



POSIT  
IVELY  
*Charged*

VOL 6: A WASTE-FREE FESTIVE SEASON!  
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## WHAT CAN WE DO, RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW?

Doing our part to lessen our impact on the planet

During times of crisis, it can be even more challenging to keep an eye on the big picture - to think about our actions, to lead by example, and, above all, to be(e) positive. Sometimes it's all we can do to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and that's ok too.

In Avallen's Zoom boardroom, we came up with an idea - a way to generate the kind of inspiration that charges our batteries (sustainably) and stretches our brains (considerably).

We wanted to create a free resource for our community, taking a long look into a brighter future whilst we are housebound in the present and, perhaps, feeling a bit lost.

To that end, we convened another enthusiastic expert panel, handpicked for this month's theme:  
**A WASTE-FREE FESTIVE SEASON!**

We are, as always, excited to activate their expertise for the benefit our wider community.





# A WASTE-FREE FESTIVE SEASON!


## BECAUSE WE WANT JOLLY HOLIDAYS WITHOUT A HANGOVER FOR THE PLANET

**“Every festival belongs to all of humanity, for happiness has no religious identity.”- Abhijit Naskar**

‘Tis the season to cherish loved ones, even when we can’t be with them, to contemplate the new year as the days finally begin to get a little brighter, and... to shop until your bank balance begs for mercy – all in the spirit of giving, of course.


All that generosity and good will often comes at a terrible price for the environment. Unnecessary wrapping, thoughtlessly discarded trees, pointless plastic toys – it seems there are many reasons to think that the spirit of the season is Santa for people but Scrooge for the planet. Can we participate in these well-loved traditions without the unwanted pollution and senseless waste?

A WASTE-FREE FESTIVE SEASON! is all about making this season joyous, merry AND sustainable. Our fantastic panel of speakers share their expertise in all areas of holiday fun, from ordering eco-friendly gifts and cosy cocktails, to saving the lives of Christmas trees and turning discarded trees into outstanding IPAs.



**This is the seasonal 6th instalment of Positively Charged, a series offering bite size chunks of curated and co-created wisdom with a single aim - to light up the sustainability conversation in the drinks industry using a balanced blend of expertise, creativity, and positivity.**

In case you missed them, you can still download [Volume 1 RISE UP!](#), [Volume 2 BEE THE CHANGE!](#), [Volume 3 THINK BEYOND THE BOX!](#), [Volume 4 CAUSE A SUSTAINABLE STIR!](#) and [Volume 5 REAP WHAT YOU SOW!](#) featuring planet-positive innovators who inspire fundamental change in businesses and individuals



*For our 6<sup>th</sup> instalment, we gathered a group of trailblazers who are changing the way we do the holidays and helping us make more planet-positive purchase decisions every day.*

Every year, even the most thoughtful amongst us become consumption machines in the run up to the holidays. The statistics on waste are staggering, but to many it seems like the unavoidable cost of decking the halls.

From Christmas trees & cocktails to online shopping with purpose, our brilliant panelists are changing the game—illuminating our options for more sustainable sparkle and contributing to a brighter new year.

In each section, we distilled key insights from their talks that (we hope) will ignite productive discussions about the many ways we can make the holidays joyously planet-positive.

[You can view the panel discussion in its excellent entirety here.](#)

KEY SPEAKERS

KATIE HILL

*Co-Founder, My Green Pod*

ALAN McDONNELL

*Conservation Manager, Tree for Life*

TIM LEFEVRE

*Bar Manager & Founder, Hive Ball Project*

FREDERIK KAMPMAN

*Chief Botanical Officer, Lowlander Beer*

MODERATOR

STEPHANIE JORDAN

*Co-founder & Queen Bee, Avallen Spirits*



# MORE GLEE, LESS GUILT

## IT'S FESTIVE GIVING. NOT FESTIVE WASTING

### Collected insights from Katie Hill

The holiday season is joyous and full of delights. Time spent with friends and family, cosy jumpers, tables laden with delicious food – it really is the most wonderful time of year for people. Unfortunately that can't be said for the planet, which is burdened with a terrifying amount of waste, single-use plastics, and throwaway toys.

**The good news is the (yule) tide is changing,** with companies large and small taking steps to reduce the negative impact on the planet. From the elimination of plastic glitter, to experience gifting and the rise of crafting, we are seeing a positive shift in the way we give and receive.

**If we do change the way we look at gifting, we can enjoy the positive outcomes all year round:**

**Reduce single use plastic** – Those tiny toys in Christmas crackers don't magically disappear when the season ends. Businesses are already working to reduce the amount of single-use plastic they offer, thanks to a surge of public interest in the health of our oceans and habitats.

