

Poppy's



Impact Report 2024

“I am thrilled to be introducing Poppy’s first impact report.”

Over the last year, Poppy’s continued to serve increasing numbers of people across Greater London and beyond, as well as opening our first high street shop in East Sheen.

Our culture is hugely values-led — everyone at Poppy’s wants the excellent care that we give to our clients to be accessible to everyone and is excited about extending our reach. We are ambitious for our growth, but it must not come at any cost; it has to be sustainable, for our people and for the planet.

We were certified as a B Corp in April 2024 — a fantastic achievement for the Poppy’s team. Everyone in the business has been involved in changing our operations, our products and our services to ensure we have a positive impact.

This might mean using work time to volunteer in our local community; helping our clients choose greener products for their funeral; harvesting rainwater to clean our vehicles; feeding back to us quarterly on what is good and not so good about working at Poppy’s; or responding to and acting on our client satisfaction surveys.

We also changed our governance and ownership structure to support our objectives as a business for good. I am delighted that, as we evolve our governance over the next few years, we have locked in our mission in this way.

We are only in the foothills of our B Corp journey. There is more to do to map our path to Net Zero, and to make further progress on justice, equality, diversity and inclusion. But for now, this report is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the work we have done to get so far.

Clare Montagu, CEO, Poppy’s



Poppy's is a fresh approach to funerals.



Poppy Mardall founded Poppy's in 2012, driven by the belief that funerals could and should be better. Better for grieving family and friends, who lacked choice, flexibility and information. Better for people who had died, who should be looked after with gentleness and care. Better for the planet, with a concern for our shared future.

Providing outstanding care for the living and the dead remains at the heart of our business. Just as when we started, Poppy's prioritises outstanding personal service, treating every person who comes to us as an individual. Unlike most funeral directors, we care for the dead in our own beautiful, light-filled mortuary.

Our clients tell us that the support we give them and the care we show for the person who has died make a real difference to their experience of grief — from the point at which they come to Poppy's,

to the day of the funeral and beyond. An increasing body of independent research* shows that grief and bereavement have a material impact on people's health and wellbeing. Getting our support right matters. Getting it wrong has real and lasting consequences for bereaved people.

Every decision we make as a business puts people and planet first. In a sector which has a heavy environmental footprint, we have long championed practices and products that have a lighter impact on the planet. We are proud that our team net promoter score is regularly above 50, where 10-30 is considered 'good' for employers.

We decided to seek B Corp accreditation to join a wider community of businesses for good, and to achieve an internationally recognised standard, so that our clients, suppliers and team members can hold us accountable for the way we work.

* www.health.harvard.edu

www.cruse.org.uk



Our mission

A world where great death care is expected and accessible to all.

Our vision

To champion great death care across Greater London, serving at least 75% local clients, by:

- Providing an outstanding quality of care, because great care for both the living and the dead can transform our clients' experience.
- Offering meaningful choice and transparency, listening to what our clients need and supporting them to make the decisions that are best for them.
- Respecting the environment, guiding our clients to make choices that have a positive impact on the planet, whilst minimising our own environmental footprint.
- Being the benchmark for excellence in our sector by sharing what we do.

Our values

Open: we'll meet whatever is on your mind with enthusiasm.

