Byway

Impact report 25/26



Contents

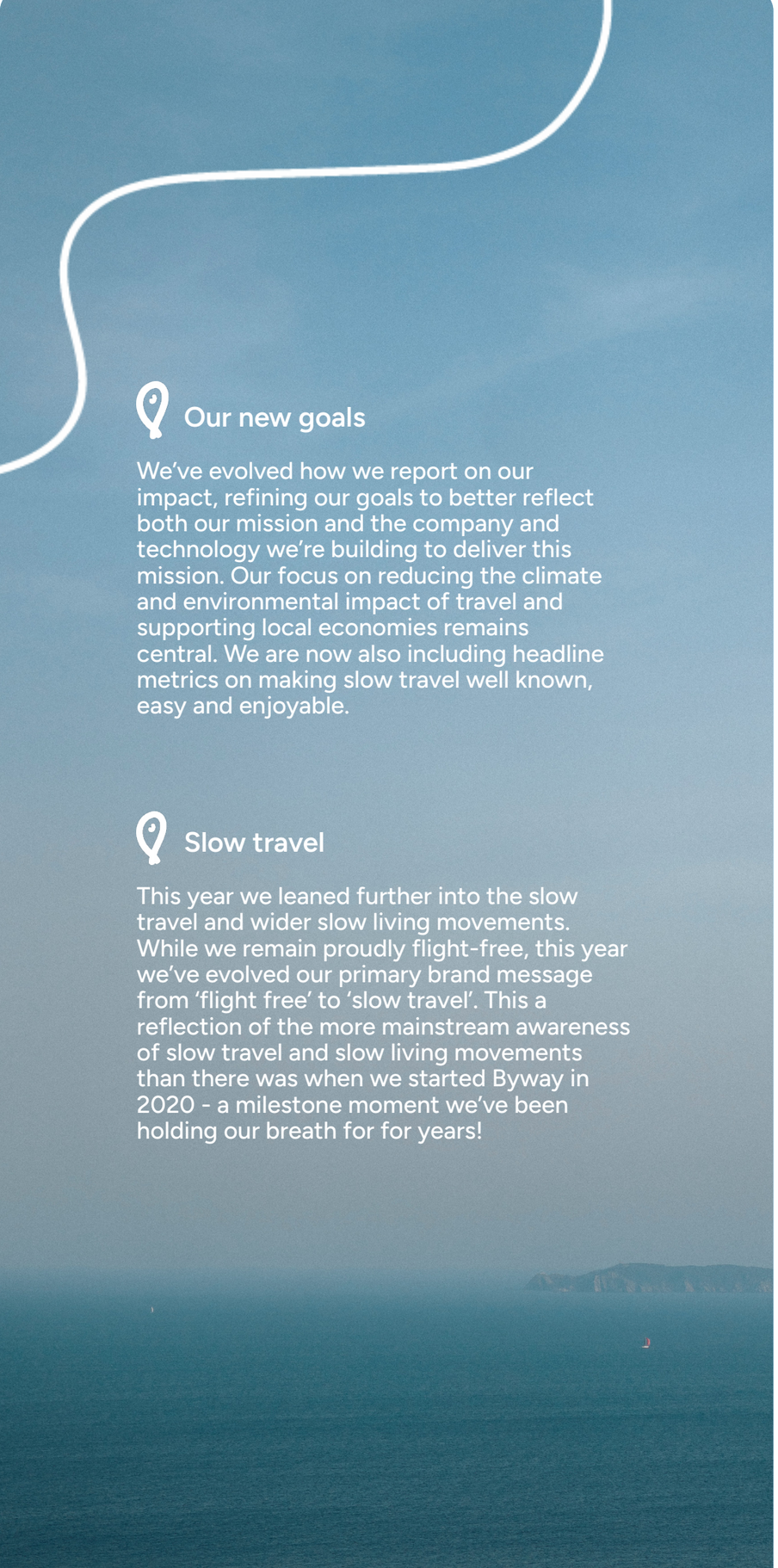
Introduction

Goal 1 progress

Goal 2 progress

Next steps

Introduction



Our new goals

We've evolved how we report on our impact, refining our goals to better reflect both our mission and the company and technology we're building to deliver this mission. Our focus on reducing the climate and environmental impact of travel and supporting local economies remains central. We are now also including headline metrics on making slow travel well known, easy and enjoyable.

