



WEST BROMWICH ALBION **SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**

2023/24



FOREWORD

“West Bromwich Albion Football Club has our roots firmly tied to the Black Country and its industrial history; our home is undeniably in an urban setting. However, we also have a strong connection with nature and the environment.”

Take The Hawthorns itself ... built where hawthorn trees were once prevalent, and of course our amazing fans known worldwide for their famous renditions of Psalm 23 where the name of our first Sustainability Working Group has come from – “Pastures Green”

We have always been somewhat pioneering in terms of environmentally friendly recycling, in 1964, with the building of the East Stand on the site of the old Handsworth Stand. the club transferred and reused the old stand to the Brummie Road End to cover the terracing!

We recognise that we all exist in a world and society that continues to be challenged in so many ways and constantly changing. As the club strives to experience growth, none of us can ignore the environmental challenges our world faces.

Like many businesses operating on a global platform, we must acknowledge our impact on the environment and on our local communities, whether from our facilities and venues, the impacts of how our staff and fans travel to our venues, our energy consumption and of course, the waste we produce.

However, we are a major part of our community, therefore we accept and welcome the influence and voice we can have. While the actions that we take are important, it's football as a whole that has the power to inspire real change.

In 2023, we formulated our first Sustainability Working Group, made up of staff from all departments who have a passion and desire to ‘make a difference’

The Group has the remit to challenge and hold the club to account in all areas and will shape our future plans in this area. A major part of their work, is to understand our environmental impacts as a club, and what practical actions we may be able to take to make ourselves more sustainable.

This report highlights our achievements so far on sustainability and make our aims and actions clear for all to see.

But this represents just the start of our sustainability journey. There is much more to do, and we won't get everything right. But we need to start the journey now”

Mark Miles

Managing Director
of West Bromwich Albion Football Club



“In 2023, we formulated our first Sustainability Working Group, made up of staff from all departments who have a passion and desire to make a difference”

All key performance indicators and numbers refer to our impact in the 2023-24 season which is for the reporting period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

INTRODUCTION

**“We don’t inherit the earth from our ancestors,
we borrow it from our children.”**

Chief Seattle

Nature and the wonderful planet we inhabit binds us together. Football is entwined with nature – The soil and grass that make up the pitches that kids kick their first ball on ... the air we all breathe, the food we sell and eat in our stadiums, in our hospitality suites, even in the training ground canteens down to the materials that are kits and clothing are made from ... all intrinsically linked to nature!

However, everyone knows that the activity of mankind is pushing the planet to the limit, often exceeding what the planet can take.

An ever-increasing world population and changing climate carries the risk of irreversible harm to both people and the planet.

The world is already experiencing some of the negative consequences and the need to take action to avoid certain tipping points is urgent.

All the worlds various footballing authorities warn those leading the game that we need to protect clubs against the significant risks associated with climate change, such as floods and extreme weather events.

We have seen many examples such as Carlisle United, Shrewsbury Town and others who have suffered from flooding in the 2023-24 season and seasons before.

That is at the professional level, but we also have a duty to help protect those at the grassroots level, which we know is most at risk.

Operating any football club generates waste, uses large quantities of energy that in turn produces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, use vast amounts of water, and all has an impact on nature.

We are looking to produce a long-term sustainability strategy that will set out to improve our knowledge and understanding of these issues, to measure our impact, and then create improvements. Sustainability aligns closely to our values:

WELCOMING

Welcoming to all.

BOLD

Bold enough to be different.

AMBITIOUS

Ambitious in our aspirations.

FANS

Fans’ needs are our focus.

COMMUNITY

Community-minded.



CLUB
VISION & VALUES

SUSTAINABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL

STRATEGY

We are committed to taking active steps to promote environmental sustainability and our approach is built around three Sustainability Pillars.

The pillars reflect: Environmental, Social & Economic. By addressing all 3 pillars, organisations are more likely to have a positive impact on the world while still improving financial performance.

The science is clear: the world must reach net zero carbon emissions well before 2050, to avoid a climate change disaster.

However, a football club's activities, including operations and travel, cause carbon emissions and therefore contribute to the problem.

We want to understand our carbon footprint, reduce it as much as possible and offset what we can't reduce, to become a net zero football club.

Research conducted by Rising Ballers, found that 72% of Gen Z football fans care about the environment, with 61% believing football should be more eco-friendly. 40.2% of young football fans suspect waste production contributes to football's high carbon footprint the most (32.5% transport, 18.1% stadiums, 9.2% food and drink).

Also, a football club's activities, including operations and travel, cause carbon emissions and therefore contribute to the problem. We want to understand our carbon footprint, reduce it as much as possible and offset what we can't reduce, to become a net zero football club.

