

MARCH

2024

A person wearing a dark wetsuit is standing in shallow, rippling water. The back of the wetsuit features the word 'Wave' in a white, stylized font and a white circular logo. The water is a vibrant blue-green color, and the background is slightly blurred.

# The Impact Zone

FEBRUARY

2025





## MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Nick Hounsfield

Since the very beginning of The Wave back in 2010, and then writing our first Sustainability Policy in 2012, we have been a business founded on a deep care and respect for people, planet and profit.

# The Wave has always been about creating happier, healthier people in a healthy environment.



This annual report is our check-in to ensure we continue to 'walk the talk' and remain on board with the purpose that drives us.

We have continued pushing innovation within this nascent industry, as well as being transparent about the challenges we face, so we can all learn together. With numerous inland surfing destinations being developed across the globe, it's more important than ever to lead the way and set a high benchmark for what it means to be a sustainable business – so that we can not only be a force for change in our sector, but can also cause a ripple effect into other industries.

Most of all, I'm incredibly thankful to our Wavemakers for not just getting on board with this vision, but for living and breathing what it means to be a future-facing sustainable business.

Keep charging.

Nick





MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Hazel Geary

It is with great pride that I present our latest Impact Report, the first in my time as CEO that reflects a full financial year. This always serves as a great time to reflect, reviewing the physical and metaphorical waves we've made, both in the water and in the community we're building.

It's hard to start anywhere other than achieving B-Corp status in September 2024. This was recognised at the global Surf Park Summit's awards, with The Wave winning the Sustainability Award for being the only surf park in the world with B-Corp accreditation.

For us, this is a clear demonstration of what we believe this industry can and should be delivering



with people, planet  
and profit at the heart  
of every decision.

Impact delivered over the long term to create meaningful change is incredibly inspiring for me to witness. Continuing our brilliant partnership with the Wave Project for the 5th year, and to be able to fund the 5th 'Learn to Surf' course for women with Open Minds Active, are particular examples of this approach in action. They are among the many stories that you'll read about in this year's report.

We look forward to another action-packed year and we thank you for being part of the journey.

See you in the water,

Hazel

DIRECTORS

Elliott Cherington  
Andy Coachafer  
Rahim Dhanani  
Hazel Geary

Nick Hounsfield  
Richard Sanders  
Layton Tamberlin



## A year of People, Planet and Profit



A sustainability policy was one of the first documents written down when The Wave was still an idea – it was a framework to help create a space that would allow people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to be healthier and happier through surfing. Simultaneously, through The Wave's development, the globally recognised B-Corp movement grew. This accreditation gives all businesses a way to measure success against people, planet and profit sustainability. It was a milestone moment for The Wave in September 2024 when we announced that we were proudly, B. While we took time to celebrate, we also knew we were only making it to the start line. The threshold is now set for a future of ensuring that our decisions continue to be guided by the impact we have on people, profit and planet.

March 2024 to February 2025 was another defining year in so many ways for The Wave. As we take you through the year, you'll hear about some of the highs – such as hosting a world class para surfing competition, giving inner-city school children their first experience of catching waves and

## the year we became a B-Corp



backing research demonstrating the restorative power of 'blue health'. But we are also honest about some of challenges we – and the surf industry as a whole – face, including achieving better gender and ethnic representation in the line-up, and tackling industrial scale pollution.

While many measures are numerical, what continues to stand out is the community that is growing around our waves. Since March 2024, our customers have donated nearly £3,500 at the checkout to further support our impact programme, sharing their love of water and waves more widely.

Surfers, spectators and visitors alike are welcomed in by our ever-growing alumni of Wavemakers, each and every one adding their legacy to a world of health and happiness, one wave at a time.

"I have to say I've never had such positive feedback from the kids after a trip! Every single one absolutely loved it! The parents have been coming in to school to pass on thanks for the experience it's been extremely positive all round. I'm actually quite emotional for the kids to have experienced what they have at The Wave. I simply cannot thank you enough!"

– Teacher at Merchants Academy  
(World Ocean Day for Schools activity)







# Waves of change



**We are on a mission to fundamentally change the way the surfing line up looks.**

In June, we welcomed Off Piste, a group dedicated to flipping the narrative on ethnic representation in snow sports, making the slopes more inclusive and accessible. On a blisteringly hot day they traded snowboards for surfboards and brought incredible energy with their first surf trip for 64 people. Thanks to support from Good Energy, the trip was made affordable to more people, bringing a new cohort into the Off Piste community.

