


— COOK —

PURPOSE PROGRESS REPORT

2025



A group of diverse people are seated at a long wooden table outdoors, enjoying a meal. The table is set with plates of food, glasses of green juice, and a centerpiece of yellow flowers. The background is a blurred green lawn. Overlaid on the image is a quote in a serif font, with the words 'more', 'longer', and 'not' underlined in yellow.

“When you have
more than enough,
build longer tables,
not higher walls”

José Andrés

Welcome to the **PURPOSE** PROGRESS REPORT 2025

Welcome to the **COOK Purpose Progress Report 2025**, our annual round-up of how we're doing in our mission to 'nourish people and planet'. It's a broad remit, but as a food business so many of **the world's most pressing problems** end up on our plates: climate change, soil degradation, animal welfare, food waste, wage inequality, social isolation and many others.

Whenever we're faced with a difficult choice, we weigh it up and endeavour to make the right decision for **people and the planet**, not just our business. We hope this little report gives you a glimpse of what that looks like in practice.

**THANKS
FOR READING**

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THIS WAY
TO GOOD
THINGS



“WE CANNOT
DIRECT THE
WIND BUT WE
CAN ADJUST
THE SAILS”
DOLLY PARTON

DOLLY PARTON ...

... doesn't feature in nearly enough annual reports. This is regrettable as she is a wise woman. Her insights are also rather more accessible than those of the typical annual report compiler, who tends to love nothing more than rolling around in the nuances of balance sheet adjustments. Rest assured, there's more Dolly to come.

We're writing in May 2025 and the winds of uncertainty are gusting. Trump is changing his mind on a daily basis about the rules of global trade; a new raft of business taxes have kicked in; people are nervous about spending, understandably; and conflicts rage on overseas. All one can do is summon one's inner Dolly and adjust those sails.

We look back on our 2024/25 financial year with a sense of satisfaction. We've delivered another year of sales and profit growth, always with our driving purpose - **To Nourish People & Planet** - front of mind. As always, heartfelt thanks to our teams, customers and partners for making it possible. COOK is a business **built on community**.

£131.6m
Net Sales

£9.7m
Profit (EBITDA)

+10%
Growth in
net sales

THERE WERE TWO STANDOUT COMMERCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 The performance of our New Space teams. Not only have we added eight new shops and over 170 new concessions, but the trading performance of the newly-opened sites has been excellent. There remain many areas where COOK doesn't have a decent presence and we see this growth continuing.
- 2 The dramatic improvement in our kitchen performance. We've increased our manufacturing capacity significantly in the last five years to keep pace with growth. Unfortunately, cooking efficiently in new sites is never easy. Last year, we turned a corner, thanks to strong management and stable teams. We can have the best kit in the world but success always comes down to people – true in any line of business.

The greatest impact we can have as a business is on the people who work with us. Over the last three years, we have absorbed a 26% increase in the real Living Wage and are proud to have done so. Our RAW Talent scheme, breaking down barriers to employment, celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and remains a pioneering example of how business can have genuine social impact. More than 5% of our team have come through RAW.

Our Community Kitchen has now provided more than 450,000 free COOK meals to people in need since 2020. We are investing millions in new refrigeration kit to further improve our environmental performance. All of this costs real money, with

a return that's impossible to measure in monetary terms. But, turning to Dolly: **“You can be rich in spirit, kindness, love and all those things you can't put a dollar sign on.”** And therein lies true wealth.

Underlying all of this is our B Corp certification. This year, we've certified for the fifth time since becoming one of the very first UK B Corps in 2013. It remains the best, most useful and demanding framework for promoting business as a force for good. Above all, it's a beautiful and energising community to be part of. And, as Dolly points out: **“Energy begets energy.”**

COOK is now in its 28th year. Mature by business standards but otherwise young and full of vim and ambition. We know what makes us tick, why we're doing what we do and are clear on the challenges ahead. Needless to say, Dolly puts it best: **“Find out who you are and then do it on purpose.”** Amen to that.

Ed & Lorie
CEOs (AND BROTHER & SISTER)

COOK NOURISH PEOPLE & PLANET

ACTION PLAN

AFTER 3 YEARS OF HARD WORK...

Back in 2022 we set ourselves **12 ambitious targets** to chart the progress of our purpose and to challenge and inspire us to do better. The end of the last financial year, 5th April 2025, marked the conclusion of this three-year Action Plan.

So, how did we do?

“The role of business is to create profitable solutions for the problems of people and planet, while not profiting from creating problems for either.”

Professor Colin Mayer CBE

**OUR VISION: VIBRANT,
INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES
WHERE WE CAN ALL
ACHIEVE OUR POTENTIAL,
AND CARING AND
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES
WHEREVER WE OPERATE.**



Our goal: By 2025 our RAW TALENT scheme will be providing even more of our team, with 60% of RAW Talents **still in work** after 12 months (whether at COOK or elsewhere).

Target met. When we launched the Action Plan, 3.6% of our team were RAW Talents. After stepping up our hiring and improving retention, it's now **5.2%**. Currently **61%** of RAW Talents are still in work after a year. RAW Talent remains an important, ongoing commitment. Find out more on p.14.



Our goal: By 2025 a further **1.5 million** free school meals will have been provided in Malawi through our partnership with One Feeds Two.

Target met. We've donated **1.8 million meals**, the equivalent of around 2,300 meals every school day over the last three years. We're close to hitting 5 million since we became One Feeds Two's first national partner in 2014. Get the full story on p.17.