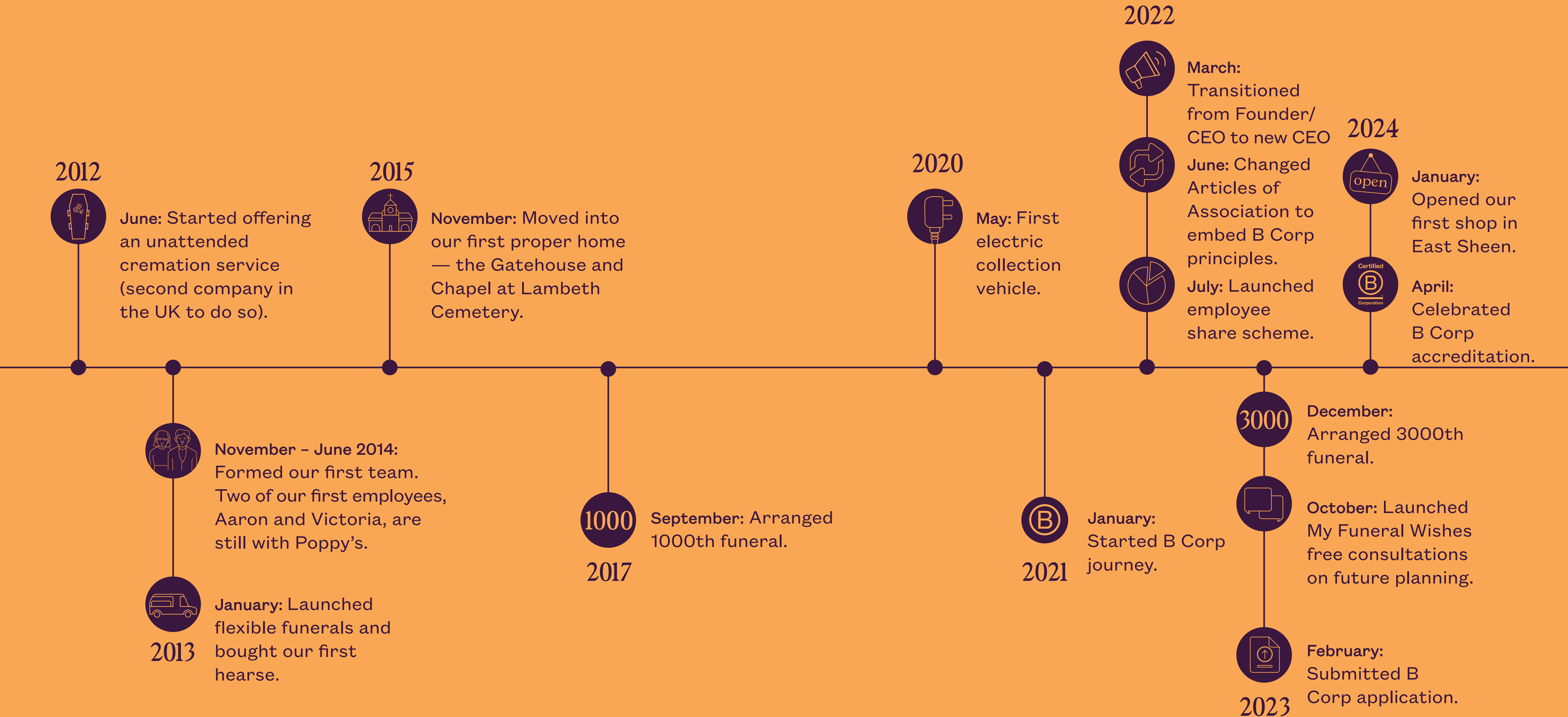
Flexible: we will respond and adapt to your needs.

Confident: we're natural leaders.

Responsible: we're conscious in our actions and decisions.

Human: we will support you and stand by your side.

The Poppy's journey





Our certification score

We were proud to be certified as a B Corp in April 2024 with a score of 83 points. We aim to increase this score when we re-certify in 2027.

- 83 Poppy's overall B Corp score
- 80 B Corp qualification threshold
- 50.9 Median score for ordinary businesses

Governance



What we said we'd do

- We chose to apply for B Corp accreditation because we were already putting people and planet at the heart of our business, and we wanted this to stay true for us as we grew.
- In our first year as a B Corp, we said we would focus on ensuring that the core principles were in place.



