



IMPACT UPDATE

2024

CARBON • NATURE • PEOPLE

▲▲▲ **INTRODUCTION**
PAGE 3

▲▲▲ **PURPOSE & GOALS**
PAGE 4

▲▲▲ **IMPACT STRATEGY**
PAGE 5

▲▲▲ **OUR ACTION POINTS**
PAGE 6 TO 16

▲▲▲ **MEASUREMENT & RESULTS**
PAGES 17 TO 18

▲▲▲ **VOLUNTEERING**
PAGE 19



It's been a busy year since our 2023 milestone impact report, *Tipping the Scales* – and I'm pleased to present this progress update.

Work on our goals has been an inspiring process, partly because it's been a company-wide effort.

Following [Tipping the Scales](#), we identified 16 key carbon, nature and inclusivity goals. Our team members then each volunteered to oversee and develop one or two of these. But customers can also get in on the action. How? Because most of these goals also sit on our website as holiday 'collections' – labelled, searchable types of trip (from '[rewilding](#)' to '[renewable energy where you stay](#)') that travellers can choose to book – and therefore contribute to.

Working with a vast global supply chain presents challenges and opportunities. We're seeing some successes and have identified some major stumbling blocks. We share both in the coming pages; for transparency and because they're important in helping us learn and progress.

We see opportunities for Responsible Travel to support a fairer transition to a nature positive, low carbon future – through tourism that generates conservation funding, jobs and income for the least advantaged communities. We have almost 6,000 trips, and many are run in places of immense significance for

biodiversity and carbon sequestration – from Scotland's Cairngorms to the Amazon Rainforest. Many of these places are safeguarded by Indigenous Peoples, and we're working to better understand their crucial stewardship role and needs. More about that on page 10.

But we face great challenges in reducing carbon.

We've long advised travellers to [fly less](#) – and instead to stay longer in their destination and keep short breaks flight-free. But only global [system change](#) on aviation can get us close to our carbon goals. We'll continue advocating for this. In addition, we're working with our supply chain to help reduce emissions in other areas, including by increasing renewably powered accommodation and plant-based food options. Earlier this year we also left Barclays bank – which invested \$16 billion into fossil fuels in 2022 alone – joining Unity Trust Bank for its ethical investment portfolio.

Until commercial aviation is decarbonized, our progress on carbon reduction can only be limited. It isn't an easy journey. But we will continue working hard to meet our goals, learning and improving as we do.



Justin Francis

Justin Francis

Responsible Travel Co-founder and Chair



OUR PURPOSE

To inspire travellers to discover our beautiful and fragile planet; act urgently to restore nature and reduce carbon; whilst being honest about our limitations and need to be more inclusive

OUR GOALS

CARBON

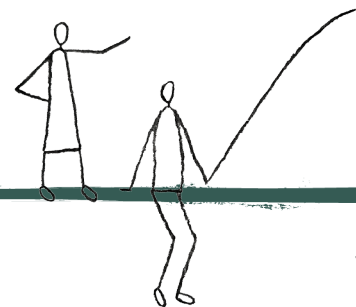
We will deliver a measurable 50 percent reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030 versus a 2023 baseline. We will contribute to a 50 percent scope 3 emissions reduction by 2030

NATURE

We aim to contribute to a nature positive world by 2030

PEOPLE

We want all of our business, and especially our nature and climate work, to be just and inclusive.



We aim to achieve our goals through four key areas of work...



SCREENING

We screen each potential partner and holiday to ensure they align with our criteria, policies and purpose. You can view our [criteria here](#). Information on how a trip has met our criteria is published on its holiday page. We then request customer feedback on the impacts of the trip as part of their [review](#), which we also publish in full on the holiday page.

SUPPLY CHAIN WORK

Our supply chain is vast, comprising almost 6,000 partner-run trips and more than 10,000 accommodation sites globally. This presents both challenges and opportunities in delivering change. Working with our partners, we advise on and encourage specific actions – some detailed on the following pages – to help reduce carbon, protect and restore nature, and improve inclusivity within the supply chain.

EDUCATION & ADVICE

Through our [travel guides](#), customer communications, [values hub](#), short films, trip collections and global media work, we aim to advise travellers on how they can reduce negative carbon, nature and community impacts on holiday, and maximise their positive impacts.