1.8 Million
Meals donated since 2022





Our goal: By 2025 we will have provided 400,000 free meals to help connect people in our communities through our **Community Kitchen Partners**, FoodCycle lunches and meals **created from our leftovers**.

Target met. In the last three years we've provided **447,419 meals** – that's **408 meals** every day – feeding care and connectivity in our communities. It was thanks to working with our Community Kitchen Partners (see p.19); organisations dealing with food surplus (p.27); and those supporting people who are homeless or insecurely housed.

447,419
Meals provided since 2022



Our goal: We will be working with our concessions partners to enable care and connection in their local communities.

Work in progress. With all we've learnt in the last three years, this goal wasn't quite right. While we're not actively working with our partners – the independent shops that stock our food – our Concessions team have joined with our Community Kitchen to get meals to people in need. A great result, even if it's not what we envisaged originally. Get the story on p.44.



Our goal: By 2025 we will be a demonstrably more inclusive workplace, with more female leaders and greater ethnic diversity.

Work in progress. COOK is now an accredited Includability Committed Employer and we've successfully launched menopause and neurodiversity Affinity Groups. We still need to work on our ethnic diversity and the number of female leaders remains similar to three years ago (44%). An encouraging sign is that **56.5%** of those completing our internal Leadership Academies were female. Watch this space.

66
People attending affinity groups



Our goal: By 2025 our team will be sharing a higher percentage of our profits, we will remain a certified Living Wage employer, with the salary gap between the highest and lowest paid being **no more than 15x**.

Target met. Profit share has increased from **5%** to **6%**, with further increases planned, and more of the team are getting it (it's paid to all those who were working with us for the entirety of the preceding financial year). We remain certified by the Living Wage Foundation and our salary gap between highest and lowest paid has fallen to **under 10x**.



**OUR VISION: FOOD
GROWN, MADE AND
ENJOYED WITHOUT
COSTING THE EARTH.**



Our goal: By 2025 our carbon footprint will be **29% lower** (from a 2018 baseline) on our way to net zero by 2030.

Target missed. Our direct carbon emissions are up **43%** since 2018, so we've missed by some distance. The context is that, since setting this target, COOK has roughly doubled in size. Our carbon intensity (measured against sales) is therefore down **29%**. Reducing our overall carbon emissions while growing our business remains a huge challenge but one we're not shirking ... Grab a spade and dig into the details on p.28.



Our goal: By 2025 our leftover ingredients will have been used to make **100,000 free meals** for our communities, helping us halve the end-of-line food waste at our kitchens.



**FELIX
PROJECT**

Work in progress. It's a game of two halves as we've comfortably surpassed the 100,000 mark, redistributing **159,978 meal equivalents** from our leftover ingredients. On the flip side, we haven't halved our food surplus. Our ultimate goal is that our end-of-line food waste is less than 1% of the ingredients that enter our kitchens. Currently, across the three savoury kitchens, it's 1.91%. We've managed to get to under 1% at all three during certain periods – so we know it's possible – but never consistently. Find out more on p.27.



Our goal: By 2025 we will be cooking with **100% certified sustainable seafood** and will have built on our five Compassion In World Farming awards to have demonstrably even better animal welfare.

Target met. All our fish and seafood is now **responsibly sourced**. Last year, we shifted to higher welfare bacon and chicken livers for our pâté. More details on p.25.



OCEAN FISH



Our goal: By 2025 sales of meat-free meals (excluding puddings) will be **30%** of our savoury total.

Target missed. Last year, **18.4%** of all meals sold were meat-free, and we don't expect to reach **30%** anytime soon. We're evolving our thinking away from focusing simply on more meat-free sales towards designing recipes that are better for our health and the planet. We get into that on p.22.



Our goal: By 2025 **100%** of our packaging will be recyclable and made from at least 70% recycled content and we will have explored closed-loop recycling systems and alternatives to plastic.

So close. 97% of our packaging, by weight, is recyclable, with the thin film on top of the meals being the biggest challenge. And **96%** is made of **70%** recycled content or sustainably sourced materials.



Our goal: By 2025 all suppliers of our priority ingredients will be taking action to reduce carbon emissions, and we will have initiatives to reduce biodiversity loss and improve soil health in our supply chains.

So close. 97% of our suppliers, by spend, are on board. It's great progress from 2022, when the figure was just **18%**. We're also launching **Recipes For Change**, working with suppliers of our top 20 ingredients to drive progress in climate action, biodiversity, soil health, animal welfare and human rights. More on p.23.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

It might not be a **perfect set of results**, but hitting them all would have been a sign the goals weren't ambitious enough. Where we haven't got there yet, we'll keep at it. Rather than creating a new, three-year Action Plan, we're focusing less on goals and more on **evolving our systems** and embedding processes so the trajectory of our progress can be sustained. We'll continue to report back transparently each year. On we go.



® THE CHANGE



LOUDER THAN WORDS

We were at **Louder Than Words** in Oxford, the world's biggest ever B Corp get-together.



In 2013, we became one of Britain's very first certified **B Corps**, a movement for responsible business based on rigorous external evaluation. We changed our legal status, hard-wiring our purpose into everything we do. Now nearly **3,000 UK companies** have joined us. The sense of community was so apparent last autumn when we welcomed our fellow B Corps in Kent to our Sittingbourne office for the first B Local event.



