

MAKING A DIGITAL DIFFERENCE



SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2022/2023



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Introduction

from our Chief Executive Officer

I am very proud to be sharing our 2022/2023 sustainability report, which details the progress we have made since our sustainability report back in 2020. It's a crucial document that considers how information technology and sustainability are both integrated into our everyday lives. We can't talk about the future of information technology (IT) without keeping the future of our planet at the heart of the conversation.

We know we have our own responsibility to drive change in our business. In 2010 we took the decision to support the return of surplus IT equipment, and we've collaborated with our customers, with other companies in our industry and with the wider world to have a positive impact on society and the environment. Through sustainability, we support our supply chain, communities, customers, and Stone colleagues.

We deliver a sustainable solution by working with leading suppliers to drive innovation with integrity, and we identify the best solution to meet customers' specific needs.

In 2022 we have expanded our shift times to support the drive for a circular economy solution where we offer collection and refurbishment of surplus and preowned IT, whatever the original brand. We find new owners for unwanted equipment, we generate local employment, provide a variety of working patterns and training opportunities and we've maintained our 100% zero waste to landfill Valpak accreditation.

We are committed to the UN Race to Zero Commitment confirming our target to achieve net zero by 2030, 20 years ahead of target with a comprehensive net zero action plan.

We have incorporated sustainability as a mindset in Stone reaching every area of our business. In 2022 we were delighted to launch our "Making a Digital Difference" Sustainability Framework where we inform, innovate and inspire, demonstrating social and environmental best practice with corporate social responsibility driving each of the 10 focus points. Making a digital difference underpins our commitment to delivering information technology provision for a sustainable future.

At Stone we recognise the opportunities that information technology can provide. Through our inclusive and community focused approach, we are committed to ensuring that communities and individuals can access and thrive helping to eradicate the digital divide and in promoting social mobility.

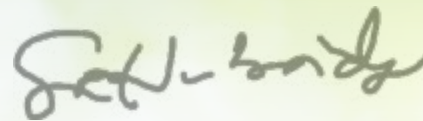
This is the first year of our Making a Digital Difference framework. The launch of our E-commerce platform for new products acts as an enabler for sustainability, showcasing second user equipment available on our Stone Refurb site. Our award winning 360® App is proving to be the ideal solution for recycling IT equipment with our dedicated teams collecting devices from across the UK. This has resulted in over 1.2 million devices being processed through our award winning circular economy solution, bringing together resale, repair, recycle and repurpose.

The achievements and progress outlined in this report are a reflection of the incredible passion and commitment amongst our teams that make Making a Digital Difference so much more than a strategy.

Our colleagues are helping to turn our 225 point action plan into a reality, from expanding our product range with sustainable and refurbished products, to offering generous warranties and comprehensive repair service. We have also partnered with the National Forest and Ecologi and have now planted over 6000 trees on behalf of our customers.

These statistics are a reflection of the dedication of everyone at Stone from our buying team, warehouse, operational team, service and repair, sales, and support services teams.

We believe our people are the heart of Stone Technologies Ltd, a Converge Company and there would not be a sustainable future without them. We are all working together for a more sustainable future where we not only protect our business but our communities and the planet.



Simon Harbridge - CEO



Who we are

We are a value added reseller working with all leading IT Vendors

We provide a full circular procurement ICT solution

We manufacture Stone Branded ICT equipment

We deliver sustainable solutions

including cyber security and cloud solutions

We are UK based with 24 hour operation covering the whole of the UK

We ensure security and integrity


We refurbish

We repurpose

We repair

We recycle





Whether you are a Stone colleague, partner or Stone supplier we have a comprehensive set of values that we all live by.

SUSTAINABLE

Our three decades in technology are testament to our commitment to sustainability in our environmental, social and economic activities. We continue to build on our strengths and do what we do really well.

DEDICATED VALUE

We are dedicated to our chosen markets and to our customers. We work in vertically focused teams, so we can speak with authority and understanding, earn trust and develop relationships that make a positive difference to our customers.

INTEGRITY

We are real, we care, and we do what we say. We are straightforward to deal with and never try to be something we are not. We are ethical, and our instinct is always to do the right thing. We accept personal and collective responsibility and are accountable for our actions.

SERVICE MATTERS

We know that customer loyalty is hard-won but easily lost, the actions of every single person in our business matter and make a difference every day.

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE

We act with respect towards each other and our customers and partners. We operate in a fast-moving, open and honest environment where we reward performance and a responsible will to win. We invest and provide opportunity that inspires, excites and enables our people to go the extra mile. Engaged employees work with passion.