Slow travel

This year we leaned further into the slow travel and wider slow living movements. While we remain proudly flight-free, this year we've evolved our primary brand message from 'flight free' to 'slow travel'. This a reflection of the more mainstream awareness of slow travel and slow living movements than there was when we started Byway in 2020 - a milestone moment we've been holding our breath for for years!

Welcome from our founder

To celebrate the six year anniversary of Byway's founding and our 20,000 traveller milestone, we took our team on the Eurostar for a weekend away in Rotterdam. When we first had a birthday weekend away (on our second birthday as our first was in lockdown), we rented a house in Essex and talked of the days we'd be a big team going on an international trip and filling a whole train carriage. This year, we filled one and a half! It was a wonderful feeling to join our team of slow travel experts and advocates taking a train quiz, playing games and planning the weekend's activities together as France, Belgium and the Netherlands slipped by outside the window.

This year, this wonderful group has helped over eight and a half thousand travellers enjoy slow travel journeys with over 96% five star reviews. 67% of the travellers who have travelled flight-free with us this year fly always, often or sometimes for their usual holidays, but after their Byway trip, 93% would refer a friend or rebook to travel by train with us again. We've launched in mainland Europe this year, taking bookings across the continent via our existing site, and via local language sites in the Netherlands, Germany and Spain. We've launched with more mainstream partners including the Guardian, the Times and TUI, and our dynamic map-based trip planning tool now accounts for 33% of our bookings. Maps has come a long way since we launched it last year - it recently created and booked a thirty three day trip spanning fourteen places, twenty train journeys and six countries for someone who didn't need to contact our team once. I hope you enjoy reading our impact roundup from the last year, and seeing where our attention will be moving forward.

Thank you for all your support in bringing slow travel into the mainstream.



Cat Jones
Founder and CEO

Our mission

Make slow travel mainstream

We're making slow travel mainstream. If more people adopt slow travel, we can reduce the travel industry's reliance on flights, lower carbon emissions and improve tourism's impact on people and the planet. To achieve this, we aim to grow the awareness, ease, and enjoyment of slow travel.

What is slow travel?

Slow travel means being mindful about how you travel - connecting more deeply to places by travelling through them rather than over them. For us, this means:

- Going flight-free for lower carbon emissions and a more joyous journey
- Working with local businesses to deliver tourism that is good for the community
- Working with locally owned businesses - to avoid tourism leakage

Goals progress



Goal 1

Grow the awareness, ease, and enjoyability of slow travel

Make slow travel a well-known, easy, and genuinely enjoyable choice. Do this by removing barriers to participation, expanding who it's for and where it goes, and creating travel experiences people are excited to repeat and recommend.

48%
tech-driven sales

77
Net Promoter Score

8,460
passengers booked

on **31k** trains, to **770** places across **40** countries

Data from May 2025 to April 2026.

Supporting indicators

>900
non-UK passengers

196
accessible trips

80M
marketing impressions

>300k
trips designed on Maps

200 clippings in mainstream press this year, e.g.


Wanderlust

The Apennines, Italy

Our writer returns from a walking and wildlife-watching trip in the Apennines, where endangered bears and wolves roam among forest-clad mountains two hours inland from Rome


The Guardian

A winter tour of Luxembourg's fairytale chateaux – on the country's free bus network


euronews.

Fewer flights, more immersion: What is 'tripchaining' and could it help you travel more sustainably?


The Telegraph

Is Europe finally getting an affordable alternative to short-haul flights?

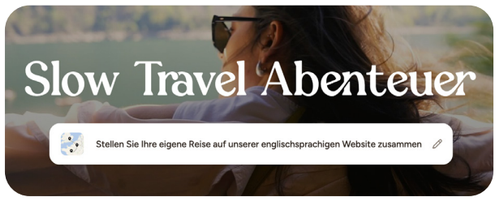
Data from May 2025 to April 2026.

