

SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

England & Wales · Charity number 1035401

Details

Other names ACTION IN RURAL SUSSEX

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [02907172](#)

Registered 1994-03-22

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 47 Western Road
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1RL

Phone 01273473422

Email info@ruralsussex.org.uk

Website www.ruralsussex.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 1) TO PROMOTE ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE COUNTIES OF EAST AND WEST SUSSEX AND IN PARTICULAR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION, THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH AND THE RELIEF OF POVERTY DISTRESS AND SICKNESS 2) TO PROMOTE AND ORGANISE CO-OPERATION IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ABOVE OBJECTS AND TO THAT END BRING TOGETHER IN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES AND PERSONS PURSUING THE ABOVE OBJECTS WITHIN THE AREA OF BENEFIT

Activities: Reducing the incidence and impact of disadvantage and poverty on people living in rural areas, increasing the capacity of rural communities to manage change for the benefit of all their members, informing and amplifying the voice of rural communities to influence public policy

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Accommodation/housing, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** IN PRACTICE SUSSEX
- East Sussex
- West Sussex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£553,872	£563,206	£1,575,910	16
2024-03-31	£479,135	£469,662	-	-
2023-03-31	£413,377	£443,875	-	-
2022-03-31	£536,696	£590,167	£1,724,661	12
2021-03-31	£517,182	£595,157	£1,778,132	12

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
COLIN BROWN		2023-01-17
Christopher Hobbs		2024-08-08
Major General John Moore-Bick		2019-12-03
Owen Ingram		2022-11-17
William Anderson		2018-08-15

SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

England & Wales - Charity number 1035401

Accounts



Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Company number 02907172

Charity number 1035401

Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31st March 2025

TC Group
One Bell Lane, Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Contents

	Page
Trustees' report	2 - 9
Auditors' Report	9 - 13
Statement of Financial Activities	14 - 16
Balance Sheet	17 - 18
Cash Flow Statement	19
Notes to Financial Statements	20 - 30

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Trustees' Report for year to 31st March 2025

1. Introduction

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

2. Charitable objects

The charity's objects are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of the counties of East and West Sussex; in particular to promote and organise partnership working to achieve the advancement of education, the protection of health, relief of poverty, distress and sickness, by bringing together representatives of the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and other bodies and any interested persons. We set out our strategic aims and activities in more detail later in this report.

3. Structure, governance and management

Legal and administrative details

Sussex Rural Community Council (SRCC) is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales, company number 02907172, incorporated under the Companies Acts. SRCC is a registered charity number 1035401.

The governing body is the Board of Trustees. The governing document is the Articles of Association.

Operating Name

Sussex Rural Community Council has operated for many years under the operating name "Action in rural Sussex" (AirS), which will be used in this Trustees' Report as the identity by which the charity is most commonly known.

Directors and Trustees

The directors of AirS are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

The Trustees who served during the year and since the year end have been:

William Anderson Chair

Colin Brown

Owen Ingram

John Moore-Bick

Kristin Sjovorr

Chris Hobbs (Appointed 8th August 2024)

Chief Executive Officer; day to day management

Tom Warder, Interim Chief Executive Officer (until 30th September 2024)

Maryanne Matthews Chief Executive Officer (Appointed 1st October 2024)

Auditors

TC Group, One Bell Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Barclays Bank plc, The Old Bank, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2JP

Nationwide Building Society, Kings Park Road, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6NW

Shawbrook Bank Ltd, Lutea House, Warley Hill Business Park, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3BE

Investment Managers

CCLA Ethical Investment, One Angel Lane, London EC4R 3AB

Registered office and operational address

16 Market Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2NB (Until 31st March 2025)

47 Western Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1RL (From 1st April 2025)

4. Appointment and Recruitment of Trustees

The trustees are elected by the members of the charity at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Any remaining vacancies not filled at the AGM may be filled by co-option on the initiative of the trustees.

New trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity.

5. Trustees and their responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The accounts comply with current statutory requirements and with the requirements of the governing document.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

6. Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

AirS exists to promote resilient, sustainable and inclusive rural communities across East and West Sussex. The charity delivers public benefit by:

- supporting community groups, parish councils and local volunteers to strengthen local services, assets and participation;
- reducing the incidence and impact of rural disadvantage, including poverty, isolation and barriers to essential services;
- enabling community-led initiatives that enhance wellbeing and local environmental quality;
- informing and influencing public policy so that the needs of rural communities are better understood and addressed; and
- working collaboratively to ensure that local people have a voice in shaping decisions that affect their lives.

The activities and outcomes described in this report demonstrate how our charitable purposes are carried out for the public benefit across the region.

7. Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees maintain a risk register that is reviewed regularly by the Board. The key strategic risks facing the charity during the year, and the measures in place to mitigate them, include:

a. Financial Sustainability

Reductions in statutory funding and uncertainty in multi-year grants pose an ongoing risk.

Mitigation: Full-cost-recovery budgeting, diversification of income streams, active contract management, and maintaining appropriate reserves.

b. Capacity and Workforce Stability

Recruitment and retention challenges within the voluntary sector may affect delivery capability.

Mitigation: Strengthened staff support, investment in workspace improvements, and strategic workforce planning.

c. Operational and Compliance Risks

Changes in regulatory requirements, data protection, safeguarding and health-and-safety obligations could impact the charity's operations.

Mitigation: Policy review, staff training, and internal controls overseen by senior management.

d. External Environment

Inflation, the cost-of-living crisis and pressures on local communities affect both service demand and project viability.

Mitigation: Close collaboration with local authorities and partners, scenario planning, and flexible project design.

e. Strategic Positioning

Failure to adapt to emerging rural priorities, environmental challenges or policy shifts could reduce impact.

Mitigation: Ongoing strategic review, engagement with ACRE, DEFRA and local networks, and investment in business development.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

The Trustees consider that the charity has appropriate systems of internal control and risk management in place to safeguard its long-term sustainability.

8. Financial Review

Funding

AirS draws funding from a wide range of sources, with statutory sector income remaining the largest component. The Trustees express their gratitude to all funders, with particular thanks to:

District Councils in East and West Sussex supporting our housing services; East Sussex County Council for funding the Making It Happen programme, delivered in partnership with Sussex Community Development Association, Hastings Voluntary Action, Rother Voluntary Action and 3VA; The National Lottery for supporting the Lost Woods consortium alongside The Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Small Woodland Association, and DEFRA, via our national body ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), for its ongoing annual grant and Rural Housing Enabler funding.

Inflation and increases in energy, food and construction costs have continued to impact both our projects and the communities we serve. AirS continues to work closely with funders, partners and local authorities to ensure services remain responsive to social, economic, environmental and political pressures.

Restricted Funds

The detail of the restricted fund activity is set out in Note 16 of the financial statements. Restricted funds at the year end amounted to £39,097.

Unrestricted Funds

The total unrestricted funds are set out in Note 15 of the financial statements amounted to £1,536,813. Of this total the Trustees have designated that £650,000 is held for specific purposes.

Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees maintains a reserves policy designed to:

- meet ongoing staffing commitments;
- ensure organisational continuity;
- provide working capital and manage contingent liabilities;
- support strategic investment and development.

Free reserves are held primarily to mitigate against unforeseen reductions in activity or funding. This is managed through full-cost-recovery budgeting, prudent forecasting and contract negotiation, and careful treasury management. Any additional free reserves not required under the policy may be used to further the charity's aims and meet contractual obligations.

The Trustees confirm that restricted funds have sufficient assets to meet their obligations, or that appropriate arrangements are in place with funders. The reserves policy is reviewed annually in light of changes to the charity's funding profile and strategic priorities

Review of the results for the Year to 31st March 2025

The financial statements for the year to 31st March 2025 show a deficit of £20,606 (2024 : surplus £9,473) on income of £542,600 (2024 : £479,135).

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

9. Strategic Statements and Operational Highlights

In spring 2024, AirS developed a concise strategic framework to support the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer and to clarify long-term direction

Mission

- A. To reduce the incidence and impact of disadvantage and poverty in rural areas.
- B. To increase the capacity of rural communities to manage change for the benefit of all residents.
- C. To inform and amplify the voice of rural communities in public policy and discourse.

Vision

- A. That every parish in Sussex benefits from community-led action and ownership.
- B. That local authorities actively support the empowerment of community projects.
- C. That rural stakeholders recognise the social, economic and environmental value of community participation.

Values

- Respect for people and places
- Belief in our purpose
- Love for land and nature
- Trust in community
- Commitment to collaboration

Statement of Purpose

Since 1931, AirS has sought to demonstrate that community-led change is a powerful driver of resilient, balanced and sustainable rural life. Our purpose is to support communities to achieve local ambitions and improve the places in which they live and work. We support community-led change to build resilience in rural Sussex. We believe in the potential for local action to meet local needs and aspirations. We celebrate the benefits of community participation and decision making.

Strategic Directions

Guided by ACRE and DEFRA priorities, AirS has developed five strategic directions:

- A. Leading on community asset development and promoting community ownership.
- B. Sustaining community networks as the foundation of rural development.
- C. Supporting a just transition to a greener society.
- D. Advancing community-led approaches to nature recovery and biodiversity.
- E. Celebrating rural life and championing the unique needs of rural communities.

Following this strategic work, Maryanne Matthews was appointed Chief Executive Officer in October 2024. Recognising the limitations of the small Market Street office, Maryanne led the move to a larger, more accessible office on Western Road, Lewes. The move was made possible by proceeds from the sale of our previous Lewes historic office on School Hill in 2018. The new premises provide much improved workspace, meeting areas, accessibility and visibility for the organisation. Maryanne Matthews decided to step down as Chief Executive Officer of Action in rural Sussex, just outside the scope of this statement, on the 23rd of May 2025. We wish her well in the future. Interim arrangements have been made with Tom Warder acting as CEO in his role as Director of Rural Community Services.

The work of AirS has continued with purpose and commitment. From April 2024 to March 2025, we delivered a range of programmes supporting rural communities and focused on three main areas. The Community Housing Service helped local groups, especially Community Land Trusts, create affordable homes. The Community Buildings Service provided advice, training, grants, and events to strengthen community buildings and networks. The Community Projects Service included 'Lost Woods', which encouraged people to connect with local woodlands, and

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

'Making it Happen', which supported residents to develop their own community projects. Across all programmes, our work aimed to build skills, increase participation, and strengthen the social, cultural, and environmental life of these Sussex communities.

Community Housing Service

The Sussex Community Housing Hub continued to support a wide range of community led housing groups across the county, helping local people shape and deliver affordable homes that meet the needs of their own communities. A key part of this work involves supporting Community Land Trusts (CLTs). CLTs are non-profit, community-run organisations that develop homes and other assets for local people, ensuring housing remains genuinely affordable.

The Arundel CLT project has made strong progress this year, with all 27 affordable homes now moving ahead on site as part of the wider Ford Road development. In Herstmonceux, the CLT secured development finance for its plan to build 17 homes for local people and has brought a Housing Association partner on board to help deliver the scheme.

Marsham CLT also took important steps forward, securing £110,000 in pre-development funding to advance plans for new affordable homes serving the parishes of Pett, Guestling and Fairlight. The Hub has continued to work closely with social investors Resonance, whose support has helped Sussex CLTs access early finance to move their projects forward.

Interest in community led housing continues to grow, with new CLTs now forming in Rye and Iden. To enhance the delivery of rural affordable housing, the Hub successfully recruited Louise Halpbern as the new Rural Housing Enabler, strengthening the team's capacity to assist the towns and parishes across the county.

This year also saw the completion of Housing Needs Surveys in Plumpton, Beckley and Wivelsfield. All three surveys showed clear demand for more affordable homes and strong support for providing these locally.

A new definition of Community Led Development in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has brought welcome clarity and recognition to the sector. Despite ongoing market challenges, community groups across Sussex continue to make meaningful progress in creating the affordable homes their communities need.

Community Buildings Service

Our Community Buildings advice and information service continued to evolve throughout 2024/25, updating resources and guidance to reflect changing trustee responsibilities, legislation and funding priorities. We responded to more than 250 enquiries from 105 halls, supporting issues ranging from governance, fundraising and CIO conversion to health and safety, marketing, land matters and operational challenges. We assisted halls in securing grants for both minor equipment and major redevelopment projects.

Our training and networking programme delivered nine well-attended sessions for 110 trustees and managers on topics including trustee roles, PAT testing, governing documents, music licensing, decarbonisation, community cafés, fundraising, risk mitigation and effective engagement. Our online forum grew to 270 users—a 20% increase—with 150 discussion threads, demonstrating strong peer-to-peer support.

The 2025 Village Hall Conference at Ashington Community Centre brought together 80 halls for a day themed around Celebrating, Encouraging & Supporting Volunteers. Keynotes Louise Beaton OBE and David Clark reflected on the past and future of village halls, while workshops covered community engagement, volunteer recruitment, trustee responsibilities, licensing, fire safety, insurance and funding.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Nationally, we contributed Sussex insights to the ACRE Network, shaping policy discussions including Martyn's Law and the needs of rural volunteer-run halls. Locally, we strengthened partnerships with authorities across Sussex and secured a Wealden District Council Community Grant for 2025–28.

We continued championing the social, environmental and economic value of community buildings and supported successful Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund applicants. Guided by the Sussex Community Buildings Advisory Group, we are preparing for Village Halls Week 2026 and developing a county-wide directory for launch in 2026. Subscribers rose to 162, with contact across 63% of Sussex halls. These activities have strengthened the management, resilience, and sustainability of village halls across Sussex.

Community Projects Service - Lost Woods Project

The past year has marked strong progress for the Lost Woods project as we approach the halfway point of our five-year programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. AirS leads on nine of the nineteen projects within the programme, focusing on engaging people—especially those from underserved communities—with their local woodlands. We are pleased to be exceeding our targets in more than half of our project areas.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, our Mobile Hub attended 18 community events, reaching over 800 people and increasing awareness of the importance of ancient woodlands and the opportunities available through Lost Woods. Alongside this, we worked to ensure people felt supported and inspired to connect with nature and each other. We ran six networking events and four training sessions, including hands-on activities such as searching for dormouse-nibbled nuts, and welcomed adults with learning disabilities from Burnside Disability Day Centre to our Community Get Together.

Our three Woods on Prescription courses in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Small Dole supported people experiencing physical or mental health challenges, isolation and bereavement. Based on the NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing, these courses improved mobility, wellbeing and confidence, and were described by participants as “life changing.”

We also supported inclusive conservation volunteering through 17 Conservation for All sessions, involving adults and young people with learning disabilities and people moving on from homelessness. Twelve wildlife surveys and guided walks, supported by our Wildlife Champions, helped engage more people in nature and provided valuable ecological information. In addition, we assisted 11 local conservation, wildlife and sustainability groups to engage their communities and helped three new groups to form and begin delivering activities.

Community Projects Service - Making it Happen

During the year under review, Action in Rural Sussex (AirS) continued its role as the Wealden delivery partner for Making it Happen (MiH), an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) programme commissioned by East Sussex County Council. The project ran from 2019 and came to a close in March 2025. AirS worked in Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough and Polegate, helping local people build confidence, form connections and develop community-led ideas.

In this final year, our Community Development Workers supported residents to spot strengths in their neighbourhoods, bring people together and get small projects off the ground. Groups across the four towns received practical help, advice and small grants, which contributed to stronger local networks and increased community activity.

Alongside this, the AirS MiH team contributed to the programme's evaluation and learning work by analysing feedback, preparing updates, and helping run workshops that brought partners together to share experiences.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

The team also provided ABCD training for AirS staff and worked with Wealden District Council as they explored using more community-focused approaches in future planning.

Making it Happen worked well because it focused on people rather than targets. Flexible support, trust and peer learning helped residents gain confidence, develop ideas and take action in ways that suited their communities. With the project now completed, AirS continues to look for opportunities to build on this way of working and support more local communities across rural Sussex.

Over the year, CLTs made strong progress, with projects on site, securing funding, and responding to local housing needs to provide lasting affordable homes. Village halls strengthened governance, increased volunteer engagement, and enhanced their social and environmental impact through advice, training, events and grants. Lost Woods successfully engaged hundreds of people, encouraged volunteering, improved physical and mental health, and increased support for woodland conservation. Making it Happen empowered residents in Wealden to gain confidence, develop local initiatives, and build stronger community networks. Collectively, these programmes demonstrate AirS's ongoing impact in building resilient rural communities.

10. Small Company Exemptions

This report is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

11. Disclosure of Information to Auditors

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 17th December 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



.....
William Anderson, Chair

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sussex Rural Community Council (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts* section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

The objectives of our audit, in respect to fraud, are: to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses; and to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and its management.

Our approach was as follows:

- We identified areas of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements from our general commercial and sector experience, and through discussion with the directors and other management (as required by auditing standards), and discussed with the directors and other management the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- We identified the following areas as those most likely to have such an effect: health and safety; General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); fraud; bribery and corruption and employment law. Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.
- We considered the legal and regulatory frameworks directly applicable to the financial statements reporting framework (FRS 102 and the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011) and the relevant tax compliance regulations in the UK;
- We considered the nature of the company's operations, the control environment and business performance, including the key drivers for management's remuneration;
- We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit;
- We considered the procedures and controls that the group has established to address risks identified, or that otherwise prevent, deter and detect fraud; and how senior management monitors those programmes and controls.

Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Where the risk was considered to be higher, we performed audit procedures to address each identified fraud risk. These procedures included: testing manual journals; reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation; performing analytical procedures; and enquiring of management, and were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

TC Group

David Martin FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of TC Group

Statutory Auditor

19 December 2025

One Bell Lane

Lewes

East Sussex BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)
For the year ended 31 March 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Income and endowments from:	2				
Donations and legacies	Page 15	48,226	-	48,226	48,749
Charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	Page 15	280,866	210,779	491,645	385,048
Investments	3	<u>14,001</u>	-	<u>14,001</u>	<u>45,338</u>
Total		<u><u>343,093</u></u>	<u><u>210,779</u></u>	<u><u>553,872</u></u>	<u><u>479,135</u></u>
Expenditure on charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	Page 16	<u>353,126</u>	<u>210,080</u>	<u>563,206</u>	<u>469,662</u>
Net income (expenditure) before other recognised gains/ (losses)	4	(10,033)	699	(9,334)	9,473
Other recognised gains and losses:					
Valuation gains/ (losses)	19	(11,271)	-	(11,271)	-
Net movement in funds		<u>(21,304)</u>	<u>699</u>	<u>(20,605)</u>	<u>9,473</u>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,558,117</u>	<u>38,398</u>	<u>1,596,515</u>	<u>1,587,402</u>
Total funds carried forward	15,16	<u>1,536,813</u>	<u>39,097</u>	<u>1,575,910</u>	<u>1,596,515</u>

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Income from donations and legacies		
Grants		
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)	47,395	47,395
Donations		
Donations	<u>831</u>	<u>1,354</u>
	<u>48,226</u>	<u>48,749</u>
Income from Charitable Activities		
Income from operational programmes		
Housing Hub Fees	174,773	124,840
Village Hall consultancy/subscription	24,751	27,892
Sussex Community Development Assoc.	81,342	77,635
Neighbourhood Planning	-	<u>2,343</u>
	<u>280,866</u>	<u>232,710</u>
Project specific funding		
Grants/Donations		
Local & Regional Government	6,715	7,176
Rural Housing Enabling	62,389	35,670
Hope Keith Trust	40,347	
Lost Woods Grants	<u>101,328</u>	<u>109,492</u>
	<u>210,779</u>	<u>152,338</u>
Total Income from operational programmes	<u>491,645</u>	<u>385,048</u>
Total Income from donations and charitable activities	<u>539,871</u>	<u>433,797</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Operational programmes		
Information technology	4,999	2,708
Event costs	1,296	1,346
Print post stationery	5,400	26
Small equipment	104	1,817
Travel, motor and meetings	4,258	2,858
Other costs	760	59
Salaries, social security and pensions	141,695	110,969
Staff recruitment, training and support	845	2,269
Share of Support Costs	<u>50,723</u>	<u>38,134</u>
	<u>210,080</u>	<u>160,186</u>
Support Costs		
Rent	8,020	7,936
Power and light	1,268	761
Communications	4,168	5,545
Insurance	2,405	2,033
Repairs and maintenance	605	1,840
Depreciation	2,607	217
Salaries, social security and pensions	290,642	269,317
Other pension costs	5,029	-
Staff recruitment, training and support	12,755	3,232
Information technology	12,356	6,776
Advertising and marketing	-	883
Membership fees	5,273	7,449
Travel, motor and meetings	14,904	6,913
Bank Charges	97	65
Legal and Professional	35,340	21,935
Print post stationery	1,458	6,675
Sundries	1,422	833
Less: Expenditure on operational programmes	<u>(50,723)</u>	<u>(38,134)</u>
	<u>347,626</u>	<u>304,276</u>
Governance Costs		
Audit Fees	<u>5,500</u>	<u>5,200</u>
	<u>563,206</u>	<u>469,662</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	£	2025 £	£	2024 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	9		8,863		203
Freehold Property	9		500,000		-
Investment	10		<u>1,038,729</u>		<u>-</u>
			1,547,592		203
Current assets					
Debtors	11	78,645		50,796	
Cash balances		<u>68,803</u>		1,654,978	
		147,448		1,705,774	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling					
Due in under one year	12	<u>(110,565)</u>		<u>(105,914)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>36,883</u>		<u>1,599,860</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			1,584,475		1,600,063
Provisions	19		<u>(8,565)</u>		<u>(3,548)</u>
Net assets			<u>1,575,910</u>		<u>1,596,515</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	15				
- General funds			395,378		353,665
- Property Reserve			500,000		-
- Designated funds			650,000		1,208,000
- Pension Reserve	19		<u>(8,565)</u>		<u>(3,548)</u>
			1,536,813		1,558,117
Restricted funds	16		<u>39,097</u>		<u>38,398</u>
Total charity funds			<u>1,575,910</u>		<u>1,596,515</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 17th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



William Anderson
Chair



John Moore-Bick
Trustee

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities	21	(38,909)	(76,107)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		2,730	45,338
Investment Fund		(1,050,000)	-
Freehold Property		(500,000)	-
Net cash provided by investment activities		<u>(1,547,270)</u>	<u>45,338</u>
Change in Cash balances in the reporting period		(1,586,175)	(30,769)
Cash balances at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>1,654,978</u>	<u>1,685,747</u>
Cash balances at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>68,803</u></u>	<u><u>1,654,978</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

1.1. Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

1.2 Group financial statements

The Company is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial Statements by virtue of section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 as the group it heads qualifies as a small group. These financial statements therefore present information about the company as an individual undertaking and not about its group.

