

Highlights

Ambitious goals to be a net zero operational venue by the end of 2025 and net zero supply chain by 2030

Their BODYHEAT system is world-leading, capturing body heat from visitors and storing it for heating or cooling later

Significant levels of collaboration and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders around the use of their innovative BODYHEAT and StackCup systems

Further action across 6 themes including circularity, biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation



SWG3

SWG3, located in the centre of Glasgow, is one of Scotland's most distinctive independent venues, a collection of atmospheric spaces alive with art, design, music, fashion, food, shopping and nightlife.

The business is delivering ambitious leadership, with sustainability a key part of the overall culture and ethos. SWG3's goal is to be at the forefront of building a sustainable future for the music and events industry with ambitious goals to be a net zero operational venue by the end of 2025 and have a net zero supply chain by 2030. These targets are ahead of competitors in the event industry in Glasgow.

Their Net Zero Action Plan includes 6 themes:

- circularity;
- biodiversity;
- cultural programme;
- creative placemaking;
- leadership, and
- collaboration; climate adaptation and mitigation.

Category description: Best Medium Business

The Vision in Business Scotland Award recognises organisations that best demonstrate “what’s good for the environment is also good for business.” This sub-category is for Best Medium Business (50 -250 employees).



SWG3 are reducing their carbon footprint, material use and improving local biodiversity. Action across these areas is driven by a Sustainability Co-ordinator and Green Team, comprising 10-15 members of staff from across all areas of the business, with regular monitoring and reporting against targets. All staff are empowered to make changes and there are opportunities for them to provide ideas via a staff suggestions box and an open-door policy with the management team.

SWG3s BODYHEAT geothermal system is world-leading, attracting global attention. It captures body heat from visitors and stores it to use for heating or cooling later. The energy used to run the system is 100% renewable and it is estimated BODYHEAT will reduce SWG3's energy demand by 67%, with a potential payback period of 5 years.

In 2023, SWG3 reduced their Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 15.4 tonnes CO₂e; an 87% reduction from their baseline of 123 tonnes CO₂e in 2018-2020. This was achieved through reducing staff commuting emissions, encouraging audience travel to the venue to be made by sustainable means and switching to their StackCup reusable cup system in place of disposable cups. Through introducing the StackCups in December 2023, the business has avoided an estimated 165,000 disposable plastic cups.

They have also regenerated 3,200m² of derelict, industrial wasteland into a community garden filled with native plants and trees, raised beds for community food growing, an orchard, wild food foraging area, beehives, and a wildflower meadow.

As well as addressing the demand for public greenspace in the city centre and providing a space for community groups and schools, the garden also contributes to local Biodiversity Net Gain. SWG3 is currently working with students at Glasgow Caledonian University to quantify the carbon capture and Biodiversity Net Gain of the garden.

SWG3s' policies and actions have generated indirect economic benefits such as attracting new business and events including the New York Times Climate Hub at COP26 and hosting a Circular Supper Club in conjunction with Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. Their £1 levy on the StackCups will initially be used to cover the cost of the system and then, in future, this will be donated to a local music therapy charity.

The business has several initiatives in place to improve staff and customer wellbeing. Their 'Be Sound' campaign on mental health, includes a welfare team who are easily identifiable in blue vests for gig goers and quiet areas in venues for those who may need them. They plan to share the campaign with entertainment venues across Scotland. SWG3 also runs the YardWorks programme, regenerating vacant and derelict land through new facilities and public art, improving the local environment and helping people to feel more positive about the area they live in.

SWG3 is an excellent example of how a business can deliver ambitious net zero targets and actions through collaboration and engagement with others. They have enormous potential to influence the hospitality and entertainment sector, despite their size within the sector.

Quote from the company:

"SWG3 are honoured to receive the VIBES Best Medium Business Award 2024. This recognition reflects our commitment to going net zero, increasing biodiversity and reducing our impact on the environment. We are grateful to our talented team and audiences who are helping us to build a sustainable future for the arts and music industry. Together, we will continue to push boundaries and create unforgettable experiences that don't cost the planet."