SYSTEM CHANGE

We devote time and resources into creating policy advice and pressing for positive system change around carbon reduction, biodiversity and nature goals in tourism.



Following the publication of our 2023 Impact Report, we identified 16 key action and development points around carbon, nature and people to work on alongside our existing campaign and advisory work.

Two of these areas – ‘content promoting diversity’ and [‘Trip for a Trip’](#) – are ongoing initiatives, detailed in the coming pages.

The remaining 14 actions sit on our website as holiday ‘collections’ – labelled, bookable types of trip, from ‘rewilding’ to ‘community-based tourism.’ It means that, while we work on these actions and track progress, they are also visible to our customers – who can book them and, in doing so, contribute to their progress.

The actions are listed here. It goes without saying that these goals are intertwined.



Our work to deliver our carbon, nature and people goals focuses on:

- Renewable energy where you stay **C**
- Electric self-drive holidays **C**
- Carbon labelled holidays **C**
- Rail holidays **C**
- Flight-free trips from the UK **C**
- Indigenous Peoples **P N C**
- Vegan and vegetarian holidays **C N**
- No single use plastic holidays **C N**
- Rewilding holidays **N P**
- Wildlife and habitat conservation holidays **N P**
- Holidays run by women entrepreneurs **P**
- Accessible holidays **P**
- Content promoting diversity **P**
- LGBTQI+ holidays **P**
- Community-based tourism **P**
- Trip for a Trip **P**

C = Carbon; **N** = Nature; **P** = People

OUR ACTION POINTS

Renewable energy where you stay



Goal: Customers can search for [renewables-powered stays](#); we can measure and encourage progress.

2024: Newly created holiday collection in 2024, in progress and includes 502 holidays to date

Background: Customers can now search for holidays that include accommodation using renewable energy for part or all of a trip. This main collection isn't '100 percent renewables powered' because that is difficult to guarantee: many will include a back-up generator or similar. And for larger partners using multiple accommodation, sourcing this information can prove challenging and will take time. We've subdivided the collection into four areas, these appear in the [left-hand](#) menu: 'Country runs on renewable energy,' 'Accommodation produces renewable energy,' 'Accommodation is supplied with 100 percent renewable energy,' and 'Part renewable.' To feature in the 'Part renewable' collection, holidays must use renewables-powered accommodation for at least 20 percent of the trip. Off-grid, 100 percent renewables-powered accommodation will feature in the 'produces renewable energy' collection.

Electric self-drive holidays



Goal: To increase our number of [electric self-drive](#) holidays.

2023 baseline: Two holidays

2024 result: Two holidays

Background: Research among our global partners shows a desire to introduce these trips, but infrastructure remains a barrier. We're looking at ways we can help partners address this, including by identifying EV car hire companies and networks to source charge points. In some destinations, fossil fuels are used to create electrical energy, which we are also researching.



WHEATLAND FARM

A member of Responsible Travel since 2006, Wheatland Farm offers renewably-powered accommodation on a 21 acre farm turned nature reserve.