1.3. Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The charity is dependent on the continued support of grant aiding bodies. The trustees believe that the company will continue to receive this support and, taking into accounts its cash reserves, consider that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:

- the charity is legally entitled to the funds;
- any performance conditions attached to the income have been met or are fully within the control of the charity;
- there is sufficient certainty that receipt at the income is considered probable;
- the amount can be reliably measured.

Donations and legacies

Grants and donations are recognised as incoming resources in the year in which they are receivable, except as follows:

- When donors specify that grants or donations given to the charity must be used in future accounting periods, the income is deferred to those periods;
- when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income. The income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the preconditions for use are met.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025**

Charitable activities

Income from operational programmes is included in the incoming resources in the period in which the relevant programme takes place.

Project specific funding - when donors specify that donations and grants are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement. This income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Interest income

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered and is recognised when:

- there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment;
- it is probable that settlement will be required;
- the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Operational programme costs - where costs are identified directly with specific programmes and allocated to the relevant heading within resources expended.

Support costs

The administrative and overhead costs associated with running the office from which the company operates as well as governance costs. Support costs are wholly attributable to operational programme costs.

Governance costs

Costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2025

1.6. Fund (Reserves)accounting

Funds held by the charity are either:

- Unrestricted general funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

- Designated funds - these are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

- Restricted funds - these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects or the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost. Depreciation is provided at annual rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Furniture, fixtures & equipment/IT equipment - Straight line basis, the shorter of four years or the duration of the project.

1.8. Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at cost less provision for diminution in value.

Investments held within investment funds are revalued to the market Net Asset Value at regular quarterly intervals.

1.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid after taking account of any trade discounts.

1.10 Cash Balances

Cash balances include cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.11 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025

1.12 Pensions

The company makes defined contribution pension and superannuation payments in relation to members of staff in accordance with the terms of their employment contracts. Such payments are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable.

1.13. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value, and subsequently revalued at their Settlement value.

2. Incoming Resources

The total incoming resources for the year have been derived from the principal activity undertaken wholly in the UK.

3. Investment Income	2025	2024
	£	£
Investment Income	<u>14,001</u>	<u>45,338</u>
4. Net income/(expenditure) for the year is stated after charging:	2025	2024
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible assets	2,607	217
Audit costs	<u>5,500</u>	<u>5,200</u>

5. Trustees' emoluments and reimbursed expenses

The trustees received no remuneration during the year (2024 - £Nil)

The aggregated amount reimbursed to trustees during the year was £298 (2024 - £Nil)

6. Staff costs and numbers	2025	2024
	£	£
Staff costs		
Salaries, social security and pension costs	418,731	380,286
Other pension costs	<u>5,029</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>423,760</u>	<u>380,286</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025**

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
60,000 to 70,000	1	-

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Management Team. The total employee costs of the 3 (2024 : 2) key management personnel of the charity were £129,470 (2024 - £123,274).

Staff Numbers

The average number of employees (including casual and part time staff) during the year was made up as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Support /operational programmes	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>

7. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of its employees. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. The pension charge represents contributions due from the company and amounted to £5,029 (2024 - Nil).

8. Corporation taxation

The company is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9. Fixed Assets -tangible assets

	IT Equipment	Furniture Fixtures Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
1 April 2024	651	7,690	8,341
Additions	<u>11,266</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,266</u>
31 March 2025	<u>11,917</u>	<u>7,690</u>	<u>19,607</u>
Depreciation			
1 April 2024	448	7,690	8,138
Charge for year	<u>2,606</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,606</u>
31 March 2025	<u>3,054</u>	<u>7,690</u>	<u>10,744</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025**

Net book values

31 March 2025	<u>8,863</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,863</u>
31 March 2024	<u>203</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>203</u>

Fixed assets - freehold property

	£
Cost	
1 April 2024	-
Additions	<u>500,000</u>
31 March 2025	<u>500,000</u>
Depreciation	
1 April 2024	-
Charge for year	-
31 March 2025	-
Net book values	
31 March 2025	<u>500,000</u>
31 March 2024	-

10. Fixed Asset Investments - subsidiary

Druv Homes Limited, registered on 26 May 2023, is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registration number 9082. This organisation is deemed a subsidiary of Sussex Rural Community Council. Druv Homes Limited has not traded since being registered and has not yet issued any shares.

Fixed Asset Investments – listed investments

	CCLA Listed Investments £
1 April 2024	-
Additions	<u>1,050,000</u>
Unrealised gain/(loss)	<u>(11,271)</u>
31 March 2025	<u>1,038,729</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Fixed Asset Investments – listed investments

	CCLA Listed Investments £
1 April 2024	-
Additions	<u>1,050,000</u>
Unrealised gain/(loss)	<u>(11,271)</u>
31 March 2025	<u><u>1,038,729</u></u>

11. Debtors	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	67,542	10,785
Other debtors	-	309
Prepayments	1,103	1,202
Accrued Income	<u>10,000</u>	<u>38,500</u>
	<u><u>78,645</u></u>	<u><u>50,796</u></u>

12. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	18,128	363
Other taxation and social security	14,378	10,722
Other creditors	5,540	6,866
Accruals	33,423	16,130
Deferred income (Note 13)	<u>39,097</u>	<u>71,833</u>
	<u><u>110,566</u></u>	<u><u>105,914</u></u>

13. Deferred Income	£
Balance at 1 April 2024	71,833
Amount released to incoming resources	(89,536)
Amount deferred in the year	<u>56,800</u>
Balance at 31 March 2025	<u><u>39,097</u></u>

Deferred income relates to grants and other income received in advance.

14. Limited by guarantee

Sussex Rural Community Council is a private company, limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales without a share capital. Each member guarantees to contribute £1 to the company in the event of its winding up. At 31 March 2025 there were 71 members.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025

15. Unrestricted funds

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Gain/ (losses) £	Pension £	Transfers £	Carried forward £
Designated Fund							
Development Fund	534,984					-24,984	510,000
Relocation Fund	500,000					-500,000	-
Sussex Community Housing Hub	92,016					7,984	100,000
IT Rolling Replacement Fund	18,000					-8,000	10,000
Recruitment Fund	63,000					-33,000	30,000
Total Designated Fund	1,208,000					-558,000	650,000
General Fund	353,665	343,093	-353,126	-11,271	5,017	58,000	395,378
Property Fund (Note 9)						500,000	500,000
Pension Deficit	-3,548				-5,017		-8,565
	<u>1,558,117</u>	<u>343,093</u>	<u>-353,126</u>	<u>-11,271</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,536,813</u>

16. Restricted funds

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Carried forward £
Lost Woods	35,618	101,328	(136,946)	-
Hope Keith	-	40,347	(34,217)	6,130
Rural Housing Enabling	780	62,389	(36,002)	27,167
Village Halls	2,000	6,715	(2,915)	5,800
	<u>38,398</u>	<u>210,779</u>	<u>(210,080)</u>	<u>39,097</u>

The National Lottery Heritage Fund supported our Lost Woods programme to introduce communities to woodland wildlife and conservation projects. DEFRA have funded our Rural Housing Enabling programme to help deliver rural affordable housing schemes. Mid Sussex Voluntary Action support our Village Halls Service. Hope Keith Villages Trust funded a new villages connect community development programme.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General Funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	508,863	-	-	508,863
Net current assets	386,515	650,000	39,097	1,075,612
Pension Reserve	(8,565)	-	-	(8,565)
	<u>886,813</u>	<u>650,000</u>	<u>39,097</u>	<u>1,575,910</u>

18. Financial commitments

At 31 March 2025 the company had no total future commitments under operating leases as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Due:		
Within one year	-	<u>6,700</u>
Over one year	-	<u>18,983</u>

19. Pension scheme

The company participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 521 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the company to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the company is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2025

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2023. This valuation showed assets of £514.9m, liabilities of £531.0m and a deficit of £16.1m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028:	£2,100,000 per annum	(payable monthly)
-------------------------------------	----------------------	-------------------

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 March 2028 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Deficit contributions

From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025:	£3,312,000 per annum	(payable monthly)
---------------------------------------	----------------------	-------------------

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the company has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the company recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

PRESENT VALUES OF PROVISION

RECONCILIATION OF OPENING AND CLOSING PROVISIONS

	Period Ending 31 March 2025	Period Ending 31 March 2024
Provision at start of period	3,548	7,596
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	94	290
Deficit contribution paid	(3,618)	(4,341)
Remeasurements - impact of any change in assumptions	54	3
Remeasurements – amendments to the contribution schedule	8,487	-
Provision at end of period	8,565	3,548

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2025

20. Related party transactions

None (2024 - £8,118 on pre incorporation expenditure relating to Druv Homes Ltd)

21. Reconciliation of net income (expenditure) to net cashflow from operating activities	2025 £	2024 £
Net income (expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(20,606)	9,473
Depreciation	2,607	217
Dividends and interest	(2,730)	(45,338)
(Increase) decrease in debtors	(27,849)	21,415
(Decrease) increase in provisions	5,017	(4,048)
(Decrease) increase in creditors	<u>4,652</u>	<u>(57,826)</u>
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>(38,909)</u>	<u>(76,107)</u>

SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

England & Wales - Charity number 1035401

Accounts



Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Company number 02907172

Charity number 1035401

Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2024

Knill James LLP, Chartered Accountants
One Bell Lane, Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Contents

	Page
Trustees' report	2 – 8
Auditors' Report	9 - 12
Statement of Financial Activities	13 – 15
Balance Sheet	16 - 17
Cash Flow Statement	18
Notes to Financial Statements	19 - 29

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Trustees' Report for year to 31 March 2024

1. Introduction

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

2. Charitable objects

The charity's objects are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of the counties of East and West Sussex; in particular to promote and organise partnership working to achieve the advancement of education, the protection of health, relief of poverty, distress and sickness, by bringing together representatives of the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and other bodies and any interested persons. We set out our strategic aims and activities in more detail later in this report.

3. Structure, governance and management

Legal and administrative details

Sussex Rural Community Council (SRCC) is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales, company number 02907172, incorporated under the Companies Acts. SRCC is a registered charity number 1035401.

The governing body is the Board of Trustees. The governing document is the Articles of Association.

Operating Name

Sussex Rural Community Council has operated for many years under the operating name "Action in rural Sussex" (AirS), which will be used in this Trustees' Report as the identity by which the charity is most commonly known.

Directors and Trustees

The directors of SRCC are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

The Trustees who served during the year and since the year end have been:

William Anderson	Chair
Colin Brown	
Rob Dillingham	Resigned 1 June 2023
Alex Ingham Clark	Resigned 19 January 2024
Owen Ingram	
John Moore-Bick	
Kristin Sjovorr	

Chief Executive Officer; day to day management

Steven Haasz, Interim Chief Executive Officer to 30 September 2023;

Tom Warder, Interim Chief Executive Officer from 1 October 2023

Auditors

Knill James LLP, One Bell Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ;
Barclays Bank plc, The Old Bank, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2JP;
Nationwide Building Society, Kings Park Road, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6NW;
Shawbrook Bank Ltd, Lutea House, Warley Hill Business Park, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3BE;
The Charity Bank Ltd, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1BE.

Registered office and operational address

16 Market Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2NB.

4. Appointment and Recruitment of Trustees

The trustees are elected by the members of the charity at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Any remaining vacancies not filled at the AGM may be filled by co-option on the initiative of the trustees.

New trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity.

5. Trustees and their responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The accounts comply with current statutory requirements and with the requirements of the governing document.

6. Financial review

Funding

AirS draws its funding from a variety of sources, but continues to be largely dependent on statutory sector funding. We are very grateful to all of our funders but particularly:

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Those District Councils in West and East Sussex that provide funding for our housing services; East Sussex County Council for their support of the Making It Happen project where AirS works as a partner with Sussex Community Development Association, Hastings Voluntary Action, Rother Voluntary Action and 3VA;

The National Lottery for their support of the Lost Woods consortium where AirS works as partner with The Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and The Small Woodland Association;

DEFRA for their ongoing annual grant in support of AirS through our national body, ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).

The past few years have been challenging due to the effects of inflation, rising costs of energy, food and building materials. The consequence has been distinct and considerable pressure on our projects and on the communities we serve. AirS will need to work ever more closely with local authorities, funders and coordinating bodies to ensure that we remain responsive to the environmental, social, economic and political landscapes where we work.

Restricted Funds

The detail of the restricted fund activity is set out in Note 16 of the financial statements. Where individual projects show a deficit on completion or termination, this has been made good from unrestricted funds. Restricted funds at the year end amounted to £76,532.

Unrestricted Funds

The total unrestricted funds are set out in Note 15 of the financial statements amounted to £1,519,983. Of this total the Trustees have designated that £1,208,000 is held for specific purposes.

Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees has developed its reserves policy to cover the ongoing employee commitments, ensure business continuity and allow for its investment in developing sustainable income streams, contingent liabilities, working capital requirements and to take account of its annual risk review. The free reserve is maintained primarily in case Action in rural Sussex suffers a sudden and unforeseen contraction of activities.

This is mitigated through full cost recovery budgeting, accurate forecasting, advantageous contract negotiation where possible and careful treasury management. Any remaining free reserves not required under the reserves policy are available to develop the work of the charity, to meet its charitable objectives and to fulfil any latent contractual obligations entered by the charity as part of its primary purpose trading.

The Board of Trustees confirms that each restricted fund has sufficient assets to meet its obligations, or arrangements exist with the funders that these obligations will be met at the point at which the requirement arises. Trustees annually review the reserves policy in the light of a continuing shift in funding profile, and the linked investment in strategic and business development.

Review of the results for the Year to 31 March 2024

The financial statements for the year to 31 March 2024 show a surplus of £9,473 (2023 deficiency £30,701) on income of £479,135 (2023 £413,377).

The last twelve months have been a period of stability and focus. Following two years of financial turnaround actions under the leadership of Steven Haasz, Tom Warder was appointed as interim CEO in October 2023. Tom's new role coincided with William Anderson taking over from Alex Ingham Clark as Chair

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

of the board in January 2024. Together they have led a strategic review of our operations in order to recruit a long-term CEO from a confident baseline with well-articulated direction. The review prospectus papers and recruitment document were compiled through the spring of 2024 for advertisement in the summer.

Concurrent to this review activity has been successful with new funded projects starting, the accomplishment of our investment intentions, and the commencement of work to build a new website with a good user interface and more ways to share our projects and vision widely. Two new projects have been designed and confirmed during the period this paper covers:

First, building on the successes of two community development projects, Making it Happen and Lost Woods (detailed below) we have agreed a new five year project with the Hope Keith Trust, recruiting a team to further develop our asset based community development services in the context of supporting - primarily - older people in a cluster of villages within the Horsham district of West Sussex.

Second, our national representative body (ACRE) have realised the continuing need for small scale rural affordable housing to be delivered by housing associations. This requires much coordination on the ground to find areas of distinct housing need, with local 'buy in' and available, affordable land. ACRE have administered the funding for a two year nation wide project to provide rural housing enablers as the local agent to bring housing projects together for funding and planning. We recruited to fill this position and work has started and is complementary to our well established community led housing activity as overseen by the team which forms the Sussex Community Housing Hub.

Meanwhile our community led planning services are developing with a focus on supporting communities through a more community-led and complete approach to planning for their futures. This is a move away from development-led and highly technical Neighbourhood Development Plans which are often ignored by developers. Instead, we have undertaken our first Parish Priority Statements which offer a more straightforward and succinct method for rural communities to set out their core vision, objectives and action plans relating to a full range of community issues and concerns.

Other streams of hard work continue to fund and grow existing services and projects to ensure we maintain support for community-led change, demonstrate the potential for local action to meet local needs and celebrate the benefits of community participation and decision making.

All the many small steps taken to achieve progress over the last year are the result of having an ambitious team of staff. Leadership at all levels has been impressive. The level of commitment and faith in our charitable mission displayed by all is not taken for granted. Times are tough in the communities we serve and we recognise the resilience and good humour of the team.

7. Operational Review for year ended 31 March 2024

Rural and Community Led Housing

The Sussex Community Housing Hub has continued to provide technical advice and support to some 30 community led housing groups and projects during this time.

Ringmer Area Community Land Trust (CLT) became the second in East Sussex to complete a scheme; six homes (four affordable to rent) built to a very high standard. Marsham CLT, representing the three parishes of Pett, Guestling and Fairlight came into being during this period and hoping to provide local needs housing on a rural exception site locally.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

In West Sussex, Arundel CLT are forging ahead with their project to provide 20 Social Rented homes on a mixed development on Ford Rd. In partnership with the Norfolk Estate and Aster Housing Association. This 90 home scheme (27 affordable) has now started on site in January 2024. Another multi parish CLT has also emerged in Storrington and Thakeham which has taken the name Chanctonbury CLT. They are exploring both housing and other social enterprise asset development locally.

High interest rates and build costs have remained a challenge to scheme viability during this year which has meant a retraction in housebuilding across the industry and to which rural and community led housing is not immune. Despite this, groups and projects supported by the Sussex Hub have continued to make steady progress.

We also look forward to re-energising our rural housing enabling offer via the funds secured from DEFRA and via ACRE to help deliver rural affordable housing schemes alongside housing association partners. A new Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) post will take this work forward in 2024/2025.

Village Hall Service

Our Village Halls Service is valued across both East and West Sussex with subscribers to the scheme growing to 160 during this period.

Training has been provided on a variety of subjects relevant to all village halls, from incorporation to governance and risk assessments. We are looking to expand the training opportunities in future years.

AirS marked national Village Halls Week this year with a Go Green event in March which championed some of the pioneering work undertaken to improve the sustainability of Village Halls such as that undertaken by the Adastra Hall in Hassocks who have installed solar panels and implemented other energy saving measures.

Other aspects of the service have been the support provided to numerous halls to make successful applications for funds including the Platinum Jubilee Fund, ongoing advice and support via the very active online forum on Basecamp and the advice and liaison provided to local authorities. We have also maintained our closer working partnership with Mid Sussex Voluntary Action, delivering tailored support to Halls in Mid Sussex. Work that is supported by Mid Sussex District Council.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Community Based Services

Making it Happen

During the year under review, AirS continued its Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in the four hub towns in Wealden (Crowborough, Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield) through its Making it Happen collaboration with East Sussex County Council.

Work on the ground has seen groups supported and grants given in all four areas, including a partial Grow grant for Green Transition Crowborough, and a next steps grant for Hailsham Boxing Club.

In addition to the main project grassroots work, the projects' three staff have been helping with the co-ordination of the evaluation strand, working on analysis of reporting data and bulletins for communications, supporting the co-ordination of the learning programme, planning and facilitating various workshops and development days.

In addition, the team has supported AirS in house training on ABCD for its staff and is working with Wealden District Council on developing a broader ABCD approach in planning for their future.

The Making it Happen project is now in its final year, and AirS is involved in succession planning at county level and in legacy planning for the communities. There is a possibility for continuation of ABCD work funded by ESCC, but AirS is also looking at other ways of growing our community development work to diversify our service for more communities to access it, supported by more varied and sustainable funding.

Lost Woods

We are now in the second year of this five year project funded principally by the Lottery Heritage Fund. AirS leads on 9 of 19 projects which make up the Lost Woods programme and employs six people, equivalent to 3.5 full time staff. We have made an excellent start to the delivery stage and our work is well regarded by project partners and funders. In the year under review we engaged with 1,042 people through the Lost Woods project.

Those with whom we have engaged now know more about woodland wildlife, how and where to enjoy it, feel less isolated through joining woodland wellbeing groups or taking part in woodland play activities. They feel more supported by developing networks and collaborations to achieve joint aims around protecting woodlands or developing activities.

Skills and knowledge have been developed through attending talks and training or taking part in practical conservation activities, building excellent working relationships within the AirS team and the wider partnership.

Woodland sustainability, conservation and wildlife and underserved communities are receiving support from the AirS team to sustain themselves and introduce new woodland activities as well as creating positive collaborations with conservation groups and woodland owners. Volunteers are engaging with nature, contributing to protecting it and sharing it with others.

The breadth and depth of these operations show how well we are embedded into the rural communities of East and West Sussex. We continue to seek solutions for those rural communities.

8. Small Company Exemptions

This report is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

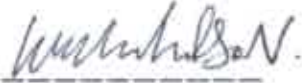
9. Disclosure of Information to Auditors

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 September 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



William Anderson, Chair

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sussex Rural Community Council (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts* section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

In identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, we:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory framework that the company operates in and how the charitable company complies with the legal and regulatory framework;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud; and
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, the charitable company's governing document, tax legislation and Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing the financial statements, including the Trustees' report, remaining alert to new or unusual transactions which may not be in accordance with the governing document.

The most significant laws and regulations that have an indirect impact on the financial statements are employment law the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). We performed audit procedures to inquire of management and those charged with governance whether the charitable company is in compliance with these laws and regulations and inspected correspondence with regulatory authorities.

