

For immediate release: Oct 2018

## **Tackle climate change & support the local economy with positive shopping this Christmas**

**Blue Patch is energising a Shoreditch high street for just one week, with the UK's very first Sustainable Department Store where visitors can buy directly from the finest British brands, join creative workshops, be pampered, solve burning environmental issues and get social. Ethical shopping made simple - and just in time for Christmas!**

Blue Patch is on a mission to help tackle two issues, climate change and our struggling local economy.

Online shopping and rising business costs are pushing businesses to breaking point. From artisans and SMEs struggling to reach customers, to well known high street stores shrinking. For quality local brands, with slender profit margins, it's a challenge just to be visible and pop-ups, here today and gone tomorrow, leave shoppers struggling to find 'hidden gems' to give them repeat custom.

The UK economy is decidedly shaky. Add climate change to the mix and our problems seem unassailable.

Rising to these challenges, a social enterprise called Blue Patch is launching an 'alternative retail experience' where customers, climate and community come first.

With a membership numbering 350 high quality heritage manufacturers, ethical services, social enterprises and artisans from across the British Isles, shoppers are in for a unique treat when Blue Patch opens the doors to their 'branded pop-up' the UK's first Sustainable Department Store in Shoreditch.

Featuring products rarely available on the high street and with several debut brands on show, customers can purchase 'hot from the workshops'. There will be makers to chat to and demos about ethical production methods, proving that sustainability equals real value for money.

The store will feature 50 brands and run from 11th to the 16th of December at the Espacio Gallery, nestled in the heart of London's East End and a stone's throw from Brick Lane.

In true department store style there will be something for everyone; Brighton-based designers Baines & Fricker are launching a new drinks cabinet, Devon based shoe-maker RED Shoes launch a ready to wear brand, you'll find Tweed clothing by London based Cock & Bull, McNair's 'plasma dry' shirts from Yorkshire, organic beauty products from the New Forest, Diggle Chocolates from a Cordon Bleu-trained chocolatier, Bethnal Green-based social enterprise, Jute which employs women refugees, will be running workshops and selling handmade shoes and local startup Glow's reflective wear in amazing colours.

And for those stressed out 'post work' people, every night is pamper night with music, organic wellbeing and a glass of fizz, making ethical shopping even more effortless.

Visitors of all ages can join the workshops, running throughout the pop-up from 9:00 - 21:00 such as *Boost your Business*, *Comfort and Joy - how to retrofit your home*, *Refill London* and *The Big Green Breakfast*, make wildflower Seedballs and 'reclaimed wallets', design wallpaper and Christmas crafts. The daily programme of in-store events will be gently nudging visitors towards climate friendly actions via enthusiastic experts with 'can do' fixes for the climate crisis. All this collaborative energy, in a store sparkling with beautiful products and friendly people, sets the scene for a new kind of high street store, one that's social, entrepreneurial and sustainable too. It's the power of positive shopping, Blue Patch style!

After the doors close in Shoreditch customers can keep buying directly from members of the collective via the Blue Patch website, generating loyalty through increased accessibility.

Blue Patch will be on the move again in spring 2019, tackling economic uncertainty head on by reinventing local shopping. The department store is back, it's creative,

low carbon and socially engaging, so keep a look out for Blue Patch, coming to a street near you soon.

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Notes to editors:

[Blue Patch](#) is a curated ethical marketplace for sustainable, local and heritage products from the British Isles and beyond including furniture, clothing, gifts, beauty and services such as ethical banks, electric car hire and sustainable printers. Launched in 2014 by Jane Langley, Blue Patch provides a collaborative business network for SMEs and small traders. A triple bottom line social enterprise, 100% of Blue Patch's income supports members and every penny of the (eventual) surplus will fund renewable energy, conservation and community programmes. Members will vote to redistribute surplus profits. Blue Patch is a new business model designed to flow money back to communities and support projects and enterprises that everyone will benefit from.