INNOVATIVE

We continuously move forward, committed in heart and mind to think "outside the box" and deliver creative solutions based on listening to and clearly understanding what our customers want.

**10 years
of zero
waste**
to landfill
achieved

1.2 million
returned
products via



100%
renewable
electricity

**Launch
of Social
Value
calculator**

6,567
trees planted
through
partnership
with Ecologi

£28 million
generated in
Social Value
in 2021

Making a digital difference

Making a digital difference is our commitment to sustainability. It is our framework that seeks to create a resilient, responsible and purpose-driven business. This includes resilient environment, resilient communities and being a responsible business.

The “**Making a digital difference**” framework is split across the two focus areas of Environmental Sustainability and Social Sustainability with ten areas of activity and Corporate Social Responsibility at its core.

A full range of topics were reviewed before we defined a set of sustainable priorities for Stone, and they all align to United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and BSI ISO 26000 Social value.

Our goal is to create sustainable growth through innovation and investment in our people, products, services, partnerships and processes.

We aim to operate in an open and transparent culture and live by our values.

Our framework is being delivered over 3 stages

STAGE 1 - Integrate and inform

STAGE 2 - Innovate and engage

STAGE 3 - Inspire and lead



Making a digital difference is our framework to achieving our vision for a sustainable future for our teams and customers. Its flexible approach will be adapted as the sustainability landscape changes and evolves.

The framework is changing mindsets of teams, communities and customers to create a truly inclusive Information Technology culture in which people and planet come first in every decision.

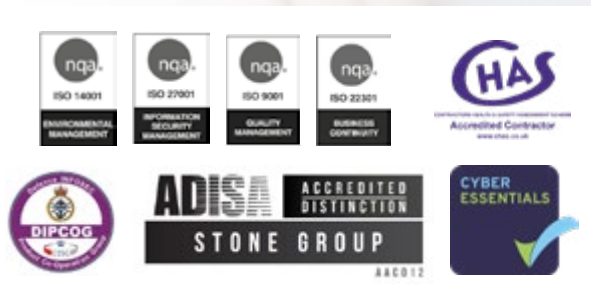
Making a digital difference is our route to achieving our vision for a sustainable future for our teams and customers. It is a flexible approach which will be adapted as our business progresses through the stages and as the sustainability landscape changes and evolves.

Our Governance and Assurance

Our approach to sustainability is governed and managed by our CEO and executive team and driven through our vision and values.

We care about the complete sustainability agenda environment including caring about your security, your data, your equipment and your specific needs. Over our 31 years we trust our service and solutions to provide confidence, so customers know that their Information Technology provision is assured.

Our accreditations include:



We also collaborate with external experts, other organisations and collaborative forums to provide assurance, supplement our knowledge and increase our innovative capacity.





We have been delivering an inhouse circular IT solution for over 10 years and provide a sustainable solution at every stage of the asset lifecycle. We provide a fully circular economy solution with our 360[®] App enabling surplus IT equipment to be reused and recycled with full data protection and Zero to Landfill commitment, all based in the UK. We are also delighted to be accepted as part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation Community for our circular economy delivery.

We see circular solutions as alternative purchasing models. They extend the life of your IT investment and existing products through resale, repair, recycling and repurposing.

Circular solutions at Stone include

Resale – a product that has been owned by someone else in the past, We offer over **700 refurbished products** through our E-commerce platforms and we are also looking to increase our catalogue of sustainable new products to include ocean plastic recovery and low-energy consumption laptops - so our customers have more opportunities to buy sustainable products.

Service and Repair – a service or product to restore an item to a good condition. Repair is all about embracing long-term IT solutions and ensuring every product we sell lives its longest possible life. We believe a strong repair and restoration service is a vital part of our circular model We have a dedicated inhouse team providing a repair service and provide warranties that ensure every product we sell lives its longest possible life.

We believe a comprehensive data- and asset-secure repair service is a vital part of our circular model, and often refurbish products by simply adding more memory or upgrading the operating system.



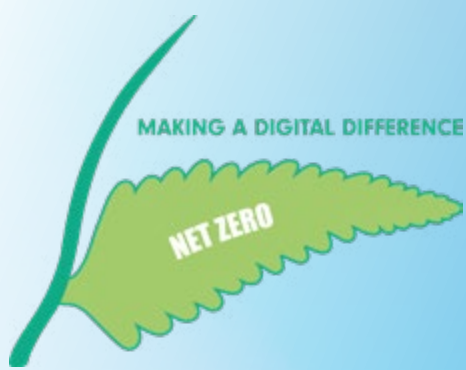
Recycle – a product that can no longer be resold is broken down to its raw materials responsibly. Customers also benefit from rebates when they recycle using our Stone 360[®] app, and we have now provided more than £4m of rebates to customers - many of whom have donated this to their nominated charity.