We identified the risk of management override of controls as the area where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included, but were not limited to, testing manual journal entries and other adjustments, evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business and challenging judgments and estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Knill James LLP

David Martin FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Knill James LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor

13 September 2024

One Bell Lane
Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Income and endowments from:	2				
Donations and legacies	Page 14	48,749	-	48,749	62,498
Charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	Page 14	232,710	152,338	385,048	326,018
Investments	3	<u>45,338</u>	-	<u>45,338</u>	<u>24,861</u>
Total		<u>326,797</u>	<u>152,338</u>	<u>479,135</u>	<u>413,377</u>
Expenditure on charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	Page 15	<u>309,476</u>	<u>160,186</u>	<u>469,662</u>	<u>444,078</u>
Net income (expenditure) before other recognised gains/ (losses)	4	17,321	(7,848)	9,473	(30,701)
Other recognised gains and losses:					
Actuarial valuation gains/ (losses)	19	-	-	-	203
Net movement in funds		<u>17,321</u>	<u>(7,848)</u>	<u>9,473</u>	<u>(30,498)</u>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,540,796</u>	<u>46,246</u>	<u>1,587,042</u>	<u>1,617,540</u>
Total funds carried forward	15,16	<u>1,558,117</u>	<u>38,398</u>	<u>1,596,515</u>	<u>1,587,042</u>

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Income from donations and legacies		
Grants		
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)	47,395	47,395
Donations		
Donations	<u>1,354</u>	<u>15,103</u>
	<u>48,749</u>	<u>62,498</u>
Income from Charitable Activities		
Income from operational programmes		
Housing Hub Fees	124,840	113,314
Village Hall consultancy/Subscription	27,892	29,750
Sussex Community Development Assoc.	77,635	97,729
Neighbourhood Planning	<u>2,343</u>	<u>16,257</u>
	<u>232,710</u>	<u>257,050</u>
Project specific funding		
Grants/Donations		
Local & Regional Government	7,176	7,175
Rural Housing Enabling	35,670	-
Lost Woods Grants	<u>109,492</u>	<u>61,793</u>
	<u>152,338</u>	<u>68,968</u>
Total Income from operational programmes	<u>385,048</u>	<u>326,018</u>
Total Income from donations and legacies	<u>433,797</u>	<u>388,516</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Operational programmes		
Information technology	2,708	1,233
Event costs	1,346	2,388
Print post stationery	26	1,745
Consultancy	-	11,136
Marketing and publicity	-	3,440
Small equipment	1,817	-17
Communications	-	172
Travel, motor, meetings	2,858	6,862
Other costs	59	-
Salaries, social security, pensions	110,969	29,563
Staff recruitment, training and support	2,269	-
Share of Support Costs	<u>38,134</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>160,186</u>	<u>56,556</u>
Support Costs		
Rent	7,936	16,517
Power and light	761	7,306
Communications	5,545	4,434
Insurance	2,033	1,815
Information technology	-	4,620
Repairs and maintenance	1,840	527
Depreciation	217	217
Salaries, social security, pensions	269,317	317,557
Other pension costs	-	5,317
Staff recruitment, training and support	3,232	6,296
Information technology	6,776	1,034
Advertising and marketing	883	928
Membership fees	7,449	6,911
Travel, motor, meetings	6,913	814
Bank Charges	65	72
Legal and Professional	21,935	5,831
Print post stationery	6,675	
Sundries	833	(656)
Irrecoverable VAT	-	1,762
Less: Expenditure on operational programmes	<u>(38,134)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>304,276</u>	<u>381,302</u>
Governance Costs		
Audit Fees	<u>5,200</u>	<u>6,220</u>
	<u>469,662</u>	<u>444,078</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

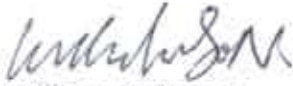
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	9		203		420
Investment	10		-		2
			<u>203</u>		<u>422</u>
Current assets					
Debtors	11	50,796		72,209	
Cash balances		<u>1,654,978</u>		<u>1,685,747</u>	
		1,705,774		1,757,956	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling Due in under one year	12	<u>(105,914)</u>		<u>(163,740)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>1,599,860</u>		<u>1,594,216</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			1,600,063		1,594,638
Provisions					
	19		<u>(3,548)</u>		<u>(7,596)</u>
Net assets			<u>1,596,515</u>		<u>1,587,042</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	15				
- General funds			353,665		340,392
- Designated funds			1,208,000		1,208,000
- Pension Reserve	19		<u>(3,548)</u>		<u>(7,596)</u>
			1,558,117		1,540,796
Restricted funds	16		<u>38,398</u>		<u>46,246</u>
Total charity funds			<u>1,596,515</u>		<u>1,587,042</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



William Anderson
Chair



John Moore-Bick
Trustee

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities	21	(76,107)	(138,241)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends and interest from investments		<u>45,338</u>	<u>24,861</u>
Net cash provided by investment activities		<u>45,338</u>	<u>24,861</u>
Change in Cash balances in the reporting period		(30,769)	(113,380)
Cash balances at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>1,685,747</u>	<u>1,799,127</u>
Cash balances at the end of the reporting period		<u>1,654,978</u>	<u>1,685,747</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

1.1. Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

1.2 Group financial statements

The Company is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial Statements by virtue of section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 as the group it heads qualifies as a small group. These financial statements therefore present information about the company as an individual undertaking and not about its group.

1.3. Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The company is dependent on the continued support of grant aiding bodies. The trustees believe that the company will continue to receive this support and, taking into accounts its cash reserves, consider that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:

- the charity is legally entitled to the funds;
- any performance conditions attached to the income have been met or are fully within the control of the charity;
- there is sufficient certainty that receipt at the income is considered probable;
- the amount can be reliably measured.

Donations and legacies

Grants and donations are recognised as incoming resources in the year in which they are receivable, except as follows:

- When donors specify that grants or donations given to the charity must be used in future accounting periods, the income is deferred to those periods;

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2024

- when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income. The income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the preconditions for use are met.

Charitable activities

Income from operational programmes is included in the incoming resources in the period in which the relevant programme takes place.

Project specific funding - when donors specify that donations and grants are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement. this income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Investment income

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered and is recognised when:

- there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment;
- it is probable that settlement will be required;
- the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Operational programme costs - where costs are identified directly with specific programmes and allocated to the relevant heading within resources expended.

Support costs

The administrative and overhead costs associated with running the office from which the company operates as well as governance costs. Support costs are wholly attributable to operational programme costs.

Governance costs

Costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

1.6. Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are either:

- Unrestricted general funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.
- Designated funds - these are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.
- Restricted funds - these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost. Depreciation is provided at annual rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Furniture/fixtures/equipment - Straight line basis, the shorter of four years or the duration of the project.

1.8. Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at cost less provision for diminution in value.

1.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid after taking account of any trade discounts.

1.10 Cash Balances

Cash balances include cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.11 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Creditors and provisions are recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

1.12 Pensions

The company makes defined contribution pension and superannuation payments in relation to members of staff in accordance with the terms of their employment contracts. Such payments are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable.

1.13. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value, and subsequently measured at their Settlement value.

2. Incoming Resources

The total incoming resources for the year have been derived from the principal activity undertaken wholly in the UK.

3. Interest receivable	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank interest	<u>45,338</u>	<u>24,861</u>

4. Net income/(expenditure) for the year is stated after charging:	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible assets	217	318
Audit costs	<u>5,200</u>	<u>6,220</u>

5. Trustees' emoluments and reimbursed expenses

The trustees received no remuneration during the year (2023 - ENil)

The aggregated amount reimbursed to trustees during the year was ENil (2023 - £283)

6. Staff costs and numbers	2024	2023
	£	£
Staff costs		
Salaries, social security and pension costs	380,286	347,120
Other pension costs	<u>-</u>	<u>5,317</u>
	<u>380,286</u>	<u>352,437</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year (2023 – nil).

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2024

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Management Team. The total employee costs of the key management personnel of the charity were £123,274 (2023 - £107,000).

Staff Numbers

The average number of employees (including casual and part time staff) during the year was made up as follows:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Support /operational programmes	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>

7. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of its employees. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. The pension charge represents contributions due from the company and amounted to £Nil (2023 - £1,353).

8. Corporation taxation

The company is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9. Fixed Assets -tangible assets

	Furniture Fixtures Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
1 April 2023	8,341	8,341
Additions	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
31 March 2024	<u>8,341</u>	<u>8,341</u>
Depreciation		
1 April 2023	7,921	7,921
Charge for year	<u>217</u>	<u>217</u>
31 March 2024	<u>8,138</u>	<u>8,138</u>
Net book values		
31 March 2024	<u>203</u>	<u>203</u>
31 March 2023	<u>420</u>	<u>420</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

10. Fixed Asset Investments

	Subsidiary Undertakings	Total
Shares	£	£
Cost		
1 April 2023	2	2
Less written off in year	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
31 March 2024	Nil	Nil
Net book values		
31 March 2024	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>
31 March 2023	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

The company owned all of the issued share capital of SRCC (Trading) Limited, a company registered in England and Wales, number 03101724, which was dissolved on 26 September 2023.

Druv Homes Limited, registered on 26 May 2023, is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registration number 9082. This organisation is deemed a subsidiary of Sussex Rural Community Council. Druv Homes Limited has not traded since being registered and has not yet issued any shares.

11. Debtors	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	10,785	59,716
Other debtors	309	1,017
Prepayments	1,202	1,062
Accrued Income	<u>38,500</u>	<u>10,414</u>
	<u>50,796</u>	<u>72,209</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

12. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	363	8,532
Other taxation and social security	10,722	7,870
Other creditors	6,866	5,043
Accruals	16,130	18,795
Deferred income (Note13)	<u>71,833</u>	<u>123,500</u>
	<u>105,914</u>	<u>163,740</u>
13. Deferred Income		£
Balance at 1 April 2023		123,500
Amount released to incoming resources		(93,667)
Amount deferred in the year		<u>42,000</u>
Balance at 31 March 2024		<u>71,833</u>

Deferred income relates to grants and other income received in advance.

14. Limited by guarantee

Sussex Rural Community Council is a private company, limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales without a share capital. Each member guarantees to contribute £1 to the company in the event of its winding up. At 31 March 2024 there were 71 members.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

15. Unrestricted funds	Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Pension	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Designated funds:					
Development Fund	534,984	-	-	-	534,984
Relocation Fund	500,000	-	-	-	500,000
Sussex Community Housing Hub	92,016	-	-	-	92,016
IT Rolling Replacement Fund	18,000	-	-	-	18,000
Recruitment Fund	<u>63,000</u>	-	-	-	<u>63,000</u>
Total designated fund	1,208,000	-	-	-	1,208,000
General fund	340,392	326,797	(309,476)	(4,048)	353,665
Pension scheme deficit	<u>(7,596)</u>	-	-	4,048	<u>(3,548)</u>
	<u>1,540,796</u>	<u>326,797</u>	<u>(309,476)</u>	-	<u>1,558,117</u>
16. Restricted funds		Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Carried forward
		£	£	£	£
Lost Woods		44,246	109,492	(118,120)	35,618
Rural Housing Enabling		-	35,670	(34,890)	780
Village Halls		<u>2,000</u>	<u>7,176</u>	<u>(7,176)</u>	<u>2,000</u>
		<u>46,246</u>	<u>152,338</u>	<u>(160,186)</u>	<u>38,398</u>

The National Lottery Heritage Fund supported our Lost Woods programme to introduce communities to woodland wildlife and conservation projects.

DEFRA have funded our Rural Housing Enabling programme to help deliver rural affordable housing schemes.

Mid Sussex Voluntary Action have continued to support our Village Halls Service

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General Funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	203	-	-	203
Net current assets	353,462	1,208,000	38,398	1,599,860
Pension Reserve	(3,548)	-	-	(3,548)
	<u>350,117</u>	<u>1,208,000</u>	<u>38,398</u>	<u>1,596,515</u>

18. Financial commitments

At 31 March 2024 the company had total future commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Due:		
Within one year	<u>6,700</u>	<u>6,700</u>
Over one year	<u>18,983</u>	<u>20,685</u>

The non cancellable operating lease is in relation to rental of the offices occupied by the company

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2024

19. Pension scheme

The company is a participating employer in the Growth Plan operated by the Pensions Trust to provide pension benefits for members of staff. The company participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the company to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the company is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows:

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the company has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the company recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The present value is calculated using the discount rate detailed in these disclosures. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

PRESENT VALUES OF PROVISION

RECONCILIATION OF OPENING AND CLOSING PROVISIONS

	Period Ending 31 March 2024	Period Ending 31 March 2023
Provision at start of period	7,596	11,915
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense)	290	225
Deficit contribution paid	(4,341)	(4,341)
Remeasurements - impact of any change in assumptions	3	(203)
Provision at end of period	3,548	7,596

20. Related party transactions

During the year the charity paid £8,118 on pre incorporation expenditure relating to Druv Homes Ltd (2023 - £10,380). These amounts are not reimbursable.

21. Reconciliation of net income (expenditure) to net cashflow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income (expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	9,473	(30,498)
Depreciation	217	218
Dividends and interest	(45,338)	(24,861)
(Increase) decrease in debtors	21,415	4,429
(Decrease) increase in provisions	(4,048)	(4,319)
(Decrease) increase in creditors	<u>(57,826)</u>	<u>(83,206)</u>
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>(76,107)</u>	<u>(138,241)</u>

SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

England & Wales - Charity number 1035401

Accounts



Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Company number 02907172

Charity number 1035401

Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Knill James LLP, Chartered Accountants
One Bell Lane, Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Contents

	Page
Trustees' report	2 – 9
Auditors' Report	10 - 13
Statement of Financial Activities	14 – 16
Balance Sheet	17
Cash Flow Statement	19
Notes to Financial Statement	20 - 31

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Trustees' Report for year to 31 March 2023

After four years as its chair, Alex Ingham Clark is standing down at this year's Annual General Meeting and he will step down as a trustee with effect from 31 December 2023 in accordance with the recommendations of the Charities Commission. Will Anderson, who joined AirS as a Trustee in August 2018 has been appointed as the new Chair.

1. Introduction

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

2. Charitable objects

The charity's objects are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of the counties of East and West Sussex; in particular to promote and organise partnership working to achieve the advancement of education, the protection of health, relief of poverty, distress and sickness, by bringing together representatives of the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and other bodies and any interested persons. We set out our strategic aims and activities in more detail later in this report.

3. Structure, governance and management

Legal and administrative details

Sussex Rural Community Council (SRCC) is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales, company number 02907172, incorporated under the Companies Acts. SRCC is a registered charity number 1035401.

The governing body is the Board of Trustees. The governing document is the Articles of Association.

Operating Name

Sussex Rural Community Council has operated during the year under the operating name "Action in rural Sussex" (AirS), which will be used in this Trustees' Report as the identity by which the charity is most commonly known.

Directors and Trustees

The directors of SRCC are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

The Trustees who served during the year and since the year end have been:

Alex Ingham Clark Chair

William Anderson

Colin Brown Appointed 17 January 2023

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Rob Dillingham Resigned 1 June 2023
Owen Ingram Appointed 17 November 2022
John Moore-Bick
Kristin Sjovorr Appointed 17 November 2022

President

Susan Pyper, Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex

Chief Executive Officer; day to day management

Steven Haasz, Chief Executive Officer to 30 September 2023;
Tom Warder, Interim Chief Executive Officer from 1 October 2023

Independent Examiners and Auditors

Knill James LLP, One Bell Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1JU

Bankers

Barclays Bank plc, The Old Bank, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2JP;
CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ;
Shawbrook Bank Ltd, Lutea House, Warley Hill Business Park, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3BE;
The Charity Bank Ltd, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1BE;
Nationwide Building Society, Kings Park Road, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6NW.

Registered office and operational address

16 Market Street, Lewes, West Sussex BN7 2NB.

4. Appointment and Recruitment of Trustees

The trustees are elected by the members of the charity at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Any remaining vacancies not filled at the AGM may be filled by co-option on the initiative of the trustees.

New trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity.

5. Trustees and their responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

- observe the methods and principles in the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The accounts comply with current statutory requirements and with the requirements of the governing document.

6. Financial review

Funding

AirS draws its funding from a variety of sources, but continues to be largely dependent on statutory sector funding. We are very grateful to all of our funders but particularly:

Those District Councils in West and East Sussex that provide funding for our housing services;

East Sussex County Council for their support of the Making It Happen project where AirS works as a partner with Sussex Community Development Association, Hastings Voluntary Action, Rother Voluntary Action and 3VA;

The National Lottery for their support of the Lost Woods consortium where AirS works as partner with The Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and The Small Woodland Association;

DEFRA for their ongoing annual grant in support of AirS through our national body, ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).

The past few years have seen significant challenges arising from inflation and rising costs of energy, food and even building materials so has seen considerable pressure on our projects and on the communities we serve. Charities like Airs will need to work extremely closely with local authorities, funders and coordinating bodies to ensure that we remain connected and aligned to their priorities and that we remain nimble and able to change course according to the headwinds that we face.

Restricted Funds

The detail of the restricted fund activity is set out in Note 16 of the financial statements. Where individual projects show a deficit on completion or termination, this has been made good from unrestricted funds. Restricted funds at the year end amounted to £46,246.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Unrestricted Funds

The total unrestricted funds are set out in Note 15 of the financial statements amounted to £1,540,793. Of this total the Trustees have designated that £1,208,000 is held for specific purposes.

Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees has developed this reserves policy to cover the ongoing employee commitments, ensure business continuity and allow for its investment in developing sustainable income streams, contingent liabilities, working capital requirements and to take account of its annual risk review. The free reserve is maintained primarily in case Action in rural Sussex suffers a sudden and unforeseen contraction of activities.

This is mitigated through full cost recovery budgeting, accurate forecasting, advantageous contract negotiation where possible and careful treasury management. Any remaining free reserves not required under the reserves policy are available to develop the work of the charity, to meet its charitable objectives and to fulfil any latent contractual obligations entered by the charity as part of its primary purpose trading.

The Board of Trustees confirms that each restricted fund has sufficient assets to meet its obligations, or arrangements exist with the funders that these obligations will be met at the point at which the requirement arises. Trustees will annually review the reserves policy in the light of a continuing shift in funding profile, and the linked investment in strategic and business development.

Subsidiary Company

The company owns all the issued share capital in SRCC (Trading) Limited. This company did not trade during the year and since the year end has been dissolved.

Restatement of 2022 Financial Results

In reviewing the result for the year to 31 March 2023, errors were discovered in the way Accrued Income and Deferred Income had been analysed in the previous year's accounts. As a result, we have had to restate the results for the year to 31 March 2022, for which the loss was understated by some £108,000. An internal review was prepared, explaining how the errors arose, and a copy of the review was forwarded to the Independent Examiner who had originally reported on the accounts, for their comment. No comments on the review have been received from the former Independent Examiner who resigned from that position a week later.

The Trustees have now appointed Knill James, Chartered Accountants of Lewes, East Sussex, to review the restated accounts to 31 March 2022 as Independent Examiner, and were appointed by the Trustees to act as auditor for the financial statements for the year to 31 March 2023.

The members of the company will be invited to approve both the restated accounts for the year to 31 March 2022 as well as the audited accounts to 31 March 2023 at the Annual General Meeting.

The Trustees will then inform both the Registrar of Companies and the Charities Commission of the circumstances of the restated accounts.

Review of the results for the Year to 31 March 2023

The financial statements for the year to 31 March 2023 show a deficiency of £30,703 (2022 deficiency £161,700) on income of £413,375 (2022 £452,231).

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

This year saw a determined effort to reduce the costs of the charity, principally by review and reduction of our payroll costs, which dropped from £485,334 for 2022 to £348,473 for 2023. This was accompanied by a review of all our ongoing costs, and included the move to new and less expensive offices in Lewes.

7. Our Staff

Steven Haasz was appointed as interim CEO in December 2021. Since then, Steven has worked closely with the Board and with the team at AirS to rationalise the organisation, to build operational and financial stability, to develop the capability of key staff members, to overhaul our policies and processes and to manage the organisation day to day. We have been very pleased with the progress made by AirS in that time in terms of our delivery and impact, our financial impact and our overall effectiveness as a Charity. After 2 years as CEO and having delivered the key elements of our turnaround plan, Steven has stepped down as CEO with effect from 1 October 2023. The board would like to record their wholehearted appreciation and thanks for the energy and support that he has given to the charity.

We will shortly be starting the search for a new CEO. Meanwhile, since 1 October 2023 our Deputy CEO Tom Warder has stepped into the interim CEO role.

As always, none of the work we do can be achieved without staff dedicated to the charity and its objectives. We know how hard our staff have worked to continue the important work they do in their communities despite the challenges of engagement in recent times, and wish to thank them all again for the great effort they have all shown during this time.

8. Operational Review for year ended 31 March 2023

Housing and Planning

The Sussex Community Housing Hub has continued to support a pipeline of some 25 community led housing groups and projects throughout this time.

We have seen the first Community Land Trust (CLT) scheme to be completed in August 2022 when Icklesham CLT became the first in East Sussex for a new build of 15 affordable homes on a rural exception site, which ensures these will remain affordable and for local people in perpetuity.

Ringmer CLT also started on site whilst CLTs at Herstmonceux, Bexhill and Arundel all secured planning. Together these are expected to provide 57 affordable homes.

New CLT groups and projects have been established in Pett, Guestling and Rye.

Despite this steady progress, many projects have faced significant challenges in terms of build costs and interest rates in the current economic climate. Meanwhile the Hub has played a leading role in mobilising political support across Sussex for the community led housing sector and renewal of a national Community Housing Fund.

West Wittering, Ninfield and Uckfield parishes concluded their Neighbourhood Plans during the year. The AirS community led planning team also produced the first Neighbourhood Priority Statement alongside Hassocks Parish Council. Neighbourhood or Parish Priority Statements are seen as an excellent lighter touch alternative for rural communities; a mini Parish or Neighbourhood Plan.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

We have also begun to explore the scope to support nature led community led planning processes, including greenspace management plans, climate action plans and community resilience plans.

Village Hall Service

Our Village Halls Service is valued across both East and West Sussex with subscribers to the scheme growing to 160 during this period.

Training courses have been attended by 83 people on a variety of subjects relevant to all village halls, from incorporation to governance and risk assessments. We are looking to expand the training opportunities in future years.

We held two Village Hall Conferences in the year:

- May 2022 Lodsworth Village Hall, West Sussex;
- October 2022 Wadhurst Commemoration Hall, East Sussex.

There were over 40 attendees for each conference. Topics covered funding, energy saving measures and insurance; and included speakers showing how Parish Councils can help Village Halls across a number of areas with a variety of speakers from: East Sussex Association of Local Councils, Community Energy South and Allied & Westminster Insurance.

Consultancy assignments were completed with Harting and Oving parishes.

The service built closer links with Parish Councils who have engaged in trustees training and Village Hall and Playing Fields workshops.

We assisted 13 halls with applying for and obtaining funding from the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund.

Community Based Services

Our two major projects that progressed during the year were the Making it Happen (MiH) project in the Wealden district of East Sussex and the Lost Woods environmental project, based largely in West Sussex.

MiH is a five-year Asset-based community development project funded by East Sussex County Council public health and delivered by five partners across the county. The project ends in March 2025 and AirS delivers the project in Wealden, focusing on the hub towns of Crowborough, Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield.