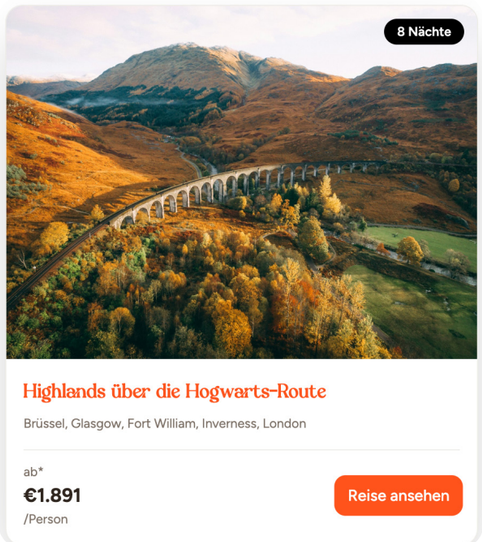
This year we...

Expanded the movement

Increased global reach

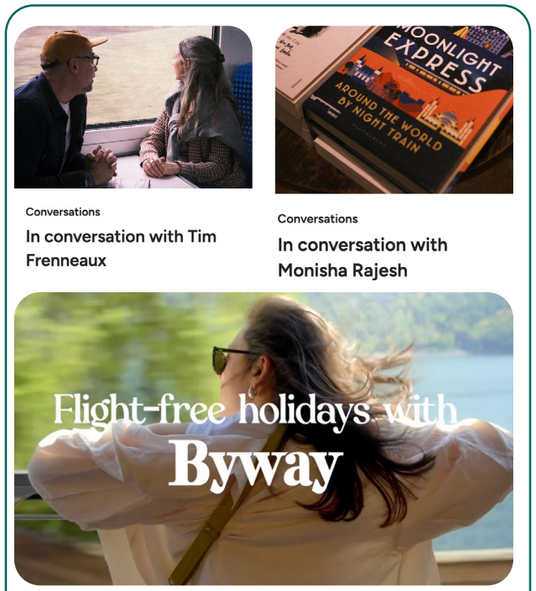
Became bonded and accredited to sell trips internationally, launching ads in English across 15 global markets and microsites in Dutch, Spanish, and German.





Grew our community

Grew our email subscriber and social media audiences to over 110,000 people.



Expanded into a new brand space

- Rebranded our marketing as ‘slow travel’ instead of ‘flight free’ and collaborated with slow-living partners like Oddbox and experts like Adventurous Ink, Sarah B Marks, and Amelia LeBrun.
- Launched a video strategy featuring slow travel icons like Mark Smith (Seat 61) and Monisha Rajesh, resulting in 89k views.
- Launched a printed magazine with >15K reads.
- Launched our first brand campaign in Brighton (billboards, YouTube, Meta).
- Achieved the top ranking spot in Google’s AI overview for ‘slow travel companies’ through AI-compatible blog content.

Worked with more travel partners

- Launched our affiliate network with 110 publishers (including Blue Light Card and Give as you Live) and welcomed mainstream partners like The Guardian, The Times, TUI, and Naturetrek.
- Spoke or exhibited at ITT, Earthfest, ABTA Sustainability, and local groups like Muswell Hill Sustainability.
- Won Travel Start-up of the Year at the Bessie Awards.

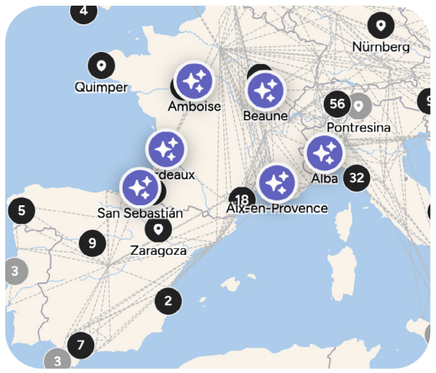


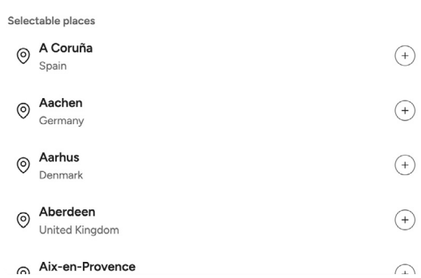
This year we...

Built new technology to make slow travel easier

Enhanced our map builder tool

Launched one-way trips, a ‘maps place finder’ for interest-based search, and added 259 new origin points and 136 places to visit.