Repurpose – Utilise components in repair and resale products.

Collection – Ability to book your collection via our website or via app at a convenient time to you.

Solution – Ability to buy at different price points, providing financial and warranty options.





We have declared our ambitious target of being net zero by 2030 alongside our commitment to the UN Race to Zero and the SME Climate Hub scheme. We've completed our 2021 Carbon Disclosure project submission and have published our Carbon Reduction Plan on www.stonegroup.co.uk

Working towards this challenging target, we have already converted our consumption to 100% renewable electricity. Our Stone products now use 80 Plus Bronze power supplies as standard, and we are working towards using more efficient 80 Plus Gold and Platinum versions.

We have embraced hybrid working and virtual meetings. We are already making our car fleet more sustainable, with 58% now either fully electric or hybrid, and we're exploring electric alternatives for our commercial fleet.

At Stone we have also engaged with the Carbon Literacy Group who have supported our colleagues to become Carbon Literate Citizens. Through the training, our colleagues understand how climate change affects them and they have now been equipped with the knowledge and skill to lower their carbon footprint and support Stone's Net Zero targets.

100%
of our electricity
is now generated
from a renewable
source

38 colleagues
are now
Carbon Literate
Citizens after
receiving training
from carbon
literacy trust

ISO14001
accreditation
since 2007

38%
reduction
in carbon
emissions

We signed the
climate pledge
accelerating our
net zero carbon
commitment by
20 years



58%
of our car fleet
is either fully or
electric hybrid

Net Zero plan
approval from
**Crown
Commercial
Services**





We benefit from a diverse supply chain including

59% SME

85 Micro organisations

36 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE)

We design IT devices that are made to last, with responsibly sourced components and a caring attitude towards the people in our supply chain. We will always drive sustainability with our supply chain and have an ethical policy to ensure that our values are shared with our suppliers. We have a supplier code of conduct and have committed to the CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics where our procurement team have completed ethical procurement training.

We work with all members of our supply chain to ensure they are supported and meet our corporate social responsibility standards. We encourage our suppliers to be transparent and responsible in sourcing and employment practices. We benefit from working with a diverse range of suppliers, 59% are SME (Small, Medium Enterprises). Some suppliers are just starting to focus on sustainability and we encourage them to learn more about sustainability through the Supply Chain Sustainability School.

Being at the cutting edge of technology means we benefit from working with suppliers who lead the way in sustainability and innovation. Stone are now Microsoft Certified accredited, and we are one of the few selected holders of the CISCO Sustainability Specialization.

We source local suppliers to reduce the transportation of goods and services therefore reducing our carbon footprint and also supporting the local economy. We work closely with the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and are a patron of the organisation. In 2021, Stone won its Sustainability and Environment Award, and in 2022 we were privileged to sponsored this award and present at the award ceremony in Stafford.

MAKING A DIGITAL DIFFERENCE

ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION &
BIODIVERSITY

Our operation will ensure a healthy environment and increased biodiversity. We minimise our environmental impact with ISO 14001 and have had this certification for over 15 years. We consider the environmental impact on our activities including logistics and recycling.

We have partnered with the National Forest who are regenerating 200 miles of derelict land in the Midlands and they have already planted over 9 million trees. We were delighted to attend their tree blessing service in partnership with National Memorial Arboretum to recognise the loss of life with Covid.



Click the link to watch the **The 'Trees of Life' Service** video

We also partner with Ecologi who planted over 6000 trees on behalf of customers through their engagement with the Stone 360® App.

Acer provides a range of IT hardware and promotes important sustainability topics. In September 2022, Acer sponsored a 75-mile trek across the National Forest by Stone colleagues. With their support we were able to donate over £730.

HP aims to be the world's most sustainable technology company. We partnered with HP in October 2022 to help increase biodiversity by planting and clearing a towpath in Stone, Staffordshire. Six Stone colleagues and four HP colleagues took part, and we worked with the Canal and River Trust and raised over £650 for the charity.



Jo completing the 75 miles



Helping the Canal and River Trust



We are reducing our waste and you can help too. We are committed to Zero to Landfill and now celebrate this 10 year achievement and are working towards being single use plastic free.



At Stone we recognise the value in your old IT equipment. We enable devices to be reused or recycled and empower customers to access IT equipment at multiple price points from our E-commerce sites at www.stonegroup.co.uk and www.stonerefurb.co.uk

Through our circular economy solution, we have managed to divert e-waste from landfill.

