

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1144788

Details

Other names	CET
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	03907328
Registered	2011-11-24
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	1 Whittle Croft Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DN
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Activities

Objects: A) THE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFITB) TO FURTHER BENEFIT THE RESIDENTS OF BIRMINGHAM WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RACE OR OF POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS OR OTHER OPINIONS TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION IN RELATION TO A) ABOVE AND TO PROVIDE FACILITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR RECREATION AND LEISURE TIME OCCUPATION WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE FOR THE RESIDENTSC) THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY FOR CHILDREN FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS AND YOUNG ADULTS AGED 18-25, USING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOLD) THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH BY PROVIDING OR ASSISTING IN THE PROVISION OF ORGANISED OUTDOOR ACTIVITIESE) WHERE IT IS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO PROVIDE OR TO CARRY OUT MAINTENANCE OR IMPROVEMENT OF: I) A COMMUNITY GARDENII) ANY OTHER PUBLIC AMENITY

Activities: We are an environmental charity seeking to protect and enhance urban green space in Birmingham by delivering projects such as Confidence Through Conservation, which aims to help the young and unemployed learn valuable transferable skills via conservation work, and Forest Schools, which engages

with school children and uses open green space to provide learning opportunities.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Birmingham City

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£73,530	£114,647	-	-
2024-03-31	£167,515	£131,962	-	-
2023-03-31	£136,873	£120,529	-	-
2022-03-31	£107,216	£112,130	-	-
2021-03-31	£91,866	£85,402	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Beverley Karen Frost		2018-09-17
Dr Alison Wilkes		2023-06-09
MRS LYNNE WITKAMP		2011-07-11
Mary McManus		2022-12-12
Troy Yeomans		2025-02-24

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1144788

Accounts

Community Environmental Trust

Charity No. 1144788

Company No. 03907328

Trustees' Report and Unaudited Accounts

31 March 2025

Community Environmental Trust
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TRUSTEES and DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Reference and Administrative information

Charity name:	Community Environmental Trust
Charity registration number:	1144788
Company registration number:	3907328
Registered Office and operational address:	1 Whittle Croft Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DN
Charity contact details:	Tel: 0121 747 3579 E-mail: info@environmentaltrust.org.uk Website: www.environmentaltrust.org.uk
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank PLC 207 High St Erdington Birmingham West Midlands B23 6SZ

Board of Trustees

Lynne Witkamp – Chair (Director)	Troy Yeomans – Vice-Chair (Director)
Karen Frost – Trustee	Alison Wilkes – Trustee
Mary McManus -Trustee	

The Community Environmental Trust (CET) is the leading environmental charity within Castle Vale, working successfully for over 25 years empowering communities to protect and enhance their environment, its wildlife and habitat by delivering outdoor educational activities and providing volunteering opportunities. Through this the organisation continues to bring relevant matters to the attention of the public, media, politicians and Government agencies alike.

Overview 2024-2025

The year 2024–2025 was marked by exciting developments and transitions for the organisation, including the arrival of new staff members who joined at the end of 2023. However, it was also a period of significant challenge.

We faced two major issues. The first was prolonged staff absences due to serious health conditions, medical procedures, mental health needs, and family-related caring responsibilities (including terminal illness). This placed considerable pressure on the organisation, as the remaining team had to absorb additional responsibilities to ensure continuity of delivery and ongoing support for our service users. Consequently, there was less time available to apply for further funding, secure additional commissioned work, and engage in essential networking.

The second challenge was the loss of major school contracts, which had been our main source of unrestricted income. Real-terms funding per pupil decreased due to inflation and rising operational costs, leading schools to make substantial budget cuts. As a result, three of our main contracts withdrew from externally commissioned programmes, including our Forest School interventions.

From a management perspective, this year also brought new learning, particularly around managing part-time and term-time-only staff, as we had previously employed four full-time workers. This required the development and implementation of new policies, procedures, and systems to ensure smooth organisational operations.

On a more positive note, the organisation embarked on new projects and initiatives, including a partnership with the National Trust, RSPB, WWF, and The Co-op (Nature Neighbourhoods), a food-growing initiative supported by BOSF and Winson Green Prison (Community Growers), and a new collaboration with a well-established organisation (Open Door) from a neighbouring housing estate (Firs and Bromford). We also repurposed our community garden to deliver two new interventions that responded to community needs: the creation of an outdoor stay-and-play area for families with children under five, and a much-needed and well-received sensory garden to support the learning of SEND young people.

Overall, despite the difficulties faced during the year, the organisation has demonstrated resilience—adapting to changing circumstances, creating new projects and initiatives to meet emerging needs, diversifying our offer, and continuing to engage positively with the community.

This year also marked an important leadership transition, as our Chair of 20 years, John Biddle, stepped down from his role. John has been a steadfast source of guidance, stability, and encouragement throughout two decades of growth and change. We are deeply grateful for his long-standing commitment and invaluable support, which have helped shape the organisation into what it is today. We extend our sincere thanks and warmest wishes to him for the future.

Aims and Objectives

MAIN AREAS OF SERVICE PROVISION

1. Maintenance and creation of wildlife habitat in local urban green spaces.
2. Raising environmental awareness by providing activities and advice on environmental issues.
3. Providing opportunities for volunteering and training.

These services were designed to fit into the following categories:

Environmental Education: Includes schools, local communities and other professionals (CET has been particularly strong in delivering environmental education by establishing and maintaining positive links with local schools).

Neighbourhood Management: Improving the quality of life for residents by encouraging and supporting sustainable regeneration and development plans.

Community Development: Participation of residents in the care of their environment, enabling them to gain new skills and experiences.

Objectives

- The conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment for the public's benefit.
- To further benefit the residents of Birmingham without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, or political and other opinions. To advance the education in relation to the above and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, for recreation and leisure time occupation, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.
- The advancement of using the environment as an educational tool, including but not exclusively for local children from local schools and young adults aged 18 – 25.
- The promotion of good health by providing or assisting in the provision of organised outdoor activities.
- Where it is for the protection of the environment, to provide or carry out maintenance or improvement of: Community Garden and any other public amenity

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14th January 2000 and registered as a charity on 24th November 2011.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were amended following approval by the members of the AGM on 7th November 2011. In the event of the company being wound up the members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The management of the Trust is vested in the Trustees who are elected by the membership and act in a voluntary capacity. In compliance with the Articles of Association at the next Annual General Meeting, which must be held no more than 15 months after the previous one, officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) will be stepping down by rotation. All will be eligible to offer themselves for re-election.

All Trustees are required to sign a Registration of Trustees and a Trustees' Code of Conduct. Business and conservation skills are well represented among the Trustees. To maintain this broad skills mix, the CET Board of Trustees undertakes an annual review of its effectiveness. If skill gaps are identified, new Trustees are sought by open advertisement, or individuals are approached to offer themselves for election.

Board meetings are held every 6-8 weeks to keep the Trustees fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction.

CET's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 24 February 2025 and included board nominations and re-elections. John Biddle, our long-standing Chair, resigned after 20 years on the board. Lynne Witkamp was nominated and elected as the new Chair, and Troy Yeomans, who recently joined the Board of Trustees, was nominated and elected as Vice-Chair. All current board members were also confirmed in their roles, ensuring continuity of leadership and governance. In addition, a local Castle Vale resident and Chair of the Castle Vale Allotments, Adam Fletcher, was nominated and elected as a Trustee but resigned later in the year due to personal and health circumstances.

The AGM reaffirmed the board's strong commitment to the organisation's mission and goals, and members expressed their enthusiasm for continuing their work in the year ahead.

Our aim is to keep strengthening and broadening the Board's cross-functional skills. The addition of Troy and Adam supports this goal: they bring business and strategic insight, and local knowledge and HR experience to the organisation, respectively. CET will also continue

to seek a Treasurer who can work closely with the Project Manager on the charity's financial management on a more regular basis.

Risk Management

The Trustees actively review the major risks that the Charity faces when preparing and updating the strategic plan, however, detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Project Manager. Risks are identified and assessed, and controls are established throughout the year, but a formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis.

Risk is managed under the headings of financial sustainability, operations, governance and compliance with law and regulation. The charity has developed systems to monitor and control these risks to mitigate any impact they may present in future.

The investment policy is to hold most of its investments in a low-risk interest savings account. The reserves policy is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months of unrestricted payments to cover emergencies that may arise from time to time.

Chair, Vice-Chair and Project Manager exercise careful control of costs by setting an annual budget and periodically reviewing progress against it.

Management Structure

Project Manager

The Project Manager's role is to ensure the long-term continuation and growth of the services provided by the Trust, as well as the successful delivery of environmental projects. They oversee the overall management of the Trust, undertaking a wide range of responsibilities, including fundraising, budget management, attending networking meetings, administrative work, and overseeing the organisation's strategic development and partnerships. The Project Manager is also responsible for CET's payroll and invoicing operations, bookkeeping, maintaining financial records, producing financial forecasts, and creating budget reports every 6–8 weeks. In addition, they generate income by providing

consultancy support to other organisations and by delivering environmental, educational, and conservation projects.

Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator's role changed due to health-related adjustments. As their working hours were reduced, some of their responsibilities were also scaled back. Their main focus remained on delivering Forest School sessions and coordinating and arranging work experience placements.

Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator

The Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator oversees and facilitates volunteer sessions in the community garden. The role includes managing volunteer groups, supporting food-growing activities, and ensuring the ongoing maintenance and development of the garden as a vital community resource.

Youth and Environment Officer

The Youth and Environment Officer acts as a liaison between the charity and children and families in the community. The role focuses on engaging young people in environmental activities, promoting sustainability, and offering outdoor educational opportunities. The officer also works with families with children under five, providing outdoor provision with a special focus on SEND inclusion.

Forest School Practitioner

An additional Forest School Practitioner was appointed to strengthen our outdoor learning programmes. This role supports the delivery of Forest School activities, fostering children's development through nature-based learning and outdoor play—an integral part of our educational offer.

Paddle Instructor

The Paddle Instructor delivers water-based activities and manages the paddle hub established in Minworth. The hub offers kayaking and bell boating sessions that encourage physical activity, outdoor adventure, and environmental education. Sessions

are tailored to suit a variety of groups, including over 50s, children and young people, families, and youth and school groups.

PROJECTS - Activities for Public Benefit

EDUCATION (Services delivered to schools)

FOREST SCHOOLS

Forest Schools (FS) is an innovative educational approach of playing and learning that uses the environment as a tool to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. This includes engaging with children with additional support needs, particularly learners who demonstrate antisocial behaviour and/or other learning or socialising difficulties (ASD, ADHD).

Children, under the supervision of a qualified FS Practitioner, visit local woodland or stay on school grounds on a regular basis (1 or 2 hours a week) over an extended period (minimum of 6 weeks to a maximum of 32). Through small achievable tasks in a stimulating environment, children are encouraged to be independent and enabled to build self-esteem and develop social and behaviour management skills.

Forest School offers freedom to explore independently, which is vital if children are to learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. It also allows time to revisit past areas and experiences, to reflect upon and consolidate their learning. Forest school sessions are mainly child-led, but activities are tailored to individual learning styles and linked to the school's curriculum.

The benefits of Forest Schools are the natural environment provides a wealth of opportunity and resources to expand children's/young people's learning, whilst building a sense of independence, high self-esteem and teamwork skills. It provides a stimulating experience where children can self-explore and use multiple senses, helping to develop children's physical capabilities as well as learning acceptable boundaries of behaviour.

All practitioners (and volunteers participating in the project) have current, enhanced DBS certificates. Practitioners also hold outdoor First Aid.

Despite the challenges faced that year, CET continued delivering Forest School sessions, offering a total of 14 sessions per week across 5 different educational institutions between April and July 24. CET continued to rely on freelance support for the delivery of the sessions in Bamford. While this support was invaluable, it also left us feeling somewhat disconnected from the project. Not having direct input in session delivery, and being unable to take photographs, resulted in missed opportunities to celebrate the children’s progress and share their experiences with the wider community.

Overall, CET engaged with a total of 501 children during that period.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Castle Vale Nursery Bramford	Castle Vale Nursery Chivenor Primary	Castle Vale Nursery	Chivenor Primary	
pm	Castle Vale Nursery High Meadow Community School Bramford	Castle Vale Nursery Chivenor Primary Bramford	High Meadow Community School	Oasis Academy Short Heath	

Forest Schools and after-school sessions		
April 24 – July 24	Frequency	Beneficiaries
High Meadow	2	180
Chivenor	3	90
Oasis Academy Short Heath	1	36
Castle Vale Nursery	5	60
Bramford Primary	3	135
Total	14	501

The new academic year began in September 2024, and it was with great sadness that we had to say goodbye to several schools, including Castle Vale Nursery, Oasis Academy, High Meadow, and Bramford Primary. This had a significant impact on our unrestricted income. For most of these schools, we had been delivering sessions consistently since 2014, and the Forest School programme had become embedded in their curriculum. Their decision to discontinue was not a reflection of our delivery, but rather the result of budget restrictions that forced them to reduce external services.

However, we maintained delivery at Chivenor Primary—the school where the Forest School programme was first piloted in 2007—and we welcomed two new schools into our portfolio: Cudworth and Spring Hill Special School. As a result, the total number of sessions delivered between September 2024 and March 2025 was 5 per week, much lower than the 15 provided in the previous academic year. Despite this reduction, engagement remained strong, with a total of 243 children benefiting from the Forest School programme.

The new academic year also brought challenges that we needed to navigate. One member of staff went on long-term leave due to major kidney surgery, and another Forest School practitioner was away for nearly two months due to family matters. This impacted our overall delivery and placed pressure on the team, who had to readjust their schedules and responsibilities to ensure sessions continued.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am					
pm	Chivenor	Chivenor	Spring Hill	Cudworth	
After-school				Cudworth	

Forest Schools and after-school sessions		
September 24 – March 25	Frequency	Beneficiaries
Chivenor	2	96
Cudworth FS	1	72
Cudworth After-school	1	60
Spring Hill	1	12
TOTAL	5	243

TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Community Engagement and Conservation programme aims to engage with members of the community, residents and other organisations to transform their local area through conservation sessions. The focus is on the Castle Vale Conservation Area, the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. Tasks would help to restore heritage and improve the quality, access and security of Castle Vale Conservation Area and other urban open spaces, whilst also reconnecting local people with their landscape. In addition, the improvements will make a significant contribution to the local environment by promoting and increasing biodiversity.

Additionally, the project also aims to improve people's mental and physical well-being (Social Prescribing), increase and promote diversity (outdoor events and workshops) and inspire future generations (formal/informal training)

Since the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer post came to an end in October 2023, following a three-year fixed-term contract, no new officer has been appointed. In the interim, sessions were moved to the garden, expanding the range of activities offered throughout the year and incorporating maintenance, construction, and wildlife gardening into the existing programme.

However, after nearly a year without an officer in post, both the community and CET recognised that several areas required urgent attention, particularly concerning access and safety. Sections of the site had become overgrown, paths were increasingly inaccessible, and there was a general sense that the area was becoming neglected. Although occasional Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) volunteering days with local businesses helped address isolated issues, they were not sufficient to meet the site's ongoing maintenance needs.

As a result, conservation sessions were reinstated in September 2024 when CET was approached by two enthusiastic young people seeking practical experience in conservation. With their support, weekly conservation sessions resumed every Tuesday.

Our presence on site quickly attracted additional volunteers and renewed community interest. One of our regular volunteers, a well-known local resident who walked his dog in the area three times a day, played a key role in increasing visibility. His involvement encouraged regular Conservation Area users to stop and talk with us, further strengthening our visibility and connections with the community.

Improvements to access, health, and safety became noticeable week by week. Being consistently on site enabled us to build strong relationships with local residents, and our work programme was shaped directly by their feedback. Regular walkers often stopped to offer comments, congratulate the team on progress, and highlight areas in need of attention.

Between September 24 and March 25, CET delivered 27 conservation sessions, totalling 365 volunteer hours. The work focused on improving access and safety by cutting back vegetation, widening and clearing paths, and carrying out essential tree work. The group also completed improvements around the pond, repaired fencing, built and installed a new gate, and created a brand-new notice board for the entrance to the Conservation Area—significantly enhancing communication with visitors.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME – GLOBAL TRAINING

The CET internship programme is the result of an agreement between the charity and Global Training, a Spanish company funded by the Basque Government. The purpose of the programme is to provide a work placement of approximately 6 months for Spanish graduates. The programme is aimed at cross-border cooperation between Spain and the UK to provide an excellent chance of work experience abroad. Successful candidates are granted a scholarship for the duration of the placement.

The work experience volunteering programme started in January 24 and lasted until July 24. In the reporting period, our charity hosted two interns who played an instrumental role in supporting various aspects of our projects and operations.

The Project Assistant Intern supported the delivery of multiple projects, activities, and events. They co-led volunteers during gardening sessions, adult nature walks, forest school sessions, and environmental outdoor activities for young people during the school holidays.

They also assisted in the delivery of Back to Nature sessions and bellboating activities. When not supporting frontline projects, they worked closely with the Project Manager, attending meetings and helping prepare project materials and resources.

The Admin and Finance Intern supported the Project Manager with financial and administrative tasks and carried out a variety of essential office duties. Their responsibilities included updating cashbooks, helping prepare financial updates and cashflow charts, managing telephone enquiries, handling email correspondence, liaising with contractors, and maintaining organised filing systems. In addition, they actively contributed to project delivery by assisting with sustainability sessions at Saathi House, workshops and events at BCU, and by leading on the unification and standardisation of our marketing materials—including posters and social media content. They were versatile, enthusiastic, and always willing to take on new tasks or offer support where needed.

It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to such dedicated and valued team members. Their friendly personalities and commitment to their roles made them extremely popular with staff and service users alike. As in previous years, the interns' contributions were highly beneficial to the organisation and provided invaluable practical experience for the candidates hosted by the Trust.