What we did

- We amended our articles of association to state that we would:
 - consider all stakeholders in the decisions we take as a business;
 - have a material positive impact on society and the environment.
- We started monthly team meetings to discuss our financial status, to ensure shared accountability and transparency.
- We rolled out the employee share scheme to all new staff and highlighted this benefit in our recruitment packs.
- We ensured that every role had a job description so we're each clear on our responsibilities.
- We ensured that every team member had engaged with our People Handbook and our Practical Handbook, which work as our ethics code and code of best practice.
- We trained all new team members on our social and environmental principles as part of their induction process.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Sharing success with the team

Our founder, Poppy, explains why she introduced an employee share scheme:

“I chose to launch employee share options (an EMI scheme) at Poppy’s in October 2022 because I wanted to share the success of the business meaningfully with the team.

The culture at Poppy’s has always been collaborative and supportive; everyone pulling together to design and demonstrate the best possible care when someone dies. We are a service business and our value lies predominantly in the skills, expertise and approach of the people in our team.

We continue to grow successfully because our team continues to offer outstanding care and service to our living and dead clients. They work

relentlessly to improve and expand our service so many more people can experience the very best care, which we think should be normal. It makes sense therefore for us to do everything in our power to recognise this work and to formalise it in our culture. It’s not enough to say thank you in words only, although this is also important.

Although we don’t foresee a sale of Poppy’s in the near future — we have too much ambition and too many plans — the EMI scheme means that, if Poppy’s grows successfully and at some point sells, team members receive a share of that success in monetary terms. No one works at Poppy’s primarily for monetary gain, but the EMI scheme is an important way in which we acknowledge the commitment of the team.”

Our team



What we said we'd do

- Create a culture of open, in-the-moment feedback, and conduct team surveys as a formal structure for input.
- Introduce a team volunteering scheme.
- Pay our team above the London Living Wage.
- Support the team with an Employee Assistance Programme.
- Provide comprehensive new starter training, tailored to each role.
- Ensure a suite of company policies and health and safety procedures are in place.

What we did

- Held quarterly feedback surveys, sharing the results with the team for discussion and action. As a result of these feedback sessions, we have:
 - increased training on welfare and support;
 - introduced a buddy scheme for new starters.
- Introduced a volunteering scheme that enables team members to take up to eight hours paid time to volunteer at a charity of their choice. 40% of the team have used their available time this year.
- Paid everyone on the team above the London Living Wage, including our flexible part-time workers.
- Introduced a new Employee Assistance Programme, plus a medical cashback plan that also offers gym discounts and access to wider wellbeing activities.
- Formalised our pattern of team time together through an annual culture day, a Christmas celebration, and an end of the financial year celebration, interspersed with more casual opportunities for the team to get together, including a crafting session, a pumpkin-carving evening, and a pub quiz.
- Formalised our new starter induction process, with a core programme for all team members, tailored to their individual role.
- Conducted an annual review of our policies to ensure that our suite is comprehensive, and accessible to all. This included making our policies gender-neutral where relevant and introducing new policies to cover Induction and Probation, and the Appropriate Handling of Client Ashes.
- Enhanced our second parent leave policy.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Volunteering

Our content editor, Sarah, tells us about the volunteering she does in her time given by Poppy’s:

“I work part-time as Poppy’s content editor, interviewing people and writing blogs and stories for our website and social media channels. Outside of Poppy’s, I write children’s books, and have an interest in literacy development, reading for pleasure and the role that libraries play in local communities.

I chose to use my volunteering time from Poppy’s towards the regular volunteering I do at my local library, which is entirely volunteer-staffed due to council cuts. I help out with all the

usual library tasks, from shelving to answering visitor queries. I’ve most enjoyed leading ‘baby rhyme time’ sessions for pre-school children and their carers (noisy but always fun), as well as assisting with the annual summer reading challenge for primary school children, listening to them talk about the books they’ve enjoyed.

My volunteering is a refreshing contrast to my Poppy’s work, but it’s still about connecting with people, their lives and their stories. Through volunteering, I get to step away from my desk, meet and connect with people in my local area and be part of a team that enables a service that I care about to stay open.”