**Working to build a more diverse surfing community, with a particular focus on gender and ethnicity.**



“We believe that this was the biggest black surf trip to ever take place in the UK and seeing so many of our community in the water having an incredible time was just the best feeling! With our ski trips we wanted to create an environment where everyone feels like they belong and can just have a good time. We were keen to see if this could be possible with surfing too and I just loved how well this event was received by everyone. It feels so exciting that we could be inspiring a new generation of surfers.”

– Frankie Dadzie from Off Piste

Activity Group	Total Hours
Black to Nature	24
Open Minds Active	96
Merchants Academy	270
Beyond the Mix	33
Off Piste	64

These hours reflect a combination of one off experiences, and learn to surf courses



# Waves of growth



July 2024 saw the much anticipated return of the English Para Surfing Open competition, and with it the Surfing England Adaptive roadshow. A calendar highlight for so many, the competition did not disappoint, but the appetite for the adaptive surfing roadshow was just as inspiring as the event itself. With people travelling from as far as Yorkshire, it showed how the controlled and accessible environment of inland wave pools can help overcome many of the barriers to surfing faced by those with physical disabilities. In addition to hosting the para surfing competition and supporting group visits as part of our impact programme, we also enabled surf sessions for 72 adaptive surfers booking individually via our customer service team. We supplied in-water supporters and additional coaches at no cost to the surfer but an additional resource cost to the business.

## Supporting and growing the UK's para-surfing community.

"The English Para Surfing Open is always an incredible event, full of high energy and exhilarating surfing action. It's also the best possible showcase to Sport England and the Government for the huge social value and impact para surfing brings to people's lives, which is essential as we continue to fight to bring more funding to this amazing sport."

– Ben Powis, CEO of Surfing England



Activity Group	Total Hours
Chipping Sodbury School	3
Nova Sport	4
Culverhill School	36
Yewstock School	16
Mountjoy School	32
Chalet School	6
English Para Surfing Open	288

These hours reflect a combination of one off experiences, learn to surf courses and additional spaces in the lake to allow for in water supporters.



# Waves of support



## THE WAVE PROJECT BRISTOL LONG TERM PARTNERSHIP

In a world where the news agenda is so regularly dominated by the decline in societal mental health and wellbeing, this year again saw just how impactful creating access to water and waves can be to overcome these pressures.

The Wave Project remain a core partner to us in tackling the mental health crisis in young people. Spring, summer and autumn 2024 again saw us host a number of 6-week surf therapy courses, as well as the growing Wave Project Surf Club, offering hundreds of hours of support to many children. The involvement of The Wave staff and customers as volunteers for the programme makes it a true community feel on Wednesday nights at The Wave.

"In 2024, the Wave Project Bristol thrived, welcoming 50 new surf therapy beneficiaries and 30 new surf mentors into the tribe. Our ever-growing surf club continued to provide even more hours of therapeutic fun in the water – offering our continued support for children who have been through the surf therapy programme."

– Tim Trythall, Wave Project Regional Team Lead

# Working with organisations using surfing and surf therapy to help those struggling with poor mental health.



## SUPPORTING FRONTLINE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Building on from the success of the Wave Project's surf therapy programme for children, we looked to expand our inland surf therapy provision in 2024 by running a trial with Surfwell. Set up by two police officers, Surfwell's innovative programme, specifically for the Blue Light community, has only run at coastal locations in Devon, Cornwall and Dorset to date. We worked closely with their team to trial the one-day programme at The Wave with participants from Avon and Somerset Police. It was a huge success and proved that the same benefits could be experienced by bringing the therapy to an inland location.

The Surfwell programme is life-changing – and in some cases has been lifesaving. It is run by a team who are all current or previous members of the emergency services themselves and have lived experience in common with programme participants, and its trauma-informed approach has been specifically developed to achieve extraordinary results in just one day. We are working with the team to run more programmes in Bristol in 2025.

"We see time and time again the immediate and importantly, the long-lasting impact of our programme. It really is life changing. To be able to bring this inland to Bristol and make it easier for more members of the emergency services from across the UK to access the programme has always been part of our dream"

– James Mallows, Co-Founder of Surfwell





Activity Group	Total Hours
Active Recovery	9
The Wave project	672
Recovery through Sport	64
Surfwell	32
Alabare	16
Axe Scouts	31
1625	3

These hours reflect a combination of one off experiences, learn to surf courses and additional spaces in the lake to allow for in water supporters.