In November 2024, our partners at Global Training informed us that the Basque Government would only be funding one candidate going forward. In December, we received the application for the new intern. After a successful interview, a new Project Assistant Intern was selected and began the programme at the end of February 2025.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Projects and Activities provided to a wider audience)

VALE YOUTH GREEN ACTION (VYGA)

VYGA is an environmental youth provision for children/young people aged 8-12 which runs during the school holidays, including school half-terms and summer play schemes. Programmes are made up of projects, workshops, environmental/outdoor and educational activities and trips.

VYGA encourages the older members to get involved in assisting and leading the younger members in activities by incorporating their ideas when designing and producing the holiday play-scheme programmes and funding-bid applications. They are part of VYGA's Young Leaders Scheme. The project also has a group of experienced regular volunteers who support the delivery of activities. All volunteers hold current enhanced DBS certificates.

This project encourages the utilisation of local green spaces and resources in a sustainable way to provide opportunities for play, gaining environmental and practical knowledge/skills and it encourages an active and healthy lifestyle.

Our newly appointed Youth and Environment Officer settled quickly into her role and brought a fresh perspective to the programme. She added her own stamp to the way activities were delivered, introducing a more tailored and thoughtful approach based on the needs of the children.

During the Easter Holiday Programme, six activities were offered—three of which took place in March and were included in last year's report. In addition, three further sessions were successfully organised and delivered during the May half-term. Activities ranged from local trips to planting, exploring the Conservation area or environmental crafts, each designed to help children learn through play, build confidence outdoors, and develop a positive relationship with the natural world.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
EASTER HOLIDAYS 2024		
Fun in the Community Garden	8	£4
Ranger session in the Conservation Area	10	£4
Activities in the Secret garden	11	£4
MAY HALF TERM 2024		
Trip to Sutton Park	15	£4
Den building and exploring the Conservation Area	14	£4
Gardening and exploring the Secret garden	12	£4

In summer 2024, CET offered a lively programme of activities for children over a four-week period. A total of eleven sessions were planned, including Monday trips, conservation work with the BCC Ranger Service on Wednesdays, and hands-on activities at the allotments and the Secret Garden on Fridays. The programme was designed to offer local children a fun, active, and educational summer that encouraged teamwork, outdoor exploration, and a deeper connection with nature.

The start of the summer brought an unexpected setback when our minibus was broken into at the beginning of July, leaving us without transport for the entire programme. With little time to spare, the planned trips were reimagined as local activities, making use of nearby green spaces and community facilities. Later in the programme, several sessions had to be cancelled due to personal circumstances affecting the CET officer delivering the activities.

Even with these challenges, the programme remained strong. Children continued to attend, and families appreciated having affordable, engaging opportunities available close to home. The atmosphere throughout the summer was one of resilience, creativity, and genuine enjoyment.

Across all activities, a total of 76 children took part. The programme also raised £380, which were reinvested into other youth initiatives, helping to ensure that more children in the community can enjoy similar opportunities in the months and years ahead.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Pon dipping at Plantsbrook	13	£5
Ranger session: minibeasts	12	£5
Green fingers	12	£5
Conservation Area	10	£5
Ranger session: path clearance	14	£5
Games and bird feeders	15	£5
	Cancelled	-
	Cancelled	-
	Cancelled	-

	Cancelled	-
	Cancelled	-
TOTAL	76	£380

A further three activities were delivered during the October and February half-term breaks. These followed the same successful format of previous holiday schemes, offering a variety of outdoor, creative, and nature-based activities across three different local settings. This approach continued to give young people a sense of ownership over their environment, encouraging them to explore, make active decisions, and play a meaningful role in shaping and improving their local spaces.

Half-Term October 2024		
Secret garden	10	£5
Conservation	10	£5
Allotments	10	£5
February Half-Term 2025		
Various activities at the Conservation Area at CET Community Garden	15	£5
	12	£5
	12	£5

DUKE OF EDINBURGH (DofE)

Duke of Edinburgh is a youth award programme aimed at young people aged 14-25. As part of the programme, they must complete different sections that involve helping the community/environment, becoming fitter, developing new skills, planning, training for and completing an expedition. The award is about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries.

The group met at the end of March 2024 to complete their Gold practice expedition. Although the expedition did not unfold exactly as planned—due to an unfortunate incident involving a CET staff member—the group was still able to continue thanks to the unwavering support of parents, DofE staff, and Chase Training (the organisation delivering the expedition on behalf of CET). Their commitment, along with the determination and resilience of the young participants, ensured that the practice expedition could go ahead successfully.

In response to the incident, CET Trustees and the Project Manager worked diligently and carefully to put appropriate measures in place, ensuring that steps were taken to avoid similar incidents in the future.

The Gold qualifying expedition was originally scheduled for the end of May. Although the dates were chosen by the young people themselves, changing work and college commitments made it impossible for any of them to participate. As this was the final step required for them to achieve their Gold Award, the group agreed to postpone the expedition first to September, and then again to the following year. As of the end of March 2025, no new date has yet been agreed.

In February, DofE contacted CET regarding the renewal of our licence, which was due to expire on 31 December 2025. They requested clarification, as re-licensing can only proceed if a designated DofE Manager is in place, and we had not yet been able to appoint one. This marked an important point of reflection for CET as we considered the future direction of our involvement with the Award.

BACK TO NATURE

Back to Nature are outdoor environmental sessions aimed at families with under-fives. The project uses CET's Community Garden, where children have the freedom to explore using their senses and families bond and reconnect with nature. This space has been created to ensure a safe and engaging environment to play and promote early childhood development through outdoor exploration and social interaction.

In February 2024 work started to repurpose a section of the garden and convert it into an Outdoor Stay and Play area, with outdoor features to climb and a mud kitchen, amongst other things. Since March 2024, weekly *Back to Nature* sessions have been delivered in collaboration with Spurgeons.

At first, attendance was modest, which allowed the officer to design and deliver tailored, season-related activities. These included planting potatoes and sunflowers, minibeast hunts, making log pets, clay snails, seed balls and elder wands. From May onwards, interest and attendance grew significantly, so we adapted our delivery approach to better meet participants' needs. Sessions became more child-led, with the Youth and Environment

Officer encouraging active play that helped develop children's fine and gross motor skills, teamwork, confidence, and communication. Between May and September, attendance increased to an average of 30 participants per session, demonstrating strong and growing community engagement.

In August, we introduced a short summer programme for families and increased sessions from one to two per week, running every Wednesday and Friday morning, with Spurgeons continuing to support delivery one day per week. After the summer, sessions returned to one per week due to a planned reduction in staff hours. Although numbers dipped slightly in September, attendance has remained steady as families became more comfortable being outdoors regardless of the weather.

Families have consistently provided very positive feedback. They particularly enjoy being outdoors and appreciate the freedom to explore the different areas of the garden. The mud kitchen remains one of the most popular spaces, keeping children engaged for long periods. The sensory garden has also proven to be a valuable resource for all families, especially those with SEND children. These sessions have also created opportunities for parents to connect with one another, share experiences, and build supportive relationships.

WELLBEING WALKS

The programme consists of regular, guided walks held every Wednesday within the Castle Vale Conservation Area. These walks are open to the local community and are designed to support both mental and physical wellbeing through gentle, accessible exercise in a natural setting. Participants are encouraged to move at a comfortable pace while enjoying the benefits of spending time outdoors, including reduced stress, improved mood, and increased social connection.

A total of 40 Wellbeing Walks were held during the year. The walks provide an opportunity for participants to engage with local green spaces, fostering a sense of belonging and a stronger connection to the natural environment. Due to staffing challenges, the walks were led by an experienced walker who was originally referred to CET by local link workers through the green social prescribing programme. During 2023–24, this individual developed the confidence and skills needed to take on a leadership role and began leading

the walks independently at the start of 2024. CET continues to support the group by providing access to the community garden and refreshments after each walk. As a result, the group has become both independent and sustainable. On occasions, CET officers have joined the walks to enhance the experience by providing binoculars and facilitating birdwatching activities, tree planting, or litter-picking sessions during the walks.

NATURE NEIGHBOURHOODS

CET was approached in October 2023 to get involved with the National Trust, RSPB and WWF in a new initiative called Nature Neighbourhoods. 18 community organisations across the UK were chosen to create a Nature Neighbourhood Plan that will help mobilise their community and lead positive change for people and nature. The action local plan, which will be presented in September 2025, will be delivered locally, co-designed with the local community and key stakeholder, and will address community priorities.

The Nature Neighbourhood Project has provided several training and networking opportunities organised by the partnership. Between April 2024 and March, CET attended nine cohort meetings and eight one-to-one meetings with the Nature Neighbourhoods England Project Officer. CET also took part in six one-to-one meetings with Hope for the Future, which helped provide the necessary tools and support to successfully liaise with local authorities. In addition, CET benefited from specialised training in Co-design and co-creative workshops, Volunteering, Equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Organisational and partnership strengthening, and Collaboration with local authorities.

Our participation in the project is benefiting both CET and our local community in a number of meaningful ways. One of the main benefits since the start of the project has been its role in helping us refocus and maintain momentum on our priority areas and projects. The involvement and support of renowned national charities have strengthened our reputation, increased our visibility, and created new opportunities for collaboration. Through cohort meetings, CET has gained inspirational stories, shared learning, and practical knowledge, which we are actively passing on to staff members and partners. Our involvement has also led to a reputation boost and the development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) opportunities, delivering tangible benefits for the local

environment and wildlife. In addition, NN has helped unlock further funding opportunities and provided access to expert advice and support.