There is also a new sponsorship opportunity for brands in football's evolving eco-aware landscape: 54% of young football fans would consider purchasing from a more environmentally sustainable brand over a mainstream option.

SOCIAL

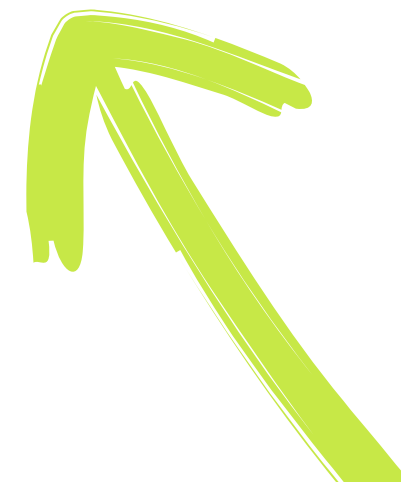
ECONOMIC



At the height of Storm Desmond, a large section of Carlisle's Brunton Park was underwater in 2015

"The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Winston Churchill'





SOCIAL

This will ensure we support healthier and fairer communities. We aim to ensure standards are being met in the production and supply of our products and merchandise. For producers and workers, having partners that ensure their workers' rights, safer working conditions and fairer pay. We are determined to support social sustainability. We will work to source produce, fabrics for our kits and merchandise clothing in an ethical way. By working with our supply chain, we can support producers and workers to take more control of their financial futures. Furthermore, we can now offer our fans and consumers an ever-increasing variety of ethically sourced, independently certified choices, showing trade can be fairer, more sustainable and better for all involved.



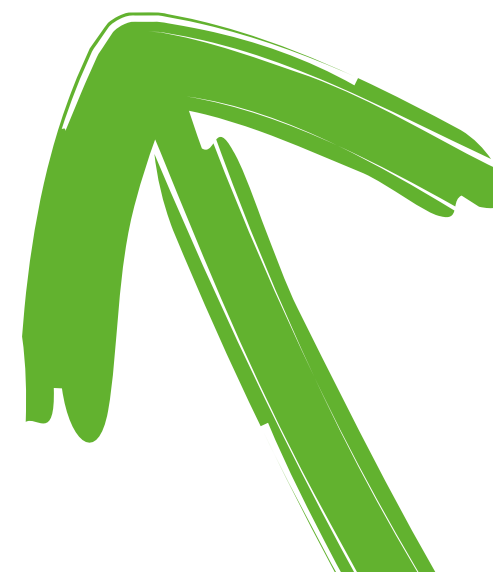
ENVIRONMENTAL

This will ensure environmental resources are preserved, maintained and not overexploited. This is what our staff and fans think of most when they think of 'sustainability'. We will be making conscious decisions to avoid the degradation and depletion of environmental resources, to ensure ecosystems can recover.



ECONOMIC

We are seeking economic/financial sustainability with the aim for profitability. In the context of our club and our business, our aim is to the efficient use of assets to maintain the club's profitability over time.