AirS currently has a team of 3 working on the project, and after a number of changes in the first part of the year, have been working well together to support communities in an asset-based way.

The MiH project was designed as a learning opportunity and so there has been a strong focus on the evaluation and learning aspects of the project. This has offered AirS the opportunity to also learn and use some of the emerging tools for its own development.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

MiH offers grants of various sizes during the course of the work and the AirS team has given out or supported 23 grants during the year under review.

Themes have emerged around green spaces, biodiversity and wellbeing; cost of living and energy; food security and mental health. This is reflected in the projects supported, including Polegate nature reserve, Selby Meadow, and the Crowborough wildlife group; the Warm spaces collaboration in Uckfield that evolved into the Warm Welcome Café; the community allotment in Hailsham and community orchard in Crowborough; the Calamity Crafting and Kinship groups in Hailsham.

Focus is beginning to turn towards the end of the project and its legacy, as well as what might be next for the five project partners. This is a conversation that is both external and internal and will become more dominant throughout this year. The AirS team have identified that, as MiH is based in the hub towns we are currently not supporting the rural villages. We would like to find a way of addressing this going forward.

The second major community development project is The Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs, which is a partnership between AirS and conservation and environmental charities The Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Small Woods Association with the aim of protecting, restoring and reconnecting Sussex's precious ancient woodland in an unprotected area between Storrington and Lewes. AirS leads the role of engaging and supporting communities, particularly those who are often underserved, to visit, learn about, benefit from and protect their local woodlands.

The 18-month development stage of this project was funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund; it began in July 2020 during which the team worked with and consulted communities to develop and test ideas, ultimately creating a 5 year delivery plan. The bid for part funding for a further 5 years to deliver the project was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in May 2022. In September 2022 the Lost Woods partnership were awarded £1.9 million towards the £2.6million, 5 years project, of which AirS were awarded £712,000 towards their £809,000 target. In December recruitment for a new team began, with interviews held in February 2023.

The team for this project requires five members, with diverse experience and skills across the spectrum of the project. By the end of March 2023 three places were filled; the team has now reached its full strength. Since the end of the period under review the project has moved forward strongly and activities include supporting Scaynes Hill Sustainability group to run a Family Nature trail and Dawn chorus walk in their local wood; running a pilot woodland well-being and play activity with Burgess Hill Young carers; and pilot conservation activities with Plumpton College and BeOK, a mental health support group run by Brighton and Hove Housing trust in Haywards Heath.

The breadth and depth of these operations show how well we are embedded into the rural communities of East and West Sussex. We continue to seek solutions for those rural communities.

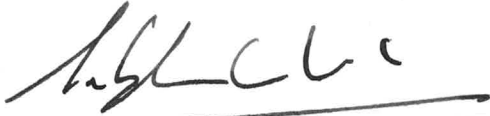
Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

9. Small Company Exemptions

This report is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on *8 December 2023*, and signed on their behalf by:



Alex Ingham Clark, Chair

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Auditors' Report to the Trustees

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sussex Rural Community Foundation (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts* section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustees report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below. In identifying and assessing the risk of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, we:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory framework

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

- that the company operates in and how the company complies with the legal and regulatory framework;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud; and
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, the charitable company's governing document, tax legislation and Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing the financial statements, including the Trustees' report, remaining alert to new or unusual transactions which may not be in accordance with the governing document.

The most significant laws and regulations that have an indirect impact on the financial statements are the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). We performed audit procedures to inquire of management and those charged with governance whether the charitable company is in compliance with these laws and regulations and inspected correspondence with regulatory authorities.

We identified the risk of management override of controls as the area where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included, but were not limited to, testing manual journal entries and other adjustments, evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business and challenging judgments and estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/Our-Work/Audit/Audit-and-assurance/Standards-and-guidance/Standards-and-guidance-for-auditors/Auditors-responsibilities-for-audit/Description-of-auditors-responsibilities-for-audit.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Knill James LLP

Mark Filsell FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Knill James LLP

Chartered Accountants

Statutory Auditor

11 December 2023
.....

One Bell Lane

Lewes

East Sussex BN7 1JU

Knill James LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charitable company by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account) For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Income and endowments from:	2				
Donations and legacies	Page 15	62,498	-	62,498	55,822
Charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	Page 15	257,050	68,968	326,018	388,064
Investments	3	<u>24,861</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>24,861</u>	<u>8,345</u>
Total		<u>344,409</u>	<u>68,968</u>	<u>413,377</u>	<u>452,231</u>
 Expenditure on charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	Page 16	<u>387,522</u>	<u>56,556</u>	<u>444,078</u>	<u>613,931</u>
 Net income (expenditure) other recognised gains/ (losses)	 4	 (43,113)	 12,412	 (30,701)	 (161,700)
 Other recognised gains and losses:					
Actuarial valuation gains/ (losses)	19	203	-	203	1,108
 Net movement in funds		<u>(42,910)</u>	<u>12,412</u>	<u>(30,498)</u>	<u>(160,592)</u>
 Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,583,706</u>	<u>33,834</u>	<u>1,617,540</u>	<u>1,778,132</u>
Total funds carried forward	15,16	<u>1,540,796</u>	<u>46,246</u>	<u>1,587,042</u>	<u>1,617,540</u>

The notes on pages 20 to 31 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income from donations and legacies		
Grants		
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)	47,395	47,395
Donations		
Donations	<u>15,103</u>	<u>8,427</u>
	<u><u>62,498</u></u>	<u><u>55,822</u></u>
Income from Charitable Activities		
Income from operational programmes		
Housing Hub Fees	113,314	122,929
Village Hall consultancy/Subscription	29,750	25,787
Sussex Community Development Assoc.	97,729	72,498
Neighbourhood Planning	16,257	24,238
Other Income	<u>-</u>	<u>1,356</u>
	<u><u>257,050</u></u>	<u><u>246,808</u></u>
Project specific funding		
Grants/Donations		
Local & Regional Government	7,175	13,226
Community Led Homes Funding	-	14,635
Lost Woods Grants	61,793	109,395
ACRE – Safeguarding	-	1,000
Funding for Interns	<u>-</u>	<u>3,000</u>
	<u><u>68,968</u></u>	<u><u>141,256</u></u>
Total Income from donations and legacies	<u><u>388,514</u></u>	<u><u>443,886</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Operational programmes		
Information technology	1,233	5,939
Events	2,388	3,060
Print post stationery	1,745	2,913
Consultancy	11,136	12,187
Marketing and publicity	3,440	1,022
Small equipment	17	618
Communications	172	1,050
Travel	6,862	4,407
Salaries/social security/pension	<u>29,563</u>	<u>79,202</u>
	<u>56,556</u>	<u>110,398</u>
Support and governance costs		
Office overheads		
Rent	16,517	18,444
Power and light	7,306	2,258
Communications	4,434	3,942
Insurance	1,815	2,112
Information technology	4,620	10,170
Repairs and maintenance	527	2,291
Depreciation	<u>217</u>	<u>455</u>
	<u>35,436</u>	<u>39,672</u>
Administration costs		
Salaries, social security, pensions	317,557	389,992
Other pension costs	5,317	45,501
Staff recruitment, training and support	6,296	29,509
Information technology	1,034	1,261
Advertising and marketing	928	1,742
Membership fees	6,911	4,825
Travel	814	713
Bank Charges	72	132
Legal and Professional	12,051	3,958
Sundries	(656)	144
Growth Plan Pension Scheme	-	(16,239)
Irrecoverable VAT	<u>1,762</u>	<u>2,323</u>
	<u>352,086</u>	<u>463,861</u>
Total expenditure on charitable activities	<u><u>444,078</u></u>	<u><u>613,931</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	9		420		638
Investment	10		<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
			422		640
Current assets					
Debtors	11	72,209		76,636	
Cash balances		<u>1,685,747</u>		<u>1,799,127</u>	
		1,757,956		1,875,763	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling Due in under one year	12		<u>(163,740)</u>		<u>(246,948)</u>
Net current assets			<u>1,594,216</u>		<u>1,628,815</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			1,594,638		1,629,455
Provisions	19		<u>(7,596)</u>		<u>(11,915)</u>
Net assets			<u>1,587,042</u>		<u>1,617,540</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	15				
- General funds			340,392		387,621
- Designated funds			1,208,000		1,208,000
- Pension Reserve	19		<u>(7,596)</u>		<u>(11,915)</u>
			1,540,796		1,583,706
Restricted funds	16		<u>46,246</u>		<u>33,834</u>
Total charity funds			<u>1,587,042</u>		<u>1,617,540</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

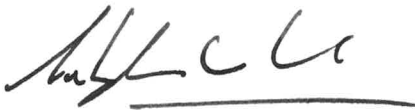
(Limited by Guarantee)

For the year ending 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

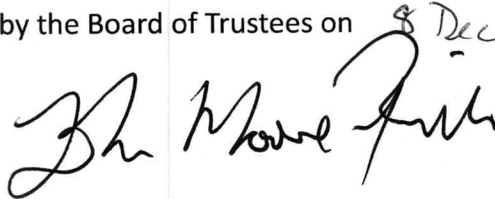
Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006;
- The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on ⁸ December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Alex Ingham Clark
Chair



John Moore-Bick
Trustee

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities	21	(138,241)	(73,524)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		24,861	8,345
Purchase of equipment		<u>-</u>	<u>(651)</u>
Net cash provided by investment activities		<u>24,861</u>	<u>7,694</u>
Change in Cash balances in the reporting period		(113,380)	(65,830)
Cash balances at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>1,799,127</u>	<u>1,864,957</u>
Cash balances at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>1,685,747</u></u>	<u><u>1,799,127</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

1.1. Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in relevant accounting policy notes.

1.2 Group financial statements

The Company is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial Statements by virtue of section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 as the group it heads qualifies as a small group. These financial statements therefore present information about the company as an individual undertaking and not about its group.

1.3. Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The company is dependent on the continued support of grant aiding bodies. The trustees believe that the company will continue to receive this support and, taking into accounts its cash reserves, consider that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:

- the charity is legally entitled to the funds;
- any performance conditions attached to the income have been met or are fully within the control of the charity;
- there is sufficient certainty that receipt at the income is considered probable;
- the amount can be reliably measured.

Donations and legacies

Grants and donations are recognised as incoming resources in the year in which they are receivable, except as follows:

- When donors specify that grants or donations given to the charity must be used in future accounting periods, the income is deferred to those periods;

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2023

- when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income. The income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the preconditions for use are met.

Charitable activities

Income from operational programmes is included in the incoming resources in the period in which the relevant programme takes place.

Project specific funding - when donors specify that donations and grants are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement. This income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Investment income

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

1.5 Expenditure

An expenditure is included on an accruals basis inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered and is recognised when:

- there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment;
- it is probable that settlement will be required;
- the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Operational programme costs - where costs are identified directly with specific programmes and allocated to the relevant heading within resources expended.

Support costs

The administrative and overhead costs associated with running the office from which the company operates as well as governance costs. Support costs are wholly attributable to operational programme costs.

Governance costs

Costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2023

1.6. Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are either:

- Unrestricted general funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

- Designated funds - these are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

- Restricted funds - these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost. Depreciation is provided at annual rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life. as follows:

Furniture/fixtures/equipment - Straight line basis, the shorter of four years or the duration of the project.

1.8. Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at cost less provision for diminution in value.

1.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid after taking account of any trade discounts.

1.10 Cash Balances

Cash balances include cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.11 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2023

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

1.12 Pensions

The company makes defined contribution pension and superannuation payments in relation to certain members of staff in accordance with the terms of their employment contracts. Such payments are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable.

1.13. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value, and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.14. Significant Accounting Estimates and Judgements

In determining the carrying amounts of certain assets and liabilities, the charity makes assumptions of the effects of uncertain future events on those assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date. The charity's estimates and assumptions are based on historical experience and expectation of future events and are reviewed annually.

2. Incoming Resources

The total incoming resources for the year have been derived from the principal activity undertaken wholly in the UK.

3. Interest receivable

	2023 £	2022 £
Bank interest	<u>24,861</u>	<u>8,345</u>

4. Net income/(expenditure) for the year is stated after charging:

	2023 £	2022 £
Depreciation of tangible assets	218	455
Audit or Independent examination	<u>6,220</u>	<u>4,000</u>

5. Trustees' emoluments and reimbursed expenses

The trustees received no remuneration during the year (2022 - £Nil).

The aggregated amount reimbursed to trustees during the year was £283 (2022 - £298).

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2023

6. Staff costs and numbers	2023	2022
	£	£
Staff costs		
Salaries, social security and pension costs	347,120	469,194
Other pension costs	<u>5,317</u>	<u>29,262</u>
	<u>352,437</u>	<u>498,456</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year (2022 – £Nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Management Team. The total employee costs of the key management personnel of the charity were £107,000 (2021 - £93,684).

Staff Numbers

The average number of employees (including casual and part time staff) during the year was made up as follows:

	2023	2022
	Number	Number
Support /operational programmes	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>

7. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of its employees. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. The pension charge represents contributions due from the company and amounted to £1,353 (2022 - £16,239).

8. Corporation taxation

The company is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2023

9. Fixed Assets -tangible assets	Furniture Fixtures Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
1 April 2022	8,341	8,341
Additions	-	-
31 March 2023	<u>8,341</u>	<u>8,341</u>
Depreciation		
1 April 2022	7,703	7,703
Charge for year	<u>218</u>	<u>218</u>
31 March 2023	<u>7,921</u>	<u>7,921</u>
Net book values		
31 March 2023	<u>420</u>	<u>420</u>
31 March 2022	<u>638</u>	<u>638</u>

10. Fixed Asset Investments	Subsidiary Undertakings Shares £	Total £
Cost		
1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Net book values		
31 March 2023	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
31 March 2022	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

The company owns all of the issued share capital of SRCC (Trading) Limited, a company registered in England and Wales, number 03101724. SRCC (Trading) Limited did not trade during the year, and since the year end has been dissolved.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

11. Debtors	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	59,716	65,866
Other debtors	1,017	1,725
Prepayments	1,062	958
Accrued Income	<u>10,414</u>	<u>8,087</u>
	<u><u>72,209</u></u>	<u><u>76,636</u></u>
12. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	8,532	8,858
Other taxation and social security	7,870	29,544
Other creditors	5,043	8,915
Accruals	18,795	18,997
Deferred income (Note13)	<u>123,500</u>	<u>180,634</u>
	<u><u>163,740</u></u>	<u><u>246,948</u></u>
13. Deferred Income		£
Balance at 1 April 2022		180,634
Amount released to incoming resources		(99,134)
Amount deferred in the year		<u>42,000</u>
Balance at 31 March 2023		<u><u>123,500</u></u>

Deferred income relates to grants and other income received in advance.

14. Limited by guarantee

Sussex Rural Community Council is a private company, limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales without a share capital. Each member guarantees to contribute £1 to the company in the event of its winding up. At 31 March 2023 there were 71 members.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

15. Unrestricted funds	Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Pension	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Designated funds:					
Development Fund	534,984	-	-	-	534,984
Relocation Fund	500,000	-	-	-	500,000
Sussex Community Housing Hub	92,016	-	-	-	92,016
IT Rolling Replacement Fund	18,000	-	-	-	18,000
Recruitment Fund	<u>63,000</u>	-	-	-	<u>63,000</u>
 Total designated fund	 1,208,000	 -	 -	 -	 1,208,000
 General fund	 387,621	 344,409	 (387,319)	 (4,319)	 340,392
 Pension scheme deficit	 <u>(11,915)</u>	 -	 -	 4,319	 <u>(7,596)</u>
	 <u>1,583,706</u>	 344,409	 (387,319)	 -	 <u>1,540,796</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

16. Restricted funds	Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£
Objectives	<u>33,834</u>	<u>68,968</u>	<u>(56,556)</u>	<u>46,246</u>

Objectives

These funds are for three main objectives:

1. Tackling Rural Disadvantage
2. Building Community Capacity and Resilience
3. Rural Voice

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General Funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	420	-	-	420
Investments	2	-	-	2
Net current assets	339,970	1,208,000	46,246	1,594,216
Pension Reserve	(7,596)	-	-	(7,596)
	<u>332,796</u>	<u>1,208,000</u>	<u>46,246</u>	<u>1,587,042</u>

18. Financial commitments

At 31 March 2023 the company had total future commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Due:		
Within one year	<u>6,700</u>	<u>17,962</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2023

19. Pension scheme

The company is a participating employer in the Growth Plan operated by the Pensions Trust to provide pension benefits for members of staff. The company participates in the scheme, a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 638 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the company to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the company is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2020. This valuation showed assets of £800.3m, liabilities of £831.9m and a deficit of £31.6m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows: From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2025: £3,312,000 per annum.

Unless a concession has been agreed with the Trustee the term to 31 January 2025 applies.

Note that the scheme's previous valuation was carried out with an effective date of 30 September 2017. This valuation showed assets of £794.9m, liabilities of £926.4m and a deficit of £131.5m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme as follows: From 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2025: £11,243,000 per annum (payable monthly and increasing by 3% each on 1st April).

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the company has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the company recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

PRESENT VALUES OF PROVISION

RECONCILIATION OF OPENING AND CLOSING PROVISIONS

	Period Ending 31 March 2023 (£s)	Period Ending 31 March 2022 (£s)
Provision at start of period	11,915	64,170
Unwinding of the discount factor (interest expense) *	225	370
Deficit contribution paid	(4,341)	(16,239)
Remeasurements - impact of any change in assumptions*	(203)	(274)
Remeasurements - amendments to the contribution schedule	-	(36,112)
Provision at end of period	7,596	11,915
Costs recognised in income and expenditure account	*	*

20. Related party transactions

During the year the company had no related party transactions that require disclosure.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2023

21. Reconciliation of net income (expenditure) to net cashflow from operating activities	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income (expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(30,500)	(160,593)
Depreciation	218	455
Dividends and interest	(24,861)	(8,345)
Decrease in stocks	-	1,919
(Increase) decrease in debtors	4,427	(27,791)
(Decrease) increase in provisions	(4,319)	(17,345)
(Decrease) increase in creditors	<u>(83,206)</u>	<u>138,176</u>
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>(138,241)</u>	<u>(73,524)</u>

22. Prior year adjustment

In reviewing the result for the year to 31 March 2023, errors were discovered in the way Accrued Income and Deferred Income had been analysed in the previous year's accounts. As a result, we have had to restate the results for the year to 31 March 2022, for which the loss was understated by some £108,000.

An internal review was prepared, explaining how the errors arose, and a copy of the review was forwarded to the Independent Examiner who had originally reported on the accounts, for their comment. No comments on the review have been received from the former Independent Examiner who resigned from that position a week later.

The Trustees have now appointed Knill James, Chartered Accountants of Lewes, East Sussex, to review the restated accounts to 31 March 2022 as Independent Examiner, and were appointed by the Trustees to act as auditor for the financial statements for the year to 31 March 2023.

The members of the company will be invited to approve both the restated accounts for the year to 31 March 2022 as well as the audited accounts to 31 March 2023 at the Annual General Meeting.

SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

England & Wales - Charity number 1035401

Accounts

Company number 02907172

Charity number 1035401

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2022

as amended

Knill James LLP, Chartered Accountants
One Bell Lane, Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1JU

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Contents

	Page
Reference and Administrative Details	2
Chairman's Foreword	3 - 7
Trustees' report	8 – 16
Independent Examiner's Report	17
Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)	18 – 21
Balance Sheet	22
Cash Flow Statement	24
Notes to Financial Statement	25 - 35

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Reference and Administrative Details

Constitution

Sussex Rural Community Council ("SRCC"), the charitable company, is a private company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales, company number 02907172, incorporated under the Companies Acts; its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association. SRCC is a registered charity number 1035401. SRCC trades as Action in Rural Sussex (AirS).

Directors and Trustees

The directors of SRCC are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Trustees.

The Trustees during the year and since the year end have been:

Alex Ingham Clark – Chair

William Anderson

Colin Brown Appointed 17 January 2023

Rob Dillingham Resigned 1 June 2023

Owen Ingram Appointed 17 November 2020

Sandra Jill Llewellyn Resigned 17 March 2022

John Moore-Bick

Neil David Smith Resigned 31 March 2022

Kristin Sjovorr Appointed 17 November 2022

Interim Chief Executive Officer; day to day management

Steven Haasz

Independent Examiners

Knill James LLP, Chartered Accountants, One Bell Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1JU

Bankers

Barclays Bank plc, The Old Bank, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2JP

CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Shawbrook Bank Ltd, Lutea House, Warley Hill Business Park, Great Warley, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3BE

The Charity Bank Ltd, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1BE

Nationwide Building Society, Kings Park Road, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6NW

Registered office and operation address

Waterside Centre Suite F1, North Street, Lewes BN7 2PE

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

AIRS CHAIR OF THE BOARD REPORT April 2021 to March 2022

Spring of 2021 finally brought about the thawing of Covid restrictions and a welcome return to our preferred practices of direct engagement with individuals and groups in their communities. Our thoughts go out to all the people of Sussex that have been impacted by the pandemic, whether that is due to the death or illness of a loved one, to hardship due to being furloughed or to a range of other issues, great and small, that arose from this unprecedented situation.

AirS has had its own challenges. Gordon Ackroyd resigned as Chief Executive in September 2021 after 10 months in post. I want to thank Gordon for his contribution, hope his health has improved and wish him every success in the next stage of his career.

In December 2021, Steven Haasz was appointed as interim CEO and has worked hard to restore stability, manage the organisation, lead a strategic review and an overhaul of our policies and processes. Steven's appointment has had a very positive impact. I and my fellow trustees have every confidence in him and thank him for his commitment to our charity.

There have also been a number to changes to our Trustees. Sandra Llewelyn and Neil Smith stood down on March 17th 2022, and March 31st 2022 respectively. I thank them for their support and dedication to our Board. At the time of writing, we welcome three additional Trustees in Owen Ingram, Kristin Sjovorr and Colin Brown who bring a wealth of diverse skills and experience. I look forward to working with them.

AirS continues to be largely dependent on statutory sector funding. The extended period of the pandemic and the associated economic impacts will see continued pressure on statutory bodies and other funders. Charities like Airs will need to work even more closely with local authorities, funders and coordinating bodies to ensure that we remain connected and aligned to their priorities.