The local community is directly benefiting from projects and interventions that are partly funded through NN. More broadly, the focus on Nature Neighbourhoods has led to visible improvements in our local area while also empowering residents and increasing community participation. The project has helped spark conversations about the environment, encouraged people to spend more time outdoors, and created opportunities for the community to help shape the future of their green spaces.

Lastly, since January 2025, we have run regular consultation sessions every Wednesday to better understand how people use and engage with local green spaces, with a particular focus on the Castle Vale Conservation Area. Recognising that not all residents are aware of the conservation area or its location, these sessions have been delivered in a range of accessible locations across the estate. This approach has enabled us to reach a broader cross-section of the community, gather diverse perspectives, and raise awareness of the green space. The feedback collected through these consultations, alongside insights gathered from events, activities, and engagement sessions delivered throughout the year, will feed directly into a co-design session that will take place in May 2025. This session will be a key milestone in the development of the Castle Vale Nature Neighbourhood Plan, which will be presented in September 2025.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden is situated in the Castle Vale Allotments. The aim of this project is to increase local community's accessibility to gardening activities in a safe and friendly environment.

It allows community groups to have access to the site to learn how to grow vegetables, it enables a wide range of educational-based activities, helps to reduce social isolation and brings together different generations in an inspirational environment where knowledge can be shared and utilised.

In February, the charity undertook an exciting repurposing of the Community Garden,

following the vision of the Youth and Environment Officer. Over the next few months, the garden was transformed into two new, distinct areas: a sensory garden co-designed with Spring Hill High School, and an outdoor Stay & Play area co-created with Spurgeons. In addition, the existing grow space was redesigned by CET's Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator to make it more functional and efficient.

Regular gardening and food-growing sessions began in April and continued until October. Volunteers attended sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, allowing them to participate in enjoyable, healthy and social activities in a safe outdoor environment, while developing their knowledge and skills in growing food and plants. Their work also helped maintain and further develop the garden.

The number of participants increased gradually as we approached the summer months, and so did the variety of weekly activities. These ranged from building creative features in the garden to undertaking woodwork repairs, planting and enhancing the existing edible forest garden, propagating plants, and designing water systems for the polytunnel. We also received significant support from plot holders, who helped build a grow cage, insulate the log cabin—enabling more groups to use the outdoor space during the winter months—and even install a solar panel.

In the summer, over 100 plug plants grown at Winson Green Prison were delivered to our garden. This was part of the Growing Project, a partnership between Winson Green Prison, the Royal Horticultural Society and Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF). CET's Community Garden was selected as one of the preferred pilot grow sites. The vegetables were planted by CET volunteers and other members of the community, and the food grown through this project was donated to the local food bank and pantry shop.

The site also benefited from the support of Bureau Veritas, whose team spent a day in the garden clearing overgrown areas, improving the polytunnel and repairing several garden features.

Finally, the garden hosted a series of workshops and events, which are detailed in the events section of this report.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

CET's Community Orchard is managed in partnership with the Castle Vale Allotments and supported by Fruit & Nut Village. The orchard is located in the Castle Vale Allotments and it is split into three different areas. 29 fruit trees, including apple, pear, plum, damson and cherry, have been grown successfully on site.

Dr. Rob Tilling, Fruit & Nut Village, delivered winter and summer fruit tree pruning workshop at the Community Orchard. Summer pruning took place on the 25th of June. Dr Tilling taught residents and plot holders how to care for and manage stone fruit trees and how to maintain fruit tree shapes to encourage fruiting wood. In January, the winter pruning focused on building structure, encouraging vigorous growth and renewal of pome fruits (mainly apples and pears). In addition to the pruning workshops, a fruit tree planting event was organised on the 10th of March to expand the existing orchard and introduce a wider variety of tree species, including soft-pitted fruit and nut trees. A total of 10 new trees were planted in Area 6 and the green amenity area by the entrance of the allotments.

These initiatives aimed to provide practical learning opportunities for individuals interested in maintaining and expanding local orchards and promoting environmental sustainability through the introduction of diverse tree species.

The workshops were well-received, with a high level of interest and engagement from the community. A majority of attendees were from nearby allotment sites, highlighting the relevance and appeal of the workshops for local gardeners and allotment holders.

CONSERVATION AREA and MEADOWS

Castle Vale Conservation Area (CVCA) is the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. It is situated to the southeast of Castle Vale, around the allotments and the stable's paddocks. The existing landscape consists of rough grassland with substantial woodland planting, fencing, a pond, a path system and seats.

Castle Vale Meadows are at the centre of the Conservation Area. They were created in 2013 as a result of a successful partnership with Birmingham City Council, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust (Nature Improvement Area Staff) and the University of Wolverhampton. The area used to be an unused, former paddock and it was transformed into a magnificent meadow using green hay from two 'donor' sites, Eades Meadow and Draycote Meadows, both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) creating 9.7 acres of 2 new-species rich meadows.

CVCA is owned by Birmingham City Council. However, the site has mainly been managed by CET, which informs and seeks permission from BCC before carrying out any activities. CET's practical conservation management days complement BCC service plans for the area.

CET is continuing its work to protect the Conservation Area and to utilise it as part of its project programmes.

The Conservation Area continued to benefit greatly from the generosity and dedication of corporate volunteers. Last year, we were fortunate to receive valuable support from 2 corporate volunteer groups. Their contributions have supported the maintenance and enhancement our green spaces.

Kuehne Nagel (10/12/24): a small but mighty team of volunteers helped with the management of our seasonal pond by helping to remove and cut down overgrown reeds that had overtaken the pond and was limiting visibility. They also tackle brambles around the pond and cut back overgrown vegetation. As a result, we had a more open space for new species to thrive, a healthier aquatic ecosystem and more attractive landscape.

Climate Action (23/01/25): A large group of volunteers helped improve access and safety along an existing path that had become inaccessible due to overgrown vegetation and uneven ground. Overgrown brambles, dog rose and willow were cut back, moss was scraped off the paved surface, and the informal path was resurfaced with bark. This work has restored the use of a well-known and much-loved part of the Conservation Area.

CASTLE VALE STABLES

CET signed in 2016 a Head of Terms to lease the Castle Vale Stables and paddock land for 15 years to protect the land and ensure it remains paddock and green land. Since then, CET has been providing support to the Castle Vale Stables with administrative and financial tasks, including managing the expectations of the horse owners, managing the number of horses/ponies on the land, dealing with health and safety, insurance, horticultural maintenance and payment of business rates, utility bills and repairs. Castle Vale Pony Owners Association continues looking after the horses and managing the run of the stables.

CET continues to maintain a strong and productive partnership with the stables, supporting some of the administrative tasks and working collaboratively on a range of initiatives aimed at achieving shared goals of community development, such as facilitating the move of horse manure from the stables to the allotments or opening up paths within the Conservation Area to ensure safe and smooth rides.

CET PADDLE HUB (Minworth)

Minworth Bell Boating Hub is part of a wider project called Paddle Sport in Birmingham (PSiB), which is trying to create several community paddle hubs across the West Midlands Combined Authority with the aim to provide regular, sustainable and thriving paddle sports to different communities in deprived areas and with low opportunities in water sports activities.

CET's Paddle Sport Officer was on sick leave from 8 April 2024 to 14 May 2024. During this period, the Project Manager covered the existing paddle sport sessions, which included bellboat sessions with Spring Hill High School every Thursday and over-50s and home-schoolers on Fridays, in addition to a bellboat taster session with Minworth Primary School. Following this period, the Paddle Instructor undertook a phased return, initially working reduced hours and days for the first three weeks, during which he focused solely on

administrative tasks. Over the subsequent three weeks, he supervised sessions, before returning to unsupervised session delivery. In June and July, the officer continued delivering sessions for Spring Hill High School and expanded the programme offered to over-50 participants.

Participant numbers grew steadily, with the morning Friday sessions proving particularly popular. In addition, CET worked with Minworth School again in July, successfully engaging the entire school in paddle activities over two days.

Two weekend sessions were also delivered in June and July to encourage people to try kayaking along the canal, each attracting an average of 40 participants per day.

The summer programme offered by CET provided a combination of free and paid sessions. Funded wellbeing bellboat sessions for over-50s were delivered on Tuesday Fridays. 3 slots of free “Come and Try Kayaking” sessions were offered on Tuesdays and Kayak skills courses, priced at £3, took place on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4:00–5:00 pm, while free kayak mini-expeditions were held on Thursdays from 6:30–8:00 pm, led by our paddle instructor volunteers, including Ian.

Lastly, in October, CET ran the highly successful Water Festival, which is described in more detail in the events section.

PROJECTS – Other work

COMMISSIONED WORK

OPEN DOOR – GREEN CONNECTING

In October, CET started the Green Connecting initiative in Bromford, grounded in the principles of mobilising the local community to engage with nature, strengthening their connection to green spaces, and creating inclusive social environments. The work took place across four sites—Church Garden, Peace Garden, Ambridge House, and Bromford Pocket Park—although the project focused primarily on the Pocket Park, which was co-designed with the local community in partnership with the National Trust. CET has signed a one-year contract with Open Door to deliver sessions, interventions, and initiatives one day per week.