Through small changes like redesigning packaging, to supporting local communities, we can work together to reduce our carbon footprint and take big steps on our Making a digital difference framework.

We are constantly reviewing our packaging to minimise the impact on the environment.

Where possible we reuse or recycle packaging and have reduced the size of packaging by 5%.

We have now replaced plastic packing tape with paper tape saving over **225 miles** of plastic tape in just one year

In 2021 we diverted over

2000 tonnes of E Waste

generating over

£188,000

in Social Value

Waste Highlights

1,200,000

devices have been recycled since launch of the 360[®] app

0%

to landfill since
10 years of Zero
to Landfill

225

miles of plastic
tape replaced by
paper tape

Removal
of harmful
foam

5%

reduction in
packaging

£188,000

Social Value
generated from
diversion from
landfill in 2021



We believe in embracing innovation and providing sustainable solutions to all stakeholders. We take the time to understand your requirement and deliver innovation with integrity. Working closely with the leading providers of hardware and software we can tailor a bespoke solution to meet your specific needs. We have also joined the Techies Go Green group to ensure we are at the cutting edge of sustainable innovation.

By engaging with our customers and understanding not only their technical needs but their sustainability drivers we can deliver a sustainable solution. We can support the best solution from cloud based servers to energy sensors, from laptops to AV equipment.



The Background

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the UK's largest public service and has 90,000 staff working across 160 locations around the country.

DWP plays a pivotal role in making a difference to millions of citizens across the UK every day, looking after a number of areas including welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy, helping to tackle poverty and enabling people to live more rewarding, safer and fairer lives.

Their existing legacy equipment across 280 meeting rooms was outdated and unreliable.

Stone responded to the DWP specification by delivering one

of the largest deployments of Skype for Business to date in the UK. Stone have a team of experts with experience and expertise in providing bespoke meeting room design services that take into account the client's needs as well as the physical space to deliver a meeting room that is easy to use, looks great and performs to the highest possible technical standards.

"The existing supplier offered to remove our old equipment for £1,000 per room and so working with Stone meant an incredible saving of £280,000. As well as saving public money, it made our job so much easier as Stone simply removed the old equipment as they installed the new."

Case Study - DWP Solution

“

Working with Stone has saved the DWP hundreds of thousands of pounds. Stone's engineers were flexible and successfully worked around any issues to complete the installations time. We are really pleased with the results which have provided a great service to our offices, especially in remote locations.

”

Carl Thompson,
DWP Collaborative Services Team

Case Study - DWP Solution



We are delivering social responsibility through our actions and measure and monitor our delivery of social value. At Stone in 2022 we have invested in a social value calculator that streamlines, captures and showcases the social value generated from supply chain, customer, colleagues and community engagement and demonstrates our commitment to corporate social responsibility.

We can measure our impact on behalf of customers or communities whether this is using local suppliers, using not for profit organisations to providing training and services, training apprenticeships, fund raising through our charity committee, volunteering or recycling through our 360® App. The reports align to the government guidance and proves a comprehensive view for clients, colleagues and our community.



Stone also generously supports colleagues with 3 days of volunteering per year enabling colleagues to generate social value through community engagement. We have been working closely with our 3 nominated charities in 2022: Midland Air Ambulance, Family Fund and Destiny Rescue, with many fund-raising activities including cake sales, inflatable run, Open Mic night and football sweepstakes.





At Stone we support employees not just in employment but promoting wellbeing and embracing diversity. We believe in our people, which goes beyond policies and procedures to create a culture of inclusivity and engagement.

Wellbeing covers mental health and physical health, so we have a team of mental health first aiders supporting their colleagues throughout the business. We have also signed the Mental Health at Work Commitment.

For physical health we provide a range of optional benefits, from annual free flu jabs and hearing tests to health assessments and discounted gym membership.

We understand that colleagues welcome flexibility so we provide a range of options including hybrid working and varied shift patterns to support care commitments and remote working. We support our people to support the community by providing three days of volunteering annually, and we are now a foster-friendly employer.



Click the link to watch the video

We understand that training is key to everyone's development and we encourage social mobility, so every employee has a performance plan and we promote inclusive talent management. This provides access to a range of training options available from a suite of online courses to apprenticeships and professional qualifications.

At Stone we are proud to be a **"Disability Confident Committed"** employer recognising that not every disability is visible, so we have been running training sessions on mental health.

We are a national living wage employer and ensure that our employees regardless of their age are paid above this level. We don't use zero hour contracts and recognise the benefits of long service through our long service awards.