Added more booking features

Added live availability and price checks; expanded our technical connections with Eurostar, UK rail, SNCF, and more; introduced room selection for hotels, and added icons for sleeper trains and ferries.



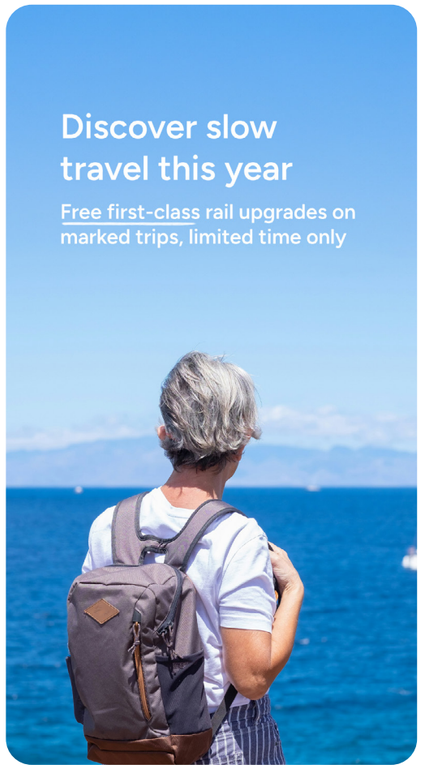
Improved localisation features

Added multi-currency pricing, localised terms and conditions, and introduced local rail pass selection/ reporting.



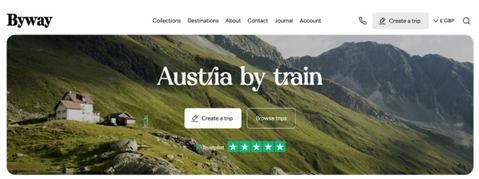
Made trips easier to customise

Launched new internal sales tools, including place reordering, accommodation filtering, and revised train time logic.



Increased our site conversion

Doubled the number of pre-built trips in our database. Increased the share of people viewing detailed itinerary pages on our site by 41% by surfacing key features earlier.



Launched automations

Launched automations to personalised travel documents, speeding up operations and reducing manual errors.

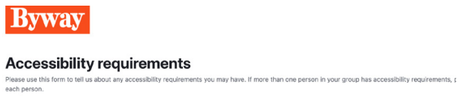
Welcome to your Byway Journey Guide! Here, you'll find your accommodation details, travel info and tickets, as well as some recommendations for activities along the way.

This year we...

Made our trips more inclusive and impactful

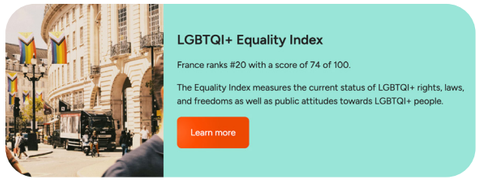
Made requesting access adjustments easier

Released a new accessible trip booking form and started tracking requests. Ran a digital accessibility audit and resolved all high-impact issues.



Added an Equality Index

Partnered with Equaldex to add trusted LGBTQI+ safety data into destination pages to ensure trip decisions are backed by robust, global insight.



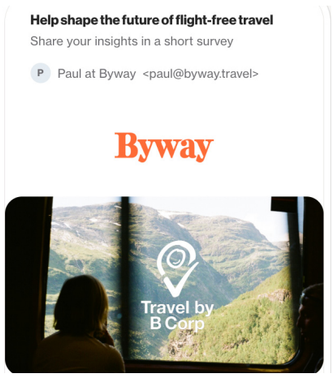
Prioritised independent hotels

Tagged all accommodation in our system to identify international chains, to help ensure our prioritised 'Byway favourite' stays consistently avoid international chains.



Collaborated on a flight-free survey

Had our shared impact project for travel de-carbonisation accepted by the Travel by B Corp network and launched an industry survey on rail holiday usage.



Swap the Sky Questionnaire

Thank you for taking part in this industry survey.