Community



What we said we'd do

- Run community events to help people in our local area know what great death care looks like.
- Measure diversity in our team.
- Contribute to the economic development of our local area through business growth.
- Recruit from within our local community where possible.
- Build long-term relationships with UK-based suppliers.

What we did

- Gave 23 talks to a variety of groups and audiences, reaching over one thousand people, on topics ranging from post-death admin to funeral myth-busting. For some, such as hospice and home-care workers, this was for professional development. For others, it was a desire to understand their options as they approach later life.
- Held two mortuary open days, welcoming people into our space to better understand how we deliver natural care after death.
- Hosted six death cafes in Tooting and Sheen, as part of a global movement to create places where people can discuss anything to do with death, with no particular agenda.
- Conducted our first diversity survey of our team to enable us to benchmark as we grow. We want to ensure our team is inclusive, equitable and reflects the community we work within. Understanding where we are now is the first step on this journey.
- Opened our first shop, bringing Poppy's to the local community of East Sheen.
- Created 10 new roles, and of those recruited to join our team, 50% live within five miles of our premises.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Opening up our mortuary

We believe the funeral sector should embrace openness and transparency in its spaces and practices.

While setting up our mortuary, we made the conscious decision to create a welcoming space for clients to visit. Not only is there a private Friends and Family Room, but the mortuary itself is also open for them to see if they choose. There are coffins, fridges and trolleys, just as there are in other mortuaries, but it's also open and filled with light. Members of our team are on hand to walk people through what they can expect.

At our regular Mortuary Open Days, we welcome our community into our spaces to talk through our practices and our approach to natural care and take questions. 68 people attended our open day events in 2024. No question is off limits so people can ask things they may never have dared or had the opportunity to ask before. For some approaching their own death, this can be a powerful way to reduce their fear about what will happen to them after they have died. For others, it answers a natural curiosity about a process that will happen to us all.

Feedback from Mortuary Open Days

Engaging, fascinating, full of warmth and compassion. Rarely have I seen such an engaged team with such belief in their values.

Very informative. It was clear that everyone who was involved was very committed to trying to change the ethos and practice of death care within the funeral industry. And to debunk a lot of the fears and myths around caring for the dead.

It was lovely to listen and learn; the Poppy's team gave thoughtful and helpful responses to everyone's questions and encouraged people to ask whatever they needed to ask.

Clients



What we said we'd do

- Create an ongoing feedback loop so that we can learn from our clients' experience of Poppy's.
- Implement an ethical marketing policy.
- Capture client outcomes, based on their experience with Poppy's.



What we did

- We introduced an ethical marketing policy to hold ourselves to high standards from the first point that clients come into contact with the Poppy's brand. This includes:
 - speaking in plain English and avoiding jargon;
 - avoiding discriminatory language and imagery;
 - assessing new marketing channels for any risk to our brand, clients or the environment;
 - using B Corp or similarly accredited partners where possible for our marketing activity.
- We now discuss constructive feedback in our weekly operations team meeting and made real-time improvements in our services.
- We have put in place clear routes to capture our experience our clients have with us:
 - an anonymous feedback survey which asks how we can improve our service;
 - capturing Google reviews and transparently sharing them on our website;
 - assessing ad hoc, in-the-moment feedback from clients to our front-line team;
 - conducting in-depth one-to-one interviews with clients to explore themes identified in our survey, their individual experiences of our service and the outcomes from that experience.
- Broader themes from client feedback were incorporated in a large piece of service re-design conducted during the year to improve the way we work in order to create better client experiences.

Client feedback in numbers

80%

of clients said the funeral they planned with Poppy's had played an important part in their grieving process.

91%

of clients told us that our team had made planning a funeral a far less challenging experience than they thought it would be.

95%

of clients who visited their person in our care said it was a positive experience.

97%

of clients told us that the support they received from Poppy's was excellent.