**When:** 11th-16th December 2018

- *Tuesday 11th December:* Store open: 10:30 – 18:00; Launch party and Blue Patch Awards: 18:00 - 21:00
- *Wednesday 12th, Thursday 13th\*, Friday 14th, Saturday 14th December:* Breakfast events + store opening 09:00 – 21:00
- *Sunday 16th December* 10:30 – 17:00

*\*Coffee served by the students from the charity Hotel School, winners of the 2018 Blue Patch Social Impact Award*

**Where:** [Espacio Gallery](#), 159 Bethnal Green Road, London, E2 7DG

**Quotes:**

*Blue Patch founder and CEO Jane Langley:* “Our members are some of the best designers and producers in the country. Because they won’t compromise quality and utilise every second of the day making, artisans and local manufacturers have little

resources available to get to customers. Listening to the issues led us to develop our concept department store so the Blue Patch members can showcase their products and get to know each other. This is the first Blue Patch department store on the high street, I'd love to hear from anyone with a shop, we're a flexible, creative organisation looking for spaces to fill."

*Justin Good at Good + Original:* "Getting into retail is very difficult for small independents and with the demise of the traditional department store, a pop-up department store is the way forward. Offering customers something different with low overheads is just what's needed, with Brexit looming and uncertainty ahead."

*Joanna Hamer, founder and director of social enterprise, Juta Shoes:* "We're excited to be taking part in the Blue Patch Sustainable Department Store. As a small online business, it's a great opportunity to meet our customers, show our products and tell our story directly to our community. Our shoes are handmade just around the corner from the store in Bethnal Green, supporting marginalised women into work, so it's the perfect chance to connect our studio to the high street. We'll also be running weekend reclaimed leather wallet making workshops."

*Emily Lambert, Co-founder of Seedball:* "Seedball is so proud to be a member of the Blue Patch collective and a part of its incredible drive to shift people towards local, sustainable shopping habits - we can't wait to join in the festive department store with our seeds for a bee-autiful Christmas that supports local wildlife too!"

Shopping ethically in the UK has surged with a market value of £81.3bn (Ethical Consumer Markets report 2017). According to Ethical Consumer this is a growth of £40bn since 2008 and it's the younger generation who are leading the trend. A YouGov survey demonstrated that almost a quarter 24% of respondents said they had bought products in 2017 specifically because of their ethical reputation. See the full report [here](#).

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*Free and paid for activities include:*

- Boost your Business. Free. Wed. 9:00 - 10:30

- The Big Green Breakfast with Refill London. Free. Thurs. 9:00 - 10:30
- Comfort & Joy on retrofitting. Free. Fri 9:00 - 10:30
- 'Happy Breathing' Mindfulness and gentle breathing exercises. £6 Sat 9:00 - 10:30
- Workshops including Design your own Wallpaper, Wildflower Seedballs and Upcycling Wallets
- Global Impact brands including an installation by Finnish menstrual cup company Lunette, the organic cotton bedding by Sleep Organic
- The award-winning charity Hotel School, which teaches hospitality skills to homeless and vulnerable people, will be serving coffee and sharing a bit of Barista Know-How
- Pamper nights. Free. Tues - Sat

*Store opening times, events schedule and free tickets on eventbrite #BStore18 [here](#).*

*Images and Lookbooks: [Dropbox](#)*

*More about Blue Patch:*

- BP is the UK's First POP-UP Sustainable Department Store. In 2016 the concept store piloted in St Barnabas Village Hall in Dulwich, London and achieved 1000 visitors in a day. Find out more: [Link](#).
- It has over 350 member businesses nationally and is funded by member subscriptions.
- Blue Patch's company is limited by guarantee and has no shareholders.
- BP team of five women and a small dog called Mole work in a house in Herne Hill, London. They also run [The Blue Patch Sustainable Business Awards](#). **This year's presentation party will be held on 11th December - the winner of The People's Prize 2018 is available under embargo.**

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*For more information:*

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