Image: © Wheatland Farm

Carbon labelled holidays



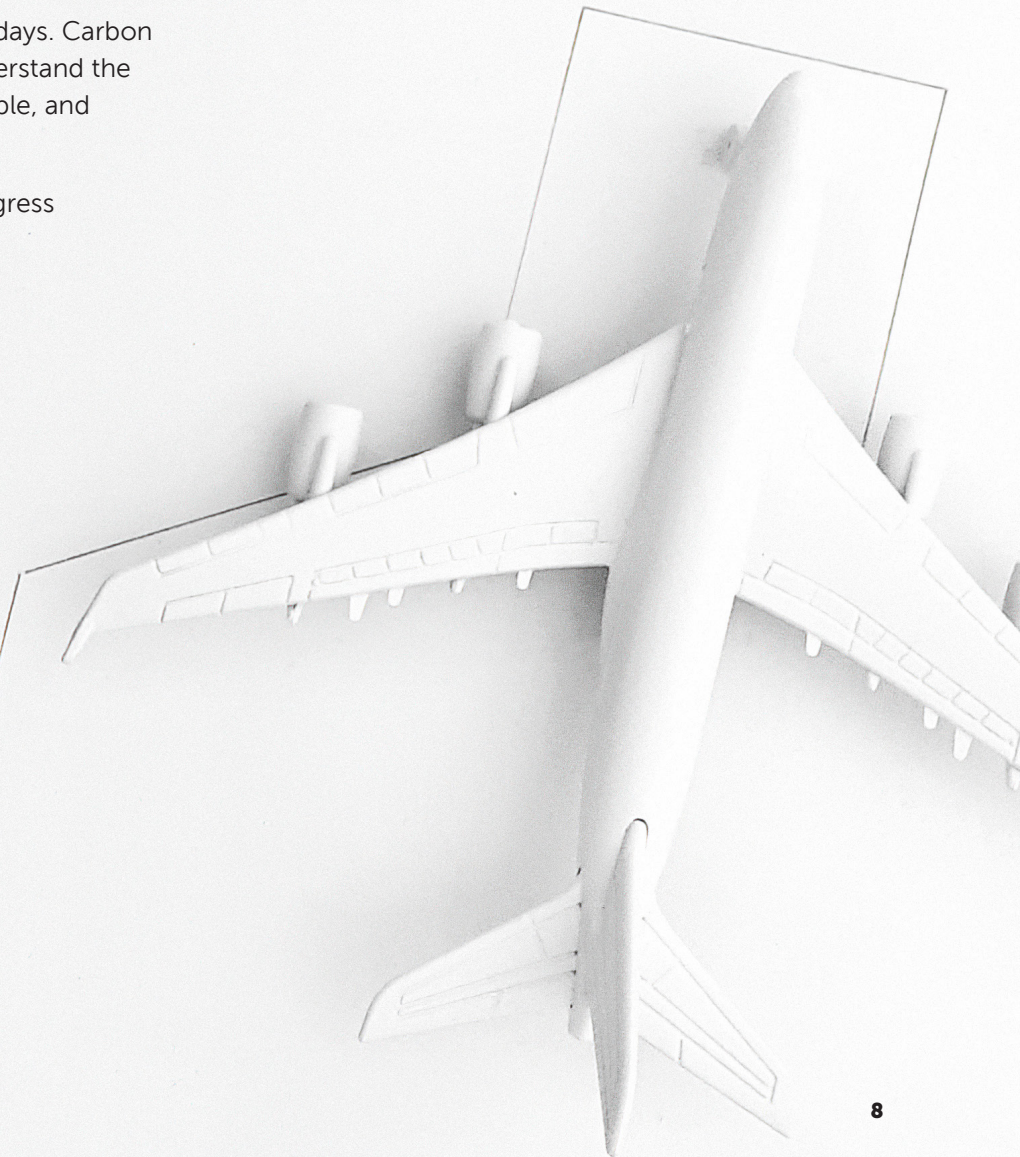
Transparency matters. We need to be honest with travellers about the impact of their holidays. Carbon labels aren't perfect, they're an approximate tool. But they can help customers better understand the impacts of their holiday and make informed choices. They can also help us stay accountable, and encourage travel operators to reduce carbon emissions across their products.

Goal: To expand our number of [carbon-labelled trips](#), capture the data and measure progress on carbon reduction.

2023 baseline: 350 carbon labelled holidays

2024 result: 886 carbon labelled holidays

Background: In 2020, our small but groundbreaking [study](#) measured the CO₂ emissions of a selection of holidays. The detailed methodology was impossible to scale up across our operators, but the findings highlighted the importance of, and [led us to call for](#), carbon labelling in tourism. By 2023, our partner Explore Worldwide gave us permission to share their carbon measurement methodology with our network of 479 members. Thanks to them, and additional partners who have followed suit, so far 15 percent of our approximately 6,000 trips are now carbon labelled. We plan to continue growing the number.





Rail holidays



Goal: To grow our global [rail offering](#).

2023 baseline: 62 holidays

2024 update: 89 holidays

Background: Rail holidays explore a destination primarily (but not always exclusively) by rail. Despite the fact that our operators have all ceased selling Transiberian and Transmongolian Express holidays because they pass through Russia, we have seen a 32 percent increase in product on the site. Rail remains a fantastic way to holiday and in some destinations high speed rail is closing the gap on internal flights, making rail travel even more appealing.