We have begun a strategic review, to assess the challenges faced by rural communities in Sussex and to refresh and revise our services considering these challenges and the evolving needs of statutory bodies and funders. This has involved a good deal of work on developing our thinking on a range of key issues facing rural communities, the outcome of which will be a suite of Position Papers and service area proposals. Any long-term strategy will also need to acknowledge and address the challenges and widespread implications presented by the Climate and Nature Crisis and the evolving UK Government Policy.

This forward-looking strategic review will help inform a number of key issues for AirS including:

- how to leverage best practise from other voluntary sector bodies both in Sussex and across the UK
- how to evolve our services to remain relevant to beneficiaries, funders and stakeholders
- how to ensure synergy between our services such that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'
- how to develop our approach to funding to ensure sustainability and successful achievement of strategic aims
- how to deploy the capital receipt from the sale of Sussex House – whether to fund specific issues/assets or a more general 'investment for income' approach.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Our overall strategic intention is that AirS remains able to address the real needs of rural communities and is fully aligned with the priorities of statutory bodies and funders – today and in the years to come.

During this busy and complex 2021-2022 period, the AirS staff have adapted and continued to deliver the vital rural services for which AirS is well known. I know how hard our staff have worked to continue the important work they do in their communities despite the challenges of engagement in recent times. Work that will be essential in the months and years ahead as we help rural communities to bounce back from the pandemic, economic downturn and the inevitable implications for rural economies, community resilience and for individual mental health and well-being. A huge amount of work has been done to enable us to maintain the standard of work that we do and to enhance communications both internally and externally. I wish to thank them all again for the great effort they have all shown during this time.

I would now like to highlight some of the excellent work our team has been doing in the last year.

Housing and Planning

The Sussex Community Housing Hub has continued to support a pipeline of some 27 community led housing groups and projects throughout this time.

With three housing schemes having now secured planning consent, we have seen the first of these start on site this year, Icklesham Community Land Trust (CLT). Icklesham CLT became the first CLT in East Sussex for a new build scheme of 15 affordable homes on a rural exception site, which ensures these will remain affordable and for local people in perpetuity. There will be 12 Social Rented homes (so genuinely affordable rent levels) and 3 for Shared Ownership.

Herstmonceux CLT and Angmering CLT both have planning but have yet to start on site given the considerable challenges of cost inflation in light of Covid and a post Brexit environment which has hampered supply chains and affected procurement. Another scheme to have gained planning consent this year is Arundel CLT which will secure 20 Social Rented homes in partnership with Aster Housing Association, as part of a 90 home development.

We have been able to help secure circa £450,000 in pre-development funds for four CLTs this year via the last round of the Community Housing Fund (CHF). Herstmonceux, Angmering, Eastbourne and Bexhill CLTs each obtained over £100,000 enable them to work towards submission of planning or starting on site. For a £4M national fund which was only open for a 9 month period this was a real success.

The lack of a renewed Community Housing Fund (CHF) - the national programme of grants to support the sector – has continued to frustrate community led housing groups and projects, and so we continue to campaign on this crucial issue. There is a good deal of momentum around community led housing in Sussex and thus considerable support for it amongst key decision makers including several local MPs, which is much appreciated. A roundtable discussion was held with Andrew Griffiths MP and five local CLTs in October 2021.

The Hub team has undertaken several Housing Needs Surveys this year including those in Pett, Guestling and Northiam. All of which identified significant local housing needs.

The Hub team have continued to undertake a series of Webinars covering key topics such as Finance, Planning, Community Engagement and Sustainable Development. These have been very well received, providing a valued space for sharing of good practice, peer support and networking.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

At the time of writing AirS has also now embarked on the process of forming its own Registered Provider of affordable housing. This is to meet the needs of smaller rural and community led housing projects which struggle to find a Housing Association partner.

Neighbourhood Planning work has picked up following the easing of Covid restrictions with several parishes renewing this work and nearing completion of their Plans; West Wittering, Ninfield and Uckfield. Other communities supported with community engagement work were Aldingbourne, Nuthurst and Send.

The Housing and Planning Team have continued to explore the scope for community led plans to address some of the key challenges of our times including the climate and nature crises and how communities can respond to these to become stronger and more sustainable. Alongside a re-design of the community led planning service offer, the team have developed a Re-thinking our communities and places survey and sought feedback from key stakeholders in advance of wider circulation across Sussex.

Village Halls and Community Buildings Service

It has been another challenging year for village halls and community buildings. Although less restricted by lockdowns than the previous one, the gradual easing of restrictions has been hampered by a spirit of caution with many regular users not returning immediately. Action in Rural Sussex has continued to issue regular updates on permitted activities to all halls via email, our website and the online forum.

Our Basecamp forum has been invaluable during the pandemic and remains popular as a place for questions, ideas and peer support. During the year there have been over 200 active conversations or threads covering a wide range of topics including COVID safety checks for halls (the most popular topic) but also governance, legislation, renewable energy, and fundraising. We have also supported halls across Sussex to carry out risk assessments and ensure that buildings were safe to use when people were slowly allowed back in.

Funding is still a challenge for halls looking to make improvements or refurbishments. The government grants to cover the lockdown period were an essential part of halls funding. However, some of the normally available grants were refocussed towards covid support leaving halls struggling to find additional funds for normal works. Some were able to make COVID-19 related improvements e.g., ventilation, acoustics to enable them to be safer on reopening. Our halls consultant Louise Beaton was kept busy delivering consultancy support on a range of topics primarily around governance and changes in charity status.

The Sussex Community Buildings Advisory Group (SCBAG) continues to support the AirS Village Halls Advisory service with its knowledge and on the ground feedback. AirS realises how crucial the role village halls play in rural community life and remains committed in its support in these challenging times.

Community Based Services

Our two major projects that progressed during this period were the Lost Woods environmental project, largely in West Sussex, and the Making it Happen project in the Wealden district of East Sussex.

Lost Woods is a Heritage Lottery funded project working alongside conservation and environmental charities to improve access and management of local woodlands. For Airs this is about encouraging and facilitating community groups to better understand, protect and preserve their local environment. During the last year, the Lost Woods team have continued to engage in the 18-month development phase and, during this time, have been working with communities to develop and test ideas and create a project brochure giving ideas for enjoying local woods. Some successes were the series of August Ambles in 2021,

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

woodland activities for young carers and community led experiences, such as the Scaynes Hill Family Trail and Dawn Chorus Walk.

The end of the Lost Woods development stage meant that work on this project had to cease while the lottery considered whether to fund the full delivery phase. At the time of writing, we are very pleased to confirm that we have won 5 years of additional Lost Woods Phase 2 project funding and over £800,000 of funds which was confirmed in Quarter 3 of 2022.

The Making it Happen project involves three part-time Village Agents supporting this project through community activities in four medium-sized towns (Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Crowborough). The Village Agents have been providing advice, signposting, and assistance with small and medium sized grants.

The Village Agents have been able to get out into communities to a greater degree through the year, although Covid restrictions were still having a significant impact on this. However, they have been able to support a growing number of community activities from small projects such as a new communal planter within a neighbourhood to the community acquisition of a new nature land asset by Polegate Town Council and the process of this becoming community led. They have also been involved in the creation of Uckfield Green Partnership and a fantastic skatepark project that has led to the involvement of young volunteers through a youth club in Crowborough.

While recent focus has been on managing the transitions and work around the Lost Woods bid – Phase 2 - and Making it Happen team changes, some thought is being given to the development of the team after the Community Lottery fund bid was unsuccessful. There are themes emerging around climate action and community, while some links are being made with potential partners that may help us move forward with new ideas. Hopefully this next year will see some of these bear fruit.

All in all, it has been a positive year for AirS, re-engaging with communities and getting back to doing what we do best.



Alex Ingham Clark – Chair

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Trustees' report April 2021 – March 2022

1. Introduction

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

2. Charitable objects

The charity's objects are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of the counties of East and West Sussex; in particular to promote and organise partnership working to achieve the advancement of education, the protection of health, relief of poverty, distress and sickness, by bringing together representatives of the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and other bodies and any interested persons. We set out our strategic aims and activities in more detail later in this report.

3. Structure, governance and management

Legal and administrative details

Sussex Rural Community Council (SRCC) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The governing body is the Board of Trustees. The governing document is the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Operating name

SRCC has operated during the year under the operating name "Action in rural Sussex" (AirS).

Trustees

The trustees are elected by the members of the charity at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and may serve a maximum of 10 years. Any remaining vacancies not filled at the AGM are filled by co-option on the initiative of the trustees.

New trustees receive an induction pack and meeting to brief them on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and the recent financial performance of the charity. During that meeting, they also meet key trustees and employees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate training where this will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Presidency

Joint Presidents:

Sir Peter Field Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex - resigned on 9 December 2021

Susan Pyper - Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

4. Strategic objectives

Target demographic of the charity

All people living in rural areas of Sussex, but especially those who are at risk of isolation and/or disadvantage, and for whom living in a rural area brings an additional challenge and cost to their daily lives.

Our vision

Our vision is a rural Sussex that is thriving, economically active and full of choice and opportunities for everyone.

Our mission

Our mission is to support and empower people in rural Sussex to maintain vibrant and diverse communities through advice, services and practical support, and by representing their interests at a local, regional and national level.

Public benefit

In shaping our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given consideration to the duties set out in section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit and to the Charity Commission Guidance on public benefit.

In particular, the trustees have considered how planned activities contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set, related in detail in the following paragraphs, which describe the benefit that the charity provides to the public.

Risk Management

The trustees recognise their responsibility for identifying, managing and mitigating all strategic, operational and technical risks facing the charity. AirS also recognises the need to have a planned and systematic approach to risk.

The trustees have adopted a formal policy for risk at both a strategic and operational level.

The comprehensive risk register that is in place is reviewed at every Board meeting.

Involvement by beneficiaries of the charity

The beneficiaries of the work of AirS are those living and/or working in rural Sussex, and especially those for whom living in a rural location can easily become an additional excluding or disadvantaging factor in their lives. In particular this includes: those not sharing the general prosperity of the region; those unable to secure affordable housing; people dependent on rural public transport and limited local services, those experiencing isolation and loneliness and those who are dependent on the support of a local community that is undergoing fundamental changes, whilst remaining superficially attractive and prosperous.

We have day-to-day contact with our beneficiaries through our outreach work with communities. In addition to this we canvass users and gather their views via housing needs surveys, community led plan consultations neighbourhood planning. We also participate in rural community networks in both East and West Sussex, and continually seek wider participation from potentially hard-to-reach groups.

In addition to the above, we introduced free membership of the charity in order to encourage more local village organisations and individuals to take part in our formal governance processes.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

We are also considering whether some representatives of disadvantaged groups or rural community organisations could be recruited onto the board to increase the involvement of beneficiaries.

How do we fund Action in rural Sussex's work?

We would like to thank everyone who contributes financially in any way to our work with rural communities.

Individuals both join and also make donations. Village organisations, most notably village halls and parish councils, subscribe to our Village Hall and Community Buildings Advisory Service (VHCBAS). Parish councils purchase help from us over local housing initiatives, housing needs surveys, assistance with neighbourhood plans or assistance with local consultation exercises. Community led housing groups – mainly Community Land Trusts – also purchase support from us as part of the enabling services offered by the Sussex Community Housing Hub. As do Housing Associations.

Various forms of government - county councils, district councils, government departments and their agencies - fund projects or contribute to our general work with rural communities.

We also secure funding from national and local funders to enable us to deliver specific projects for the benefit of rural communities across Sussex.

In total over 250 individuals and organisations have contributed to our work, indicating the diversity of our funding streams, which continues to grow. We are especially grateful to East Sussex County Council and the Big Lottery Fund for their financial contributions to our community-based Village Agents project, and to DEFRA for their support across a range of our services.

Successful applications were submitted to Lewes and Mid Sussex District Councils for continued support for our Village Hall Service while we were unsuccessful with a bid to the Prince's Countryside Fund for funding to begin a digital inclusion project for later life residents.

Successful applications were also submitted to Rother, Wealden, Mid Sussex and Arun District Councils and to Hastings Borough Council to further the work of the Sussex Community Housing Hub in these areas.

We could not exist without your support, and we thank you all on behalf of the rural communities we serve in Sussex, for the tangible difference you are helping us make.

5. Review of 2021/22

The main features of the year:

- As an agency that focusses on Community Development being able to come out of the deep Covid freeze has been a big part of the story this year. Staff have been keen to get back out into communities to both re-ignite and establish new working relationships.
- We have expanded our Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH), a community led housing enabling service providing advice and support to co-operatives, self-build and Cohousing groups as well as Community Land Trusts (CLTs). The Hub continues to support projects in East and West Sussex. Our first CLT scheme is now on-site in Icklesham (15 affordable homes completed in August 2022).
- Our Village Agent Scheme, funded by ESCC and Big Lottery, continued to support individuals and community groups in East Sussex, tackling social isolation and loss of services.
- The Lost Woods project (Village Agents) has progressed very well despite the challenges of Covid with lots of activity and learning taking place in the communities involved.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

- We have reviewed our specialist provision of Community Led and Neighbourhood Planning Services, which continues to work with parishes in both East Sussex and West Sussex, thus ensuring rural residents' voices are heard.
- We have reviewed and expanded our Community Buildings Service so that it remains the source of expertise, advice and guidance for community buildings across Sussex but offers additional support via our online 'Basecamp' forum and message board where over 300 individuals come together to offer peer support, local knowledge and advise and to share best practice.
- Our CEO and Senior Management have represented rural communities at East Sussex Strategic Partnership, Wealden Local Strategic Partnership, East Sussex Voluntary Alliance, Partnership Plus, Southeast Local Economic Partnership Rural Working Group and the Sussex Nature Partnership.

Helping communities plan for the future

We continue to support rural communities explore their needs and aspirations, through community-led plans such as parish and neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood Planning support has seen West Wittering undertake a second regulation 14 consultation following feedback from their first regulation 14 and the pandemic. A second submission plan has been prepared with amended policies for the steering group and parish council to approve. Ninfield received intensive support (ongoing) as they prepare their draft plan to share with Wealden district Council. We resumed support for Uckfield Town Council working with the Steering Group to re-engage with residents and interested stakeholders on their plan post pandemic.

The team also submitted Scopes of Service to Aldingbourne and Ewhurst to support with consultation activities to identify current and future needs towards planned redevelopment of key community facilities and buildings. Aldingbourne user groups and residents were consulted in the form of workshops, telephone conversations and a general household survey. The workshops attracting over 40 individuals representing various groups and organisations. We also undertook a parish wide survey work for Send Parish Council on their Recreation Grounds Improvement Project.

The team also began to explore wider issues in relation to community led planning. The impact of the pandemic and a reflection on communities and their role in addressing issues of resilience; climate change and adaptability, nature recovery and biodiversity, local food supply, regenerative agriculture and supporting a circular economy. We developed a survey and sought feedback from key stakeholders in advance of wider circulation across Sussex.

A total of 7 Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) grant panel meetings were attended with AirS role being to ensure that the projects approved will have sustainable benefits for residents of the communities in which they are located. This is being led by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Community Buildings Service

The Village Hall and Community Buildings Advisory Service continued to support trustees, management committees and volunteers involved with the day to day running of village halls and community buildings across Sussex. AirS maintained contact with over 200 halls across both counties and is aware that there are many other community buildings such as scout huts, sports pavilions etc spread across both counties.

The cost of subscription to the service remained at £120+VAT (£144) per year and membership levels remained the same with 158 subscribers. This shows a sustained confidence in the service with all those that joined the previous year electing to stay on.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

COVID-19 continued to be the greatest challenge for most halls and community buildings during the year. Although the third UK lockdown period came to an end early on there was a continued need for advice on the cautious reopening's and the challenge of following the government's advice and the law. As previously, many relied on the guidance issued from ACRE which was easier to understand and specifically tailored to Village Hall's needs. A further 15 update briefings were issued during the year with additional information sheets and templates, and these were sent out to all contacts regardless of subscription status.

The annual Village Hall conferences were postponed for a second year due to restrictions on gatherings and the vulnerable status of many trustees. Sussex Community Buildings Advisory Group (SCBAG) working with the advisory service felt that it would be better to hold off for another year and aim to relaunch live conferences in 2022-2023.

There were a few changes in staff delivering the service during the year with the main VH advisor leaving in September and the former VH advisor/consultant stepping in to fill the gap with additional support from core staff. An experienced VH advisor was recruited in January.

There was a continued demand for AirS consultancy services to support on a range of issues predominantly governance arrangements, incorporation (CIO), business plan development, roles and responsibilities of trustees, and the search for funding to update/rebuild halls.

Community Based Village Agents

Our two major projects that progressed during this period were the Making it Happen project in the Wealden district of East Sussex and the Lost Woods environmental project, largely in West Sussex.

The AirS Making it Happen (MiH) team support work in four rural-hub towns in Wealden. MiH began in September 2019 and is a five-year East Sussex County Council funded, Asset Based project, alongside four other voluntary sector partners. The project involves three part-time Village Agents supporting community activities in four medium-sized towns (Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Crowborough). The Village Agents have been providing advice, signposting, and assistance with small and medium sized grants. It is a county-wide project with five delivery partners and led by SCDA.

The MiH project is informed by the Asset Based Community Development model's principles of being citizen led, relationship-oriented, asset-based, place-based and inclusion focused. Looking to address the rural priorities identified by the County Council, the Village Agents support community groups to tackle issues such as social isolation, poor mental health, access to services and the needs of an ageing population.

The village agents have been able to get out into communities to a greater degree through the year, although Covid restrictions were still having a significant impact on this. However, they have been able to support a growing number of community activity from small projects such as a new communal planter within a neighbourhood to the community acquisition of a new nature land asset by Polegate Town Council and the process of this becoming community led. They have also been involved in the creation of Uckfield Green Partnership and a fantastic skatepark project that has led to the involvement of young volunteers through a youth club in Crowborough.

Although more recent, it is worth noting that the MiH project has had some significant changes. The loss of Chiara, due to retirement, and Steve Lewis has meant that we have been recently going through a period of transition as Laura Heales has taken over as Team Leader and we have welcomed Jo Peters into the project. However, the team is now feeling positive and have lots of ideas about how the project can move forward in new and interesting ways.

While recent focus has been on managing the transitions and work around the Phase 2 Lost Woods bid and MiH team changes, some thought is being given to the development of the team after the Community

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

lottery fund bid was unsuccessful. There are themes emerging around climate action and community, while some links are being made with potential partners that may help us move forward with new ideas. Hopefully this next year will see some of these bear fruit.

The second major Village Agent project is The Lost Woods of the South Downs and Low Weald. This project began in July 2020, is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund until May 2022 as part of the first phase.

Lost Woods is a 5-year, multimillion pound lottery funded project alongside conservation and environmental charities such as the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency and the Small Woods Association. During the last year, the Lost Woods team have continued to engage in the 18 month development phase and, during this time, have been working with communities to develop and test ideas and create a project brochure giving ideas for enjoying local woods. Some successes were the series of August Ambles in 2021, woodland activities for young carers and community led experiences, such as the Scaynes Hill Family Trail and a Dawn Chorus Walk.

The end of the Lost Woods development stage meant that work on this project had to cease while the lottery considered whether to fund the full delivery phase. This meant that we had to lose most of the Lost Woods Team as there was not sufficient funding to retain them during this interim period. As at the time of writing we are very pleased to confirm that we have won 5 years of additional Lost Woods Phase 2 project funding and over £800,000 of funds which was confirmed in Quarter 3 of 2022.

Community Led Housing and the Sussex Community Housing Hub

The Hub service at AirS has continued to work closely with 27 community led housing groups and projects across East and West Sussex. These are all Community Land Trusts – CLTs - (including one Co-Housing project). Icklesham CLT became the first CLT in East Sussex to start on site for a new build scheme of 15 affordable homes on a rural exception site, which ensures these will remain affordable and for local people in perpetuity. There will be 12 Social Rented homes (so genuinely affordable rent levels) and 3 for Shared Ownership. Herstmonceux CLT and Angmering CLT both have planning but have yet to start on site given the considerable challenges of cost inflation in light of Covid and a post Brexit environment which has hampered supply chains and affected procurement. Another scheme to have gained planning consent this year is Arundel CLT which will secure 20 Social Rented homes in partnership with Aster Housing Association, as part of a 90 home development.

We have been able to help secure circa £450,000 in pre-development funds for four CLTs this year via the last round of the Community Housing Fund (CHF) Herstmonceux, Angmering, Eastbourne and Bexhill CLTs each obtained over £100,000 each to enable them to work towards submission of planning or starting on site. For a £4M national fund which was only open for a 9 month period this was a real success.

The Hub team has undertaken several Housing Needs Surveys this year including those in Pett, Guestling and Northiam. All of which identified significant local housing needs.

The Hub team have continued to undertake a series of Webinars covering key topics such as Finance, Planning, Community Engagement and Sustainable Development. These have been very well received, providing a valued space for sharing of good practice, peer support and networking.

The Hub and Sussex CLTs are at the forefront in terms of lobbying to make the case for a renewal of the Community Housing Fund to secure this vital funding stream for the sector.

Research and Policy

Numerous networking events were held in various communities, right across the county, attracting attendees from a wide range of business sizes and types. These events provided a valuable opportunity for

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

the sharing of knowledge, experiences and business contacts, as well as signposting to the diverse range of support available.

We have also consistently continued to provide housing needs surveys to provide evidence and information for community housing initiatives throughout the year.

6. Developments and changes to activities

Volunteers

We encourage time to be freely given by volunteers in their own communities. We have always encouraged them to contribute in this way rather than directly to us. In some communities (eg Mayfield) we have been happy to see the growth and development of local community organisations, owned and run by local community, with AirS (and other agencies) giving support of different kinds along the way.

Work with other charities

The core of our work is its support of smaller voluntary organisations and charities throughout Sussex, including in their conception and creation. In addition, we work in partnership with a wide range of other voluntary organisations to help rural communities access specialist skills and services, and to disseminate key information.

Our work is diverse and consequently so are the specialisms of voluntary sector partners that we work with - for instance environmental protection, health, poverty, housing needs, farming, domestic abuse, transport provision, education, and infrastructure.

Impact beyond the area of benefit

Our staff work closely with our national body, ACRE to ensure the voice of Sussex is heard nationally and that it is strengthened via the national campaigning this offers and the rurally focussed guidance and information it provides.