**Cut down on paper waste** – When you consider that the UK alone generates goes through 227,000 miles of wrapping paper, it's easy to see how a small change in the way we gift can make a big difference.

**Build better habits** – Training ourselves to buy better during the holiday season can also help us make better purchase decisions all year round. Planet positivity isn't just for special occasions.

## ACTION SECTION

### What we learned...

It would be easy to feel deflated by the startling statistics about the waste generated by holiday traditions. Lucky for us, companies large and small are taking steps to change all that.

### Why it's important...

If we don't change the way we celebrate, then the environmental hangover will carry on far beyond boxing day. We are moving in the right direction – lets keep the momentum up!

### How we can be better...

- **Buy into shared ethics** – look for businesses that share your ideals, and add that extra layer of love (for the planet) onto your gift
- **Upcycle & support makers** – whether it's a fab find on eBay or a unique craft on Etsy, your gift doesn't have to be mass produced to be appreciated
- **Do it yourself** – we've seen an unprecedented rise in homemade EVERYTHING this year - why not use your newly acquired skill to create personalised gifts for your loved ones



# TREES ARE FOR LIFE, NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS

## BUILDING A NEW TRADITION, AND REPLACING THE AX WITH A WATERING CAN

### Collected insights from Alan McDonnell

It won't come as a surprise to anyone that trees are a vital part of the ecosystems that surrounds them. From the nourishment they give, to the shelter they provide, to the part they play in keeping our atmosphere healthy, trees do a lot of heavy lifting on all our behalf.

The Christmas tree industry, with its traditional tendency toward monoculture and their limited lifespan, take more than they give during a time when giving should be at the forefront of our minds.

### Why Christmas trees are worse for the planet than you might think

**The tree** – there's a range of tree species used for Christmas trees, but generally speaking they are grown commercially in a monoculture forest environment.

**The biome**– Christmas trees are grown in tightly packed forests, allowing very little light to reach the forest floor and reducing the diversity within their biomes. Animals, pollinators and microorganisms all suffer when biodiversity is reduced.

**The air** – trees are excellent carbon sinks, but natural or rewilded forests deliver far more planet positive impact than industrial forests.

## ACTION SECTION

### What we learned...

The secret life of trees reaches beyond its deepest roots or its loftiest branches. Trees provide food, homes, air, fuel, and information.

### Why it's important...

Whilst industrial forestry is essential, we must also rewild lands and protect natural forests to support the biomes that keep our planet healthy.

### How we can be better...

- Share some festive cheer with your local forest conservation group in the form of volunteer work or donations
- If you do get a Christmas tree, reduce the carbon footprint and support local growers by buying local



# THE BARTENDER'S GUIDE TO CELEBRATING A SUSTAINABLE SEASON

**1- Keep up the good work** – if you've spent the rest of the year seeking out sustainable products and reducing waste, why stop at Christmas? There are plenty of green options to make your venue fun & festive, from plastic-free crackers to seed-packed paper cards.

**2- Make it seasonal** – Winter isn't great for fresh seasonal produce in many parts of the world, but luckily traditional preserved and spiced fruits, as well as modern innovations like beers brewed from Christmas trees, offer a variety of opportunities to delight guests and protect the planet.

**3- Reconsider your tree options** – Nothing says festive season like a sparkling Christmas tree, but the traditional approach is not very eco-friendly. Consider investing in a living tree that will lend freshness and warmth to your venue all year round.

**4- Encourage Santa to be planet-positive** – Secret Santa is a time-honoured tradition. There's usually a limit on spend - why not also ask for gifts to upcycled, organic, or homemade?

**5- Support the eco-friendly elves** – Seek out and support suppliers that are paying extra attention to sustainability during the holidays. The more we support them, the more pressure bigger businesses feel to follow suit.

## STARTLING STATISTICS

'Tis the season for too much paper waste and not enough respect for the mighty tree.

**6 million** single use Christmas trees, are discarded in the UK every year.

**227,000 miles** of wrapping paper, used and tossed per year in the UK.

The oldest living tree in the UK is **5000 years old** but most of the country's natural forests have been clear-cut for industrial agriculture.

Small craft breweries use **5x less water** and generate **32x less CO2** than industrial brewers, controlling for scale.



# DECK THE HALLS WITH BEERS & HOLLY

## SEEKING OUT JOLLY WAYS TAKE LESS AND GIVE BACK

### Collected insights from Frederik Kampman

How do you create a seasonal product that is literally made of Christmas? A winning combination of creativity and planet-positive purpose, both of which open your eyes to opportunities all around you.

### Inspiration can strike anywhere, even on frosty morning in January, jogging down a street littered with discarded Christmas trees..