NEWS JUST IN

OUR NEW
B CORP SCORE

104.4

The highest ever score for a UK food business with more than the equivalent of 1,000 full-time staff.

LIFE CHANGING MEALS



Food is like magic...

Take some raw ingredients and a little skill and care, you can turn them into something that brings communities together and **nourishes body and soul**. We are inspired daily by the power of food. More than just fuel for life, it can genuinely **change lives**.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF RAW TALENT

Last October we celebrated a decade of our **RAW Talent programme**. Helping people into work after prison, homelessness, addiction and other challenges. A good job can be the cornerstone on which a life is rebuilt, and we're so proud to have welcomed **246 people** into roles at COOK. It's been an incredible journey so far, with coaching, collaborations, a **Queen's Award for Enterprise**, sessions in prisons, and so much more. We can't wait to see where the next 10 years will take us.

27
New RAW
Talents last year

A job provides a key way to help people restore their lives and relationships following a stretch in prison. In return, we get committed, loyal team members to help us build our business.

Rosie, Co-CEO

All of us were once in the position that we needed guidance and support ... and that's what you're doing, every day of the week.

Lord Timpson OBE

In January, our old friend James Timpson – CEO of the Timpson Group and now **Lord Timpson OBE, Minister of State for Prisons** – visited the Pastry & Pies kitchen in Sittingbourne. Timpsons have been a leading light in inclusive hiring, and we've collaborated with them many times over the years. He was accompanied by **The Times** and **ITV Meridian** and, during his visit, he announced **11 employment councils** that will connect prisons and probation services with employers like us.

WORKING TOGETHER

Inclusive hiring is a real team sport. Without the dedicated support of our partners, it wouldn't happen. We're so lucky to work with the amazing people at Shaw Trust, Reed, People Plus, at jobcentres, HMP Stenford Hill, and others. Rosie, our Co-CEO, is Chair of the National Oversight Board for Prison Employment Advisory Boards, helping to broaden the impact of what we're doing and, over the last 10 years, we've supported over **85 other employers** set up or improve their inclusive hiring by sharing **RAW Talent** materials and our learnings.

Over **9%** of
the ops team are
RAW Talents

61%
RAW Talents from
23'-24' are in work
after 12 months

RAW TALENT TALES

RAW Talent isn't really about the numbers; it's about people's lives. Many of them have been on truly remarkable journeys, and sometimes their job at COOK was just the first leg. Here are a few of their stories...

RENE

After two decades marred by addiction and prison, Rene changed his life and got clean through our partners at Caring Hands (p.21). He joined COOK in 2015, working in the Finishing Team. In 2022 he left COOK and returned to Caring Hands, where he now works supporting people dealing with the very problems he's faced himself.

CASEY

Severe anxiety and depression made staying in work a real struggle for Casey, and he even checked himself into A&E with severe suicidal thoughts. Last September he did the RAW Talent training and now works in the Finishing Team. **"I am the happiest I have ever been in my entire life,"** he said. **"I have grown in confidence and have good rapport with my team."**

TOM

After lockdown, Tom struggled to find work, but eventually found a way back into employment through RAW Talent. Five years on, he's moved from Hygiene, to Sealing & Packing, and now into the Technical team. **"It's given me a platform to develop myself personally and professionally,"** he said. **"I'm excited to see what happens next!"**

MARK

We were heartbroken by the death of our friend and colleague Mark Gray last April. One of our first official RAW Talents, he joined COOK in 2014 and found a home here. He became Hygiene Manager at the Pastry & Pies Kitchen, where he was loved and respected. We'll miss him so much. Our thoughts are with those who knew him best, and with his wife Elaine, and his three children.



ONE FEEDS TWO



It's been **10 years** since we became the first national partner of the charity One Feeds Two. For every kids' meal sold, we donate a school meal to a child in extreme poverty in Malawi. So far, we've donated nearly **5 million portions** of nutritious porridge, *likuni phala*, made from maize, soya, and fortified with essential nutrients. It's simple, but it makes a **big difference**.



The school meal gives me joy and happiness and that helps me to pass with flying colours in class.

Exton

Before the program was introduced to the school, it was difficult for me to be in school as I would get hungry. I dream of becoming a nurse.

Patricia

2,300
Meals donated
every school day



one
feeds
two





COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Our Community Kitchen...

A simple yet powerful focus: We want our meals and puddings to bring people together. The COOK Community Kitchen includes **donating complete meals** and **surplus food** (p.27) from our shops and kitchens, **discounts for local charities** and customers and championing **community events**.

COMMUNITY

KITCHEN PARTNERS

All our company-owned shops can donate **18 free meals** every week with the aim of bringing people together over food. At **COOK Norwich** last year, they supported the first intergenerational 'Food with Friends' event at the **Two Acres Care Home**. Pupils from local schools enjoyed a lunch with the care home residents.

Shop participation has grown from roughly **50%** to **63%** in the past year and we're aiming to get to **80%** by the end of this year.

56,384
Meals donated



538 LOCAL
EVENTS
SUPPORTED

Last year we supported **PTA meetings, charity fundraisers, sports club socials**, and loads of other events with our **Community Kitchen Discount of 30% off** all our food. Events included the Warm Hub get-together at a community centre near COOK Market Harborough, where Sam and Andy from the shop went along to help. We officially supported 538 events last year, but we think the real number was significantly higher. Our reporting system is a bit convoluted and we're working on simplifying it.