“Our surfing lesson at The Wave is the highlight of the programme for so many and even that just one session has huge impact on the women. A lot of the participants report not having any positive memories at all to hang on to and say that the time at The Wave created a ‘pocket of joy’ that helped them immensely.”

– Project Coordinator of ‘Waves of Support’ group visiting The Wave

# Grounded in evidence



We have worked alongside the University of Bristol’s Centre for Exercise, Nutrition and Health Studies since 2022, to support and further research into the impact of surfing and blue spaces – particularly on our mental wellbeing. Over the last 18 months this partnership has focused on facilitating a Masters thesis and a UK-wide surfing and health study.

In Spring 2024 student, Ariane Gerami, was granted funding for a 4-year PhD, allowing her to deepen the research she started with her Masters thesis. The Wave has worked with Ariane and the university this year to establish the foundations of the research study and will continue to facilitate phase 1 of the PhD throughout 2025 and beyond. A big element of this will be providing the location for a publicly accessible digital tool to capture how surfers feel after their surf session.

“I’m delighted to have been awarded a University of Bristol Postgraduate Research Scholarship to enable my PhD. Being able to further the research I started with my Masters’ thesis is a dream come true. I can’t wait to work alongside The Wave to really get to the heart of how and why surfing impacts health and wellbeing.”

– Ariane Gerami, PhD student at the University of Bristol



# Collaboration

"The current evidence shows that spending time in or around blue spaces may have a positive impact on our wellbeing. It's important for stakeholders to work in partnership to understand, advocate and implement ways in which we can support safe and equitable access to blue spaces around the UK. The Blue Health Symposium aims to enable this, bringing together stakeholders to learn from each other, and more importantly, develop connections that can support future collaboration. This is an exciting area where research, practice and policy can work together!"

— Dr Joey Murphy, University of Bristol  
Lecturer in Physical Activity and Public Health

The Blue Health Symposium is a great example of how The Wave can act as a conduit for, and advocate of, collaboration. The invite-only event brought together delegates from academic institutions, community groups, CICs, corporates and brands, all with an interest in making blue spaces safe and accessible. The speakers – Dr. Jo Garrett from the University of Exeter, Yvette Curtis from Surfers Against Sewage, Ben Clifford from Surfability, Maggy Balgrove from Open Minds Active and Sam Davis and James Mallows from Surfwell – presented a range of recent research and grassroots initiatives. This was followed by workshop-style sessions that encouraged delegates to look at where the opportunities could be for better collaboration and how we can all to work together to further the blue health research sector. A post event report was issued that included clear calls to action around developing research and using it to influence central government policy around health and wellbeing.



# Growing communities



## SISTER SESSIONS

The Sister Sessions were born out of a desire to encourage more women and girls to take up, or progress, the sport – and instigated by a huge amount of feedback from customers asking for women-only sessions. Getting more women and girls into surfing is vital for the sport and surf culture, as well as hugely beneficial for the women themselves. Creating communities where women feel supported by other women, and where they have a huge amount of fun together, is a big part of this. The atmosphere of female camaraderie and encouragement make the Sister Sessions a hugely positive environment for female surfers of all levels.

In 2024 we hosted three Sister Sessions events, all reaching near sell out status, with brilliant activations from brand partners to bring an extra level of atmosphere to the day. And in February we delivered our first 'Cold Water Surf Club' edition. On a wintery Wednesday in February, over 150 women took to the water to cheer each other into waves. We were joined by former professional surfers, world adaptive surf champions, former Olympic snowboarders and current Bristol Bears Women rugby players. We also supported a group of women from an organisation called with Black2Nature to come and experience their first ever surf lesson. In 2025 we are running more Sister Sessions than ever before – with a total of 7 events planned.



## GOOD ENERGY

The intersection of sustainable energy and communities was one that came to life this year. In April 2024, Good Energy became the sustainable energy partner of The Wave, and with it sponsored the installation of outdoor directional lighting. This technology development has enabled us to make surfing available at more accessible hours throughout the year, and all operated using energy generated by our own solar array and from other sustainable energy sources. Good Energy wanted this sponsorship opportunity to offer a real community difference

and so we created The Wave's customer surf competitions - the first edition of which was surfed exclusively under lights. This competition offered four surfing categories which allowed improver level surfers as well as experienced surfers, and both women and men, to take part. While some fabulous prizes were on offer, the lasting memories were the conversations in the Clubhouse between friends as they dissected their performances over a pasty and pint. A real community atmosphere fuelled by Good Energy.

