, interviews with sector pioneers, or content informed and inspired by the work of our environmental partners.

We are committed to ensuring sustainability and social impact will be a key focus of our content planning in 2022 and beyond.

Measuring our emissions

Accurately calculating carbon emissions for an entire business in which every employee works from home is no mean feat. However, we are committed to measuring full carbon data for the company by the end of 2022, and using this information to set a realistic but ambitious net-zero goal.

The road ahead

We are proud of what we've done so far, and excited to implement the plans we've outlined here, but we recognise that there is always more we can do, and that many of the challenges we're facing will not be fixed quickly, easily, or by Mr & Mrs Smith alone.

We also know that, although the challenge may be big, our biggest responsibility as a business – and a travel business in particular – is to do everything we can to face it. Our final commitment in this report is to keep you posted on how that goes – we'll be sure to update you on our progress.



HOTELIER PLEDGES

‘Of the food and drink that we are unable to produce, we will do everything humanly possible to source from within 25 miles and eradicate as many food related air miles as possible.’

**ROBIN HUTSON,
FOUNDER, THE PIG HOTELS**

‘We pledge [...] to keep sustainability at the forefront of all that we do, to buy from our local farmers and grow our own produce in order to reduce our carbon footprint and that of our guests, and to be mindful of our surroundings and the preservation of our culture, heritage and legacy.’

**AMRIT RAJARATNAM, OWNER,
THOTALAGALA**

‘I see ourselves as responsible for everything and everyone we impact. Now more than ever, we must continue to reinvent luxury hospitality.’

**ARNAUD ZANNIER,
FOUNDER AND CEO, ZANNIER
HOTELS**

‘I pledge to never stop challenging myself and others to do even better. To never stop innovating for positive change. To never stop holding our company and our industry accountable. And to never stop respecting and guarding the precious natural environments where we are so lucky to have our resorts.’

**SONU SHIVDASANI,
FOUNDER, SONEVA GROUP**

‘Sourcing locally reduces waste, packaging and carbon emissions. It allows small towns like ours to thrive, it fosters creativity and shows young people that you can reach for excellence without leaving the home you love.’

**ANTONIO SERSALE,
OWNER, LA SIRENUSE**

‘We will champion marine and reef conservation and turtle hatchling protection as a WWF Signing Blue partner. We will educate and inspire employees, guests and the Anambas community on the importance of sustainable initiatives and living with an Earth-first philosophy.’

**PAUL ROBINSON,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
BAWAH RESERVE**

‘We hope to spark conversations which explore evidence based solutions and action for coexistence and embed an understanding that in nurturing nature, we nurture ourselves.’

**CARYN HIBBERT,
FOUNDER, THYME**

‘I pledge to ensure that a mindset of conscious sustainability for each decision and process within our establishment is core and demonstrated in all of our values, from sourcing practices, energy usage, waste management, staff attitudes and guest behaviour.’

**DANIEL KOETSER,
OWNER, LE GRAND BELLEVUE**