Building on successful experiences in Castle Vale and aligning community needs with sustainable practices, CET has worked closely with several existing groups that have been directly involved in shaping the future of the park.

Twelve people from Bromford, including partners and residents, visited our community garden for inspiration and later took part in discussions to adapt and implement similar models and initiatives locally. Between October and December, CET introduced weekly Friday gardening sessions for adults; attendance was modest but steady, helping us maintain and prepare the garden for winter. Alongside this, CET also worked with Worth Unlimited to facilitate outdoor sessions for young people.

In the new year, the focus shifted as CET began supporting Cosy Club, an existing but previously inconsistent group for families with young children. Although attendance was initially low, the group has grown steadily, with interest increasing significantly following the Open Door Easter event where we trialled outdoor equipment and activities previously used in Castle Vale.

At the same time, we carried out an extensive community consultation up to April to understand residents' use of green spaces, their needs, barriers, and aspirations. In addition, two co-design workshops were delivered with Cosy Club and the Worth Unlimited Youth Group.

RE-FUTURE COLLECTIVE

CET delivered 8 sessions between April 24 and March 25. The sessions were aimed at young people from the Waterworks estate in Ladywood (ArtPad), adults referred via social prescribing (Forms of Clouds) and young asylum children living with their families on temporary accommodation at the Collective Hotel in Hagley Road. The work carried out included environmental workshops, environmental art and trips to art galleries.

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

CET strengthened its partnership with Birmingham City University by delivering a series of sessions and participating in events throughout the year as part of Graduate+ Week and Sustainability Week. These activities aimed to increase student and staff engagement

through practical activities, such as basket weaving, while also raising awareness of wildlife on campus.

Last year, the focus was on hedgehogs, as BCU registered as a Hedgehog-Friendly Campus. To support this initiative, CET delivered two practical workshops where participants made hedgehog boxes and a minibeast hotel, which were subsequently installed across the two main campuses. In total, CET delivered five sessions over the course of the year.

SAATHI HOUSE

Between May 2024 and February 2025, CET delivered a series of biweekly interactive environmental education workshops aimed at educating, inspiring, and empowering women from Saathi House to take action against climate change and contribute positively to environmental protection and enhancement.

The two-hour sessions combined theory and practical skills, equipping participants with the knowledge and tools needed to integrate sustainable living practices into their daily lives. Workshop themes included sustainable living, waste reduction, food waste management, energy and water conservation, and biodiversity and green spaces. CET worked with two different cohorts, each consisting of approximately 30 participants.

In addition, CET participated in a film commissioned by the funders to raise awareness of this work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNSIR63qnmA>

PARTNERSHIP WORK

- CET has been regularly supported by Birmingham City Council Ranger Service in a range of capacities, particularly in delivering youth engagement activities on Wednesdays during half-term holidays, as well as in the consultation and delivery of the Green Adoption Scheme. We are supporting and enhancing each other's offer. This partnership has given us the opportunity to start promoting and enhancing other green spaces in Castle Vale.
- The Project Manager has continued to support Birmingham Open Spaces Forum in her capacity as Treasurer and Trustee

- Regular meetings are held with local Castle Vale partners including Pioneer Group, Compass-Support, Spitfire Services and Castle Vale Allotments.
- CET has continued to build strong, sustainable partnerships with local companies, including Bureau Veritas, I.M. Properties, Flomatik, Eley Hawl Ltd, and Kuehne + Nagel, each of which has played an important role in supporting our mission and projects throughout the year. Additionally, CET established a new partnership with The Fort Shopping Centre, thanks to the connections and enthusiasm of their Destination Manager, Troy Yeomans. CET first met Troy at a networking event, and he has since become not only an advocate and supporter of our work but also a Trustee.
- New engagement:
 - St Gerard’s Primary School: On the 31st of March we supported the delivery of their Lent Sponsored Walk which gave us the opportunity to bring 180 children around the Conservation Area for two hours. The positive engagement has resulted in a contract from September 2025 (Delivery of Forest School Sessions).
 - Youth Justice Service (future collaboration programme between both organisations which will involve youth offenders helping out in the garden and Conservation Area), Disability Youth Network led by Access Sport, BeeZee Families free award-winning healthy lifestyle programmes for the whole family. We shared information about our programmes and identifying suitable activities that promote regular, gentle exercise and engagement for the families they support.

TRAINING

The Project Manager completed their MBA apprenticeship at Aston University, funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority via the Levy, in February 2025, graduating with distinction.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- **Horticultural workshop** (21.05.24) - Sponsored by Birmingham Open Spaces Forum and the Royal Horticultural Society. CET hosted the session in the Community Garden which was organised as part of the 'Prison Project'. Friends from various different gardening groups learnt skills and tips from Darren Rudge of Rudge Wood Horticulture CIC. How to propagate cuttings, good seed planting technique and easy ways to make natural, nutritious fertiliser from comfrey or nettles.
- **Big Lunch** (06.06.24): Organised at the Community Garden in partnership with Compass Support. The big lunch is an annual community event celebrated at a national level to bring communities together and join in for a few hours of community, friendship and fun. The event provided an opportunity for residents to share food, conversations, ideas and skills. Compass-Support provided lunch and CET officers delivered two engaging gardening activities for attendees. Over 30 people attended.
- **Great Green Big Week** (10th- 14th June): CET delivered a programme of activities to support environmental action and raise awareness about the pollution crisis at a local level. Throughout the week, community members took part in a range of practical and educational events designed to encourage people to connect with nature and take positive action in their local area. Activities included:
 - Bird identification and counting along the canal, combined with litter picking from the bellboat
 - Vegetable planting and a major tidy-up at the Community Garden
 - A ranger-led walk exploring the meadow and its biodiversity
 - A pop-up café in the Conservation Area, creating a welcoming space for residents to connect with each other and with nature
 - Project Wagtail 'Walk & Talk' and litter picking session, engaging volunteers in tackling local pollution while learning more about the project's aims

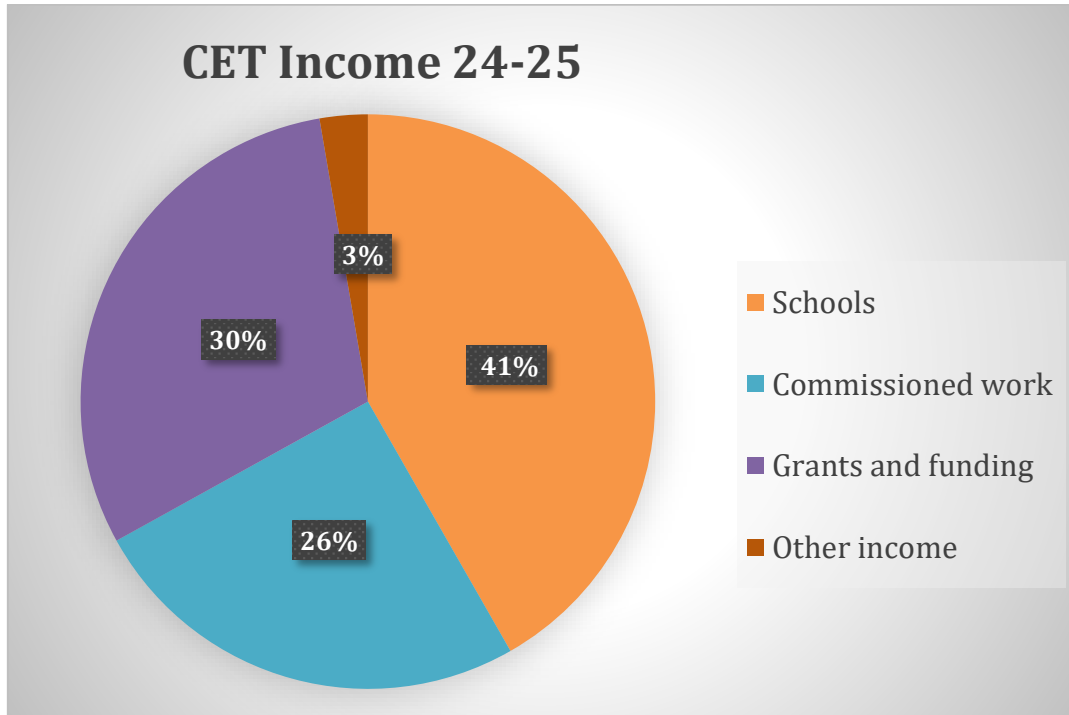
These activities strengthened local engagement, encouraged positive environmental action, and highlighted achievable ways the community can help protect and enhance their local green spaces.
- **Sutton Park Bioblitz** (28.06.25): CET supported pond dipping activities at Sutton Park, working with over 100 children from 6 different primary schools.
- **Water Festival** (05.10.24). CET hosted a boat racing event that was organised across seven different hubs in Birmingham. Twelve teams of eight people took part (96

participants), with an additional 60 attendees joining on the day. We received invaluable support from volunteers, local residents, The Boat Inn, and partner organisations including the Canal & River Trust, StreetGames, Paddle UK, and Access Sport. Alongside the boat races, we also offered “come & try” kayak sessions and a range of environmental craft activities. At 11am, we were joined by Emma Wiggs, a triple Paralympic gold medallist and twelve-time World Champion paracanoeist, who shared her insights and experiences with participants.