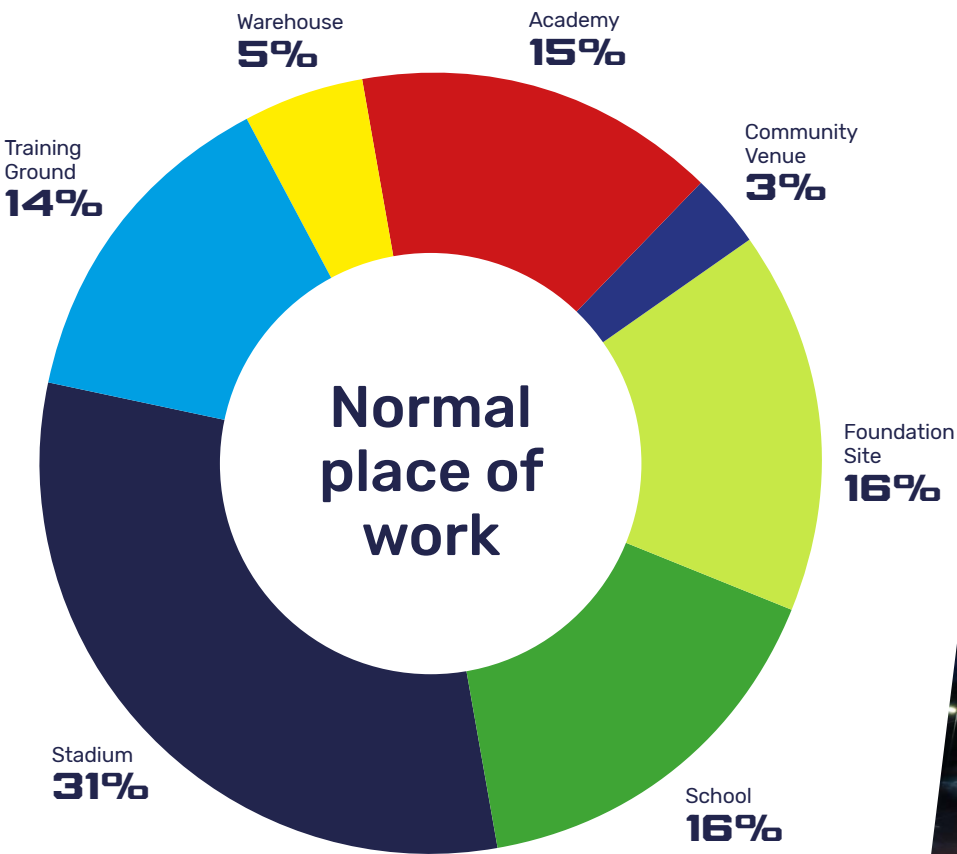


ENGAGEMENT

In 2023, we undertook a club wide Staff Sustainability Survey looking at changes we could make to reduce our impact on the environment.

The survey (2-5 mins) was designed to give the Sustainability Working Group a better understanding of the staff commute, and whether there would be interested in Cycle to Work and/or Electric Vehicle schemes.

The findings are summarised below and will assist us in shaping future initiatives.



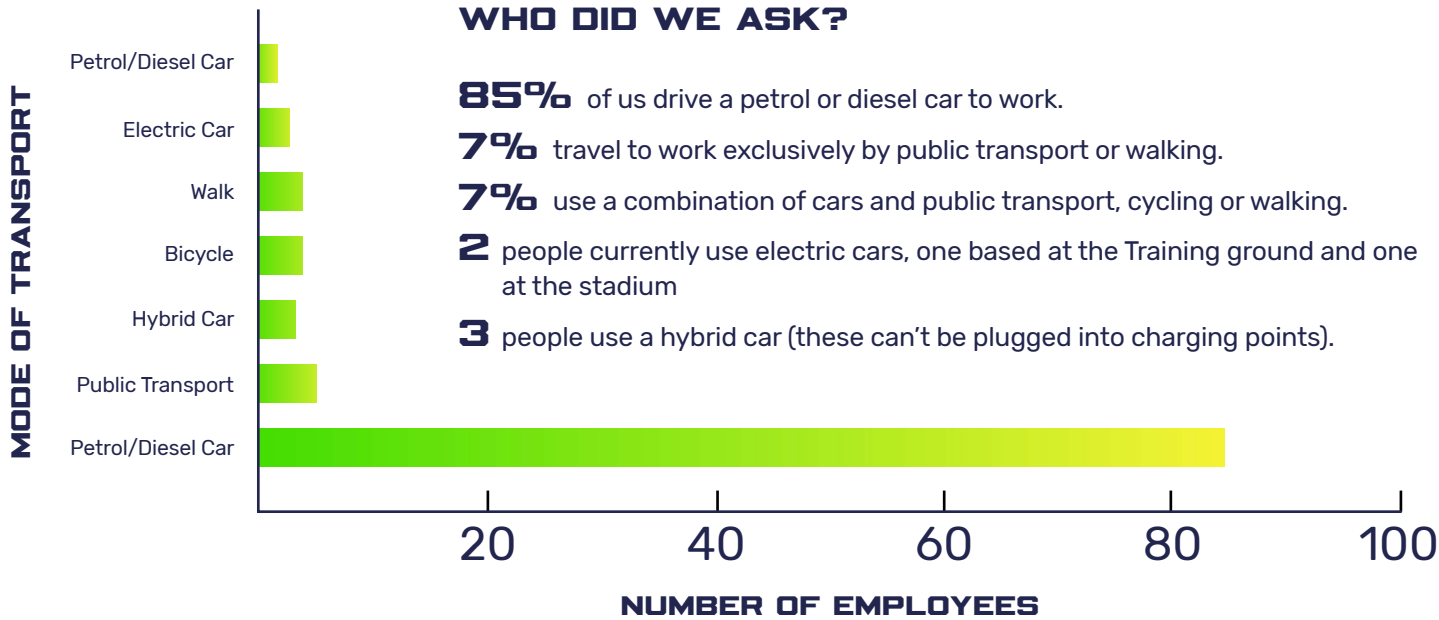
WHO DID WE ASK?

Foundation and Women's team employees.

All permanent West Bromwich Albion FC employees.

We received 107 responses.

Casual staff were not included as they would not be eligible for the schmes.



HOW FAR ARE WE COMMUTING?