Swap the Sky, by Travel by B Corp, is exploring the barriers and opport
from the UK to Europe, with a particular focus on leisure travel by rail.
lower-carbon options, we want to better understand the practical, com
tour operators when it comes to selling and packaging flight-free Euro

- The key barriers to offering flight-free short-haul travel
- Gaps in knowledge, tools, partnerships or infrastructure
- Commercial considerations and customer demand factors
- What support or solutions would enable greater uptake

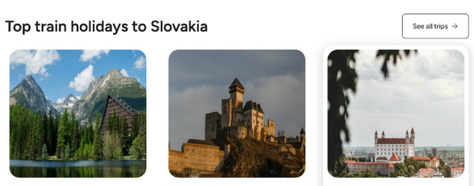
Connected with our community

Hosted a product feedback breakfast for customers.



Improved our anti-hotspot tech

Enhanced our maps tool to bypass hotspots or limit stays to one night where unavoidable. Launched trips to lesser-visited regions like Slovakia, Romania, and the Baltics.





Grand tour of the Baltic States

Travel through Germany and Poland to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, exploring Art Nouveau districts and UNESCO old towns.

This year we...

Empowered our team

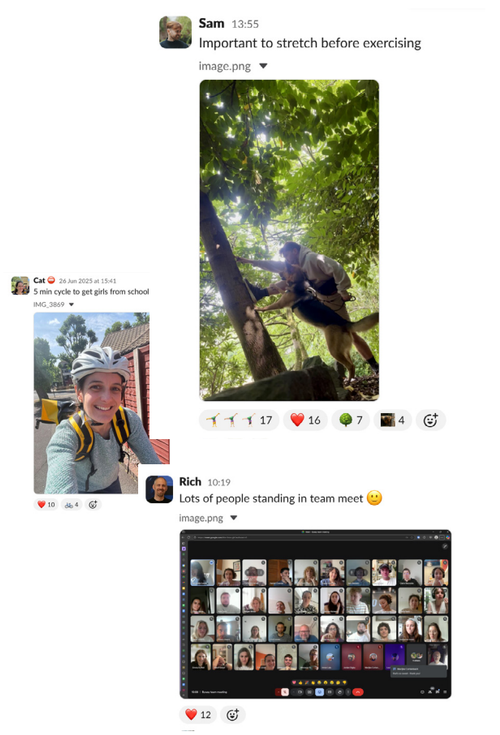
Added more ways to try slow travel

Launched a programme providing every team member with a free annual Interrail pass and experience training.



Introduced new policies

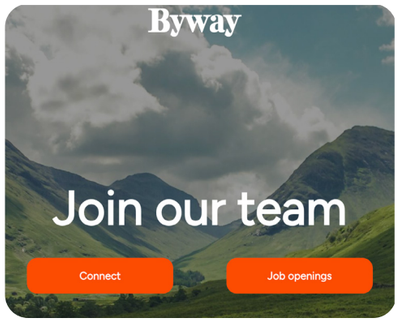
Rolled out enhanced parental leave, a cycle to work scheme, a volunteer time off policy, and ‘staying balanced’ stress management sessions. We also observed World Wellbeing Week as a team.





Gatherered more diversity insights

Ran a diversity survey and moved recruitment to TeamTailor, incorporating equal employment opportunity surveys to inform our diversity, equity and inclusion strategies.



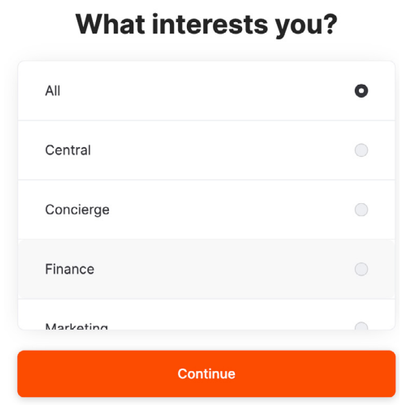




Photo by Hanish Chavda

Goal 2

Check our slow travel growth delivers impact

Ensure that growth in Byway bookings meaningfully reduces environmental impact and contributes to more balanced, locally beneficial tourism by shifting travel choices away from high-emissions alternatives, global chains, and overcrowded destinations.

1.7k
tonnes of CO_2e saved

>800
years of CO_2e savings from turning vegan

80%
nights spent in non-chain hotels[2]

68%
nights spent in non-hotspot places[3]

1. Calculated using Flight Free UK's estimate that eating meat generates 2.06 tonnes of CO_2e per person per year.

2. Calculated the nights spent in non-chain accommodation as tagged through manual identification.

3. Calculated based on manually identified "hotspot" destinations, which face environmental or social strain from heavy footfall, or where local policies like rental limits and higher tourist taxes aim to limit visitor numbers.

