

The Environment Centre Ltd

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

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 2021. 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).

Objectives and activities

The company is established as a company limited by guarantee under its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated May 1994.

The company's charitable aim as set out in its Memorandum of Association is the advancement of education through environmental conservation, protection and restoration for the benefit of the public by the provision of training and information services and the encouragement of participation and volunteering in practical environmental projects. The Trustees have agreed to three working aims:

- a) Raising awareness of environmental issues in all sectors of the community;
- b) Increasing participation in environmental projects by individuals and groups;
- c) Promoting change in society towards a more sustainable future.

The Environment Centre Ltd seeks to achieve its aims through three main areas of activity:

- i) Supporting other environmental groups and projects through a range of facilities and services;
- ii) Providing information services including a public information centre, a resource library, a monthly newsletter, regular features in the media, exhibitions and stands at local events;
- iii) Organising educational projects and activities for schools, community groups and the general public.

Organisational structure

The Environment Centre Ltd is managed by a Board of Trustees. Board meetings are arranged on a bi-monthly basis. Subgroups are organised to meet between Board meetings to discuss and progress finance, property and staffing issues, as well as the education and information delivery and outreach issues. These subgroups are made up of trustees and staff and report back to the board.

The Centre Manager is responsible for the day to day running of the Centre and provides a detailed activity report to the Board at the Board meetings. The Finance and Resources Manager prepares a comprehensive financial report for these meetings.

The Environment Centre Ltd is fully independent but works closely with many other organisations and is a member of several forums, partnerships and networks. The most notable of these are Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF) and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS).

Achievements and developments

The Coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on the work of the Centre. The staff were able to continue working from home, doing development work whilst in lockdown. When restrictions were lifted the shop re-opened, initially for limited hours, and we were able to welcome people back until the Centre had to close again with the lockdown in the New Year. The hire of the meeting spaces in the Centre fell to almost nothing during the year, and has not fully recovered since. Despite the difficulties we had a successful year, and look forward to being able to restart many of the activities, events and networking which were interrupted by the restrictions.

Environment Centre Ltd staff over the year consisted of Rhian Corcoran as Centre Manager; Siân Jenkins as Finance and Resources Manager; Clare Bennett as Shop and Volunteer Coordinator; Mo Green as Cleaner/Caretaker; Bryony Hipkin as Office Administrator; Chris Day as Beyond Recycling Project Officer (since August 2020); Rhiannon Rees-Williamson as Shop Assistant (since end of March 2021). Stuart Cairns continues to volunteer his services as Treasurer. During the year, the Centre was able to utilise the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme through furloughing eligible staff at certain points during the year.

The Board would like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by trustees, staff and volunteers over what has been another challenging year.

Through the full Covid lockdown at the start of the year, the Centre was able to serve as a hub for the community

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Centre also raised funds by arranging a Litter Picking Challenge when Bryony litter picked every day during February and the sale of surplus stationery and sundries in our foyer after a sort-out in the offices.

We continued to offer a Membership scheme and had planned to increase the membership and develop the benefits of becoming a member during the year – this was put on hold until next year.

The Centre received funding from Swansea Council for the second year of the contract to provide a strategic environmental partnership and forum in Swansea with our key partner Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF).

Following a three month Covid delay, the Centre received funding from the Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme to commence the Beyond Recycling Swansea (BRS) project. We recruited a Project Officer in August, for a 15 month period initially. This was central to activity delivered in the last six months of the year, which included setting up dedicated social media and new collection points for harder to recycle items, including CDs and DVDs that will be used by local business Smile Plastics. We worked with Swansea Community Farm to deliver a remote community seed swap, with seeds being posted to recipients. The BR project officer was able to guide a number of litter picking groups.

Funding was also received from Swansea Council through the Green Recovery Circular Economy Fund to begin developing a network of Bike Repair Stations. Five stations were installed in a mix of locations around Swansea, each one attached to a local group or business that would be able to provide ongoing care and hosting of the stands.

A flagship partnership (with Swansea Council) project developed and delivered during this year was the installation of a significant biodiverse green wall and green roof at The Environment Centre Ltd, funded by the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature /Greening the public estate capital grant. This project will improve the biodiversity value of the building and surrounding area, provide other ecosystem service benefits such as cooling, rainwater retention and insulation from extreme weathers. Importantly it is a demonstration of how to retrofit green infrastructure enhancements onto existing buildings, and has developed provision to provide information and advice to others seeking to install green roofs and walls. Local business Celtic Wildflowers provided locally grown plants and delivered awareness sessions for volunteers maintaining the wall.