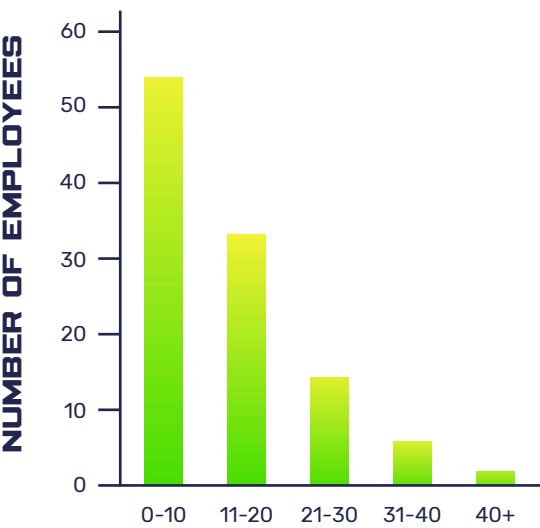
Average One way trip **14 MILES**

Average journey time **35 MINUTES**

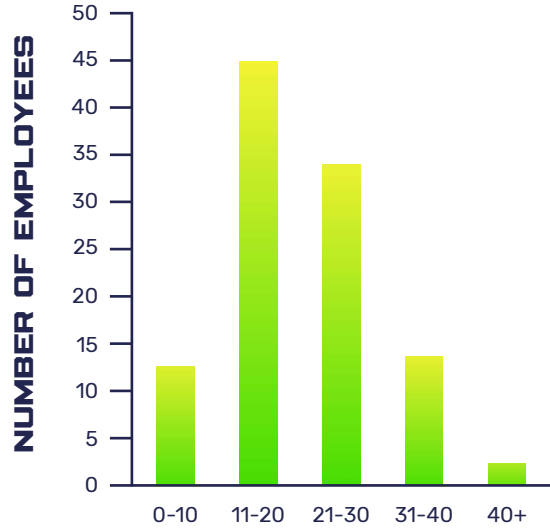
Estimated annual CO2 emissions from petrol/diesel cars* **164,084 kgs**

(This is the equivalent to flying to Australia and back 52 times!)

NB This value doesn't account for travel between sites, casual staff, or those that didn't complete the survey.



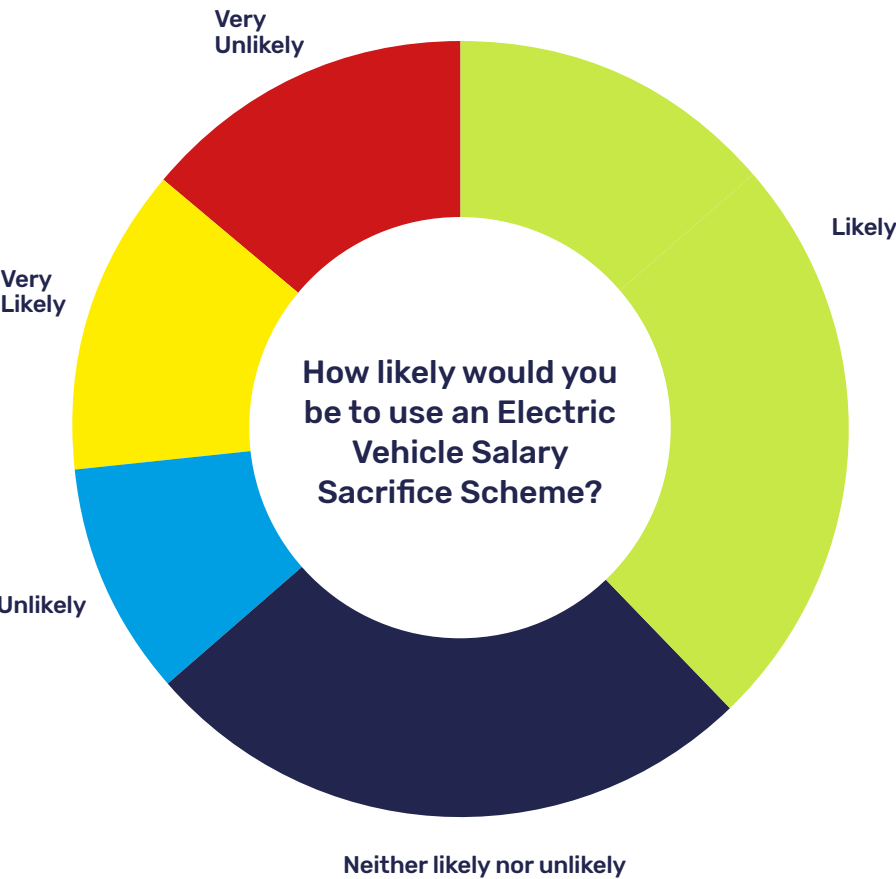
MILES TRAVELLED TO WORK (ONE WAY)



MINUTES SPENT TRAVELING TO WORK (ONE WAY)

*Based on average UK emission per car of 221.4g per mile. Calculation based on total of 1544 miles per day x2 for two-way trip, commuting 240 days per year.