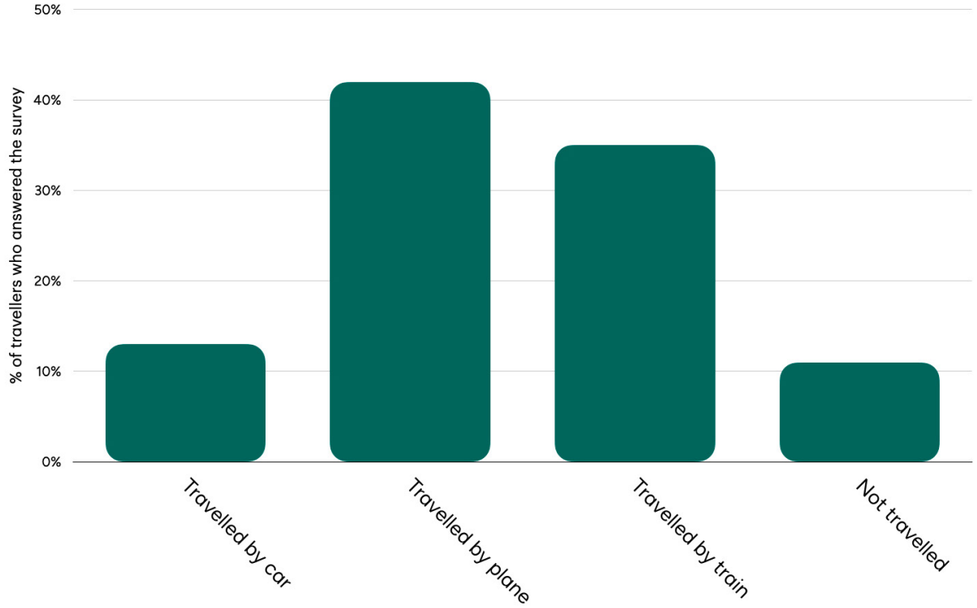
Data from May 2025 to April 2026.

How we work out CO2e saved

After our customers book, we ask them, “What would you have done otherwise?” to help us calculate the carbon difference between this and their Byway trip based on transport and hotel emissions. We projected the 1,119 survey responses across our 7,888 total passengers, yielding a statistically significant sample size with a +2.7% margin of error.

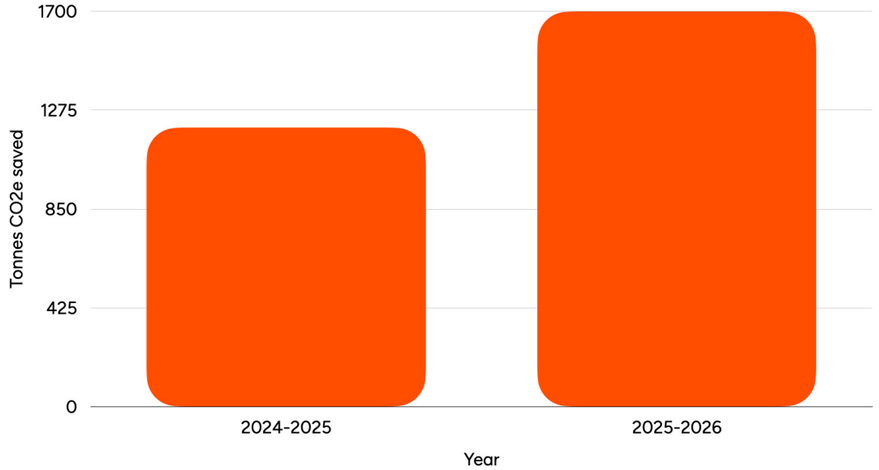
We show the CO2e saved compared to other modes of transport on our trips. Here is how we calculate that. We compared this data to our survey results, where travellers identified a specific alternative transport mode and if customers would have otherwise stayed home, we marked this as an increase in CO2e.

What would you have done if you hadn’t travelled with Byway?



Tonnes CO2e saved 24/25-25/26

±2.7% margin of error.



Data from May 2025 to April 2026. 95% confidence level.