7. Financial review

Overview

Action in rural Sussex carries out a wide range of projects and programmes in pursuit of its strategic aims. The outcome of this activity has been reported earlier in the trustees' report.

Restricted Funds

The detail of the restricted fund activity is set out in Note 18 of the financial statements. Where individual projects show a deficit on completion or termination, this has been made good from unrestricted funds. Restricted funds at the year end amounted to £33,834.

Unrestricted Funds

The total unrestricted funds are set out in Note 17 of the financial statements amounted to £1,583,805. Of this total the Trustees have designated that £1,208,000 is held for specific purposes.

Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees has developed this reserves policy to cover the ongoing employee commitments, ensure business continuity and allow for its investment in developing sustainable income streams, contingent liabilities, working capital requirements and to take account of its annual risk review. The free reserve is maintained primarily in case Action in rural Sussex suffers a sudden and unforeseen contraction of activities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

This is mitigated through full cost recovery budgeting, accurate forecasting, advantageous contract negotiation where possible and careful treasury management. Any remaining free reserves not required under the reserves policy are available to develop the work of the charity, to meet its charitable objectives and to fulfil any latent contractual obligations entered by the charity as part of its primary purpose trading.

The Board of Trustees confirms that each restricted fund has sufficient assets to meet its obligations, or arrangements exist with the funders that these obligations will be met at the point at which the requirement arises. Trustees will annually review the reserves policy in the light of a continuing shift in funding profile, and the linked investment in strategic and business development.

Restatement of 2022 Financial Results

In reviewing the result for the year to 31 March 2023, errors were discovered in the way Accrued Income and Deferred Income had been analysed in the previous year's accounts. As a result, we have had to restate the results for the year to 31 March 2022, for which the loss was understated by some £108,000.

An internal review was prepared, explaining how the errors arose, and a copy of the review was forwarded to the Independent Examiner who had originally reported on the accounts, for their comment. No comments on the review have been received from the former Independent Examiner who resigned from that position a week later.

The Trustees appointed Knill James, Chartered Accountants of Lewes, East Sussex, to act as Independent Examiner for the restated accounts to 31 March 2022.

The members of the company will be invited to approve both the restated accounts for the year to 31 March 2022 as well as the audited accounts to 31 March 2023 at the Annual General Meeting.

The Trustees will then inform both the Registrar of Companies and the Charities Commission of the circumstances of the restated accounts.

8. Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Sussex Rural Community Council for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Small Company Exemptions

We confirm that the accounts comply with current statutory requirements and with the requirements of the governing document.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 8 December 2023

and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Clark', is written over a horizontal line.

Alex Ingham Clark – Chair

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees
of Sussex Rural Community Council

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Sussex Rural Community Council (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



Mark Filsell FCA, Knill James LLP, Chartered Accountants, One Bell Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN71JU

11 December 2023

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds as restated £	Restricted funds as restated £	2022 Total as restated £	2021 Total
Income and endowments from:	2				
Donations and legacies	Page 18	55,822	-	55,822	59,589
Charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	page18	246,808	141,256	388,064	441,531
Investments	3	<u>8,345</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,345</u>	<u>16,062</u>
Total		<u>310,975</u>	<u>141,256</u>	<u>452,231</u>	<u>517,182</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:					
Operational programmes	page 19 – 20	<u>503,533</u>	<u>110,398</u>	<u>613,931</u>	<u>595,157</u>
Net income (expenditure) before Other recognised gains (losses)	4	(192,558)	30,858	(161,700)	(77,975)
Other recognised gains and losses:					
Actuarial valuation gains	20	1,108	-	1,108	-
Net Movement of funds		<u>(191,450)</u>	<u>30,858</u>	<u>(160,592)</u>	<u>(77,975)</u>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,775,156</u>	<u>2,976</u>	<u>1,778,132</u>	<u>1,856,107</u>
Total funds carried forward	16,17	<u>1,583,706</u>	<u>33,834</u>	<u>1,617,540</u>	<u>1,778,132</u>

The notes on pages 24 to 35 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Income from donations and legacies		
Grants		
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)	47,395	47,395
HMRC Job Retention Scheme	<u>-</u>	<u>10,110</u>
	47,395	57,505
Donations		
Donations	<u>8,427</u>	<u>2,084</u>
	<u><u>55,822</u></u>	<u><u>59,589</u></u>
Income from Charitable Activities		
Income from operational programmes as restated		
Housing Hub Fees	122,929	100,875
Village Hall consultancy/Subscription	25,787	18,712
Sussex Community Development Assoc.	72,498	69,135
Neighbourhood Planning	24,238	-
Other Income	<u>1,356</u>	<u>2,889</u>
	<u><u>246,808</u></u>	<u><u>191,611</u></u>
Project specific funding		
Grants/Donations as restated		
Local & Regional Government	13,226	102,550
Community Led Homes Funding	14,635	63,720
Lost Woods Grants	109,395	82,650
ACRE – Safeguarding	1,000	1,000
Funding for Interns	<u>3,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u><u>141,256</u></u>	<u><u>249,920</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Operational programmes		
Direct project costs as restated		
Information technology	5,939	7,432
Events	3,060	765
Delegated and other grants	-	75,353
Funding RVA for Reaching Communities	-	9,624
Print post stationery	2,913	6,202
Consultancy	12,187	7,313
Marketing nad publicity	1,022	1,114
Small equipment	618	1,385
Communications	1,050	2,194
Travel	4,407	1,559
Legal	-	100
Recruitment and training	-	4,840
Salaries/social security/pension	<u>79,202</u>	<u>309,476</u>
	110,398	427,357
Support costs – page 20	499,235	163,778
Governance costs – page 20	<u>4,298</u>	<u>4,022</u>
	<u><u>613,931</u></u>	<u><u>595,157</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2022

	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
Support and governance costs				
Support costs				
Office overheads				
Rent	18,444		17,614	
Power and light	2,258		2,436	
Communications	3,942		3,339	
Insurance	2,112		2,581	
Information technology	10,170		9,809	
Repairs and maintenance	2,291		733	
Depreciation	<u>455</u>		<u>812</u>	
		39,672		37,324
Administration costs as restated				
Salaries, social security, pensions	389,992		119,376	
Other pension costs	45,501		15,766	
Staff recruitment, training and support	29,509		25,550	
Information technology	1,261		-	
Travel	373		24	
Print, Post, Stationery	132		927	
Advertising and marketing	1,742		3,580	
Membership fees	4,825		4,500	
Sundries	144		540	
Growth Plan Pension Scheme	(16,239)		(46,771)	
Irrecoverable VAT	<u>2,323</u>		<u>2,962</u>	
		<u>459,563</u>		<u>126,454</u>
		<u>499,235</u>		<u>163,778</u>
Governance costs				
Trustee travel and meetings	340		22	
Legal and professional	<u>3,958</u>		<u>4,000</u>	
		<u>4,298</u>		<u>4,022</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 as restated		2021	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	9		638		442
Investment	10		<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
			640		444
Current assets					
Stocks	11	-	1,919		
Debtors	12	76,636	48,845		
Cash balances		<u>1,799,127</u>	<u>1,864,957</u>		
		1,875,763	1,915,721		
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in under one year	13	<u>(246,948)</u>	<u>(108,771)</u>		
Net current assets			<u>1,628,815</u>		<u>1,806,950</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			1,629,455		1,807,394
Provisions	20		<u>(11,915)</u>		<u>(29,262)</u>
Net assets			<u>1,617,540</u>		<u>1,778,132</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	16				
- General funds			387,621		596,418
- Designated funds			1,208,000		1,208,000
- Pension reserve	20		<u>(11,915)</u>		<u>(29,262)</u>
			1,583,706		1,775,156
Restricted funds	17		<u>33,834</u>		<u>2,976</u>
Total charity funds			<u>1,617,540</u>		<u>1,778,132</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

For the year ending 31 March 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006;
- The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 8 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Alex Ingham Clark
Chair



John Moore-Bick
Trustee

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 as restated £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities	22	(73,524)	(194,223)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		8,345	16,062
Purchase of equipment		<u>(651)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash provided by investment activities		<u>7,694</u>	<u>16,062</u>
Change in Cash balances in the reporting period		(65,830)	(178,161)
Cash balances at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>1,864,957</u>	<u>2,043,118</u>
Cash balances at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>1,799,127</u></u>	<u><u>1,864,957</u></u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies

1.1. Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (issued October 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in relevant accounting policy notes.

1.2 Group financial statements

The Company is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial Statements by virtue of section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 as the group it heads qualifies as a small group. These financial statements therefore present information about the company as an individual undertaking and not about its group.

1.3. Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The company is dependent on the continued support of grant aiding bodies. The trustees believe that the company will continue to receive this support and accordingly consider that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:

- the charity is legally entitled to the funds;
- any performance conditions attached to the income have been met or are fully within the control of the charity;
- there is sufficient certainty that receipt at the income is considered probable;
- the amount can be reliably measured.

Donations and legacies

Grants and donations are recognised in incoming resources in the year in which they are receivable, except as follows:

- When donors specify that grants or donations given to the charity must be used in future accounting periods, the income is deferred to those periods;
- when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income. the income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the preconditions for use are met.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2022

Charitable activities

Income from operational programmes included in the incoming resources in the period in which the relevant programme takes place.

Project specific funding - when donors specify that donations and grants are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement. this income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Investment income

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

1.5 Expenditure

An expenditure is included on an accruals basis inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered and is recognised when:

- there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment;
- it is probable that settlement will be required;
- the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Operational programme costs - where costs are identified directly with specific programmes and allocated to the relevant heading within resources expended.

Support costs

The administrative and overhead costs associated with running the office from which the company operates as well as governance costs. Support costs are wholly attributable to operational programme costs.

Governance costs

Costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

1.6. Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are either.

- Unrestricted General funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.
- Unrestricted Designated funds - these are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022

- Restricted funds - these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects or the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as cost.

Depreciation is provided at annual rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life. as follows:

Furniture/fixtures/equipment - Straight line basis, the shorter of 4 years or the duration
of the project

1.8. Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at cost less provision for diminution in value.

1.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid after taking account of any trade discounts.

1.10 Cash Balances

Cash balances include cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.11 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

1.12 Pensions

The company makes defined contribution pension and superannuation payments in relation to certain members of staff in accordance with the terms of their employment contracts. Such payments are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

1.13. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value, and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.14. Significant Accounting Estimates and Judgements

In determining the carrying amounts of certain assets and liabilities, the charity makes assumptions of the effects of uncertain future events on those assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date. The charity's estimates and assumptions are based on historical experience and expectation of future events and are reviewed annually.

2. Incoming Resources

The total incoming resources for the year have been derived from the principal activity undertaken wholly in the UK.

3. Interest receivable	2022	2021
	£	£
Bank interest	<u>8,345</u>	<u>16,062</u>
4. Net income/(expenditure) for the year is stated after charging:	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible assets	455	812
Independent examination	<u>4,000</u>	<u>4,000</u>

5. Trustees' emoluments and reimbursed expenses

The trustees received no remuneration during the year (2021 - £Nil).

The aggregated amount reimbursed to trustees during the year was £298 (2021 - £29).

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022

6. Staff costs and numbers	2022	2021
	£	£
Staff costs		
Salaries, social security and pension costs	469,194	428,852
Other pension costs	<u>29,262</u>	<u>15,766</u>
	<u><u>498,456</u></u>	<u><u>444,618</u></u>

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year (2021 – £Nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Senior Management Team. The total employee costs of the key management personnel of the charity were £93,684 (2021 - £81,508).

Staff Numbers

The average number of employees (including casual and part time staff) during the year was made up as follows:

	2022	2021
	Number	Number
Support /operational programmes	<u><u>14</u></u>	<u><u>12</u></u>

7. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of its employees. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. The pension charge represents contributions due from the company and amounted to £16,239 (2021 - £15,766).

8. Corporation taxation

The company is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022

9. Fixed Assets -tangible assets	Furniture Fixtures Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
1 April 2021	7,690	7,690
Additions	<u>651</u>	<u>651</u>
31 March 2022	<u>8,341</u>	<u>8,341</u>
Depreciation		
1 April 2021	7,248	7,248
Charge for year	<u>455</u>	<u>455</u>
31 March 2022	<u>7,703</u>	<u>7,703</u>
Net book values		
31 March 2022	<u>638</u>	<u>637</u>
31 March 2021	<u>442</u>	<u>442</u>

10. Fixed Asset Investments	Subsidiary Undertaking Shares £	Total £
Cost		
1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Net book values		
31 March 2022	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
31 March 2021	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

The company owns 100% of the issued share capital of SRCC (Trading) Limited, a company registered in England and Wales, number 03101724. SRCC (Trading) Limited was incorporated to carry out the non-charitable activities of the company and has not traded during the year; SRCC (Trading) Limited has net assets of £2 as at 31 March 2022.

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022

11. Stocks	2022	2021
	£	£
Work in progress	<u>-</u>	<u>1,919</u>
12. Debtors	2022	2021
	as restated	
	£	£
Trade debtors	65,866	25,167
Other debtors	1,725	-
Prepayments	958	3,210
Accrued Income	<u>8,087</u>	<u>20,468</u>
	<u>76,636</u>	<u>48,845</u>
13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2022	2021
	as restated	
	£	£
Trade creditors	8,858	22,718
Other taxation and social security	29,544	10,102
Other creditors	8,915	3,931
Accruals	18,997	25,298
Deferred income (Note14)	<u>180,634</u>	<u>46,722</u>
	<u>246,948</u>	<u>108,771</u>
14. Deferred Income		£
		as restated
Balance at 1 April 2021		46,722
Amount released to incoming resources		(46,722)
Amount deferred in the year		<u>180,634</u>
Balance at 31 March 2022		<u>180,634</u>

Deferred income relates to grants and other income received in advance

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

15. Limited by guarantee

Sussex Rural Community Council is a private company, limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales without a share capital. Each member guarantees to contribute £1 to the company in the event of its winding up. At 31 March 2022 there were 110 members.

16. Unrestricted funds	Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Pension	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Designated funds:					
Development Fund	534,984	-	-	-	534,984
Relocation Fund	500,000	-	-	-	500,000
Sussex Community Housing Hub	92,016	-	-	-	92,016
IT Rolling Replacement Fund	18,000	-	-	-	18,000
Recruitment Fund	<u>63,000</u>	-	-	-	<u>63,000</u>
Total designated funds	1,208,000	-	-	-	1,208,000
General fund	596,418	312,083	(503,533)	(17,347)	387,621
Exceptional item- Pension scheme	<u>(29,262)</u>	-	-	17,347	<u>(11,915)</u>
	<u>1,775,156</u>	<u>312,083</u>	<u>(503,533)</u>	-	<u>1,583,706</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

17. Restricted funds	Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£
Objectives	2,976	141,256	(110,398)	33,834
ACRE safeguarding	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Funding for Interns	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
	<u>2,976</u>	<u>145,256</u>	<u>(110,398)</u>	<u>33,834</u>

Objectives

These funds are for three main objectives:

1. Tackling Rural Disadvantage
2. Building Community capacity and Resilience
3. Rural Voice

Acre – safeguarding

Funding from Action with Communities in Rural England to cover safeguarding responsibilities.

Funding for Interns

Funding from the University of Sussex as part of the University's CareerLab programme.

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General Funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	637	-	-	637
Investments	2	-	-	2
Net current assets	386,982	1,208,000	33,834	1,628,816
Long term liabilities	<u>(11,915)</u>	-	-	<u>(11,915)</u>
	<u>375,706</u>	<u>1,208,000</u>	<u>33,834</u>	<u>1,617,540</u>

19. Financial commitments

At 31 March 2022 the company had total future commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Due:		
Within one year	<u>17,962</u>	-

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022

20. Pension scheme

The company is a participating employer in the Growth Plan operated by the Pensions Trust to provide pension benefits for members of staff. This scheme is a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 950 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the company is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchases basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

The Growth Plan is in deficit. The triennial actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2020 showed a deficit of £31.6m, which has reduced from £131.5m at 30 September 2017. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme over a period of twelve years, which commenced in April 2013.

For the company the additional contributions are to be levied at the original rate of £11,998 in the first year (2013-2014) with an increase of 3% per annum thereafter, subject to revision. Full provision for the revised total amount has been made in these accounts. The company has been notified that the latest estimated employer debt on its

withdrawal for the Growth Plan would be £163,287 (2020: £197,905). A number of employees remain as active members of the Growth Plan and there is no intention to withdraw from the Plan in the foreseeable future. In the event that the company did withdraw, its employer debt would be recalculated and would take into account the additional contributions made under the Recovery Plan.

The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

Where the scheme is in deficit and where the company has agreed to a deficit funding arrangement the company recognises a liability for this obligation. The amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit reduction contributions payable under the agreement that relates to the deficit. The unwinding of the discount rate is recognised as a finance cost.

The scheme has been valued by The Pensions Trust at £11,915 as at 31 March 2022.

Pension liability was previously measured as the net present value of future deficit payments. However, the trustees have in 2022 received an actuarial valuation of the scheme liability leading to a gain recognised in the SOFA of £1,108.

21. Related party transactions

During the year the company had no related party transactions that require disclosure.

22. Reconciliation of net income (expenditure) to net cashflow from operating activities	2022 £	2021 £
Net income (expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(160,593)	(77,975)
Dividends and interest	(8,345)	(16,062)
Depreciation	455	812
Decrease in stocks	1,919	(1,919)
(Increase) decrease in debtors	(27,791)	(18,320)
(Decrease) increase in provisions	(17,345)	-
(Decrease) increase in creditors	<u>138,176</u>	<u>(80,759)</u>
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>(73,524)</u>	<u>(194,223)</u>

SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

England & Wales - Charity number 1035401

Accounts

Company number 02907172
Charity number 1035401

Sussex Rural Community Council
(Limited by Guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Breckman & Company Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants
49 South Molton Street
London W1K 5LH

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Contents

	Page
Reference and Administrative Details	1
Chairman's Foreword	2 - 5
Trustees' Report	6 - 16
Independent Examiner's Report	17
Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)	18 - 21
Balance Sheet	22 - 23
Cash Flow Statement	24
Notes to the Financial Statements	25 - 36

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Reference and Administrative Details

Constitution

The company is incorporated under the Companies Act, company number 02907172 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The company is a registered charity, number 1035401.

Directors and trustees

The directors of the charitable company (Sussex Rural Community Council) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees during the year and since the year end, were :

Carole Robertson resigned 7 July 2020
Alex Ingham Clark - Chair
Rob Dillingham
Sandra Jill Llewellyn appointed 8 October 2020
John Moore-Bick
Neil David Smith
William Anderson

Interim CEO/day to day management

Steven Haasz

Independent Examiners

Breckman & Company Ltd, 49 South Molton Street, London W1K 5LH.

Bankers

Barclays Bank plc, The Old Bank , High Street, Lewis, East Sussex BN7 2JP.

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ.

Shawbrook Bank, Lutea House, Warley Hill Business Park, The Drive Great Warley, Brentwood, Essex CM13 3BE.

The Charity Bank Ltd, Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1BE.

Nationwide Building Society, Kings Park Road, Moulton Park, Northampton, NN3 6NW.

Solicitors

Christmas Ogden & Company Solicitors, Howard Cottage, Broomans Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2LT.

Registered office and operation address

Waterside Centre Suite F1, North Street, Lewes BN7 2PE.

Name

" Action in rural Sussex (AirS)" is the trading name used by Sussex Rural Community Council.

AIRS CHAIR OF THE BOARD REPORT April 2020 to March 2021

The COVID 19 lockdown started just 3 weeks before the end of our last 2019-2020 reporting period and continued to have a very dramatic impact during 2020-2021. Our thoughts go out to all the people of Sussex that have been impacted by the pandemic, whether that is due to the death or illness of a loved one, to hardship due to being furloughed or to a range of other issues, great and small, that arose from this unprecedented situation.

It is not surprising that AirS has been significantly impacted by the pandemic during the period 2020-2021 as have our funders, partners and beneficiaries. At best, our normal ways of working have been limited or changed. At worst, some services had to stop altogether, and some AirS staff had to be put on furlough for a period of time. I am very proud that despite these very significant headwinds, AirS was able to continue to provide valuable services to our beneficiaries and in some cases to adapt these services to meet the very particular circumstances and challenges presented by Covid.

In addition to the challenges presented by the pandemic, AirS has also had to weather additional challenges closer to home. Our Chief Executive Petrina Mayson retired due to ill health in August 2020. My fellow Trustees and I would like to thank Petrina for her leadership during the time she was in post and particularly for the sterling work that she and the AirS team put in as the pandemic and lockdown took hold. We wish her all the best for her retirement. After an extended search we appointed Gordon Ackroyd as the new Chief Executive in December 2020 but I regret to say that Gordon resigned in September 2021. I want to thank Gordon for his efforts whilst in post and wish him every success in the next stage of his career.

At the time of writing, Steven Haasz is acting as our interim CEO and is charged with restoring stability, managing the organisation, leading a strategic review and an overhaul of our policies and processes. Steven has made a very positive start and we have every confidence in him and the team.

This year we have had one new Trustee join our Board: Sandra Llewelyn, a former consultant and advisor with many years' experience in financial services who has already made an impact with her rigorous approach to Governance. Sandra, thank you for your support.

AirS continues to be dependent on statutory sector funding. The extended period of the pandemic and the associated economic impacts will see continued pressure on statutory bodies and other funders. Charities like Airs will need to work even more closely with local authorities, funders and coordinating bodies to ensure that we remain connected and aligned to their priorities.

The Trustees have committed to undertake a strategic review, to assess the challenges faced by rural communities in Sussex – both 'pre-Covid' challenges and new – and to refresh and revise our services considering these challenges and the evolving needs of statutory bodies and funders. At the time of writing, the COP26 summit is ongoing, and any long-term strategy will also need to acknowledge and address the challenges and widespread implications presented by Climate Change and the evolving UK Government Policy and societal shifts which are still uncertain as they relate to rural communities.

This forward-looking strategic review will help inform a number of key issues for AirS including:

- how to leverage best practice from other voluntary sector bodies both in Sussex and across the UK
- how to evolve our services to remain relevant to beneficiaries, funders and stakeholders
- how to ensure synergy between our services such that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'
- how to develop our approach to funding to ensure sustainability and successful achievement of strategic aims

- how to deploy the capital receipt from the sale of Sussex House – whether to fund specific issues/assets or a more general ‘investment for income’ approach.