HOW FAR ARE WE COMMUTING?



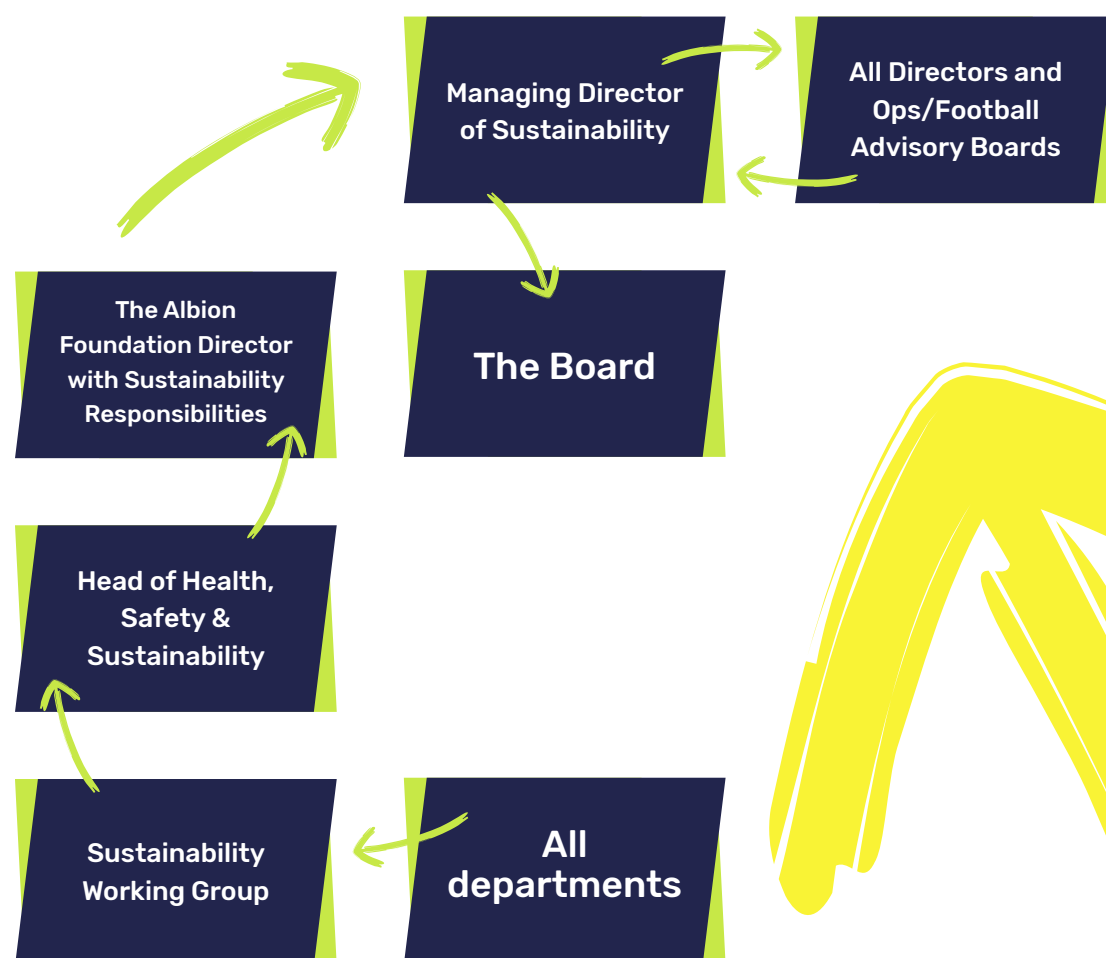
From this snapshot we are engaging with providers. We will assess business models available with a view to providing our staff, stakeholders, customers and the wider local community with on-site EV Chargers at our venues.

The electric vehicle (EV) market is booming, nearly one in five cars sold in 2023 was electric. At the end of 2020, there were 205,770 electric cars, which represented 0.6% of all cars on the road and since then the number of electric cars has increased more than five-fold.

As of the end of November 2024, there are over 1,300,000 fully electric cars in the UK. This means that around 3.94% of the c.34 million cars on UK roads are fully electric.

By installing EV chargers at our workplaces, we will be contributing to a cleaner environment, promoting sustainability, and fostering a sense of responsibility amongst all of us... watch this space!