## PRIZE WAVES

The Wave's reputation as an incredible day out for local families and groups continues to grow, and therefore so does the request that an experience at The Wave can be used as a prize in all manner of local fundraising events. We love

to share the joy in a way that benefits other local charities, schools and businesses and last year we gifted 259 vouchers to the value of £50 each. We love to hear how excited winners are when their name or number gets picked!



# Fundraising feast

In September 2023 we hosted a very special 'feasting' fundraiser for incredible Bristol-based charity The Mazi Project. We worked with top cooks Anna Jones and Elly Curshen to create an incredible eating experience - and although torrential rain thwarted the plans to dine along the Pier, the event was still a huge success! All profit from ticket sales went to support the Mazi Project's work empowering marginalised 16-25-year-olds via food - raising over £2,000.

The feasting event marked the beginning of a partnership between The Wave and The Mazi Project, with a longer-term vision to support the young people completing the Mazi cooking programmes. This will initially be via a surf experience for those completing the courses - via our Waves of Support activity - and we also hope to explore opportunities for work experience and even employment in The Wave's food and drink team in the future.

"The Mazi Project is creating real waves of change for the young people it supports, and we love the ethos of 'togetherness' that runs through their work. Community and connection are incredibly important to us - in fact creating a naturally healthy space that would help people to connect with themselves and each other has been a part of what we are all about from the very beginning."

- Nick Hounsfield, Founder of The Wave

"Mazi means 'together' in Greek and our aim is to bring people together via healthy, sustainable food whilst improving lives. We focus on three areas - education, health and employment. A big part of this is building skills and knowledge around food and cooking through our programmes, and ultimately using food as a tool for social mobility, advocacy and a cure to our public health crisis."

- Melanie Vaxevanakis, Founder of The Mazi Project





# Our team

The staff season kicked off with a big wave splash, as all Wavemakers were encouraged to embrace the spring tides, and jump in. This was part of an 'all-hands' day to welcome staff back ahead of the core season, and inspire them to be a fundamental part in delivering the business strategy for the year. Finding time for companywide events is hard in a business that operates from 6am to 11pm, seven days a week. But there has been a real focus on creating more occasions for cross departmental staff relationships to build. We can see the cultural focus working with a record 44% wavemaker return rate into seasonal roles for the 2024 summer.

In addition, we continue to review policies and benefits for our Wavemakers. In this year, these changes included:

- Paying above the national living wage threshold for 21+ - for all our staff regardless of age
- Making free flu jabs available to all workers who operate predominantly outside
- Providing eye care vouchers for all workers who have high levels of screen time
- Offering staff the opportunity to swim for free, which has two benefits; for some it is just to promote physical activity, while for lifeguards it allows them to ensure they remain swim fit as part of their job requirements
- Running more free staff surf sessions than any prior year, giving many of our staff more of what they love
- Training 20 staff in a specialised para-surf coaching course that has improved not only their management of adaptive surfers, but also helped improve elements of their day-to-day surf lessons, such as differentiating between different ages, abilities and levels of confidence