“The people who
give you their food
give you their heart”

Cesar Chavez

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sticking to our mission to nourish communities wherever we operate, our shops were as busy as ever last year. In October the team from COOK Ringwood took part in a local fundraiser for Future Dreams, a breast cancer charity. **“We donated to the raffle, had a collection box, sold breast cancer awareness pins to raise funds, and showed support in our local community for a great cause,”** they said. They even got a thank you from the mayor.

CARE CARDS

When someone’s going through a hard time, like dealing with cancer or caring for a family member, finding the time and energy to make a nourishing meal can be a struggle. Everyone in our shops can offer a Care Card to people in this situation giving them 30% off all our food for **12 months**. Last year, they were used 9,758 times. And we have our first national **Care Card Partner:** the Ruth Strauss Foundation, supporting families facing the death of a parent to cancer.

Over
£100,000
Discounts given

PULLING TOGETHER

The positive impact we have on the communities we serve is only possible thanks to our amazing **Community Kitchen Partners**. Here are just two of the dozens we work with...

CARING HANDS

12,893 MEALS DONATED LAST YEAR

This day centre in **Chatham** became our first official charity partner in 2007. They work with people who are homeless or insecurely housed and support them from crisis, to coping, to confidence, providing free meals, advice, and access to showers and clean clothes.

COOK food was used to feed around **70 people** every day they were open last year – including Christmas Day – freeing up their budget to provide a daily breakfast.

ARC

PARTNERED WITH SINCE 2020

Our **Puddings kitchen** in **Somerset** has teamed up with ARC, a charity based in nearby Taunton supporting vulnerably housed people. They provide residential housing, communal meals, and access to nurses and counselling.

COOK’s generosity and consistency greatly helps us build hope in the hearts of our guests, making the crisis they face more bearable.
Marty, Caring Hands

COOK enables us to offer delicious, healthy, nutritious and varied meals to some of the most vulnerable in our society. We can’t thank them enough!
Rosie, ARC



RECIPES FOR CHANGE

We need to radically rethink how food works in Britain, for the good of our health and the planet. Our new **Recipes for Change** initiative is all about making meals that are **better for people, farmers, and nature**, without sacrificing taste or affordability.

There's no quick fix. Real change comes through **nudges, tweaks, and the occasional leap of faith**. We don't have all the answers but we're on the journey, staying true to what makes a COOK meal special.

JARGON BUSTER:

Greenhouse Gasses (GHG)

The damaging gasses causing climate breakdown.

CO₂e

Carbon dioxide equivalent. A way to measure all GHG, as the equivalent amount of CO₂ that would cause the same warming to the climate.

Green Gas

Gas that isn't produced from fossil fuels.

Scope 1 & 2 Emissions

GHG we make directly (e.g. running our ovens or delivery vehicles) and all the energy we use in our sites across the business.

Scope 3 Emissions

All the other 'field-to-fork' GHG, which mostly come from the ingredients we use.

LET'S GET
MOO-VING!



HIGHER
ANIMAL
WELFARE

NATURE FRIENDLY INGREDIENTS

It's integral to how we farm our potatoes, ensuring future food supply whilst protecting the environment for generations to come.

Tracy from Provenance Potatoes



Prioritising farming regeneratively in tune with nature, the environment and enhancing biodiversity.

Michael from Barber's, cheddar cheese and butter supplier

As well as keeping us fed, farmers are stewards of the delicate natural balance of our countryside. COOK is a partner on their journey, so we need to better understand how to support and champion the people behind our ingredients. That means **respecting, protecting, and supporting** the soil and the wildlife on farms, and some seriously proactive action on climate change. A huge part of that is getting to grips with our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (see p.28).

Over the last year, we've been talking to suppliers to understand what they are already doing in these areas and their **future plans**. As we learn more, we'll prioritise changes we make to our sourcing with the aim of making more and more **nature-friendly decisions**.

RECIPE REDESIGN

TRY ME!
Available this Autumn

RETHINKING THE LASAGNE

We challenged ourselves to make a version of a core COOK meal that's better for you, better for nature, and better for farmers, while still costing the same. We chose our Lasagne al Forno as it's a huge bestseller – we made **1,725,259 portions** last year – and, crucially, it's made with beef, which has a carbon footprint **5x that of pork and 8x that of chicken.**

For the new lasagne, we're working with **Grassroots** – who are pioneering more nature-friendly ways of beef farming – as well as using our usual higher-welfare pork from **Dingley Dell**, lentils and mushrooms. Compared to the one-portion Lasagne al Forno, the carbon footprint is 27% lower, there's more veg, and there's 28% less salt per 100g. Best of all, it tastes incredible.



“We farm to allow nature to thrive, not because it's a nice-to-have, but because it's critical to the resilience of future food supply amidst climate change.”

Alastair from Grassroots,
beef supplier

JARGON BUSTER:

NATURE-FRIENDLY BEEF

It comes from breeds of cattle that can stay outside all year round, grazing on more complex grasslands, which can **eliminate the use of fertilizers**. It's early days, but this type of farming has already shown to have a positive impact on greenhouse gas emissions, soil health, water quality, biodiversity, animal welfare and farmers.

HIGHER ANIMAL WELFARE

Our commitment to animal welfare has led to **five Compassion in World Farming awards**. They're a registered charity that's been leading the charge globally for half a century to improve the quality of life for billions of farmed animals.

We are consistently looking at how to **improve the animal welfare** in our supply chain. Further progress was made last year. All our bacon is now higher-welfare and comes from Dingley Dell, the family-owned farm in Suffolk where we get all our pork. Our chicken was already 100% higher welfare, and now so are the chicken livers in our pâté.