Flight-free trips from the UK



Goal: To maintain our [flight-free](#) holidays collection.

2023 baseline: 122 overseas holidays from the UK

2024 result: 118 overseas holidays from the UK

Background: We want to increase our flight-free offering. To do so would require the ability to book train travel in France more than three months ahead, as well as a change in EU package travel regulations, which currently mean a tour operator is responsible for delays to a customer's journey and associated overnight costs. When booking a flight package, the airline pays, yet when booking a train package the tour operator pays.

Indigenous Peoples



Indigenous Peoples comprise approximately six percent of the global population and safeguard a great deal of the world's cultural and biological diversity. They also make up at least 15 percent of the world's poorest people. Working with Indigenous Peoples to maximise the local economic benefits of responsible tourism and ensure they're part of any decision-making and tourism development is crucial.

Goal: To expand the number of our trips that partner with and benefit

[Indigenous Peoples.](#)

2023 baseline: 58 holidays

2024 result: 187 holidays

Background: In 2024, we undertook an eight-week review of our Indigenous Peoples holidays. We worked to better understand, through research and interviews, the impacts and benefits of tourism within these communities. We also audited our site to capture a more complete picture of trips that were working with and benefiting Indigenous Peoples. For every holiday in this section, the benefits of tourism to each community will now be clearly labelled on that holiday page. We also have a new travel guide planned.



"The community feel a part of it and they feel the benefits from it. In addition, we're still keeping our culture and our livelihoods and our lifestyle."

– Steve Rokoi Olkumum, Maasai guide with our partner, Saruni Basecamp.

SARUNI BASECAMP

On safari holidays with Saruni Basecamp you stay on land leased from hundreds of Masaai landowners for tourism purposes. The lease fees provide a sustainable income in harmony with wildlife as well as funding education and training facilities. In addition, 86 percent of the staff, including many senior managers, are from local Maasai communities. The tourism partnership has rejuvenated, and now conserves a vital migration corridor between the Masai Mara National Park and the Loita Plains used by several hundred thousand animals.

Vegan and vegetarian holidays



Goal: To continue expanding our collection of holidays offering [vegan and vegetarian](#) food.

2023 baseline: 1,570 holidays (up from 114 in 2021)

2024 result: 1,856

Background: Reducing meat and dairy in favour of more plant-based, organic, local and seasonal food is better for [climate and nature](#). This holiday collection allows customers to book based on diet, with the knowledge that it will also help reduce their [holiday carbon emissions](#).

No single use plastic holidays



Goal: To raise awareness among travellers on how to cut [single use plastic](#), and to work with partners to encourage progress on plastic reduction.

2023 baseline: 60 holidays

2024 result: 47 holidays

Background: Zero single-use plastic remains a [significant challenge](#) in many destinations, with progress further hampered by the pandemic. As well as [informing travellers](#) on how to reduce plastic, we're engaging with partners to ensure the issue remains prominent and identify good and replicable initiatives to cut plastic use.





SCOTLAND: THE BIG PICTURE

A member of Responsible Travel since 2023, holidays with this charitable company explore and support local projects that are helping restore nature in the Cairngorms.

Rewilding holidays



Goal: To expand our [rewilding holidays](#) collection.

2023 baseline: 11 holidays

2024 result: 17 holidays

Background: Work on this was paused to review our collection definition. Under our new criteria, hands-on rewilding activity for guests is not a requirement of these holidays, but each trip will educate and inform guests about nature conservation – and help financially support efforts to restore important habitats and ecosystems.

Wildlife and habitat conservation holidays



Goal: To expand our offering and inform travellers about what different types of [wildlife conservation](#) volunteer holidays involve.

2023 baseline: 65 conservation volunteering holidays

2024 result: 78 conservation volunteering holidays

Background: The volunteering sector in general continues to struggle commercially, partly due to younger customers impacted by high student fees and the cost-of-living crisis. But interest remains high, and our aim is to expand the collection. We continue to inform travellers about the importance of responsible wildlife and nature tourism to global conservation efforts through our travel guides and media work.