# 02

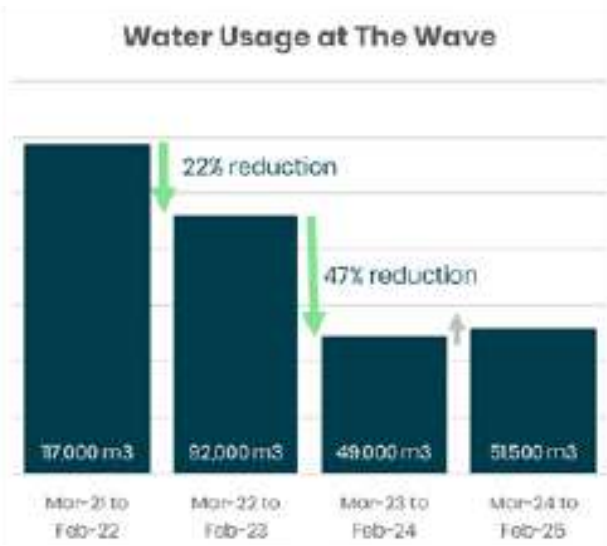
# Planet



# Water

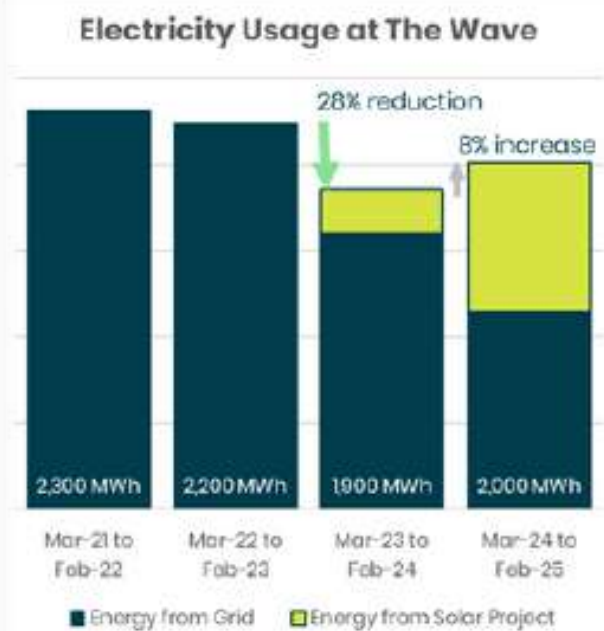


Water is clearly critical to The Wave experience, however we remain dedicated to controlling water usage at all times. After two significant years of reduction, this year has seen a minor increase, but not to the levels previously seen. This can be attributed predominantly to being open for more hours due to the introduction of floodlights, the more surfers that are in the lake, the more water is carried out of the lake absorbed in their wetsuits. Waves also create spray and splash that exits the pool depending on the wave setting – and so more waves equals more lost water. We also made the camp showers available as warm shower options for surfers throughout the winter, which had not been available before. This allows customers to warm up after surfing in cold water through the winter, but as a result increases our water usage.



# Electricity

Similarly, a small increase in electricity usage after two years of substantial reduction can almost exclusively be attributed to the introduction of floodlights, as we make surfing available after dark throughout the winter. The business has retained key messaging throughout the site for Wavemakers about their responsibility to planet, encouraging reduction in energy usage through simple tasks like switching off lights and heaters when they leave rooms, and this remains a key focus.





# Good energy



**Our solar array  
has now been up  
and running for  
18 months and  
has generated  
2,500 MWh,**

of which 860 MWh has been used by The Wave and the remainder supplied to the National Grid. This means we have still seen a significant reduction in energy that we have had to source from the grid. There has been a delay in the installation of the battery as part of the solar project. This means we currently cannot store excess generated electricity for later use. This reduces the overall cost saving opportunities but these will eventually be realised at the completion of the project.

# Total rubbish — & recycling

By driving up surfer and visitor numbers, we naturally see far greater volumes of waste from The Wave. Last year we moved to ask customers to further segregate their waste at bin points, introducing coffee cup bins as well as a series of recycling bins to reduce general waste.

**While there has been  
a 23% increase in  
total waste, within  
that increase only  
13% of the growth is  
general waste, with the  
remaining 87% being  
recycled waste.**





# Making material differences



With 140,000 hours surfed per year, wear and tear on the equipment is inevitable, but minimising damage and turnover is a focus for all Wavemakers in all departments.

A great example of this is the care, storage and repair of the hire surfboards, which has meant that

**we have ordered  
20% fewer new  
boards in 2025 than  
we did in 2024.**

Not only is this great for the planet, but it is also a significant cost saving for the business. One way of achieving this has been working with surfboard partners to inherit good condition second hand boards. This is great for brands who get exposure for their boards, and great for us as we get them at minimal or no cost. In addition, we continue to test boards made of more sustainable materials that have the durability needed to be a fleet hire board in a surf lake.

When materials do reach the end of their safe or useable life, effective material recycling is critical. Wetsuit neoprene recycling has always been a challenge for The Wave. Many companies will recycle one or two, but The Wave has hundreds of suits that reach the end of their commercial life each season. In 2024 we overcame this problem in a number of ways.

1. Firstly, we repaired 42% of damaged wetsuits
2. At key points in the year we sold used wetsuits, which still have enough wear to keep surfers warm in summer sea temperatures, at a very low price. These are perfect for individuals who visit the beach occasionally and just need to take the edge off the cold, and who want avoid buying brand new, performance wetsuits.
3. In 2024 we recycled two tonnes of wetsuits with Circular Flow, all of which will be broken down and used in other product creation

Rash Vests are another item that come to the end of their commercial life each year. In 2024, through Deakin and Blue, we were able to recycle all our worn rash vests. The material was repurposed into new swimwear!

