



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)

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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 Sjøvorr	

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

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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:

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

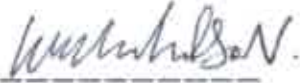
9. Disclosure of Information to Auditors

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

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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:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Anderson', written over a horizontal line.

William Anderson, Chair

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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

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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.

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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.

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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

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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>-</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.

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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>

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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>

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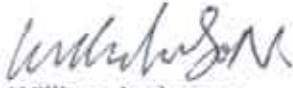
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	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><u>1,654,978</u></u>	<u><u>1,685,747</u></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

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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 - £Nil)

The aggregated amount reimbursed to trustees during the year was £Nil (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

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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	63,000	-	-	-	63,000
Total designated fund	1,208,000	-	-	-	1,208,000
General fund	340,392	326,797	(309,476)	(4,048)	353,665
Pension scheme deficit	(7,596)	-	-	4,048	(3,548)
	<u>1,540,796</u>	<u>326,797</u>	<u>(309,476)</u>	<u>-</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

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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	(57,826)	(83,206)
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(76,107)	(138,241)