(From 170 client responses)

The flexibility and way I was able to plan the day exactly my way was integral to my grieving and being able to give my dad a good send off.

Poppy's made the grieving process easier because they treated me like a real person, as an equal. There was no unnecessary nonsense. I felt like I was dealing with a supportive friend rather than an old-fashioned undertaker.

We really trusted Poppy's — your humanity, kindness and respect.

We were able to take everything at our own pace. We felt in control of everything.

[Poppy's] reduced stress levels. We didn't know where to go, Angie guided us through everything.

SPOTLIGHT ON CLIENTS:

Client feedback in their own words

Poppy's let us personalise Mum's funeral, so it was really meaningful to us.

Poppy's 'spoke my language' and shared my values.

You made it easier.

Taking us to see the mortuary gave me comfort. The room was light, not morbid. I expected it to be morbid but wasn't scared when I saw it. It made me feel good.

Your team made us feel safe. We knew it would be good and smooth.

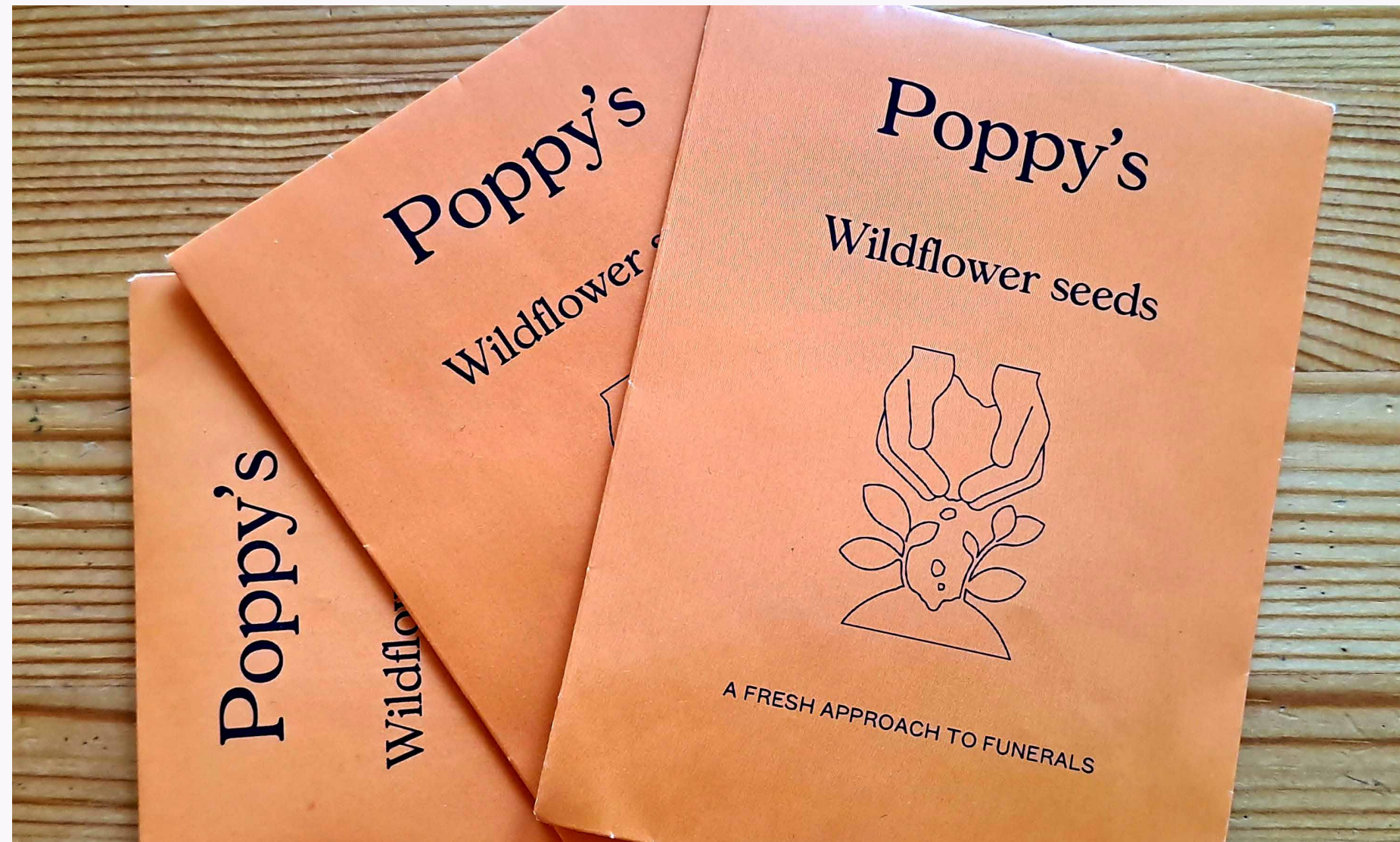
Poppy's made the whole process more healing than traumatic. And [I] really appreciate the help in trying to find a Hindu priest from our part of India — that was really impressive.