Holidays run by women entrepreneurs



Goal: To continue reviewing, populating, and promoting our [women entrepreneurs holiday collection](#).

2023 baseline: 80 (under previous definition – see below)

2024 result: 865

Background: Previously, this collection comprised ‘women-owned, locally-run’ trips – a subsection of our much larger locally-run trips collection. Following discussions, we decided to change the definition to include all our female entrepreneurs – as the spirit of this collection celebrates female empowerment, not locally-run trips. So trips in this section are all from partner companies that are founded and run by women. We relaunched it under the new definition as a standalone collection, alongside our expanded women entrepreneurs travel guide.

Travel guide: women entrepreneurs in tourism

The majority of people working in tourism are women - but the higher up the corporate ladder you go, the fewer there are. At Responsible Travel, we're proud to partner with women who have founded and run holiday companies around the world. Some operate in partnership with others, many are standing alone, and many have faced challenges in setting up and running their businesses. Our [guide to women entrepreneurs in tourism](#) explores why there are so few female leaders in the sector, and the social and cultural challenges they encounter. We also hear the stories and successes of some of our inspiring entrepreneurs - and how they're using their skills and influence to improve the prospects for other women.





Accessible holidays



Goal: To expand our collection of fully screened and labelled [accessible](#) trips.

2023 baseline: 99

2024 result: 105

Background: We want great adventures to be [accessible to all travellers](#), and we continue to work with our partners, including specialist operators, to expand and improve our accessible holiday collection. Discussions on accessibility now also form part of every training meeting with our partners.

Content promoting diversity



Being a travel company, we rely heavily on visual media. But while we're currently unable to commission our own imagery, we are working hard to source images that reflect the diversity of our partners and travellers, including with our partners. Finding enough of this content does remain a challenge, however. We hope that as demand for diversity in travel imagery grows, services will improve. We remain committed to doing all we can to continue to improve representation on our site, and welcome thoughts and ideas on this.

LGBTQI+ holidays



Goal: To expand our offering of [LGBTQI+ holidays](#).

2023 baseline: Two holidays (under new definition)

2024 result: Four holidays

Background: All the holidays on our site welcome LGBTQI+ travellers. Previously, our LGBTQI+ collection simply reflected this – comprising hundreds of holidays from partners who specifically requested their trips be included in this collection. In 2023 we conducted a review and, following a feedback process from staff and partners, we redefined this section. Our LGBTQI+ trips are now specifically designed with LGBTQI+ travellers in mind: small group tours or cruises that are for members of the community or tailor-made itineraries that include a focus on LGBTQI+ topics or spaces.

Community-based tourism



Goal: To expand our [community-based](#) holidays collection.

2023 baseline: 35 holidays

2024 result: 55 holidays

Background: Holidays in this collection will include a visit to a community-based tourism initiative. This could be an accommodation option, an experience, or tour – but it must be owned and run by a community for the financial benefit of the wider community. As such, these holidays are separate from our homestays, which benefit a single family.



Trip for a Trip



For so many people, nature, culture and other attractions on their doorstep remain inaccessible. With our Trip for a Trip initiative, for every holiday booked with us, we offer to fund a great local day out for a child from a disadvantaged background on behalf of our customer. It's a small way in which we try to address the inequalities of opportunity in travel.

Goal: To fund more days out for children, working with existing and new partners in the UK and globally.

By 2023: 5,500 children in 14 countries had benefited since the initiative launched in 2016. By the end of 2024, we expect that number to rise to approximately 6,800.