We recognise the contributions of individuals with "Employee of the Month" and also "Star of the Year"

We also commend the commitment of our teams by arranging company paid fun days and tasty treats including ice cream, pizza days and onsite barbeques, trips to the races and Alton Towers visits and each December we provide each employee a turkey from a local farm or voucher.



100%
of our colleagues now take part in annual training for sustainability, with a number now being Carbon Literacy citizens.

We have a range of apprentices including Accountancy, System thinker practitioner, Data analyst and Information communication and offer a complete work experience placement.



In 2021 we achieved the
Best Company To Work For
by CRN Sales and Marketing
Awards.

CRN
SALES AND MARKETING
AWARDS 2021

We are constantly looking
to improve wellbeing and
engagement, and this is
recognised though feedback
such as Glassdoor

glassdoor
4.6 | 
CEO Rating 92%



At Stone we support communities and individuals to ensure equality of opportunity and access. This is from basic needs such as the National living wage, no zero-hour contracts to zero tolerance to modern slavery and supporting our supply chain to protect the human rights of their colleagues.

We are a Disability Confident Committed employer and promote opportunities to all. We embrace inclusive software that can support additional needs and work closely with charities such as The Family Fund to enable technology to support families and communities.

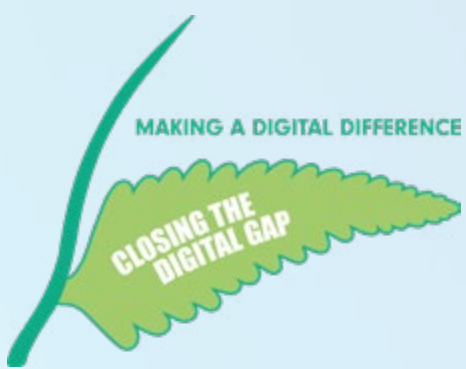
We have a supplier's code of conduct and ethical procurement procedure. These outline our zero tolerance of modern slavery, and we also support Electronics Watch who protect the rights of workers in their electronics supply chain. Our Modern Slavery statement is available on our website www.stonegroup.co.uk

We provide Stone colleagues training in Modern Slavery awareness and have a comprehensive code of conduct and Whistleblowing procedure.

For 2022 we have been supporting Destiny Rescue which supports victims of modern slavery. We encourage our colleagues and suppliers to recognise the signs of modern slavery with the support of the Supply Chain Sustainability School learning resources.

Stone are accredited Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essential Plus suppliers as we know the importance of data protection and data privacy for all our customers. We also work with the National Cyber Resilience Centre, who are not for profit organisation, to increase cyber resilience awareness for the benefit of our colleagues and customers.





As Stone is a leading IT provider we recognise the benefits that technology can bring - but also realise that a lack of hardware, infrastructure or knowledge mean these benefits are not available to all. We work closely with community groups and charities to close the digital divide and enable people to reach their full potential.

Home Group is a housing association, social enterprise and charity and is one of the UK's largest housing providers of high quality housing and integrated housing, health and social care. With its origins in the North East, the company has expanded elsewhere in England and Scotland to support over 115,000 customers across 55,000 properties.

The Group prides itself on its innovative approach to building homes and it supports some of the most vulnerable in society, including people with mental and physical health issues and in 2020 it was voted Landlord of the Year in the UK Housing Awards.

One project for the IS team was to bring older kit up to date. As well as desktops, the Group used Surface Pros which were around three to five years old and in refreshing these the Group was left with almost 700 machines that were not fit for purpose. The question was what to do with all these old machines – as a Microsoft Partner, one option would

be to 'cash them in' for recycling, however, as the pandemic progressed, the Group's CFO John Hudson raised the idea of repurposing them to support colleagues working from home.

"Many of our colleagues had families and so they were home schooling," said Simon. "While most had one computer at home which under normal circumstances would suffice, when home schooling if you had more than one child, each of whom need to be on line for lessons, then you have a problem.

In addition, even assuming colleagues could afford to buy a new laptop, many of them work with people in our communities rather than in an office and may not have the expertise to decide which laptop to buy or how to set it up. In addition, balancing work with home schooling doesn't leave much time to think about it. John put two and two together - old Surface Pros + colleagues needing IT at home – and recognised the Group could provide a solution."

Case Study - Home Group

“

Both colleagues and customers were grateful to receive what they saw as a free brand-new laptop. Stone cleaned up the machines to a very high standard and even though people knew they were second hand, when they removed their laptops out of the box, they essentially looked brand new and of course, worked efficiently. Our executive members and CEO received lots of pictures showing happy children and grateful parents and it's a great feeling to know that we have had such a positive and genuine impact on young lives.

”

Simon Parker
Director of Information Systems (IS)

Case Study - Home Group



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