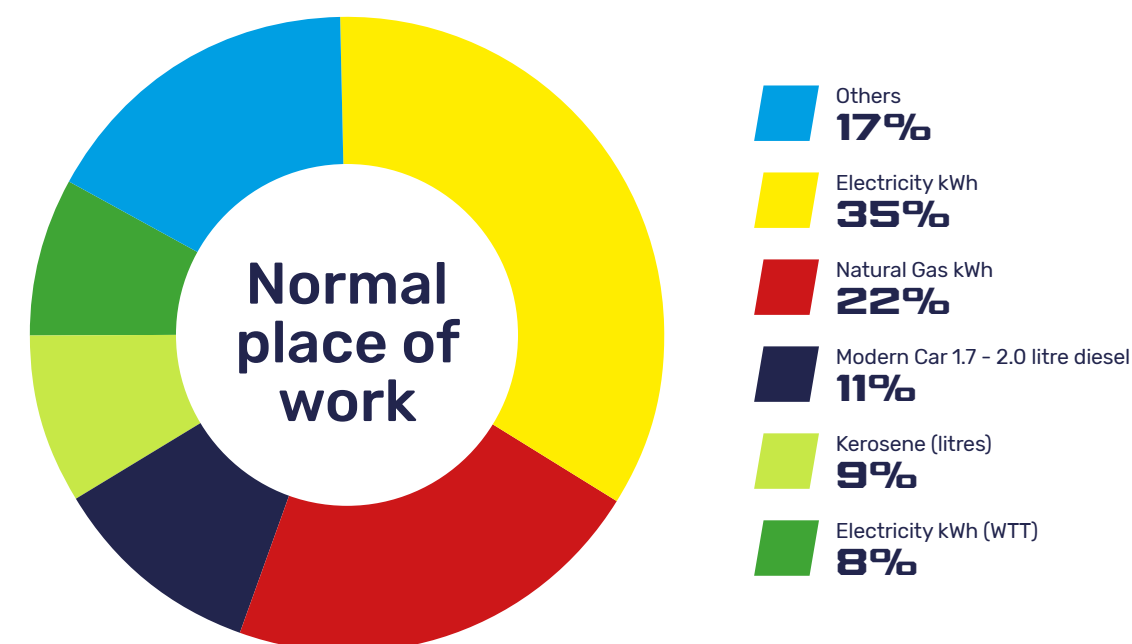
OUR STRUCTURE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



We aspire to contribute to the UK government's plan to reach Net Zero by 2050 and the UK's pledge to limit temperature increases because of climate change to 1.5oC above pre-industrial levels with the Paris Agreement.

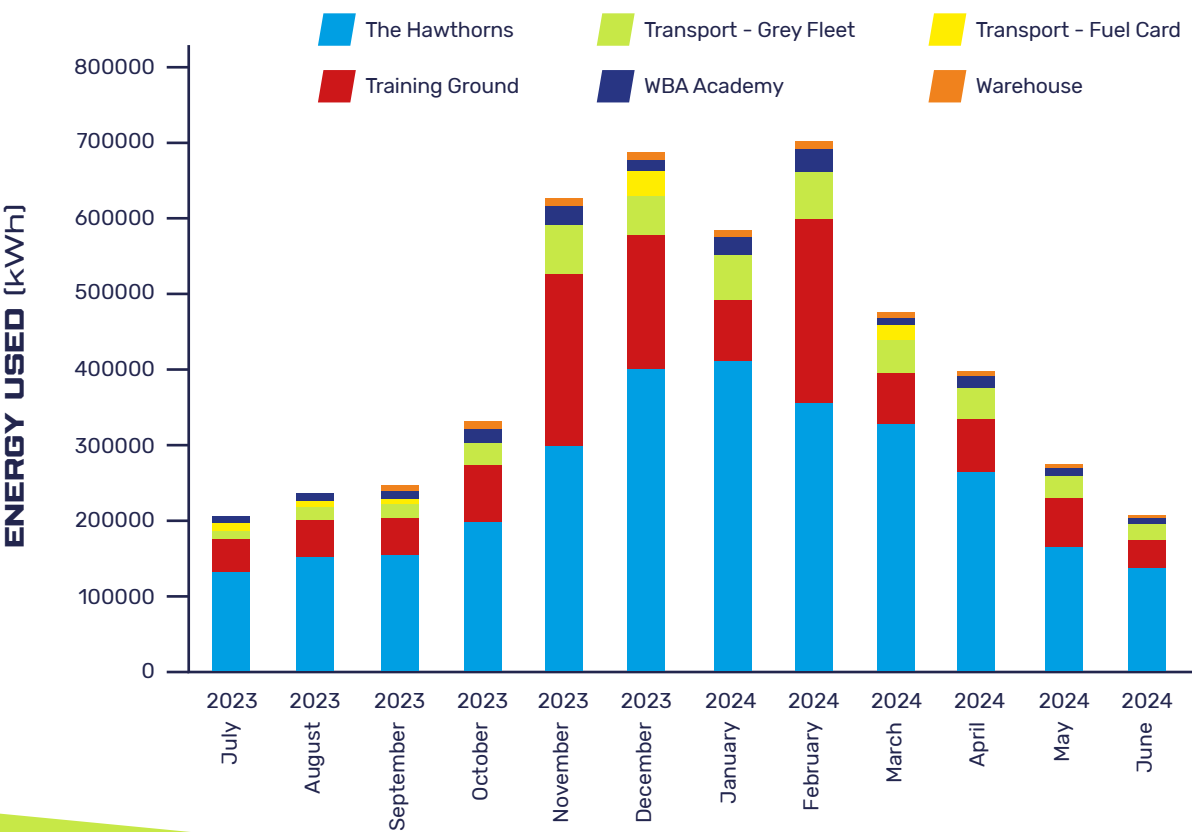
All figures are in tCO₂e WTT=Well to Tank T&D=Transmissions and Distribution