- **Xmas decoration (12/12/24):** Our annual Christmas Decoration Workshop took place at the Castle Vale Stadium. As in previous years, trustees and volunteers provided invaluable support with both the preparation and delivery of the event. More than 50 people attended and took part in a wide range of festive activities, including crafting willow wreaths and stars, creating bay leaf rosettes, making mini Christmas trees, wooden reindeer, and wildlife-friendly reindeer food. All items were made using natural materials sourced locally by CET staff and generously donated by residents and a local company, Special Branch. In addition, Eley Hawk Ltd sponsored a Christmas tree for each wooden shield decorated by participants and made a financial donation to CET in support of the event.
- **Night Paddle for families in need: (16.12.24)** In partnership with The Boat Inn and Compass Support, we delivered a fun Christmas Bellboat Trip just after dark on the Minworth Canal. It was a closed invitation event, targeting those most in need of a joyful time in the winter months. The families enjoyed a boat ride with illuminations, and adults dressed up as elves to entertain them. Followed by a refreshments provided by The Boat Inn and a bag of sweet and goodies donated by residents.

Financial review

Last year’s income was distributed across three main sources: income generated from schools (41% of total income), grants and funding (30%), and commissioned work (26%). The remaining 3% was generated through miscellaneous income.



Income from Schools

Forest Schools remained the largest single source of income during the reporting period. CET received £16,932 in unrestricted funds from participating schools. This represents a significant decrease compared to the previous year, when income from schools was reported as just over £75.

Grants and Funding

The charity benefited from substantial grant funding, which was critical in supporting our operations and enabling the delivery of key projects. Total grant income for the year was £12,310, representing 30% of the charity's total income. Similarly, there has been a major decrease compared to last year's, which was under 70K. Funding was received from the following organisations:

- £560 from British Canoeing to contribute towards training and upskilling staff and volunteers
- £6,250 from the National Trust for the delivery of the Nature Neighbourhood Project
- £2,500 from Birmingham Airport to create and accessible growing space, carry out improvements in the outdoor education classroom and deliver environmental

sessions.

- £2,000 from Brum Breathes for the delivery of the Green Adoption Scheme pilot
- £1,000 from Access Sport to deliver Bellboat sessions for Spring Hill Special Needs College

In addition, CET continued to benefit from a small number of grants received in the previous financial year.

Commissioned Work

In addition to grant-funded activity, the charity undertook commissioned work, providing services and specialist expertise to partner organisations and generating over £10 in income, approximately half of the amount generated in the previous year. Breakdown as it follows:

- £1,110.24 for the delivery of eco-workshops for Re-Future
- £2,100 for Green Connecting sessions delivered one day per week in the neighbouring Bromford housing estate
- £1,050 from Compass Support, EBN, and Worth Unlimited for the delivery of kayaking and Bellboating sessions during the school holidays
- £910 from Birmingham City University for participation in *Graduate+ Week* and delivery of workshops
- £150 from Upcycle for the delivery of a Christmas decoration workshop
- £2,450 for mentoring sessions delivered in East Birmingham as part of the *Level Up* project
- £2,950 for the delivery of sustainable living workshops at Saathi House and participation in the funder's promotional video

Miscellaneous Income

The remaining 2% of total income (£1,095.20) was generated through miscellaneous sources, including donations (£415), volunteer data submissions to the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (£50), and income from youth activity delivery (£600.20).

Year-on-Year Income Reduction

When compared with the previous financial year, it is important to highlight the significant reduction in overall income, which decreased from approximately £167,000 to £41,000.

The two main challenges contributing to this reduction, as outlined in the Overview of the Year at the beginning of this report, were:

- The loss of major school contracts due to reduced funding per pupil, driven by inflation and rising operational costs
- Prolonged staff absences resulting from physical and mental health conditions, medical procedures, and family-related caring responsibilities

These challenges placed considerable pressure on the organisation and staff team, significantly reducing capacity for essential networking activity and grant application development. Despite this, CET has been able to continue operating due to strong reserves and savings. Income diversification has also supported the financial viability of the Trust, and CET will continue to apply this operating model to achieve a balanced approach to income generation.

However, the Trustees recognise the importance of identifying new ways to expand and refine the Trust's offer, alongside developing additional income-generating opportunities that remain aligned with our mission.

With this in mind, Trustees will meet in April to discuss and agree a new financial strategy for CET, which will also include strengthening partnerships with local businesses, securing sponsorships, offering joint initiatives, and creating mutually beneficial opportunities that will enhance both, financial support and community engagement.

Reserves policy

It is the charity's policy to ensure that the reserves account holds enough money to ensure that the charity remains financially secure, capable of meeting its obligations and maintaining its operations for at least three months. The reserves should also cover any redundancy cost if funding difficulties arise.

At the end of March 2024, the account held £42,028.05. The reserves policy is reviewed periodically to ensure it aligns with the charity's current financial position and operational needs. Reserves levels will be adjusted in the future as perceptions of risks and other factors change, e.g. school budget cuts, reduction of commissioned work.

Funds held as a Custodian Trustee

CET does not hold funds as a Custodian Trustee.

Future

With the continued support and oversight of the Trustees, CET remains committed to securing a sustainable future that both empowers individuals to protect and enhance green spaces and strengthens the Trust's long-term financial resilience. In light of the challenges experienced during the reporting period, a renewed focus has been placed on financial sustainability to ensure CET can continue to deliver meaningful impact while operating within its resources.

Over the coming year, CET aims to consolidate and grow its educational and youth programmes, with a particular emphasis on initiatives that empower young people to take positive action in environmental conservation. The Trust will also continue to strengthen its work with volunteers, particularly within the community garden and local conservation areas, supporting environmental stewardship while delivering positive outcomes for physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connection.

CET will further develop inclusive provision for home-educated children, young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and families. This will include expanding accessible outdoor learning opportunities, tailored environmental education sessions, and family-based activities that encourage intergenerational engagement with nature. These programmes will promote wellbeing, resilience, and confidence, while enabling participants to develop a deeper understanding of the natural environment and the importance of its protection.

In addition, CET will actively seek to expand and deepen strategic partnerships with like-minded organisations, funders, and stakeholders. By working collaboratively, CET aims to diversify income streams, extend its reach, and enhance the effectiveness of its activities. Through this work, CET will continue to deliver measurable environmental benefits

alongside improved wellbeing outcomes, ensuring the organisation remains resilient, adaptable, and well-positioned to serve its communities in the years ahead.

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Community Environmental Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the Charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's financial statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the 2006 Act ; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements under section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.



Andy Hopkins
BVSC
Latham House
33-34 Paradise Street
Birmingham

B1 2AJ
31 March 2025

Community Environmental Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	4	611	-	611	7,856
Charitable activities	5	41,543	29,806	71,349	158,334
Investments	6	1,570	-	1,570	1,325
Total		43,724	29,806	73,530	167,515
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	7	3,652	378	4,030	27,209
Other	8	83,811	26,806	110,617	104,756
Total		87,463	27,184	114,647	131,965
Net gains on investments		-	-	-	-
Net (expenditure)/income	9	(43,739)	2,622	(41,117)	35,550
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Net (expenditure)/income before other gains/(losses)		(43,739)	2,622	(41,117)	35,550
Other gains and losses					
Net movement in funds		(43,739)	2,622	(41,117)	35,550
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		168,720	-	168,720	133,168
Total funds carried forward		124,981	2,622	127,603	168,720

Community Environmental Trust
 Summary Income and Expenditure Account
 for the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Income	71,960	166,190
Interest and investment income	1,570	1,325
Gross income for the year	<u>73,530</u>	<u>167,515</u>
Expenditure	114,477	131,792
Depreciation and charges for impairment of fixed assets	170	170
Total expenditure for the year	<u>114,647</u>	<u>131,962</u>
Net (expenditure)/income before tax for the year	(41,117)	35,553
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	<u><u>(41,117)</u></u>	<u><u>35,553</u></u>

Community Environmental Trust

Balance Sheet

at 31 March 2025

Company No. 03907328	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	11	338	508
		<u>338</u>	<u>508</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	12	4,986	1,795
Cash at bank and in hand		125,291	195,439
		<u>130,277</u>	<u>197,234</u>
Creditors: Amount falling due within one year	13	(3,012)	(29,024)
Net current assets		<u>127,265</u>	<u>168,210</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>127,603</u>	<u>168,718</u>
Net assets excluding pension asset or liability		<u>127,603</u>	<u>168,718</u>
Total net assets		<u><u>127,603</u></u>	<u><u>168,720</u></u>
The funds of the charity			
Restricted funds	14		
Restricted income funds		2,622	-
		<u>2,622</u>	<u>-</u>
Unrestricted funds	14		
General funds		124,981	168,720
		<u>124,981</u>	<u>168,720</u>
Reserves	14		
Total funds		<u><u>127,603</u></u>	<u><u>168,720</u></u>

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

For the year ended 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

Approved by the board on 31 March 2025

And signed on its behalf by:

Troy Yeomans

T. Yeomans

Trustee

31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

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 applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds These are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objects of the charity.