The Centre assisted a local volunteer group, Cyfoeth y Coed (Sweet Pickings), with applications for funding and the development of a crowdfunder, which will be developed next year.

The Centre was supported by the SEF Swansea Greenspaces project, with monthly advice on the future development of the Urban Garden and relaunch of the garden volunteer group as Covid restrictions eased. Discussion and planning resulted in a proposal for a more substantive volunteer provision, to seek funding in 2021.

During the latter part of the year, funding was also secured from SEF for a project where the Centre delivered a range of information and awareness sessions via zoom, including on The Welsh Government Warm Homes Nest Scheme and around the benefits and opportunities for laying hedges in Swansea. The Beyond Recycling Swansea (BRS) project also delivered awareness and engagement sessions via their 'Waste Wednesday Webinar' series, focusing on waste and the circular economy, where speakers were from Repair Café Wales, Plastic Free Mumbles, Benthylg and about the new Welsh Government Circular Economy strategy with Any Rees. This series was attended by 423 people.

In March, the Centre and SEF secured funding from Neath Port Talbot CVS to write an environmental toolkit for the 3rd sector, focusing on The Green Recovery. This 50 page document is packed full of case studies and contains sections covering our role in a green recovery, environmental action small organisations can take and volunteering for the benefit of people and planet.

The Centre also acted as a host for a Renew Wales co-ordinator post from October 2020 and received administrative fees for the service. The Centre also partnered with Inspire Training and were able to create a six-month Shop Assistant post through a Kickstart placement for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit.

Unsurprisingly, Covid 19 greatly impacted the Centre but we were able to access some funding opportunities. This included a Covid grant from the Moondance Foundation to ensure all staff kept working, delivering all possible services and making future development plans. This led to a successful WCVA 3rd Sector Resilience Fund funding bid which allowed the recruitment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator and Fundraising Co-ordinator for 2021/22 as well as 'Survival' funding to help with staffing during the last six months of the year.

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Statement of financial activities
for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and member subscriptions	2	7,258	-	7,258	2,080
Trading and other activities	3	26,687	-	26,687	41,280
Other income - Furlough		7,295	-	7,295	-
Charitable activities	4	37,688	47,563	85,251	82,095
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Total income		78,928	47,563	126,491	125,455
 Expenditure on:					
Raising funds/ trading activities	5	19,845	-	19,845	31,446
Charitable activities – direct	6	2,133	47,563	49,696	51,685
Charitable activities – support costs	7	60,055	-	60,055	61,656
Charitable activities - governance costs	8	2,100	-	2,100	1,800
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Total expenditure		84,133	47,563	131,696	146,587
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Net (expenditure)/ income for the year		(5,205)	-	(5,205)	(21,132)
Total funds brought forward		59,704	-	59,704	80,836
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
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Total funds carried forward		54,499	-	54,499	59,704

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Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

5 Expenditure on raising funds/ trading activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Promotional costs	575	-	575	528
Costs of shop and café sales	19,270	-	19,270	30,918
	19,845	-	19,845	31,446

6 Expenditure - charitable activities direct

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Swansea Council Contract	-	25,000	25,000	25,000
NRW: Valuing our Natural Assets	-	-	-	6,180
In the Loop: Hubbub	-	-	-	15,264
Lift project	-	-	-	1,807
Renew Wales		2,648	2,648	-
Beyond Recycling		12,286	12,286	-
Bike Repair Project - CC Swansea		922	922	-
Bike Repair Project - Uplands Council		1,650	1,650	-
Green Wall Project		4,872	4,872	-
SCVS Youth Project		185	185	-
Eastside Energy Scheme	2,118	-	2,118	1,500
Other projects	15	-	15	1,934
	2,133	47,563	49,696	51,685

7 Charitable activities - support costs

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Salaries & other work costs	36,717	-	36,717	30,381
Administration costs	4,008	-	4,008	5,556
Establishment costs	19,330	-	19,330	25,719
	60,055	-	60,055	61,656

8 Charitable activities - governance costs

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Independent examiner's remuneration	2,100	-	2,100	1,800
	2,100	-	2,100	1,800