Environment

What we said we'd do

- Prioritise green and ethical companies for our office suppliers.
- Benchmark our Scope 1 emissions (the direct emissions we emit through our work).
- Use renewable electricity sources.
- Harvest rainwater to clean our vehicles.
- Enable clients to make greener funeral choices.



What we did

- Reviewed our funeral products supplier list to understand the environmental impact of each product we offer.
- Secured new suppliers who focus on greener practices, including a local florist who only uses in-season locally grown flowers and foliage, including foraged materials; and a jeweller who specialises in ethical silver.
- Supported clients to make greener funeral choices by prioritising greener products within our available product range and clearly highlighting greener choices in our catalogue. We saw an increase year-on-year from 59% to 66% of products from our 'greener' range being chosen by clients and a 24% increase in clients choosing locally grown, plastic-free flower arrangements.
- Helped clients and people researching funerals to understand the impact of funeral choices on the environment through our content with articles covering "How to plan an eco-friendly funeral"; and "Five things you might not know about having a greener funeral".
- Moved our buildings' energy supply to 100% renewable electricity.
- Benchmarked our waste production and tracked all our vehicle usage.
- Reduced our amount of landfill as a proportion of total waste, year-on-year, from 22% to 15%.
- Installed a huge water butt to harvest rainwater for washing vehicles.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Greener vehicles

The last journey of the person who has died, from our mortuary space to the chapel, burial site or crematorium can be a hugely important part of the process for some of our clients.

As with all our service options, we offer a range of vehicle choices. Our Ford Galaxy looks like a family people carrier and is a relaxed low-cost option. Our Viano is in Poppy's pink and provides a modern take on a hearse. Our black hearse remains a popular choice for clients who want something more traditional. We also

hire vehicles to match the style of funeral and highlight greener choices through our product list. We've had bicycles, motorbikes and buses, which all have a lower carbon footprint than a traditional hearse journey.

Whichever vehicle clients choose, it's essential they are shiny and smart. Every vehicle is washed on the day of the funeral, so we've installed a 130-litre water butt storing rainwater for us to use. We estimate that we've saved over 8,680 litres of fresh water this year.

Becoming a certified B Corp was an important milestone for Poppy's. It formally recognises the social and environmental stance that was at the heart of the business from its foundation. Our journey continues as we implement further change.



Focus for 2025

- To develop our Net Zero plan by fully benchmarking our current footprint and developing a realistic plan to reduce and offset our emissions.
- To conduct a justice, equity, diversity and inclusion audit across our internal operations, our work with clients, and how we work with suppliers, and develop a strategy to improve our performance in all these areas.
- To review our supplier processes and relationships to increase our influence on their social and environmental impact.

Our work on these three goals will have impacts across the B Corp assessment areas and will provide Poppy's with a clear framework for continuing our B Corp journey. We're ambitious and excited about where we're going.





A Fresh Approach To Funerals

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