Source	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Spet 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Jul 2024
Electricity	27.9	33.5	33.8	39.3	46.3	53.4	56.6	49.8	46.3	39.0	31.1	25.6	482.6
Natural Gas	10.3	10.4	10.5	16.6	32.1	44.1	46.2	38.3	37.5	27.9	15.3	8.9	298.0
Medium Car Car 2.0 diesel 1.7 litre	3.4	6.9	10.2	13.0	13.8	11.8	13.1	18.5	14.2	15.5	13.4	12.1	145.9
Kerosene	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.7	35.6	0.0	40.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	118.6
Electricity (WTT)	6.7	8.1	8.1	9.5	11.1	12.9	13.6	12.0	11.2	9.4	7.5	6.2	116.2
Natural Gas (WTT)	1.7	1.7	1.7	2.7	5.3	7.3	7.6	6.3	6.2	4.6	2.5	1.5	49.2
Electricity (T&D)	2.4	2.9	2.9	3.4	4.0	4.6	4.9	4.3	4.0	3.4	2.7	2.2	41.8
Air Con Gas	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	27.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.7
Medium Car (WTT) Car 2.0 diesel 1.7 litre	0.8	1.7	2.5	3.2	3.4	2.9	3.2	4.5	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.0	35.6
Kerosene (Litres) (WTT)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.4	8.6	0.0	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.8
Modern transit Style Van	1.4	1.6	0.9	0.5	2.9	1.2	1.4	2.3	1.1	2.3	1.4	0.2	17.2
Modern transit Style Van (WTT)	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.1	4.2
Gas Oil	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8
Small Modern Van	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.0	2.5
Gas (WTT)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Small Modern Van (WTT)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.6
Total	57.1	69.3	72.9	90.3	204.0	183.0	147.7	187.3	124.5	106.7	77.7	59.8	1,380.5



DETAILED TOTAL ENERGY USE OVER TIME FOR TOP SITES

The bar chart below shows energy use per month per site and includes all energy use sources.



FROM OUR SECR 2024 REPORT

Total carbon emissions – tCO2e means ‘tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent’

This reporting period (Jul 2023 – Jun 2024)

1,380 TC02E

Prior reporting period (Jul 2022 – Jun 2023)

2,294 TC02E

A REDUCTION OF
914 TC02

“But we want to reduce it to Net Zero ... So, let’s make a start
.... well, we already have!”

PLASTICS

■ All 1st Team & Academy players & staff have branded personal Water Bottles.

Partnering with Pure-ionic Water, we have 7 x Water Fountains dispensing ionic water at the Training Ground. This ‘1 big thing’ initiative was to reduce the purchasing of single use plastic water bottles for consumption.

The statistics were mind-blowing, we were using 5,000 cases of bottled water, 120,000 bottles per year, £350 per week on single use plastic water bottles. Cost £18,250 per annum – that does not account for other types of sports drinks.

Also, the waste disposal resulted in 508 kilos per year to landfill, we incurred ‘overweight’ costs due to the extra weight caused by hundreds of partly full water bottles.

We also now have the health benefits of the ionic water, protecting against particle contaminants found in water such as Micro plastics – Viruses – Bacteria – Heavy Metals – Hormones (especially oestrogens), Chemical Contaminants – Pesticides & Nitrates



We have taken away plastic cups, and all staff have also been issued with branded reusable bottles, have access to water fountains, and this will reduce further single use bottles being purchased.