EATING WELL MADE EASY

Do the options we're given as shoppers influence the types of food we choose? Might more readily available healthy, sustainable options mean we end up eating more healthy, sustainable meals? We set out to answer these questions working with Project SALIENT, a government-funded, **£5.5 million** research project run by eight top universities including Oxford, Cambridge and Birmingham. They struggled to find any retailers willing to run live store trials, so we stepped up.

From **July to September 2024** in a few COOK shops, we increased the proportion of veggie meals from **30%** to **45%** to see what impact it would have on purchasing behaviour. Over six weeks we saw a **+15%** increase in sales of meat-free meals and, crucially, overall shop sales were stable. Food for thought, indeed. The Project SALIENT team is now working out the impact this could have at scale.

+15%
Meat-free sales
in the trial freezers



FIGHTING FOOD WASTE

Every year in the UK, we throw away enough food to feed over **30 million people**, creating annual carbon emissions equivalent to that of **3.5 million cars**. Ethically and environmentally, it's a disaster.

The nature of frozen meals means there's less waste, but at the scale we work at, even fractions of a percent can add up to thousands of meals. Our approach is to reduce, reuse and redistribute our surplus. Working with partners like **The Felix Project** (p.32), **Caring Hands** (p.21), and **FareShare**, we've made some great progress. The trial at COOK Classics, where we now have a designated role to reduce food waste, led to **27 tonnes** of surplus being saved from going to waste last year, and we'll be doing the same at the Pastry & Pies kitchen. But there's still loads to do to reach our target of end-of-line waste being **<1%** of total ingredients used, and saving **60%** of this surplus.



**SAVE OUR
SURPLUS**

73,809

Meal equivalents saved last year

1.91%

Total ingredients wasted at end-of-line

22%

*End-of-line surplus saved at
COOK Classics*

ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The food system is responsible for **30% of all the UK's greenhouse gas emissions**, so we can't bury our heads in the sand. Our efforts in the last financial year saw some progress, some frustrations, and a real evolution in our understanding.

THE GOOD



Our carbon intensity – CO₂e emissions measured per £million of sales – dropped to 23.7 tonnes last year. That's 29% below our baseline year of 2017/18.



Green Gas continues to make up 40% of our gas supply. And, for the first time ever, we made some Green Gas ourselves. See p.33.



Voltage optimisation systems – which adjust and control voltage levels depending on usage – were installed in two of our kitchens. We saw a 6% reduction of energy use and it will pay for itself in a year. A great result. We're now looking at other sites for it.



Recipes for Change was launched (p.22). A standout result was 97% of the money we spend on priority ingredients now goes to suppliers taking climate action.



The solar panels at COOK Puddings paid for themselves completely and provide around 20% of all the electricity in our Somerset kitchen. Free, green energy! A great result.

THE BAD

(and what we're doing about it):



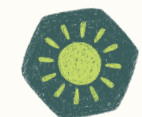
Our carbon footprint last year was 3,141 tonnes of CO₂e, 43% higher than 2017/18. For context, in that time COOK has essentially doubled in size.



GHG leaks from the old freezers at The COOK Kitchen continue to hinder our progress in reducing our footprint. Phase one in replacing them should be completed this financial year.

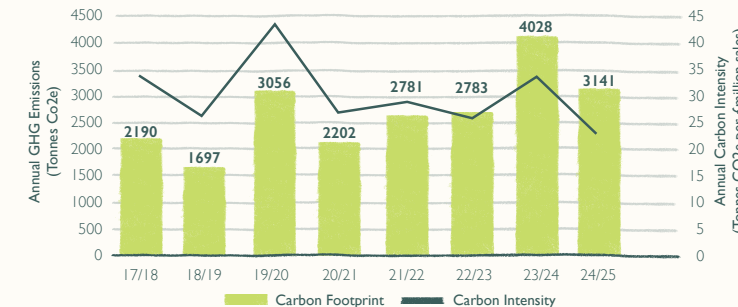


Decarbonising the COOK fleet is a long game. The charge in our small electric vans (currently five of 39) runs the engine and a freezer, which is a big ask, so we're looking at how we might deliver ambiently. As for the big lorries, there's no workable electric version, so we're looking into biodiesel, a non-fossil fuel.



Solar panels at The COOK Kitchen didn't happen as the roof wasn't suitable. Instead, we're in the process of installing them at the Pastry & Pies kitchen across the road.

CARBON INTENSITY/TOTAL EMISSIONS



THE CARBON CONUNDRUM

In business, Net Zero means cutting your greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible, then offsetting the rest through investing in carbon capture. We're aiming for Net Zero in our direction operations (known as Scope 1&2) by 2030. But it gets complicated. Scope 3 emissions include those from farms who supply us with ingredients. Factor them in and that's 81% of all emissions associated with our business. So, should we prioritise cutting our own emissions over emissions from our ingredients?

We're focusing on where we can have the biggest real-world impact. So we're investing in more expensive, nature-friendly beef rather than buying more green gas. The carbon saving will be bigger and, importantly, we'll be helping grow a new market. But it won't help our progress towards Net Zero in Scope 1 & 2. A tough choice but the right one.

MILESTONE:

We focused on safety (reducing the number of accidents to below 3 per 100,000 hours worked), efficiency (greater accountability, smarter working and less waste), and quality (bringing down the number of complaints to less than 50 per million meals sold).