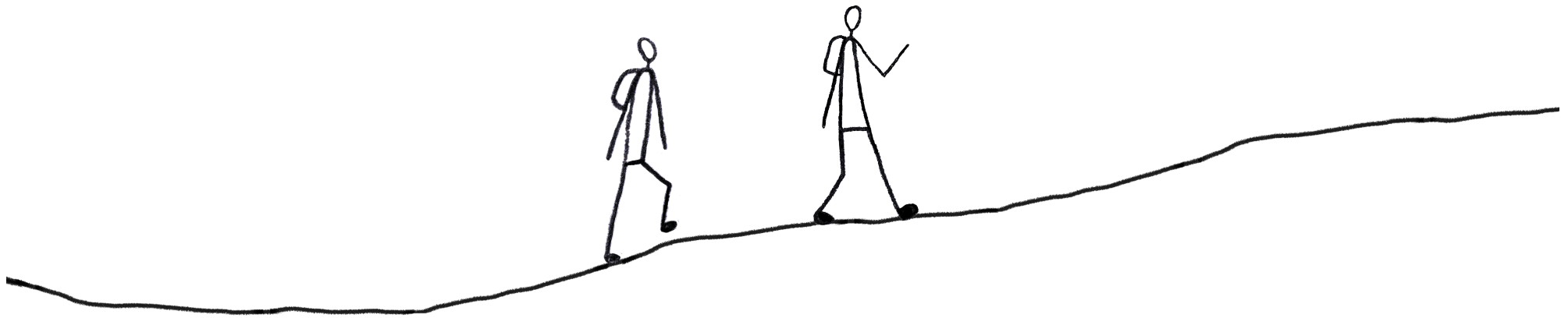
In 2024 to date: 826 children have been away so far this year, with trips for another 500 children planned.

Background: In the first half of 2024, children from Romania, Eswatini, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Laos and India enjoyed days out. Our partners in Eswatini, All Out Africa, have taken 310 children to Mlilwane nature reserve and in October, 120 north London children will get back to nature in Kent on outings with our charity partner, The Garden Classroom.

"You do not realise what you are doing for the children when you take them out on these trips. They talk about it all year."

– Member of staff at the Hupenyu Hutsva Children's Home in Harare, Zimbabwe, after a visit to Mukuvisi Woodlands Nature Reserve and Environmental Education Centre





Carbon

We're now able to measure approximate [scope 1 and 2 destination impacts](#) for selected trips. We share these with customers through holiday carbon labels. We can also use this information to help track changes and report on progress towards our carbon reduction goals.

You'll find our first data, comparing 2023 to 2024, on page 18.

We'll continue working hard to cut scope 3 – aviation – emissions. However, we can't measure these impacts. Our customers – from all over the world – book their own flights and transport, and we don't know the origin or duration of flights or if one was taken.

Nature

We are working to contribute to a nature positive world through our impact strategy and key action areas. The Science-Based Targets for Nature and Task Force for Nature Related Financial Disclosures are detailed tools for setting and reporting on goals for nature. They're not designed for small businesses and are realistically far too onerous for most of those in our supply chain. However, once the specific tourism sector tools are published, we will consider if it's possible to produce a simplified version to enable our partners to measure and improve their impacts.

What we measured

In July 2024 we have 885 trips with carbon labels versus 350 in 2023. We calculated the following for those 885 trips:

- Ground CO₂ emissions, for all carbon labelled holidays, excluding transport to and from the destination

We then calculated the number of passengers booking those labelled trips. CO₂ emissions are calculated by trip based on passenger numbers and emissions per passenger. This enables us to track and analyse how passenger behaviour is (or isn't) changing.

Results

	CO ₂ per day per passenger (kg)
2023 (Jan- July)	36.5
2024 (Jan - July)	35.4
Change	-3.2%

Summary

Passengers who have booked carbon labelled trips in 2024 have booked slightly lower carbon emissions trips than in 2023. There could be a variety of reasons for this, including markets and pricing, and it's not possible to attribute it to the labelling. An additional factor has been lower overall passenger numbers vs 2023 (when we saw a post COVID bounce in bookings).



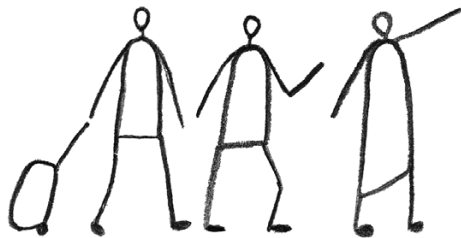
VOLUNTEERING

We can all do something to help cut carbon, and support nature and communities. Twice a year our team volunteers for a day on local nature based initiatives, while all staff are given half a day every month to contribute to volunteering projects of their choice.





**WE LOOK FORWARD
TO SEEING YOU
OUT ON THE ROAD**



**AAA RESPONSIBLE
TRAVEL**

Pioneering responsible travel since 2001

www.responsibletravel.com