Designated funds These are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Revaluation funds These are unrestricted funds which include a revaluation reserve representing the restatement of investment assets at their market values.

Restricted funds These are available for use subject to restrictions imposed by the donor or through terms of an appeal.

Income

Recognition of income Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to, and virtually certain to receive, the income and the amount of the income can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income with related expenditure Where income has related expenditure the income and related expenditure is reported gross in the SoFA.

Donations and legacies Voluntary income received by way of grants, donations and gifts is included in the the SoFA when receivable and only when the Charity has unconditional entitlement to the income.

Tax reclaims on donations and gifts Income from tax reclaims is included in the SoFA at the same time as the gift/donation to which it relates.

Donated services and facilities These are only included in income (with an equivalent amount in expenditure) where the benefit to the Charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material.

Volunteer help The value of any volunteer help received is not included in the accounts.

Investment income This is included in the accounts when receivable.

Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets This includes any gain or loss resulting from revaluing investments to market value at the end of the year.

Gains/(losses) on investment assets This includes any gain or loss on the sale of investments.

Expenditure

Recognition of expenditure	Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.
Expenditure on raising funds	These comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income, fundraising trading costs and investment management costs.
Expenditure on charitable activities	These comprise the costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services in the furtherance of its objects, including the making of grants and governance costs.
Grants payable	All grant expenditure is accounted for on an actual paid basis plus an accrual for grants that have been approved by the trustees at the end of the year but not yet paid.
Governance costs	These include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Charity, including any audit/independent examination fees, costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity, together with a share of other administration costs.
Other expenditure	These are support costs not allocated to a particular activity.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Plant and Machinery	25% Straight Line
Computer Equipment	25% Straight Line

Trade and other debtors

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

Trade and other creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other 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.

Pension costs

The charity operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the company pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the company has no further payments obligations. The contributions are recognised as expenses when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals in the balance sheet. The assets of the plan are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

2 Company status

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital.

3 Statement of Financial Activities - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Income and endowments from:			
Donations and legacies	7,856	-	7,856
Charitable activities	138,966	19,368	158,334
Investments	1,325	-	1,325
Total	<u>148,147</u>	<u>19,368</u>	<u>167,515</u>
Expenditure on:			
Charitable activities	112,488	19,368	131,856
Other	106	-	106
Total	<u>112,594</u>	<u>19,368</u>	<u>131,962</u>
Net income	<u>35,553</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,553</u>
Net income before other gains/(losses)	35,553	-	35,553
Other gains and losses:			
Net movement in funds	<u>35,553</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,553</u>
Reconciliation of funds:			
Total funds brought forward	133,168	-	133,168
Total funds carried forward	<u>168,721</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>168,721</u>

4 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations	611	611	7,856
	<u>611</u>	<u>611</u>	<u>7,856</u>

5 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Services - Project Income	39,194	-	39,194	153,280
Grants receivable	2,349	29,806	32,155	5,054
	<u>41,543</u>	<u>29,806</u>	<u>71,349</u>	<u>158,334</u>

6 Income from investments

	Unrestricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£
Bank interest	1,570	1,570	1,325
	<u>1,570</u>	<u>1,570</u>	<u>1,325</u>

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
<i>Expenditure on charitable activities</i>				
Services - Project Income	3,652	378	4,030	27,209
Governance costs				
	<u>3,652</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>4,030</u>	<u>27,209</u>

8 Other expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Employee costs	70,290	26,806	97,096	86,475
Motor and travel costs	2,484	-	2,484	1,891
Premises costs	4,328	-	4,328	4,328
Amortisation, depreciation, impairment, profit/loss on disposal of fixed assets	170	-	170	170
General administrative costs	3,256	-	3,256	4,683
Legal and professional costs	3,283	-	3,283	7,209
	<u>83,811</u>	<u>26,806</u>	<u>110,617</u>	<u>104,756</u>

9 Net (expenditure)/income before transfers

	2025	2024
	£	£
This is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of owned fixed assets	170	170
Independent Examiner's fee	450	450

10 Staff costs

	2025	2024
Salaries and wages	84,781	71,925
Social security costs	8,051	10,480
Pension costs	3,499	4,045
	<u>96,331</u>	<u>86,450</u>

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

The average monthly number of full time equivalent employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
	Number	Number
	7	4
	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and Machinery	Computer Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or revaluation			
At 1 April 2024	16,137	6,883	23,020
At 31 March 2025	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,883</u>	<u>23,020</u>
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 April 2024	16,137	6,375	22,512
Depreciation charge for the year	-	170	170
At 31 March 2025	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,545</u>	<u>22,682</u>
Net book values			
At 31 March 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>338</u>	<u>338</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>508</u>	<u>508</u>

12 Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	3,191	-
Prepayments and accrued income	1,795	1,795
	<u>4,986</u>	<u>1,795</u>

13 Creditors:

amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Other taxes and social security	2,112	1,479
Accruals	900	450
Deferred income	-	27,095
	<u>3,012</u>	<u>29,024</u>

14 Movement in funds

	At 1 April 2024	Incoming resources (including other gains/losses) £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2025 £
Restricted funds:				
Restricted income funds:				
Grantham Yorke	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
SPF	-	9,999	(9,999)	-
Sutton NNS	-	5,997	(5,997)	-
Nature Neighbourhood	-	6,250	(6,250)	-
Paddle UK	-	560	(560)	-
Airport Fund	-	2,500	(378)	2,122
Brum Breathes	-	2,000	(1,500)	500
<i>Total</i>	<u>-</u>	<u>29,806</u>	<u>(27,184)</u>	<u>2,622</u>
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	168,720	43,724	(87,463)	124,981
Total funds	<u>168,720</u>	<u>73,530</u>	<u>(114,647)</u>	<u>127,603</u>

Purposes and restrictions in relation to the funds:

Restricted funds:

Grantham Yorke
 SPF
 Sutton NNS
 Nature Neighbourhood
 Paddle UK
 Airport Fund
 Brum Breathes

15 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Total £
Fixed assets	338	338
Net current assets	127,265	127,265
	<u>127,603</u>	<u>127,603</u>

16 Reconciliation of net debt

	At 1 April 2024	Cash flows	At 31 March 2025
	£	£	£
Cash and cash equivalents	195,439	(70,148)	125,291
	<u>195,439</u>	<u>(70,148)</u>	<u>125,291</u>
Net debt	<u>195,439</u>	<u>(70,148)</u>	<u>125,291</u>

17 Commitments

Operating lease commitments

Annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2025	2025	2024	2024
	Land and buildings	Other	Land and buildings	Other
	£	£	£	£

Operating leases with expiry date:

Pension commitments

	2025	2024
	£	£
The pension cost charge to the company amounted to:	<u>3,499</u>	<u>4,045</u>

18 Related party disclosures

Controlling party

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital; thus no single party controls the company.

Community Environmental Trust
Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies				
Donations	611	-	611	7,856
	<u>611</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>611</u>	<u>7,856</u>
Charitable activities				
Services - Project Income	39,194	-	39,194	153,280
Grants receivable	2,349	29,806	32,155	5,054
	<u>41,543</u>	<u>29,806</u>	<u>71,349</u>	<u>158,334</u>
Investments				
Bank interest	1,570	-	1,570	1,325
	<u>1,570</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,570</u>	<u>1,325</u>
Total income and endowments	43,724	29,806	73,530	167,515
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities				
Services - Project Income	3,652	378	4,030	27,209
	<u>3,652</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>4,030</u>	<u>27,209</u>
Total of expenditure on charitable activities	3,652	378	4,030	27,209
Employee costs				
Salaries/wages	57,975	26,806	84,781	71,925
Employer's NIC	8,051	-	8,051	10,480
Pension costs	3,499	-	3,499	4,045
Staff training	765	-	765	25
	<u>70,290</u>	<u>26,806</u>	<u>97,096</u>	<u>86,475</u>
Motor and travel costs				
Vehicles - General costs	2,406	-	2,406	1,891
Travel and subsistence	78	-	78	-
	<u>2,484</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,484</u>	<u>1,891</u>
Premises costs				
Rent	4,328	-	4,328	4,328
	<u>4,328</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,328</u>	<u>4,328</u>
General administrative costs, including depreciation and amortisation				
Depreciation of Plant and Machinery	-	-	-	-
Depreciation of Computer Equipment	170	-	170	170
Bank charges	100	-	100	106

Community Environmental Trust
Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