Turning discarded trees into delicious beer is more than just a product innovation or a neat recycling trick for Lowlander Beer. It efficiently aligns planet and profit, proving yet again that sustainability is, well, sustainable.

### But don't stop there!

Whether it's using spare capacity in existing breweries, or collecting discarded peels from restaurants, waste doesn't have to be wasted.

Lowlander took it a step further, and invited people to register their trees for pick up. Individuals as well as businesses took them up on their offer, ultimately resulting in hundreds of trees being pulled out of the rubbish pile and put into a delicious beer. When it wasn't possible to pick up trees, the brewers planted a tree to offset those that were discarded.

And we can do more than just reduce our negative impact. Positive steps are equally vital. Consider cultivating a living tree for Christmas that will last for years – find out how at [\[link\]](#)

## ACTION SECTION

### What we learned...

That you can make beer out of Christmas trees! Also, in this season of giving, we can also give some thought to what we take. Look for inspiration around every corner – you never know where it will pop up.

### Why it's important...

We can't be the change we want to see if we don't see the opportunities around us, and take action.

### How we can be better...

- **Take less** –find alternative solutions or sources to traditional industrial actions. Assess every step in your process, starting with production, and look for ways to repurpose and reduce.
- **Give back**– seek out actions that have an outsized impact on the world. When Lowlander produced a lemongrass beer, they committed to planting one seagrass plant for every beer purchased, tying the impact to the product story in a memorable way. That's a lot of planet-positive punch in one small package!





# DRINK, REUSE, AND BE MERRY!

## ENJOY LOW-WASTE WINTRY COCKTAILS THAT WILL JINGLE YOUR BELLS

### Collected insights from Tim Lefevre

Cocktails can generate a surprising amount of waste. From perishable ingredients to unnecessary garnish, these tasty drinks are not nearly so palatable for the planet. Recently, a number of very talented bartenders have explored ways to reduce that negative impact, without compromising on quality.

### Ingredients & their impact

Low-waste cocktails ingredients are seasonal, local, and utilised with circularity in mind. We can also use or make our own ingredients with a long shelf life, like vinegars and shrubs – doubly important in winter when fresh local produce is scarce.

### Making low waste cocktails at home

Whether you're a seasoned bartender or a cocktail enthusiast, you can always up your low-waste game by following these simple rules.

**1- Don't be afraid to fail** because that is when you'll learn the most. You're not performing brain surgery, so don't sweat the mistakes. Just keep trying until you find your sweet, or spiced, spot.

**2- Have fun (safely)** play with interesting ingredients, preserve unusual produce (nothing poisonous), test drive unexpected flavor combinations. It won't always work, but when it does it will be glorious.

**3- Trust your taste buds** sure, we think that drinking vinegars are delicious, but maybe you don't, and that's ok! There are plenty of cocktails out there – keep experimenting until you nail the recipe that makes your face happy. It's the only one that matters.

## ACTION SECTION

### What we learned...

You can make drinking vinegars at home! Also, preserving fruit is a great way to manage seasonality and waste in winter.

### Why it's important...

During the cold winter months it's easy to forget key principles of sustainability. A few key ingredients and ready-to-go recipes can make all the difference.

### How we can be better...

- **Make your own ingredients** – pickles, shrubs vinegars – they elevate your cocktail without diminishing the planet. Learn how to make them and try out Tim's recipes [here](#).
- **Think twice about garnishes** –ask yourself, does this drink really need dressing. If it does, look at eco-friendly alternatives like oven-dried citrus wheels and edible accompaniments.



## BUT IF YOU CAN ONLY DO THREE THINGS...

**Buy better** – the festive season is full of disposable temptations – don't give in! When you're shopping for gifts, check if your favourite planet-positive brands have a holiday range, seek out marketplaces and sellers that specialise in eco-friendly products, or make something yourself for that personal touch.

**Waste not, want not** – Now that you've filled Santa's sack with sustainable goodies, remember to reduce your waste footprint by avoiding unnecessary wrapping and upcycling your discarded trees when possible.

**Donate if you can** – it's not an option for everyone, but for those of us who are lucky enough to be able to give, during the most giving time of the year, consider [these worthwhile charities](#) and donate in a loved one's name.





## GREAT! NOW WHAT?

Our aim was to inspire you to take planet-positive action this holiday season and get on Santa's nice list. Did it work?

Whether it's making your own low-waste cocktails at home or thinking twice about that tree - if we managed to trigger even the smallest environmentally positive actions, then our job here is done. On to the next!

Let us know your thoughts about our Positively Charged series, topics you'd like to see featured, favourite Avallen cocktail recipes - anything you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you!

Email us at: [thebees@avallenspirits.com](mailto:thebees@avallenspirits.com)