We also now have the health benefits of the ionic water, protecting against particle contaminants found in water such as Micro plastics – Viruses – Bacteria – Heavy Metals – Hormones (especially oestrogens), Chemical Contaminants – Pesticides & Nitrates

■ In the Birmingham Road Stand, new cellars have enabled to move to Draught options and stop overreliance on PET bottles. Last season we bought 42,622 plastic PET bottles to serve beer, we’re now averaging around 239 a game, averaging circa 5,497 for the season. (An 87% reduction).

■ Single use plastics have been removed from hospitality areas.

■ We no longer purchase single use plastic carrier bags instore – offering a reusable Cotton Tote Bag – Plastic Gift Cards have been replaced with a cardboard alternative which are compostable and recyclable.

■ Our mailing bags for online orders are made from 100% recycled materials – We have a range of unisex clothing made from re-generated cotton and are working to extend this to more products.

■ Replica shirts are made from 100% recycled polyesters which is ethically sourced, fully traceable, and responsibly produced. Our new kit supplier also has better eco credentials in terms of re-using water, solar panels etc.



STADIUM AND WBAFC VENUES:

- Sponsorship advertising boards are made using recycled material and are recycled at end of life.
- We have eliminated mass production of team sheets on match-days, moving to a digital solution, also removed welcome packs to corporate members, and flowers in certain suites to reduce waste and our carbon footprint.
- We are replacing all lighting/bulb with LED, reducing energy usage and creating longer service life. Currently this covers 70% of all lighting.
- We are fulfilling our legal obligations for Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR), a sustainability reporting framework which is mandatory for large organizations in the United Kingdom (UK). It incorporates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and our efforts to improve energy efficiency.



- The SECR framework promotes transparency for stakeholders regarding energy and carbon use, while also encouraging cost savings and emission reductions.
- We have fulfilled our legal requirements for Energy Savings Opportunities Scheme (ESOS) Stage 1 & 2 and now enter Stage 3. ESOS is a mandatory UK energy assessment scheme. We will carry out assessments every 4 years for energy used by our buildings, industrial processes and transport.
- Our Contractor / Supplier template questionnaire is completed by all contractors and suppliers of services and now includes a specific question regarding their environmental and sustainability credentials.
- The Contractor / Supplier template Performance Review has a specific scored section for how they have managed sustainability / environmental issues on site.

WASTE, OUR SUPPLY CHAIN AND BIODIVERSITY:

Sean Byrne – Our Executive Head Chef is leading the way regarding sourcing food suppliers within a 40-mile radius of stadium. This 'Go Local' initiative reduces our carbon footprint whilst enhancing our commitment to social sustainability and local employment and employers.

- In partnership our Waste Disposal company B&M Waste we provide a food waste solution.
- Food Waste Bins are placed in identified catering / kiosk areas.
- B&M separate the food waste at their plant, turning it into animal food pellets and organic matter for composting.
- We have been 'zero to landfill' for 3 years
- Our Ground staff researched bio-diversity friendly seeds, identifying and implementing several re-wilding areas at both the Training Ground and Stadium.
- Our Facility Maintenance staff have manufactured Bat Boxes and Bug Hotels, using suitable recycled waste materials.
- Both Ground & Facility staff researched and placed the items in their relevant environments and monitor long term for suitability and success.
- In Autumn, we undertook an extensive tree planting exercise at the Training Ground. Over 150 trees of varied species were planted in identified areas and 8 Hawthorn trees at the Stadium.



- Our Executive Chef Sean Byrne has trained to be a registered Beekeeper, we have purchased Hives, identified the 'Baggies Pastures Green Honey Factory' showing we really are 'Bonded by Bee-lief' ... again, as we provide home produced honey for the use in our Kitchens. Surplus will used to provide local charities with fresh produce.
- And finally ... We are an active signatory in the EFL Green Clubs Scheme. EFL Green Clubs is a voluntary environmental support and accreditation scheme.

The scheme's delivery partner, GreenCode, will assess our environmental performance and offers steps for continual improvement.

The initial assessment gives bespoke guidance and practical advice on how to implement change in our environmental operations.

This is supplemented by ongoing series of training and development offers aimed at facilitating actions to bring us closer to the scheme's accreditation mark.

We are operating at the required level for a full audit in 2025. where we will become GreenCode accredited.

FUTURE PLANS:

- We are seeking EV Charging solutions, Solar and renewable options and greener and more sustainable options for energy usage, supply chain carbon footprint, travel and water usage reduction.
- With our SECR & ESOS partner, we will produce a comprehensive Carbon Reduction Plan for the coming years.
- We have identified a suitable environment at the Training Ground set aside for our staff to implement the 'Baggies Pastures Green Conservation Area'. This will consist of polytunnels for fruit growth and a veg patch to be used in our Kitchens. Surplus will be provided to local charities as we develop a supporter led volunteer group to sustain and grow this initiative.

