



6 million books re-used or recycled in 2015

Over 20 million books diverted from landfill since 2008

All company carbon is offset

Turnover has grown by 22.5% in 2015 despite the rise in popularity of e-books.

Understanding of the value of books and being able to re-sell to appropriate markets

Exemplar contribution to social improvement and literacy initiatives

Better World Books

Better World Books (BWB), situated in Dunfermline, is a for-profit socially minded online bookseller that collects books from organisations such as libraries, universities, recyclers and charity shops. These books are then processed and sold online on 11 marketplaces and on www.betterworldbooks.co.uk. A percentage of each sale goes back to the source organisation and a further percentage goes to support one of BWB's 5 literacy partners or the BWB Literacy Fund.

The Circular Economy Award is for businesses whose product or service demonstrates the business and environmental benefits of a closed loop approach. The re-use of books is recognised as an important contribution to the circular economy. Although other companies sell used books online, BWB are innovative in that no books are sent to landfill; they are sold, donated, or as a last resort recycled. BWB can also track every book received back to the library or organisation it came from. At the heart of the BWB business model is a triple bottom line of People, Planet and Profit.

Winners of the VIBES Circular Economy Award 2015

Sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland

The collection of redundant books ensures that these books are diverted from landfill. They go through a rigorous process to ensure that as many books as possible are reused. Any recycling currently goes to pulp processing which is then reused in paper manufacture with other reuse options being considered to diversify reuse. Packaging is reused as many times as possible (around 3 times for cardboard boxes) prior to being sent for pulp. The pulped material is manufactured back into packaging material.

BWB try to choose companies to work with that have a sustainability ethos and are local (contributing to Scotland's development and reducing their carbon footprint).

The company reduce their carbon footprint further by conducting their business travel by public transport whenever possible and planning collection routes to minimise travel and in turn CO₂ emissions. They also advise their book donors about how to maximise loads in boxes and on the "perfect pallet" to maximise transport efficiency.

The judges were impressed with the growth of the business over the past 3 years, turnover has grown by 22.5% in 2015 (this was greater than the projected growth) despite the rise in popularity of e-books. Employment has increased from 5 employees in 2008 to 49 full time employees in 2015 with up to 20 agency staff at any one time.

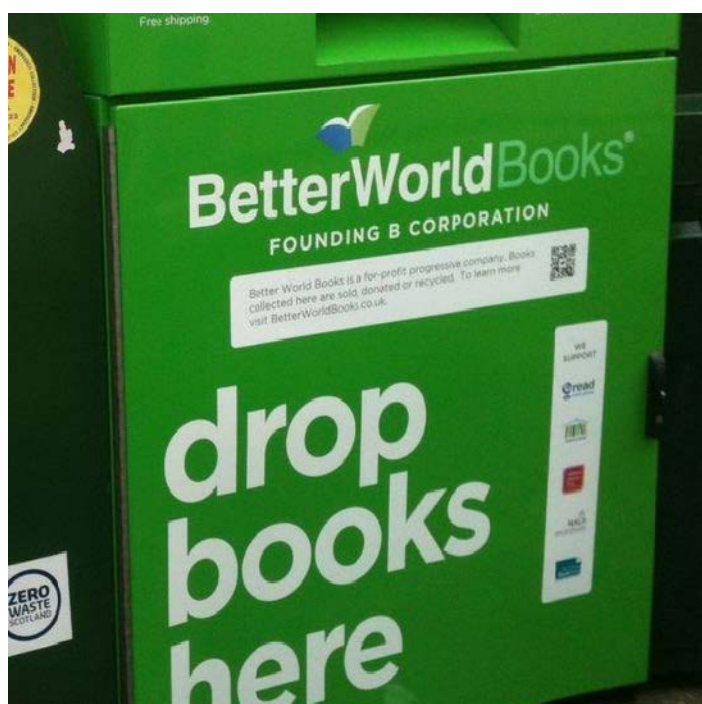


Image: BWB book collection box



Image: BWB collecting their VIBES Award

Staff engagement is high with a number of ways that feedback from staff is sought. Staff are consulted on changes and improvements to working practices. Each member of staff is given 16 hours paid leave to undertake volunteering work. Staff training is identified through staff appraisals and includes awareness of sustainability and resource efficiency. Staff are primarily local to the Dunfermline area.

BWB has a strong community involvement. In August they opened their doors for 3 days and invited teachers to take away children's books for their schools – 35,000 books were donated this way. Space within the building is offered to local groups free of charge and a teachers' group has booked the space.

The judges felt that their contribution to social improvement and literacy initiatives was an exemplar.

Mairi McManus, Managing Director of Better World Books, said: "Better World Books is thrilled to have won the VIBES Award. Our business model was built to support global literacy through book reuse. Working with our employees, clients, partners and consumers, giving books the opportunity to be enjoyed over and over again helps us all to do our part in supporting a sustainable environment one book at a time."