25%
Fewer accidents

COOK MILESTONES

Every year we set ourselves milestones. You'll find a few of them in this year's report, along with a grade of how we've done...

BRITAIN'S BEST KITCHENS

Three years ago, our kitchens emerged from the challenges and stresses of the pandemic in need of some TLC. They'd gone above-and-beyond, but cooking through lockdowns had taken its toll. Our teams were in need of a lift; recruitment was tough; and our systems were fraying at the edges. So we launched a **three-year plan** to turn things around: the **New Dawn for Britain's Best Kitchens**. This year, the sun has fully risen and our kitchens have been transformed. It has taken a monumental effort from leaders and everybody involved. Last June, we were recognised with the **Made In The UK Manufacturer of the Year award**, a sign of the progress we've made. There's plenty more to come.

THE COOK KITCHEN

Our first big kitchen is now 18 years old, and starting to feel it. The team did an amazing job cracking on as work was carried out to upgrade various bits of kit. This meant some of the team moving over the road to our new Pastry & Pies Kitchen – thanks all. Next up is replacing our big blast freezers with ones much friendlier to the planet.

Mind Your Backs...

Over 18 weeks The COOK Kitchen achieved a major milestone by completing manual handling training for 259 team members ... all while managing their regular duties. Across all sites, a total of 568 people got trained up.



730 Tonnes
Of potatoes used

COOK CLASSICS

It's been a watershed year at **COOK Classics**. Opened at the start of the pandemic, it's taken a while for it to adapt to "normal" operating conditions. Now the team is cooking on gas and last year improved performance across the board. There's a great vibe about the place. The team enjoyed staff lunches made from food surplus, a coffee and cake day for **Macmillan Cancer Support**, a murder mystery night, and an epic summer barbecue.

SURPLUS WITH PURPOSE

Some of the surplus food from **COOK Classics** goes to **The Felix Project** kitchen in Poplar, east London, where it's made into meals and redistributed to people around the capital. An average of over 1,000 meal equivalents are dished up into reusable 10-litre tubes, labelled by hand, and sent to Felix every week.

It's a very significant contribution to all of the charitable organisations that we support.

Will Griffiths, Production Kitchen Manager, The Felix Project

11,186,847
Portions made



COOK PUDDINGS



The **10th birthday** of our purpose-built COOK Puddings kitchen in Ilton, Somerset tempted founder **Liz Dove** out of retirement to celebrate with the team in March. A lot has changed in the past decade, and with a five-year expansion project that will double the size of the kitchen, there are some exciting times ahead for **Team Puddings** in Somerset.



Carol spent a day volunteering at the **Melplash show** with Discover Farming, who provide an educational programme promoting food and agriculture in Dorset.



This might look like the world's dodgiest barbecue, but it's actually a big step in generating our own energy. Last year **COOK Puddings** worked with WASE, a tech company, to turn food by-products into biogas. It's early days but this could mean powering our kitchens with our own energy, partially at least, cutting waste and reducing our reliance on the grid.



COOK PASTRY & PIES

It was the first full production year for the team at our newest kitchen. They deftly overcame a few teething problems to put in a great performance and became the first kitchen to feature on prime time TV, starring in a **Channel 5 documentary**. This year, solar panels will be installed on the roof, which will not only generate electricity but also provide insulation, so we use less of it.

PROJECT WONKA



Preparing our meals and puddings by hand is central to COOK ... but we can't ignore innovations that reduce risk and boost efficiency. Finding that balance is what our Project Wonka is all about. Our Pastry & Pies team have started using a press to form quiche bases, dramatically reducing the risk of repetitive strain injury. The rest, of course, is still crafted by hand.



FUTURE COOKS

"Our young chefs left feeling inspired and excited ... Thank you, COOK, for sharing your passion with us!" - Social Enterprise Kent

In August, the kitchen hosted the finalists of the **Young Cooks competition**. We were blown away by their enthusiasm.

236 Tonnes
Shortcrust pastry made



COOK LOGISTICS

Last year at **Logistics** was a tale of triumph over adversity. Our warehouse and transport teams have been based at the cold store in **Gillingham since 2017**, and it's now well past its prime. Kit breakdowns, electrical problems ... you name it, Team Logistics have dealt with it. Despite everything, they delivered in style throughout our busiest year ever, including a record-beating Christmas.

The good news is construction of a new site is underway, next to the COOK Classics kitchen. All being well, we'll be moving at the end of next year.



MILESTONE:

Our goal was to create a medium-term Logistics strategy to meet our growth ambitions, including a clear property and design plan, and break ground before the end of 2024.



**New National
Delivery record!**

£345,000

**OF MEALS DELIVERED
IN A SINGLE WEEK**

WINNING IN TASTE



★★★
Rhubarb & Custard
Pudding, Product of the Year
British Frozen Food Federation

MILESTONE:



Make the most of food development by creating a “new recipe” category, including 4 additional core recipes and sauces launch, and demonstrating value with a full in-store promotions calendar.

THE TASTES OF ASIA

It was a delicious end to the financial year with the biggest launch at COOK for over a decade. The new Pan Asian menu hit the shops with **16 mains and six sides**. If that wasn't enough for the kitchens to master, we also launched **four new sides in our Thai menu**.



COOK meals and puddings picked up a phenomenal **27 Great Taste Awards** last year, beating our already impressive haul from 2023. It takes our total from the last three years to a remarkable **61 awards** ... a number we're quietly confident no other producer can match.