Supporting indicators

1.6x

more was spent on non-hotspot accommodation year on year

93%

of customers said they would rebook or refer[1]

67%

of customers fly more than rarely[2]

1: Based on 1,910 respondents (±0.8%, 95% confidence). “Recommend” and “book again” scored 8+/10 counted as yes.

2: Based on 400 respondents (±5% margin, 95% confidence). As the question was optional, results may reflect selection bias.

Data from May 2025 to April 2026.

Company carbon emissions

Emissions by scope

What are the scopes?



Scope 1

0.00 tCO_2e



Scope 2

740 tCO_2e



Scope 3

270 tCO_2e

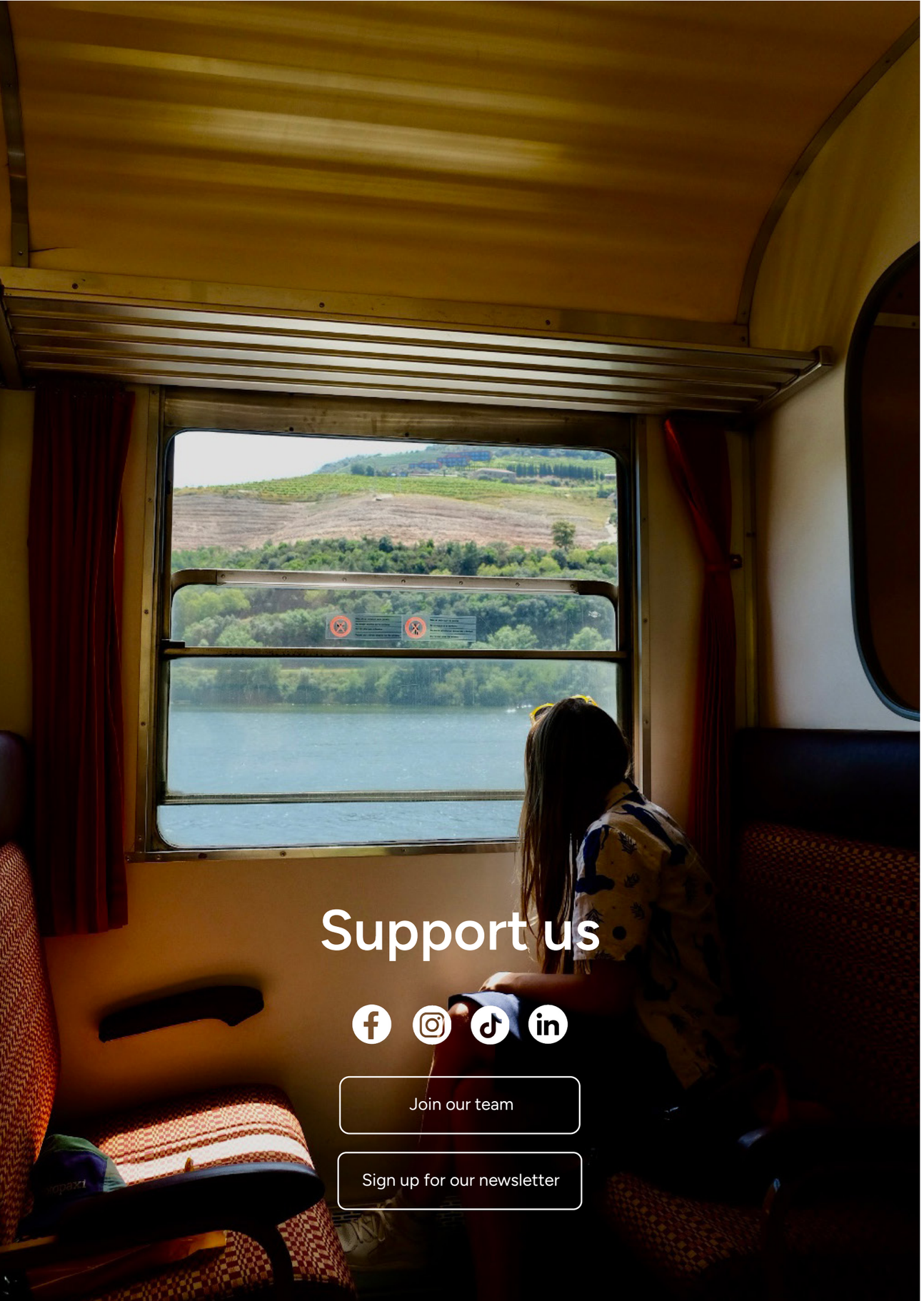
Methodology

We collected data on our operations, expenses and activities and input it into a carbon emissions calculator by Atlas Metrics. The tool calculated our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in tonnes of CO_2 equivalents. As these are spending based, they may overreport emissions, particularly as we prioritise carbon saving technologies like hosting in 100% renewable energy data centres, running batch jobs overnight when electricity demand is lower, and using algorithms and caching to avoid recomputation.