Our overall strategic intention is that AirS remains able to address the real needs of rural communities and is fully aligned with the priorities of statutory bodies and funders – today and in the years to come.

During this busy and complex 2020-2021 period, the AirS staff have adapted and continued to deliver the vital rural services for which AirS is so well known. I know how hard our staff have worked to make the change to working from home and continuing the important work they do in their communities. Work that will be essential in the months and years ahead as we help rural communities to bounce back from the pandemic and its implications for rural economies, rural community cohesion and resilience and for individual mental health. A huge amount of work has been done to enable us to maintain the standard of work that we do and communications both internally and externally. I wish to thank them all again for this tremendous effort they have all shown in this unprecedented time.

To highlight some of the excellent work our team has been doing in the last year:

Housing and Planning

The Sussex Community Housing Hub has continued to support a pipeline of some 27 community led housing groups and projects throughout this time, a task made easier with the addition of another Housing Enabler to the team (Polly Eason) which now consists of three fully accredited Community Led Housing Advisors. We have maintained the momentum with these groups in spite of these challenging times, including via our very well received series of Webinars, which have covered a range of topics such as Funding and Finance, Planning Changes (rural and community led implications) and good practice in Community Engagement.

Establishing new groups as strong and viable entities to take forward local needs housing projects has been testing at times during the past year. Despite this, solid new groups have emerged as CLTs in Firle and Battle and a Co-Housing group called Future Folk who have a strong commitment to low impact, sustainable housing and living. This chimes well with our objectives as a Housing Hub in promoting and supporting the delivery of sustainable development.

With 3 housing schemes having now secured planning consent we will see at least 2 of them starting on site this year, Icklesham Community Land Trust (CLT) and Angmering CLT in East Sussex providing 27 affordable homes available for local people in perpetuity. The third, Herstmonceux CLT providing 18 homes, has been delayed due to the impact on build costs and supply chains that have arisen in light of both Covid -19 and Brexit. The Hub has supported all these exciting community led housing projects with successful applications for more than £400,000 predevelopment costs and capital grants in excess of £1.4M.

A successful community led housing project often needs a strong housing association or registered provider (RP). We have noted a strategic challenge for some projects due to the absence of a willing RP – whether due to perceived complexity of community projects or due to the small size and perception that there are ‘easier pickings’ to be made with larger commercial projects. This is a strategic issue that we intend to research, and ideally address, in the 2021-2022 period.

The absence of a renewed Community Housing Fund (CHF) - the national programme of grants to support the sector – has also caused some consternation amongst Sussex CLTs, but we are confident that the CHF will be renewed, and we continue to campaign on this crucial issue. There is a good deal of momentum around community led housing in Sussex and thus considerable support for it amongst key decision makers including several local MPs, which is much appreciated.

Neighbourhood Planning work slowed for some parishes during Covid crises. Nonetheless, several kept up the pace with online meetings, workshops and consultations. Three Neighbourhood Plans that passed examinations in 2019/20 had their referendums postponed due to the pandemic. All three have now passed and been adopted by their respective Local Planning Authorities (Upper Beeding, Henfield and Send).

During this time, the Housing and Planning Team also began to explore wider issues in relation to community led planning. The impact of the pandemic has caused many to reflect on the bigger picture and their role in addressing issues of community resilience; climate change and adaptability, nature recovery and biodiversity, local food supply, regenerative agriculture and supporting a circular economy. We are keen to support those who are interested in or indeed already engaged in such projects and will be focussing on this in the year ahead, identifying partners to work with and projects on which to collaborate.

Village Halls and Community Buildings Service

It has been a very difficult year for village halls and community buildings. Because of COVID, building managers and management committees were often unsure of what activities – if any - they were allowed to continue. During the pandemic, Action in Rural Sussex has issued regular updates on permitted activities, and these were updated over 40 times in line with government guidelines. These updates were made available on our website and on our online 'Basecamp' discussion forum.

Our Basecamp forum has been invaluable during the pandemic. It is a place for halls to share information and advice, templates for risk assessments and, most importantly, to communicate with other hall committees across the county for peer support, encouragement and advice. We currently have over 200 individual users on Basecamp; most of these are from Sussex village hall committees but there are also some voluntary sector partners, Local Council staff and colleagues from other Rural Community Councils around the country. During the year there have been over 120 active conversations or threads happening on the Basecamp forum message board covering a wide range of topics including COVID safety checks for halls, building legislation, renewable energy, and fundraising. During this period, we have had approx. 1,800 engagements with Basecamp from halls, equating to over 150 per month. We have also supported halls across Sussex to carry out risk assessments and ensure that buildings were safe to use when people were slowly allowed back in.

A major challenge for halls during the year has been funding: As many buildings lost their income during this time, we have supported them to find additional finance through other funding sources. During the year, we helped halls in Sussex access over £250k from the Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund. We also gave a free six-month subscription to the advisory service so that no hall would miss out on our support. We are pleased to confirm that an additional 30 halls took advantage of this free service, and many have stayed with us after this time. During the year, through our sustained efforts to remain proactive, we increased the number of subscribers to the service to over 160; the largest number we have seen.

While many halls were closed, they took the opportunity to carry out any building or administrative work that was needed and our consultancy service was busier than ever. In this year, through our halls consultant Louise Beaton, we supported 12 halls with in-depth consultancy on a range of topics including governance, building regulations and changes in charity status.

With the continued advice and guidance from the Sussex Community Buildings Advisory Group (SCBAG) a group whose membership is drawn from village halls committees around East and West Sussex, we continue to canvas the needs and aspirations of our halls, and this allows us to offer the most appropriate and timely support possible.

The period 2020-2021 has been a most challenging year for village halls: As we all know, village halls are the heart of any community, and many have been forced to the point of closure by the effects of the pandemic. Most halls rely on hire charges for their income. With most activities stopped during the crisis, halls have run down any reserves they had and now need to find alternative sources of funding. At Action in Rural Sussex, we have been supporting halls to find new ways of generating income, including helping halls write funding applications and looking at diversifying activities (becoming business and digital hubs), looking at installing electric vehicle charging points and providing additional services.

This is a crucial time for village halls. Many people see them as a constant and reassuring presence in the community; some halls have been in existence for over 100 years. Unfortunately, some people will not miss them until they are gone. Due to covid-restrictions, many groups have made the move to online meetings where they would have previously used their local village hall. Whilst this is practical in some instances, such as during bad weather or for people with disabilities or health issues, there is no replacement for the human contact that a face-to-face meeting in a hall gives. That's why we at AirS are doing all we can to make sure halls survive this crisis and thrive going forward.

Community Based Services

During the year we moved ahead with our two major projects while closing the file on three others. Our two major projects now are the Lost Woods environmental project, largely in West Sussex, and the Making it Happen project in the Wealden district of East Sussex.

Lost Woods is a 5-year, multimillion pound lottery funded project alongside conservation and environmental charities such as the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency and the Small Woods Association. Lost Woods was officially launched in July 2020 and by October 2020 we had recruited a full complement of staff (a team of five, all part-time). The aim of the AirS component of this project is to encourage community groups to protect and preserve their local environment. Sadly, but unsurprisingly, COVID had a significant detrimental impact on the initial part of this project. The AirS Village Agents, who were responsible for making links with community groups, were unable to travel to villages in the autumn, and in Spring were furloughed for 3 months. Overall though, at the time of writing (Autumn 2021), we are very satisfied with the contacts we have been able to make, and the progress we have made.

The Making it Happen project has been similarly affected by COVID. AirS has three part-time Village Agents supporting this project through community activities in four medium-sized towns (Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Crowborough). The Village Agents were unable to visit these communities as often as they would have liked at the start of the project. However, they have been able to give continued advice, provide signposting, and assist with small grants.

On 31st December 2020 the AirS 'Reaching Communities' project ended, and we provided the funder (The National Lottery) with a well-received 'end of project' report in Spring 2021. Two further old projects, where we had some residual funds, came to an end in March 2020 and we closed out the accounting with East Surrey County Council. This ended our long support for Good Neighbour Schemes (GNS) in small villages.

Alex Ingham Clark
Alex Ingham Clark (Nov 29, 2021 20:55 GMT)

Alex Ingham Clark – Chair

24 November 2021

Trustees' report April 2020 – March 2021

1. Introduction

The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The reference and administrative details set out on page 1 form part of this report. The financial statements comply with Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

2. Charitable objects

The charity's objects are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of the counties of East and West Sussex; in particular to promote and organise partnership working to achieve the advancement of education, the protection of health, relief of poverty, distress and sickness, by bringing together representatives of the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and other bodies and any interested persons. We set out our strategic aims and activities in more detail later in this report.

3. Structure, governance and management

Legal and administrative details

Sussex Rural Community Council (SRCC) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The governing body is the Board of Trustees. The governing document is the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Operating name

The Sussex Rural Community Council has operated during the year under the operating name "Action in rural Sussex" (AirS).

Trustees

The trustees are elected by the members of the charity at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and may serve a maximum of 10 years. Any remaining vacancies not filled at the AGM are filled by co-option on the initiative of the trustees.

New trustees receive an induction pack and meeting to brief them on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and the recent financial performance of the charity. During that meeting, they also meet key trustees and employees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate training where this will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

A maximum of 16 members of the Board of Directors will be elected at the General Meeting proposed by members of the Company and are invited by the Board of Directors to make such proposals.

The trustees of the charity during the year were:

William Anderson	Alex Ingham Clark (Chair)
Rob Dillingham	John Moore-Bick
Neil Smith (Honorary Treasurer)	Sandra Llewellyn (appointed 08/10/2020)

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Presidency

Joint Presidents:

Sir Peter J Field – former Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex

Susan Pyper – Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex

Subsidiary Company

Action in rural Sussex owns the two shares in SRCC (Trading) Limited. The directors of SRCC (Trading) Limited during the year were:

William Anderson

Alex Ingham Clark (Chair)

Rob Dillingham

John Moore-Bick

Neil Smith (Honorary Treasurer)

Sandra Llewellyn (appointed 08/10/2020)

SRCC (Trading) Limited has not traded during the year.

4. Strategic objectives

Target demographic of the charity

All people living in rural areas of Sussex, but especially those who are at risk of isolation and/or disadvantage, and for whom living in a rural area brings an additional challenge and cost to their daily lives.

Our vision

Our vision is a rural Sussex that is thriving, economically active and full of choice and opportunities for everyone.

Our mission

Our mission is to support and empower people in rural Sussex to maintain vibrant and diverse communities through advice, services and practical support, and by representing their interests at a local, regional and national level.

Public benefit

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2).

In particular, the trustees have considered how planned activities contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set, related in detail in the following paragraphs, which describe the benefit that the charity provides to the public.

Risk Management

The trustees recognise their responsibility for identifying, managing and mitigating all strategic, operational and technical risks facing the charity. AirS also recognises the need to have a planned and systematic approach to risk.

The trustees have adopted a formal policy for risk at both a strategic and operational level.

The comprehensive risk register that is in place is reviewed at every Board meeting.

Involvement by beneficiaries of the charity

The beneficiaries of the work of AirS are those living and/or working in rural Sussex, and especially those for whom living in a rural location can easily become an additional excluding or disadvantaging factor in their lives. In particular this includes: those not sharing the general prosperity of the region; those unable to secure affordable housing; people dependent on rural public transport and limited local services, those experiencing isolation and loneliness and those who are dependent on the support of a local community that is undergoing fundamental changes, whilst remaining superficially attractive and prosperous.

We have day-to-day contact with our beneficiaries through our outreach work with communities. In addition to this we canvass users and gather their views via housing needs surveys and neighbourhood plan consultations. We also participate in rural community networks in both East and West Sussex, and continually seek wider participation from potentially hard-to-reach groups.

In addition to the above, we introduced free membership of the charity in order to encourage more local village organisations and individuals to take part in our formal governance processes.

We are also considering whether some representatives of disadvantaged groups or rural community organisations could be recruited onto the board to increase the involvement of beneficiaries.

How do we fund Action in rural Sussex's work?

We would like to thank everyone who contributes financially in any way to our work with rural communities.

Individuals both join and also make donations. Village organisations, most notably village halls and parish councils, subscribe to our Village Hall and Community Buildings Advisory Service (VHCBAS). Parish councils purchase help from us over local housing initiatives, housing needs surveys, assistance with neighbourhood plans or assistance with local consultation exercises.

Various forms of government - county councils, district councils, government departments and their agencies - fund projects or contribute to our general work with rural communities.

We also secure funding from national and local funders to enable us to deliver specific projects for the benefit of rural communities across Sussex.

In total 259 individuals and organisations have contributed to our work, indicating the diversity of our funding streams, which continues to grow. 32 of these have contributed more than £1,000. We are especially grateful to East Sussex County Council and the Big Lottery Fund for their financial contributions to our community-based village agents project, and to DEFRA for their support of our Village Hall service.

Successful applications were submitted to Lewes and Mid Sussex District Councils for continued support for our Village Hall Service while we were unsuccessful with a bid to the Prince's Countryside Fund for funding to begin a digital inclusion project for later life residents.

We could not exist without your support, and we thank you all on behalf of the rural communities we serve in Sussex, for the tangible difference you are helping us make.

5. Review of 2020/21

The main features of the year:

- The dominant feature of 2020 and 2021 was the coronavirus pandemic. Many of the AirS staff during this period worked at home which necessitated continuous adaptations to working practices.
- In general, it can be said that it is a huge challenge for an agency that focusses on Community Development to carry out most of its work while not being able to visit communities! The staff all found 2020/21 to be highly challenging year.
- In Spring 2020, Petrina Mayson - our then CEO - sadly became ill and took sick-leave. In July 2020 Petrina left the organisation. There was then a hiatus of six months without a CEO. Gordon Akroyd started work at Christmas 2020. The early months of 2021 were taken up by CEO induction and a series of meetings between the CEO and external donors and partners.
- We have expanded our Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH), a community led housing enabling service providing advice and support to co-operatives, self-build and co-housing groups as well as Community Land Trusts (CLTs). The Hub continues to support projects in East and West Sussex. Our first CLT scheme is now on-site in Icklesham (15 affordable homes).
- Our Village Agent Scheme, funded by ESCC and Big Lottery, continued to support individuals and community groups in East Sussex, tackling social isolation and loss of services.
- A new Village Agent scheme began, largely in West Sussex, and new staff were recruited for this project (the Lost Woods project).
- We have reviewed our specialist provision of Neighbourhood Planning Services, which continues to work with parishes in both East Sussex and West Sussex, thus ensuring rural residents' voices are heard.
- We have reviewed and expanded our Community Buildings Service so that it remains the source of expertise, advice and guidance for community buildings across Sussex but offers additional support via our online 'Basecamp' forum and message board where over 200 individuals come together to offer peer support, local knowledge and advise and to share best practice.
- Our CEO and Senior Management have represented rural communities at East Sussex Strategic Partnership, Wealden Local Strategic Partnership, East Sussex Voluntary Alliance, Partnership Plus, Southeast Local Economic Partnership Rural Working Group, Sussex Local Nature Partnership, and has been involved in numerous Covid-19 planning and response meetings.

Helping communities plan for the future

For many years we have supported communities to explore their needs and aspirations, through parish action plans and in developing neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood Planning work slowed for some parishes during Covid crises which compelled most parish and town councils to switch priorities. Nonetheless, we continued working with our communities, providing intensive support to Ninfield, West Wittering (as they held their first Regulation 14 consultation) and Wadhurst who were finalising their plan for Regulation 14 consultation as well. We supported these groups through online meeting, workshops and consultations. Uckfield, North Mundham and Angmering required very little support during this period.

Three of our neighbourhood plans that passed examinations in 2019/20 had their referendums postponed due to the pandemic. The referendums finally took place in May 2021 with all three being passed with overwhelming support. These plans have now formed part of the various Districts and Borough Council's Development Plans

Henfield	– Yes votes	-	2,085 (90.53%)
Upper Beeding	– Yes votes	-	999 (85.24%)
Send	– Yes votes	-	1322 (82%)

We also worked with several communities including Forest Row, Nuthurst and Send in undertaking various surveys with residents to identify new community projects, gather views on the current and future use of existing community facilities and identify the gaps. The various parish councils encouraged resident's views on how to generate funds to implement projects as well as prioritising limited resources to maximise community benefits

Presentations have also been made to Willingdon and Jevington PC and Ninfield PC, both of which expressed interest in exploring the development of neighbourhood planning to address community needs.

A thorough review of the AirS Neighbourhood Planning services was undertaken, and findings submitted to the AirS Board where a decision was made for AirS to continue providing this much valued service to communities in Sussex.

During this time, the Team also began to explore wider issues in relation to community led planning. The impact of the pandemic has caused many to reflect on the bigger picture and their role in addressing issues of community resilience; climate change and adaptability, nature recovery and biodiversity, local food supply, regenerative agriculture and supporting a circular economy. We are keen to support those who are interested in or indeed already engaged in such projects and will be focussing on this in the year ahead, identifying partners to work with and projects on which to collaborate.

Community Buildings Service

The Village Hall and Community Buildings Advisory Service exists to support trustees, management committees and volunteers managing village halls and community buildings across the whole of Sussex: A huge undertaking as, together, East and West Sussex have nearly 300 village halls and many more scout huts, sports clubs and other community buildings over an area of nearly 2,000 square kilometres.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

The cost of subscription to the service remained at £144 per year and at year end we had 158 paid subscribers, an increase of 30% on the previous year.

The greatest challenge facing the service and every hall and community building during the year was, of course, The COVID pandemic.

All halls and community buildings except those providing emergency services experienced long periods of closure which led to much uncertainty for halls. Many halls found that the guidance coming out of government for communities was not relevant to the services they provided. During the year our service issued over 45 updates for halls as to what they were permitted to do along with risk assessment health and safety templates.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we offered six months free subscription to the service so that no halls would miss out on important updates and information. All existing subscribers were included in this, and an additional 30 halls took us up on this offer.

Due to the pandemic and following consultation with our Sussex Community Buildings Advisory Group (SCBAG) it was decided to postpone the annual conference until we were allowed to hold the event 'in person' Feedback we were getting from halls was that they valued the personal contact and the networking opportunities that a 'live' conference offered, and they felt a virtual conference would not be the same.

Whilst we held several online Q and A sessions around the interpretation of government guidance for halls, it was decided to postpone the conference until we were confident it would be allowed to go ahead as a live event.

With the enforced closure of halls, many management committees took the opportunity to look at their operation and during the year we were called upon to provide 15 halls with detailed consultancy on a range of issues that require in-depth work. These covered advice on governance arrangements, options appraisals, business plan development, roles and responsibilities of trustees, revised constitutions, updating/rebuilding halls and support for conversion to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status.

Community Based Village Agents

AirS began the year with five Village Agent (VA) projects and ended the year with two - Making it Happen (MIH) and Lost Woods (LW). Three VA projects came to the natural end of their lifespan.

The MIH project of the Village Agent team is informed by the Asset Based Community Development model's principles of being citizen led, relationship-oriented, asset-based, place-based and inclusion focused. Looking to address the rural priorities identified by the County Council, the Village Agents support community groups to tackle issues such as social isolation, poor mental health, access to services and the needs of an ageing population. The AirS MIH team support work in four rural-hub towns in Wealden. MIH began in September 2019 and is a five year East Sussex County Council funded, Asset Based project, alongside four other voluntary sector partners.

The second major VA project is The Lost Woods of the South Downs and Low Weald. This project began in July 2020. We recruited four part-time staff in October. The project is an interesting new development for AirS because it takes us into the environmental space, working with Conservation groups and agencies such as Woodland Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust. Village Agents support communities to care for, protect and preserve their local green spaces. This project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the first tranche of funding is 18 months, until May 2022.

The MIH project was severely hampered by the COVID lockdowns – the VA's continued working but for most of the year were unable to visit their communities. The LW staff carried out induction in November and December 2020 but were then furloughed for three months in early 2021. Since the end of March 2021, the team have been running to catch up with lost time. The LW team must gather evidence of demand and bid in June 2022 for the funding to continue.

Three projects came to an end during the year. The most important was 'Reaching Communities' funded by the National Lottery. Reaching Communities was a three-year project, 2017-2020, it was extended by three months because of the pandemic. Reaching Communities supported 30 local community associations in Wealden and Rother. We successfully completed the evaluation and final reporting and aim to submit another proposal to the Lottery in the future.

The other long-running project that ended was AirS support for Good Neighbour Schemes, mainly in Lewes District. The Village Agent team valued this work because it allowed us to support small villages such as Rodmell, Newick and many others. That work was funded by East Sussex County Council for five years but sadly the funding and our support for this project has now ended.

In the coming year we are looking to extend our environmental/green volunteering work to reach East Sussex and to support a wider range of community groups. We hope to do this through a follow-up application to National Lottery/Reaching Communities

Community Led Housing and the Sussex Community Housing Hub

The Hub service at AirS has continued to work closely with 27 community led housing groups and projects across East and West Sussex. These are all Community Land Trusts – CLTs - (including one Co-Housing project) Two further schemes secured planning consent this past year; Herstmonceux CLT (18 homes) and Ringmer CLT (6 homes) both stand-alone - non housing association - projects. Icklesham and Angmering CLTs will start on site in 2021.

The Hub has expanded to include a another fully accredited Advisor; Polly Eason who has been great addition to the team. This recruitment was enabled by grant funds that were secured from Community Led Homes. We have undertaken several Housing Needs Surveys including an online survey in Hailsham. The limitations imposed by Covid-19 have made community engagement more difficult, but we have managed to maintain momentum with all our existing projects whilst also enabling a couple of new groups to emerge during this challenging time; Future Folk and Battle CLT.

The Hub team have used this time to expand our online presence and find other ways to support groups including via a series of Webinars covering key topics such as Finance, Planning, Community Engagement and Sustainable Development. These have been very well received, providing a valued space for sharing of good practice, peer support and networking.

The Hub and Sussex CLTs are at the forefront in terms of lobbying to make the case for a renewal of the Community Housing Fund to secure this vital funding stream for the sector.

Research and Policy

Numerous networking events were held in various communities, right across the county, attracting attendees from a wide range of business sizes and types. These events provided a valuable opportunity for the sharing of knowledge, experiences and business contacts, as well as signposting to the diverse range of support available.