Among the winners were three of the rare two-star awards: Rhubarb & Custard Pudding, Glazed Apple Tart, and Roasted Chicken Breasts in a Port & Merlot Jus.

THE REVIEWS ARE IN...

THE Sun
A dream for emergencies
and days I just don't feel
like cooking.

delicious.
Why had we never tried
COOK? Well now we have,
and we were impressed.

GLAMOUR
Made me wonder why I
ever bother cooking at all.

Last year saw a great leap forward in getting the word out to potential customers in the national press, magazines, websites, and on TV. In April there was a kitchen tour of the Pastry & Pies Kitchen in a **Channel 5** documentary ... and we even popped up on **This Morning**.

Feedback is flooding in every day on Trustpilot too. With over 36,000 reviews, we're averaging 4.8 out of 5, which makes us officially **'excellent'**!

Good Housekeeping



this morning



Women'sHealth



The Telegraph



TOP OF THE SHOPS

It wasn't that long ago that everyone was declaring the days of the high street were numbered. **We politely disagree.** Our shops – which are part traditional retail space, part delivery hub, and increasingly part community centre – have proved to be our superpower. A record-breaking **13 COOK shops** had sales of over £1 million last year, and we opened eight new ones – seven in new locations, and COOK Henley moved to a new home.

+10.6%
Shop transactions



#108 COOK
MORPETH



#106 COOK
BEXHILL

#107 COOK
CHESTER



#104 COOK
FRINTON

#102 COOK
ST ALBANS



#105 COOK
CHRISTCHURCH



#103 COOK
CHELMSFORD



#109 COOK
MACCLESFIELD

DELIVERING IN STYLE

The vast majority of our customer deliveries come straight from a COOK shop. The explosion of home deliveries we experienced in the lockdowns has fallen back to a more manageable split and now just over 20% of shop sales come from **local deliveries**. Here's Titus from COOK Romsey picking up one of our **six new vans** last November.

170,385
Local deliveries



COMING SOON: COOK Newmarket | COOK St Neots | COOK Bedford | COOK Queen's Ferry Road, Edinburgh | COOK West Byfleet | COOK Putney | COOK Ascot

THE SHOP FLOOR IN '24



A vibrant high street is an essential part of any community, and Team Retail's year was marked with **countless moments of kindness and connection.**



COOK MIDHURST

Midhurst treats street-cleaning volunteers with coffee and cake



HAPPY BIKE DAY!

Sregas now bikes to work at COOK Poynton after the team got him a bike



EVENT WEEKEND

A great event weekend in November



LOVE OLIVER BALL

Our Scottish shops at the ball for Love Oliver, their charity partner



PETTS WOOD

Petts Wood visit Summerdown, the UK's first B Corp farm

OUR BEST EVER CHRISTMAS

SALES +9.8%

SHOP SALES +4% LIKE FOR LIKE

GIFT CARD SALES +16.8%

TURKEYS +3,000

Around Christmas we make about a third of our annual profit so, at COOK, 'tis the season to be busy. It arrived late last year but, by Christmas week, records were being smashed in shops, concessions and deliveries ... and Father Christmas was even spotted in West Wickham.

To see every part of the business working together, with professionalism, **good humour** and **kindness** was a beautiful sight indeed.



REACHING NEW COMMUNITIES

Over the last **19 years**, working with like-minded independent retailers has proved to be an incredibly effective way to get our food to communities where a full COOK shop might struggle. Concessions has grown to become an **integral part of what we do**, and you'll now find our freezers in around 1,200 independent retailers and cooperatives across the UK. And it's only picking up pace. 2024 was another record-breaking year, with vending in five NHS hospitals, events and shows all over the UK, visits to existing stockists, and teaming up with over **170 new Concessions partners**.

MILESTONE:

Fuel growth by opening at least six new shops and 150 concessions while continuing to test the potential of Vending and International.



537
New freezers



SHOW TIME

In April, Team Concessions set up shop at the **NEC** in Birmingham for the annual **Farm Shop & Deli Show**, the most important and the largest of the half-dozen shows at which we exhibit. The team had a fancy new stand and, with full freezers, they were able to offer tasters for the first time.

THE GOLD STANDARD

In July last year, we won **Specialist Wholesaler of the Year** at **The Grocer Gold Awards**. It's so great to see this recognition of the amazing work done by everyone who keeps our Concessions partners stocked.



G
The Grocer
Gold Awards
2024
WINNER
Specialist Wholesaler
of the Year





One of our **Action Plan goals** was to bring our commitment to communities into the Concessions side of the business. A year ago, we'd almost written it off as a possibility ... and then it all came together. We now have **two official partners** and are hoping to line up more.

MEALS FOR MARLOW

We support this local community group with discounted food, organised and delivered through our Concessions team. **Meals From Marlow** then deliver food to local people in need of a meal and connection. We were thrilled to attend their Pub In The Park event, which raised a **whopping £62k**.

ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We teamed up with **St John's Community Support (SJCS)** in Guildford, who work with many local families in the Guildford area, with a particular emphasis on addressing child poverty. They get referrals from a wide variety of schools, churches, charities and caring agencies from across Guildford and Surrey.

BRINGING COMMUNITY TO CONCESSIONS

COOK CULTURE

Every business has a **culture**. Even if they pretend they don't, it's there. Ignored, it can quickly fester and feed off the worst aspects of human nature, so our culture is something we take very, very seriously. The greatest impact we will ever have as a business is on the people we work with.