These figures include tech usage, including AI. Emissions for the AI technologies we use, including Claude Code, Gemini, GPT-4o and our in house machine learning, are not published. Estimates for LLM carbon usage vary widely due to unknowns such as hardware processing and server batching methods.

Data from May 2025 to April 2026.

Next steps



As we look ahead to further increase the awareness, ease and enjoyment of slow travel, we will:

Awareness

- Localise our site into multiple non-English languages.
- Launch trips in more countries to expand our reach.
- Increase our organic reach and press coverage by hiring a Comms leader.
- Improve our customers' logged-in experience to help increase repeat bookers and referrals.

Ease and enjoyment

- Improve our trip-editing experience by making it easier to customise a trip.
- Expand our Maps tool by adding featured routes, sleeper trains and ferries.
- Expand our personalisation capabilities to help more people discover the joys of slow travel.

Ensure slow travel delivers on impact promises

- Increase marketing for non-hotspot locations, add more locations to our Maps tool, and partner with destinations seeking tourism to encourage people to help further elevate non hotspot options.
- Onboard more accommodation providers to expand our range of locally owned hotels.
- Continue to monitor tech usage and adopt lower-impact technologies where possible.

20:08	Train departures			
Depart	To	Remark	Platform	
20:10	Brussel Zuid	Breda, Antwerpen C, Brussel Airport N	8	IC direct
20:11	Schothorst via Schiphol A	Schiphol Airport N, Hilversum	17	IC direct
20:11	Amsterdam Centraal	Delft, Den Haag HS, Leiden C, Heemstede	2	Intercity
20:13	Dordrecht	Blaak, Rotterdam Zuid, Lambardijen	4	Sprinter
20:15	Eindhoven Centraal	Cancelled due to a timetable change	3	Intercity
20:16	Den Haag Centraal	Delft, Den Haag HS	5	Intercity
20:20	Utrecht Centraal	Alexander, Gouda	13	Intercity
20:21	Den Haag Centraal	Schiedam Centrum, Delft, Den Haag HS	6	Sprinter
20:21	Roosendaal	Blaak, Dordrecht	7	Intercity
20:22	Amsterdam Zuid	Platform has been changed	12	Intercity Direct

20:08	Train departures		
Depart	To	Remark	Platform
20:23	Breda		1 IC direct
20:24	Uitgeest	Gouda, Woerden, Breukelen, Amsterdam C.	16 Sprinter
20:25	Delft Campus	Stopbus ijnr trein. Departure time = 20:25	Stopbus ijnr trein
20:26	Dordrecht	Blaak, Rotterdam Zuid, Lambardijen	6 Sprinter
20:26	Venlo via Schiphol A	20:35 IC Utrecht C, platform 14 earlier in Utrecht C.	9 Intercity
20:27	Delft	Snelbus ijnr trein. Departure time = 20:27	Snelbus ijnr trein
20:35	Delft Campus	Stopbus ijnr trein. Departure time = 20:35	Stopbus ijnr trein
20:35	Utrecht Centraal	Alexander, Gouda	14 Intercity
20:36	Den Haag Centraal	Schiedam Centrum, Delft, Den Haag HS	11 Sprinter
20:37	Delft	Snelbus ijnr trein. Departure time = 20:37	Snelbus ijnr trein

20:08	Depart
Platform	
1 IC direct	20:37
16 Sprinter	20:41
Stopbus ijnr trein	20:42
6 Sprinter	20:42 +5
9 Intercity	20:45
Snelbus ijnr trein	20:45
Stopbus ijnr trein	20:47
14 Intercity	20:50
11 Sprinter	20:51
Snelbus ijnr trein	20:52