Finally, with over 200 seasonal staff, uniform gets very well-used and ultimately worn and faded. It is laundered and re-used until it is not fit for purpose and is then recycled through traditional material recycling methods.





# 03

# Profit





# Profit

It is right that an impact report brings to life the stories that impact people and planet in so many ways. However, for those life impacting events to continue to occur, The Wave must remain profitable. This allows us to continue to invest in the facilities and experiences for all surfers and visitors to The Wave, as well as developing our staff and paying them fairly.

Ultimately, profitability is driven by our pricing strategy which is set to drive as much occupancy in the lake as possible. This capitalises on high demand in peak seasons and creates great, affordable pricing in off-peak times. In 2024 we moved to a simplified pricing structure for

the year that moved through a low, high and holiday season. As a result, high occupancy was seen through the colder months from our regular surfers, as well as peak holiday seasons. Termtime weekdays were not as highly populated as we would have liked. To overcome this we deployed additional discount tactics to encourage first-time bookers which worked well, and our wider marketing campaign drove awareness of our free on-site activities, even if visitors didn't take part in a water-based activity. The ambition here is that first time visitors would be inspired by the facility and then return to book a surf session or lesson. This approach to driving non-surfer visitors is very much at the heart of why the Wave was created, to bring more people into activity in nature.



Over the year we invested a total of £980,000 in capital expenditure projects to improve the customer experience both in and out of the water, which included:

- **£245,000 in site wide improvements from skate ramps, to play activities, to furniture replacement and more**
- **£199,000 in floodlights with the support of Good Energy, to make surfing after dark possible**
- **£150,000 on improving the digital customer journey**
- **£20,000 on new automated video camera technology to record every wave surfed by our reef surfers and provide footage for them to buy**





# Wiping out is part of the journey



Inevitably, we didn't achieve everything we set out to do in 2024.

We were determined to enable 2,000 surfs via our social impact programme but fell short of this number. However, we are confident that we will surpass 2,000 in 2025.

We do not have an effective CO2 emissions measurement process in place and therefore cannot benchmark and create interventions to reduce this.

The adage, you can't be what you can't see, remains true. We need to have better ethnic diversity within our Wavemaker team – and we know in the longer term this will also help grow wider diversity amongst those who visit us. It remains an ambition for the business to have a more strategic approach to ensure that the diversity of Bristol is far more representative across our workforce.

We also know there is a need to increase the number of women working in our Surf Operations team – be that as surf coaches, lifeguards or surf techs. We have highlighted this issue in past Impact Reports, and it continues to be an area we are working on. The good news is that there has been some positive change over the last year. We have doubled the number of female lifeguards, more than doubled our female surf coaches – and overall female representation in the whole Surf Operations department has gone from 23.07% to 28.4%. We know there is still plenty of work to be done here and will continue to do everything we can to push these numbers up!

# but the best is yet to come

With B-Corp status now achieved, it is a clear benchmark to guide our decisions, ensuring our score is retained, and where possible, improved. Some of the main goals for us in this coming year are...



**Enable 2,500 surfs via our social impact programme**



**Grow the number of female surfers at The Wave to 25%**



**Re-address the measurement of carbon emissions, allowing us to make positive change for the planet**



**As we embark on planning for a London site, we must ensure that our triple-bottom-line decision making process – balancing impact on people, profit and planet – remains central to bringing a world-class slice of the ocean to life in London**





# Better together

We believe we are truly better together – and far more can be achieved when we work in partnership. Huge thanks to all our partners and supporters for the on-going collaboration that makes Impact at The Wave possible.





---

“All I really want to say is this: Get in the water. Walk along the water. Move across its surface. Get under it. Sit in it. Leap into it. Touch the water. Close your eyes and drink a big glass. Fall more deeply in love with water in all its shapes, colours and forms. Let it heal you and make you a better, stronger version of yourself. You need water. And water needs you now. I wish you water.”

- Wallace J Nicols - Author of Blue Mind - 1967-2024

---



For more information or to enquire about supporting our social impact programmes contact [hello@thewave.com](mailto:hello@thewave.com)

[www.thewave.com](http://www.thewave.com)