



Claire Kennedy and Simon Morioka, Joint Chief Executives

PPL

info@ppl.org.uk
www.ppl.org.uk

“Growing up and growing out” – an open letter from Simon and Claire, Dec 2022

Every year we hear from our Chief Executives Simon and Claire at our annual Christmas party. This year, we have decided to share their speech in the form of an open letter to our clients, colleagues and partners on this journey of change.

This message rounds off our #PPL12 days of impact for 2022. We hope you enjoy reading and look forward to catching up next year!

We all started this year still in a pandemic, overshadowed by the sadness and anxiety it created. As a team, we started this year with a set of ambitions about pushing forward and making life ‘more’. This year, we have embodied that ambition in a way that makes us incredibly proud.

As we come together, we wanted to take a moment to look back and really celebrate what we have achieved together, and to share the excitement of what lies ahead for us in 2023.

We have talked this year about PPL growing ‘up and out’ – we are going to start by talking about how we are growing up, and then how we are growing out!

Growing up – Mill Street, our new office and community asset

This year PPL has bought its own home in Mill Street! Our new office will be a permanent home for the PPL team and the fellow travellers we welcome into our space. It will also be a community asset that we will be proud to share with our fellow Bermondsey residents.

Our unofficial motto has always been 'Do what you can, with what you have, where you are'. Through our **Mill Street Nights** programme, we will be sharing that philosophy with as many people as we can. We will be bringing leaders and thinkers together to share ideas and innovation, and then (most importantly) to agree to Do Something. We will host conversations that give people the permission to celebrate the power of taking any form of action, rather than wasting the opportunities we do have by dismissing them as being too small to make a difference. Everything we do makes a difference - even doing nothing is a choice.

Our Mill Street office is also being designed by us as a team to sustain us – to give us spaces to work together, to relax together, to think together, to grow, learn and develop together. The pandemic made us all recognise that the traditional model of turning up at an office because 'that was what we had always done' (actually not really what we had always done at PPL!) wasn't working. It also made us think hard about what we wanted to keep from that way of working.

We have always believed that the magic happens in the cracks – the throwaway comment, the unexpected meeting, the conversation that changes the way you think about something.

Our new office space is about celebrating what people can do together. It's a grown-up space for the grown-up challenges we have ahead of us. But grown-up doesn't mean boring or conventional – the space will be as special as we make it.

Growing up – our leadership team

This year has been a time of real transition in the leadership of PPL. We are proud and grateful for the new leadership roles that [David](#), [Katie](#) and [Toby](#) have taken on, leading the organisation with kindness, respect, and a deep understanding of the importance of our social purpose.

As part of PPL growing up, we have also recognised that PPL needs a Chief Executive (or two!). We are therefore changing our roles from 'Co-Founder and Managing Partner' to 'Chief Executive'. Simon and I are not particularly motivated by titles. Titles are really just badges, unless they allow you to do more. In life, one of the things we have learnt is that the only thing that matters is the impact you have; everything else fades to dust. This change is simply to recognise that we now have a team who are brilliantly leading the operations of PPL, and that our role is now to support the new and growing parts of PPL to dock into it successfully, and to continue to enhance what we do.

Growing out – our team

We are on a conscious growth strategy, which has enabled us to welcome 12 people to PPL since January 2022. We are delighted with the way we have reshaped as a team through each new joiner and the way our open, collaborative and outward-focused culture has allowed such significant growth to happen almost seamlessly. That is no small achievement and sets us up well to be able to continue to expand our team throughout next year. We always wanted to build a team we would be proud to work for. This one is already better than anything we could ever have envisaged.

Growing out – our Bristol office

By opening up a presence for PPL in Bristol, we are beginning a strategy to build our presence in new markets and networks and to broaden our perspective on the challenges our clients are facing. This presents us with a real opportunity to spread our impact more widely than we have done previously.

Growing out – our social impact

We are an unusual team, working in an unusual way and succeeding by any of the measures we apply. We are a social enterprise that donates thousands of pounds to charity each year and provides hundreds of hours of volunteering time. We are a B Corp certified as being in the top 5% of the world for the way we work as a team, an FT leading Management Consultancy, and an organisation that clients will often describe as ‘partners, not just consultants’.

Alongside the now-traditional ways we deliver impact through our social purpose – our work with clients, our volunteering, our annual Dragon’s Den and our donations to charities and third sector partners – we are now launching PPL Together. PPL Together is a brand-new charity that will disperse our social impact fund on our behalf. It is a way of maximising the impact of our donations and allowing us to apply the same principles of strategic partnership to the way we manage our charitable relationships as we do in our client and voluntary work.

Growing out – our voice

We are (finally!) getting much better at using our voice to share our insights and thoughts. From the [warm hubs work](#) through to the [Fuller Stocktake resource pack](#), PPL is becoming understood as an organisation that thinks clearly and pragmatically about upcoming policy challenges, and as a generous partner in sharing those thoughts. It’s an easy message to share because it is exactly who we are.

Looking to next year – enjoying the journey

Last year we said we would do more. This year we have lived that ambition. The thought we want to end on this year is that now we should make sure we enjoy the journey.

As a team, we are at a really important moment, and we should make sure to appreciate it as much as we can. There is a freedom and a creativity that comes from being able to build new things sometimes from scratch, to be able to try things out, to have the space, permission and confidence to test things and refine those that don't work. We are at a particular moment where we have loads of learning behind us to draw on, great relationships and partners, great ideas, and the space to be able to work out what we can really achieve with it all. We know we will all look back on this as a really unique moment in the development of PPL, so one of the thoughts we wanted to finish on tonight is simply to say let's all do our best to appreciate it.

There will, of course, be frustrating, tiring days and things that don't go to plan, but we are building something special, and there will also be those moments of perfection when we get to create something really magical, alongside a great set of colleagues. We should all take the time to appreciate those moments, and to congratulate ourselves, and each other, when they happen.

And our final, final thought is that we should literally enjoy it – it's not an endurance test! We should have fun, make each other laugh, take the time to go and stand by the river and look at the swans and the beautiful world around us. I want us to remember that, in the end, the thing we will take away is the impact we achieve, the experience of the journey and the memories of who we shared it with.

On behalf of us both and James, thank you in advance for the next stage of our adventure together in 2023 and we hope you all have a restful and happy Christmas break.