We have also consistently continued to provide housing needs surveys to provide evidence and information for community housing initiatives throughout the year.

6. Developments and changes to activities

Volunteers and Help In Kind

We encourage time to be freely given by volunteers in their own communities. We have always encouraged them to contribute in this way rather than directly to us. In some communities (eg Mayfield) we have been happy to see the slow growth and development of local community organisations, owned and run by local community, with AirS (and other agencies) giving support of different kinds along the way.

Many of the projects carried out by us are done as partnership projects to which other organisations contribute help in kind. We do not show the financial contribution of this help in kind within the financial statements. (We are indebted to the organisations that work with us in this way and are grateful for their co-operation in preparing statements of their contributions, when these are required, to demonstrate match funding.

Work with other charities

The core of our work is its support of smaller voluntary organisations and charities throughout Sussex, including in their conception and creation. In addition, we work in partnership with a wide range of other voluntary organisations to help rural communities access specialist skills and services, and to disseminate key information.

Our work is diverse and consequently so are the specialisms of voluntary sector partners that we work with - for instance environmental protection, health, poverty, housing needs, farming, domestic abuse, transport provision, education, and infrastructure.

Impact beyond the area of benefit

Our staff work closely with our national body, ACRE to ensure the voice of Sussex is heard nationally and that it is strengthened via the national campaigning this offers and the rurally focussed guidance and information it provides.

As already indicated above, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the work of AirS both in the short and potentially the longer term.

Whilst we swiftly transferred the entire staff team to remote working and maintained our support to the charity's contacts throughout, as soon the scale of the pandemic became clear, this did cause disruption and additional ICT costs.

The impact on our services of losing the face-to-face contact and the complex legal issues faced by such areas as community buildings has been significant.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

AirS also chose to respond to the crisis by identifying how it could offer additional support to the rural services in need and decided to offer free membership to any community building in Sussex which created a lot of work internally.

The charity is grateful to the staff team for rapidly adapting to using a wide range of online meeting platforms so that their services could be maintained.

The Trustees also wish to note that despite the complexities of operating under Covid, the AirS team still managed to move offices (within the same building) to an improved space, and reorganise the space to optimise it for their work.

Our funders recognised the need to adapt our work to respond to emerging needs and we thank them for their support and flexibility during this time.

Some new projects have had their start dates delayed as a direct result of the pandemic due to their face-to-face project design or the loss of construction project progression. Whilst these are delays in income, they will still proceed so do not represent a loss in income.

The impact of the pandemic on the Housing Hub is harder to predict at this stage; whilst the need for affordable housing remains topical, there are delays on planning aspects, but we are pleased to confirm that overall progress has been maintained.

A considerable proportion of staff time was spent participating and contributing to Covid-19 response meetings across Sussex to ensure that the rural voice is heard and that AirS services are adapted where possible - this time is unfunded so paid for from the charity's reserves.

The Board recognise that the charity was fortunate to be in such a financially robust position when the outbreak started and will be considering this when revisiting their policy on the correct level of reserves at the proper time.

The Board will also be considering the ongoing impact that the pandemic has had on social enterprises and charities reliant on retail income and fundraising events when deciding their investment strategy and designations. Our future plans will also be informed by the new and emerging needs of rural communities and once the true scale of the impact across Sussex is clearer.

7. Financial review

Overview

Action in rural Sussex carries out a wide range of projects and programmes in pursuit of its strategic aims. The outcome of this activity has been reported earlier in the trustees' report.

Restricted Funds

The detail of the restricted fund activity is set out in Note 18 to the accounts (page 35). Where individual projects show a deficit on completion or termination, this has been made good from unrestricted funds.

Overhead Recovery

The totals shown in the SOFA and in Notes 17 & 18 to the accounts include overhead recovery.

Free Reserves

The total funds (reserves) of the charity, as represented by net assets in the balance sheet, amount to £1,807,394 before an exceptional item relating to the Pensions Trust of £29,262, set out in detail in Note 20. To establish the value of reserves available to the trustees known as “free reserves”, monies held for specific purposes including funds designated by the trustees for specific projects and any monies not available for other uses must first be deducted. Restricted funds, whose use is formally restricted by the funder, total £2,976.

In addition, resources invested in funds designated by the trustees for specific projects or purposes total a further £1,208,000 leaving an operating free reserve of £596,418 before the Pensions Trust exceptional item described above. The trustees have taken the view that both the long term and dynamic nature of this liability dictates that the operating free reserve is defined prior to the deduction of this liability.

Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees has developed this reserves policy to cover the ongoing employee commitments, ensure business continuity and allow for its investment in developing sustainable income streams, contingent liabilities, working capital requirements and to take account of its annual risk review. Due to the additional working capital constraints associated with the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, the policy of Action in rural Sussex is to keep an operating free reserve with a minimum balance of £422,000, to reflect the above costings. At the balance sheet date, the operating free reserve at £596,418 was greater than the target amount and minimum acceptable balance. At this level, trustees are confident that they have scope to take action to mitigate emerging risks and invest in sustainable income generation. The free reserve is maintained primarily in case Action in rural Sussex suffers a sudden and unforeseen contraction of activities.

This is mitigated through full cost recovery budgeting, accurate forecasting, advantageous contract negotiation where possible and careful treasury management. Any remaining free reserves not required under the reserves policy are available to develop the work of the charity, to meet its charitable objectives and to fulfil any latent contractual obligations entered by the charity as part of its primary purpose trading.

The Board of Trustees confirms that each restricted fund has sufficient assets to meet its obligations, or arrangements exist with the funders that these obligations will be met at the point at which the requirement arises. Trustees will annually review the reserves policy in the light of a continuing shift in funding profile, and the linked investment in strategic and business development.

8. Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Sussex Rural Community Council for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

We confirm that the accounts comply with current statutory requirements and with the requirements of the governing document.

Small company exemptions

This report is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 November 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

Alex Ingham Clark

Alex Ingham Clark (Nov 29, 2021 20:55 GMT)

.....
Alex Ingham Clark - Chair

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Sussex Rural Community Council

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 18 to 36.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.]

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to an audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**Richard Nelson FCCA
Breckman & Company Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants**

49 South Molton Street
London W1K 5LH

24 November 2021

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2020 Total £
Income and endowments from:	2						
Donations and legacies - page 19		59,589	-	59,589	51,673	-	51,673
Charitable activities:							
Operational programmes - page 19		191,611	249,920	441,531	327,440	244,590	572,030
Investments	3	16,062	-	16,062	8,259	-	8,259
Total		<u>267,262</u>	<u>249,920</u>	<u>517,182</u>	<u>387,372</u>	<u>244,590</u>	<u>631,962</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities:							
Operational programmes - pages 20 - 21		226,996	368,161	595,157	303,416	229,527	532,943
Total		<u>226,996</u>	<u>368,161</u>	<u>595,157</u>	<u>303,416</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>532,943</u>
Net income/(expenditure)	4	40,266	(118,241)	(77,975)	83,956	15,063	99,019
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		1,734,890	121,217	1,856,107	1,650,934	106,154	1,757,088
Total funds carried forward	17, 18	<u>1,775,156</u>	<u>2,976</u>	<u>1,778,132</u>	<u>1,734,890</u>	<u>121,217</u>	<u>1,856,107</u>

The notes on pages 25 to 36 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
Income from donations and legacies		
Grants		
Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)	47,395	47,995
HMRC Job Retention Scheme	10,110	-
	<u>10,110</u>	<u>-</u>
	57,505	47,995
Donations		
Donations	2,084	3,678
	<u>59,589</u>	<u>51,673</u>
Income from charitable activities		
Income from operational programmes		
Fees	100,875	322,260
Fees - Village Hall consultancy/subscription	18,712	-
Fees - Sussex Community Development Assoc.	69,135	-
Membership	-	5,180
Other income	2,889	-
	<u>191,611</u>	<u>327,440</u>
Project specific funding		
Grants/Donations		
Local & Regional Government	102,550	-
Community Led Homes Funding	63,720	-
LW cash costs	23,951	-
LW cash costs [Woodland Trust]	9,995	-
LW FCR staffing/lottery	40,785	111,922
LW overhead recovery	7,919	37,857
ACRE - safeguarding	1,000	-
Groundwork UK	-	71,645
Lewes District Council	-	3,500
Mid Sussex District Council	-	9,726
SCDA	-	9,940
	<u>249,920</u>	<u>244,590</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Operational programmes		
Direct project costs		
Computer equipment	5,429	-
Event costs	267	634
Delegated and other grants	75,353	15,063
Funding RVA for Reaching Communities	9,624	-
Internet subscriptions	1,125	-
Mailout charges	5,698	10,241
Marketing/publicity	1,114	537
Meeting costs/refreshments	123	1,968
Membership fees	325	4,769
Postage	5	217
Resources	21	171
Room hire	50	425
Small equipment	1,385	68
Stationery/photocopying	478	800
Telephone	2,194	2,721
Training/activities	-	844
Travel	1,559	10,067
Volunteer expenses	-	62
Websites for projects	368	-
Consultancy	7,313	61,773
ITC costs/small computer equipment	510	-
Legal	100	-
Recruitment	3,320	-
Salaries/social security/pension costs	309,476	270,314
Staff training	1,520	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	427,357	380,674
Support costs - page 21	163,778	149,002
Governance costs - page 21	4,022	3,267
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	595,157	532,943
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Year ended 31 March 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
Support and governance costs				
Support costs				
Office overheads				
Rent	17,614		17,605	
Light/heat	2,436		1,267	
Telephone/fax/internet	3,339		1,767	
Insurance	2,581		2,804	
IT/maintenance/support/website	9,809		9,391	
Repairs/maintenance	171		362	
Cleaning	562		-	
Depreciation of fixtures/fittings/equipment	812		1,922	
		37,324		35,118
Administration costs				
Salaries/social security/pension costs	119,376		105,122	
Other pension costs	15,766		14,696	
Staff training/recruitment/other staff costs	1,599		2,651	
Healthcare	1,026		-	
Staff welfare	104		-	
HR Support costs	22,821		-	
Travel/transport	24		14	
Printing/postage/stationery	740		2,083	
Books/journals	187		-	
Advertising/marketing	3,580		-	
Membership fees	4,500		-	
Sundries	321		2,906	
Irrecoverable VAT	2,962		1,780	
		173,006		129,252
Professional/financial				
Legal/professional	122		746	
Bank charges	97		88	
Exceptional item - growth plan pension scheme	(46,771)		(16,202)	
		(46,552)		(15,368)
		163,778		149,002
Governance costs				
Trustees' meetings/expenses	22		767	
Accountancy/consultancy	4,000		2,500	
		4,022		3,267
		167,800		152,269

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Balance Sheet
31 March 2021**

		2021		2020	
Notes	£	£	£	£	
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		442		1,254
Investments	10		2		2
			444		1,256
Current assets					
Stocks	11	1,919		-	
Debtors	12	48,845		30,525	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,864,957		2,043,118	
		1,915,721		2,073,643	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(125,010)		(142,759)	
Net current assets			1,790,711		1,930,884
Total assets less current liabilities			1,791,155		1,932,140
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	14		(13,023)		(76,033)
Net assets			1,778,132		1,856,107
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	17				
- General fund			596,418		602,923
- Designated funds			1,208,000		1,208,000
			1,804,418		1,810,923
Restricted funds	18		2,976		121,217
Exceptional item	20		(29,262)		(76,033)
Total charity funds			1,778,132		1,856,107

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

For the year ending 31 March 2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 November 2021 and signed on its behalf by

Alex Ingham Clark
Alex Ingham Clark (Nov 29, 2021 20:55 GMT)

Alex Ingham Clark
Chair



Neil David Smith
Trustee

The notes on pages 25 to 36 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Cash Flow Statement
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities	22	<u>(194,223)</u>	<u>(69,729)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		<u>16,062</u>	<u>8,259</u>
Net cash provided by investment activities	23	<u>16,062</u>	<u>8,259</u>
Change in cash at bank and in hand in the reporting period		(178,161)	(61,470)
Cash at bank and in hand at the beginning of the reporting period		2,043,118	2,104,588
Cash at bank and in hand at the end of the reporting period		<u>1,864,957</u>	<u>2,043,118</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies

1.1. Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (issued October 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

1.2. Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid after taking account of any trade discounts due.

1.3. Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.4. Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

1.5. Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis.

The company is dependent on the continued support of grant aiding bodies. The trustees believe that the company will continue to receive this support and accordingly consider that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

1.6. Group financial statements

The Company is exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue of section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 as the group it heads qualifies as a small group. These financial statements therefore present information about the company as an individual undertaking and not about its group.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1.7. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:

- the charity is legally entitled to the funds
- any performance conditions attached to the income have been met or are fully within the control of the charity
- there is sufficient certainty that receipt of the income is considered probable
- the amount can be reliably measured

- Donations and legacies

Grants/donations are recognised in incoming resources in the year in which they are receivable, except as follows:

- when donors specify that grants/donations given to the charity must be used in future accounting periods, the income is deferred until those periods
- when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income, the income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the preconditions for use are met.

- Charitable activities

Income from operational programmes is included in incoming resources in the period in which the relevant programme takes place.

Project specific funding - when donors specify that donations and grants are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement, this income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

- Investment income

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1.8. Expenditure

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered and is recognised when:

- there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment
- it is probable that settlement will be required
- the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably

- Charitable activities

Operational programme costs - where possible, costs are identified directly with specific programmes and allocated to the relevant heading within resources expended.

- Support costs

The administrative and overhead costs associated with running the office from which the company operates as well as governance costs. Support costs are wholly attributable to operational programme costs.

- Governance costs

Costs associated with the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

1.9. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost.

Depreciation is provided at annual rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Furniture/fixtures/equipment - Straight line basis, the shorter of 4 years or the duration of the project

1.10. Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at cost less provision for diminution in value.

1.11. Pensions

The company makes defined contribution pension and superannuation payments in relation to certain members of staff in accordance with the terms of their employment contracts. Such payments are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable.

1.12. Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are either:

- Unrestricted general funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.
- Designated funds - these are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.
- Restricted funds - these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1.13. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value, and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.14. Significant Accounting Estimates and Judgements

In determining the carrying amounts of certain assets and liabilities, the charity makes assumptions of the effects of uncertain future events on those assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date. The charity's estimates and assumptions are based on historical experience and expectation of future events and are reviewed annually.

2. Incoming resources

The total incoming resources for the year have been derived from the principal activity undertaken wholly in the UK.

3. Interest receivable

	2021 £	2020 £
Bank interest	16,062	8,259

4. Net income/(expenditure) for the year is stated after charging:

	2021 £	2020 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	812	1,922
Independent examination	4,000	2,500

5. Trustees' emoluments and reimbursed expenses

The trustees received no remuneration during the year (2020 - £nil).

The aggregated amount reimbursed to trustees during the year was £29 (2020 - £298).

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

6. Staff costs and numbers	2021	2020
	£	£
Staff costs		
Salaries, social security and pension costs	428,852	376,113
Other pension costs	15,766	14,696
	<u>444,618</u>	<u>390,809</u>

No employee earned £60,000 or more during the year (2020 - nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees and the Senior Management Team. The total employee benefits (including social security costs and pension costs) of the key management personnel of the charity were £81,508 (2020: £94,126).

Staff numbers

The average numbers of employees (including casual and part time staff) during the year was made up as follows:

	2021	2020
	Number	Number
Support / operational programmes	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>

No accrual has been made for holiday and sick pay as the amount was deemed to be immaterial.

Each salary scale has a number of incremental pay points which are linked to the points on the Local Government Service Salary Scales.

7. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of its employees. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. The pension charge represents contributions due from the company and amounted to £15,766 (2020 - £14,696).

8. Corporation taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

9. Fixed assets - tangible assets

**Furniture/
fixtures/
equipment
£**

Cost

1 April 2020 /
31 March 2021

7,690

Depreciation

1 April 2020
Charge for year
31 March 2021

6,436

812

7,248

Net book values

31 March 2021
31 March 2020

442

1,254

Previously the charity sold its freehold property and is currently renting while a long term strategy for the proceeds is formulated.

10. Fixed Asset Investments

**Subsidiary
Undertakings
Shares**

Total

£

£

Cost

1 April 2020 /
31 March 2021

2

2

Net book values

31 March 2021
31 March 2020

2

2

2

2

Action in Rural Sussex owns 100% of the 2 Ordinary Shares of SRCC (Trading) Limited, company registered in England and Wales, number 03101724. The company was used to carry out the non-charitable activities of Action in Rural Sussex. SRCC (Trading) Limited is incorporated in England and has in the past been involved in business and management consultancy. SRCC (Trading) Limited has not traded during the year, and had net assets of £2 as at 1 April 2021.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

11. Stocks	2021	2020
	£	£
Work in progress	1,919	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
12. Debtors	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade debtors	25,167	27,023
Prepayments	23,678	3,502
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	48,845	30,525
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	22,718	7,906
Other taxation/social security	10,102	6,118
Other creditors	20,170	4,267
Accruals	25,298	14,483
Deferred income (note 15)	46,722	109,985
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	125,010	142,759
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
14. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Pension fund deficit	13,023	76,033
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

15. Deferred income	£
Balance at 1 April 2020	109,985
Amount released to incoming resources	(109,985)
Amount deferred in the year	<u>46,722</u>
Balance at 31 March 2021	<u><u>46,722</u></u>

Deferred income relates to grants and other income recieved in advance.

16. Limited by guarantee

The private limited company is limited by guarantee, registered in EW - England and Wales, and does not have a share capital. Each member gives a guarantee to contribute a sum, not exceeding £1, to the company should it be wound up. At 31 March 2021 there were 110 members.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

17. Unrestricted funds	Brought forward	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Exceptional Item	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Designated funds:					
Development Fund	534,984	-	-	-	534,984
Relocation Reserve	500,000	-	-	-	500,000
Sussex Community Housing Hub	92,016	-	-	-	92,016
IT Rolling Replacement Fund	18,000	-	-	-	18,000
Recruitment Fund	63,000	-	-	-	63,000
Total designated funds	<u>1,208,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,208,000</u>
General fund	602,923	267,262	(226,996)	(46,771)	596,418
Exceptional item - pension scheme deficit	(76,033)	-	-	46,771	(29,262)
	<u>1,734,890</u>	<u>267,262</u>	<u>(226,996)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,775,156</u>

The exceptional item refers to the additional contributions to be levied by The Pensions Trust as detailed in note 20. The sum of £29,262 is the amount due over the 4 years to 31 March 2025, which may be revised.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

18. Restricted funds	Brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Carried forward £
Aims	121,217	248,920	(367,161)	2,976
ACRE - safeguarding	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
	<u>121,217</u>	<u>249,920</u>	<u>(368,161)</u>	<u>2,976</u>

Aims

These funds are for three main aims:

1. Tackling Rural Disadvantage
2. Building Community Capacity & Resilience
3. Rural Voice

19. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:			
Tangible fixed assets	442	-	442
Investments	2	-	2
Net current assets	1,787,735	2,976	1,790,711
Long term (liabilities)	(13,023)	-	(13,023)
	<u>1,775,156</u>	<u>2,976</u>	<u>1,778,132</u>

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

20. Exceptional item - pension scheme

Sussex Rural Community Council is a participating employer in the Growth Plan operated by The Pensions Trust to provide pension benefits for members of staff. This scheme is a multi-employer scheme which provides benefits to some 950 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the company to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the company is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

The Growth Plan is in deficit. The triennial actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2020 showed a deficit of £31.6m, which has reduced from £131.5m at 30 September 2017. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the Trustee has asked the participating employers to pay additional contributions to the scheme over a period of twelve years, which commenced in April 2013.

For Sussex Rural Community Council, the additional contributions are to be levied at the original rate of £11,998 in the first year (2013-14) with an increase of 3% per annum thereafter, subject to revision. Full provision for the revised total amount has been made in these accounts. Sussex Rural Community Council has been notified that the latest estimated employer debt on its withdrawal from the Growth Plan would be £163,286 (2020: £197,905). A number of employees remain as active members of the Growth Plan and there is no intention to withdraw from the Plan in the foreseeable future. In the event that Sussex Rural Community Council did withdraw, its employer debt would be recalculated and would take into account the additional contributions made under the Recovery Plan.

21. Related party transactions

During the year the company had no related party transactions that require disclosure.

Sussex Rural Community Council

(Limited by Guarantee)

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

22. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cashflow from operating activities

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(77,975)	82,817
Depreciation/amortisation	812	1,922
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(16,062)	(8,259)
(Increase) in stocks	(1,919)	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(18,320)	13,199
(Decrease) in creditors	(80,759)	(159,408)
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>(194,223)</u>	<u>(69,729)</u>

23. Gross Cash Flows

	2021	2020
	£	£
Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	<u>16,062</u>	<u>8,259</u>









Sussex Rural Community Council 2021 draft accounts v18

Final Audit Report

2021-11-29

Created:	2021-11-24
By:	Richard Nelson (richardnelson@breckmanandcompany.co.uk)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAegcXeShRSQbElalKjsYrfyo62QUIZCLY

"Sussex Rural Community Council 2021 draft accounts v18" History

-  Document created by Richard Nelson (richardnelson@breckmanandcompany.co.uk)
2021-11-24 - 7:48:37 AM GMT- IP address: 51.148.113.129
-  Document emailed to Alex Ingham Clark (alex.inghamclark@ruralsussex.org.uk) for signature
2021-11-24 - 7:50:14 AM GMT
-  Email viewed by Alex Ingham Clark (alex.inghamclark@ruralsussex.org.uk)
2021-11-24 - 7:17:32 PM GMT- IP address: 104.28.86.87
-  Document e-signed by Alex Ingham Clark (alex.inghamclark@ruralsussex.org.uk)
Signature Date: 2021-11-29 - 8:55:39 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 5.62.43.227
-  Document emailed to Neil David Smith (neil.smith@ruralsussex.org.uk) for signature
2021-11-29 - 8:55:41 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Neil David Smith (neil.smith@ruralsussex.org.uk)
2021-11-29 - 9:56:27 PM GMT- IP address: 104.47.5.254
-  Document e-signed by Neil David Smith (neil.smith@ruralsussex.org.uk)
Signature Date: 2021-11-29 - 9:57:40 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 31.127.106.248
-  Agreement completed.
2021-11-29 - 9:57:40 PM GMT