The Best Companies Awards have proven to be a great check-in on our culture, and we were encouraged to be voted, once again, **#1 in the Food & Drink category**. Overall we came 31st ... and, a nice surprise, COOK is officially the **Best Company to Work For** in the West Midlands.

TALK TO THE PIG

Keeping our culture alive starts with talking about it. Every May we have our Churchill's Pig Week, when we invite the entire team to share their thoughts on how to make COOK a better place to work. Among last year's **144 pieces of feedback** were flexible working and pay days, and we implemented increased maternity pay, based on feedback from Pig Week '23.



MILESTONE: CULTURE



Inspire more people to develop their careers at COOK by launching careers week and clearer career pathways. Further embed our Culture of Care with an online learning and training platform, enabled by a new in-house training scheme.



SQUIGGLY CAREERS

24

Dreamers

DREAM ACADEMY

We offer free one-on-one life coaching with our Dream Manager, AI, to help team members achieve their goals, face a fear, or find the courage to try something new.

781

People got involved in learning programmes

The concept of career ladders is outdated. We love the idea from Sarah and Helen, our friends at **Amazing If**, that modern careers are squiggly. The team here are remarkable, and we want to help as many of them as possible to grow and **squiggle with us**.

11

People enrolled on apprenticeships

APPRENTICESHIPS

Some of our team honed their skills and learnt new ones by taking up apprenticeships, spending time with external companies and diving into coursework and exams from GCSE to degree level.

38%

Of Academy graduates squiggled into a new role at COOK

COOK ACADEMIES

Allowing team members to grow into leaders is essential for our culture as we grow. Last year we ran 10 Academies – for people in the shops, kitchens and offices – as well as launching a new Ops Leadership Programme, training for all the leaders in our kitchens and warehouse.

#1

First Ever Event

GROW YOUR

CAREER MONTH

In March we had our first ever Grow Your Career Month, focusing on showing people right across the business the opportunities for growth, with workshops and discussions. A very successful launch, and something set to become an important fixture in our calendar.

25

People on internal mentoring programmes

MENTORING

“Mentoring has been fantastic for my own personal growth and helped with my leadership style.”

Tony, Procurement Director

Last year we had more interest than ever in both our internal mentoring and the scheme we run with other B Corps, including Ella's Kitchen, This, and Riverford. A total of 22 of our team were either a mentor or a mentee in B Corp Mentoring.

ASHLEIGH'S

SQUIGGLY JOURNEY

In 2013, Ashleigh started her first job after leaving university, joining COOK as a Category Assistant in the Food Team. About a year later, she squiggled over to Technical as a Supplier Technologist. Then, in 2019, she became Sustainability & Responsible Sourcing Manager, which is now part of our Impact Team.

“I've always been allowed to grow as COOK has grown. Changing roles and teams can seem really scary – but my advice is be bold in your choices, and trust you have the skills and experience to take your career wherever you want to go. I feel I've now really found my niche within the business. I'm getting to do something I'm really passionate about.”

Ashleigh



HAVE FUN!

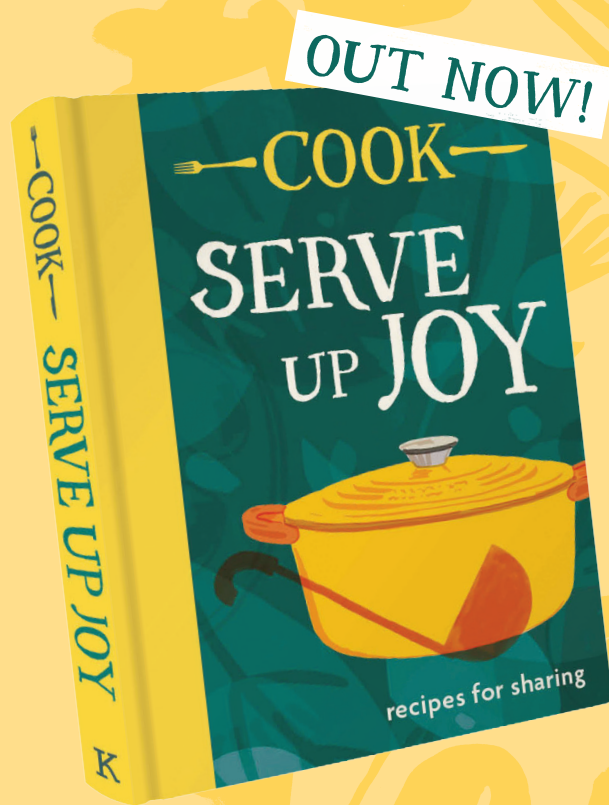
You spend **more time at work than you do doing anything else**, so we figure you should enjoy it. **Having fun** is an **essential ingredient** at COOK, and last year saw a lot of it: the **Big Night Out** for the Ops Team, a casino-themed evening for the Sittingbourne office, barbecues, picnics, day trips, games nights, go-karting, cook-offs, cake sales, meals out and lots, lots more...



★ OUR FIRST ★ ★ COOK BOOK ★

After **28 years** of creating and honing recipes in our kitchens, we decided it was high time we shared some of what we've learnt. **Serve Up Joy**, our first ever COOK book, collects over **80 recipes** we love so customers can try making them at home.

It published in June 2025 and is available in all good bookshops and COOK shops.





“Delicious food from
an ethical company”

Lynda ★★★★★ ★ Trustpilot

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