General insurances	1,676	-	1,676	960
Software, IT support and related costs	261	-	261	1,436
Stationery and printing	-	-	-	682
Sundry expenses	185	-	185	873
Telephone, fax and broadband	1,034	-	1,034	626
	<u>3,426</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,426</u>	<u>4,853</u>
Legal and professional costs				
Audit/Independent examination fees	450	-	450	450
Accountancy and bookkeeping	97	-	97	94
Consultancy fees	2,736	-	2,736	6,665
	<u>3,283</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,283</u>	<u>7,209</u>
Total of expenditure of other costs	<u>83,811</u>	<u>26,806</u>	<u>110,617</u>	<u>104,756</u>
Total expenditure	87,463	27,184	114,647	131,965
Net gains on investments	-	-	-	-
	<u>(43,739)</u>	<u>2,622</u>	<u>(41,117)</u>	<u>35,550</u>
Net (expenditure)/income				
Net (expenditure)/income before other gains/(losses)	<u>(43,739)</u>	<u>2,622</u>	<u>(41,117)</u>	<u>35,550</u>
Other Gains	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	<u>(43,739)</u>	<u>2,622</u>	<u>(41,117)</u>	<u>35,550</u>
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	168,720	-	168,720	133,168
Total funds carried forward	<u>124,981</u>	<u>2,622</u>	<u>127,603</u>	<u>168,718</u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1144788

Accounts

Charity Registration Number: 1144788

Company Registration Number: 3907328 (England and Wales)

**COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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TRUSTEES and DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Reference and Administrative information

Charity name:	Community Environmental Trust
Charity registration number:	1144788
Company registration number:	3907328
Registered Office and operational address:	1 Whittle Croft Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DN
Charity contact details:	Tel: 0121 747 3579 E-mail: info@environmentaltrust.org.uk Website: www.environmentaltrust.org.uk
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank PLC 207 High St Erdington Birmingham West Midlands B23 6SZ

Board of Trustees

John Biddle – Chair (Director)

Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair (Director)

Ifor Jones – Trustee

Alison Wilkes – Trustee

Karen Frost – Trustee

Mary McManus -Trustee

The Community Environmental Trust (CET) is the leading environmental charity within Castle Vale, working successfully for over 23 years empowering communities to protect and enhance their environment, its wildlife and habitat by delivering outdoor educational activities and providing volunteering opportunities. Through this the organisation continues to bring relevant matters to the attention of the public, media, politicians and Government agencies alike.

Overview 2023-2024

The year 2023-2024 was marked by significant challenges and transitions for the organization. These included the tragic passing of a beloved staff member at the end of 2023, which prompted a major organisational restructuring. This restructuring led to the creation of two new positions—**Youth and Environment Officer** (appointed in July 2024) and **Forest Schools Practitioner** (appointed in September 2024)—which were integral to both, the continuation of existing projects and the development of new programs and initiatives.

In addition to these changes, the organization faced prolonged staffing challenges due to the long-term health condition of another team member. As a result, the organization remained understaffed for a significant part of the year, with the workload being covered by a range of freelance workers. This put considerable strain on the team but also provided opportunities for flexibility and innovation in operations.

At the end of the year, the **Community Engagement and Conservation Officer** relocated up north, leaving a vacancy that remains unfilled. In response to this, the organization employed one of CET's regular volunteer as a **Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator** on a temporary basis to continue with gardening activities over the winter months, ensuring that these initiatives remained active and well-supported despite the staffing gap.

On a more positive note, the organization embarked on a new initiative in September 2024, aimed at diversifying its offerings. A **Paddle Sport Instructor** was hired to lead water-based activities along the local canal, expanding the range of programs and engaging with the community in a new, exciting way. This project has been well-received and is seen as a promising development, introducing outdoor recreation and environmental awareness in a dynamic, inclusive format.

Overall, despite the difficulties faced during the year, including staffing challenges and the untimely loss of a key member, the organization has shown resilience, adapting to changing circumstances, creating new roles to meet emerging needs and diversifying to continue engaging positively with the community. Moving into 2024, filling the remaining vacancies and further expanding the offerings will be essential to maintaining momentum.

Aims and Objectives

MAIN AREAS OF SERVICE PROVISION

1. Maintenance and creation of wildlife habitat in local urban green spaces.
2. Raising environmental awareness by providing activities and advice on environmental issues.
3. Providing opportunities for volunteering and training.

These services were designed to fit into the following categories:

Environmental Education: Includes schools, local communities and other professionals (CET has been particularly strong in delivering environmental education by establishing and maintaining positive links with local schools).

Neighbourhood Management: Improving the quality of life for residents by encouraging and supporting sustainable regeneration and development plans.

Community Development: Participation of residents in the care of their environment, enabling them to gain new skills and experiences.

Objectives

- The conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment for the public's benefit.
- To further benefit the residents of Birmingham without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, or political and other opinions. To advance the education in relation to the above and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, for recreation and leisure time occupation, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.
- The advancement of using the environment as an educational tool, including but not exclusively for local children from local schools and young adults aged 18 – 25.
- The promotion of good health by providing or assisting in the provision of organised outdoor activities.
- Where it is for the protection of the environment, to provide or carry out maintenance or improvement of: Community Garden and any other public amenity

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14th January 2000 and registered as a charity on 24th November 2011.

It is governed by Articles of Association, which were amended following approval by the members of the AGM on 7th November 2011. In the event of the company being wound up the members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The management of the Trust is vested in the Trustees who are elected by the membership and act in a voluntary capacity. In compliance with the Articles of Association at the next Annual General Meeting, which must be held no more than 15 months after the previous one, officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) will be stepping down by rotation. All will be eligible to offer themselves for re-election.

All Trustees are required to sign a Registration of Trustees and a Trustees' Code of Conduct. Business and conservation skills are well represented among the Trustees. To maintain this broad skills mix, the CET Board of Trustees undertakes an annual review of its effectiveness. If skill gaps are identified, new Trustees are sought by open advertisement, or individuals are approached to offer themselves for election.

Board meetings are held every 6-8 weeks to keep the Trustees fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction.

CET's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on the 24th July 2023 which included board nominations and re-elections as well as a discussion about Chair's transition. John Biddle (Chair) and Lynne Witkamp (Vice-Chair) were nominated and re-elected to their positions for the upcoming year. All our current board members were also confirmed in their roles, ensuring continuity of leadership and governance. Our chair also announced that he will step down at the next AGM. This will mark the conclusion of his term, and the board will begin preparations for the election of a new Chair during the next year.

This AGM reaffirmed the commitment of the board to the mission and goals of the organisation, and they all looked forward to continuing their work in the coming year.

Our aim is to continue enriching and widening our Board's cross-functional skill base. CET will also continue looking for a Treasurer who can support and assist the Project Manager with the financial aspects of the charity on a more regular basis. CET Board is also looking for a Trustee with a Human Resources background who could join the team and oversee organisational functions and provide support and advice managing employees.

Risk Management

The Trustees actively review the major risks that the Charity faces when preparing and updating the strategic plan, however, detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Project Manager. Risks are identified and assessed, and controls are established throughout the year, but a formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis.

Risk is managed under the headings of financial sustainability, operations, governance and compliance with law and regulation. The charity has developed systems to monitor and control these risks to mitigate any impact they may present in future.

The investment policy is to hold most of its investments in a low-risk interest savings account. The reserves policy is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months of unrestricted payments to cover emergencies that may arise from time to time.

Chair, Vice-Chair and Project Manager exercise careful control of costs by setting an annual budget and periodically reviewing progress against it.

Management Structure

The **Project Manager's** role is to ensure the long-term continuance and expansion of the services provided by the Trust and the successful delivery of environmental projects. The Project Manager oversees the overall management of the Trust, undertaking a wide range of jobs. These include raising funds, maintaining budgets, attending regular project meetings with the Neighbourhood Manager, increasing awareness of and improving the local environment through a range of activities and media, undertaking administrative work, overseeing the organisation's strategic links and development. Since 2016, the Project Manager has also been responsible for CET's payroll and invoice operations, bookkeeping, records of financial transactions, producing financial forecasts and creating budget reports every 6-8 weeks. The Project Manager also generates income by providing consultancy support to other organisation and delivering environmental, educational and conservation projects. The Project Manager receives support from the Project Coordinator, and the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer.

The **Project Coordinator's** role is to deliver a wide range of environmental, educational and conservation projects in the local area by increasing awareness, understanding and support from residents, community groups, associations and local schools. The Project Coordinator also promotes environmental awareness and education across the local community, as well as creating and developing environmental initiatives. The Project Coordinator manages two main projects: Forest School Scheme and Youth Provision. She also attends meetings, writes bids and seeks funding for environmental activities with the youth group as well as coordinating and arranging work experience placements.

The **Community Engagement and Conservation Officer (CE&CO)** is a 3-year fixed-term position created thanks to HS2's Community and Environment Fund (October 2020-October 2023). Primarily, the CE&CO's role is to engage with residents and stakeholders, to deliver conservation activities, workshops and events that will help attract new users to the area. During the summer months, their activities are moved to the community garden where the focus is on food growing. The role also involves planning and managing the Conservation Area sustainably and enhancing existing features that will help change the designation of the land to a Local Nature Reserve. Due to the success of this role, the Board of Trustees has agreed to extend the contract after October.

Over the course of the year, CET underwent a restructuring process, which was prompted by the sad passing of a valued member of staff. In response to the changes, three new roles were developed to strengthen our capacity to deliver on our mission and continue supporting the community.

Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator: This new position was established to oversee and coordinate volunteer sessions in the community garden. The role includes managing volunteer groups, facilitating food-growing activities, and ensuring the continued maintenance and development of the garden as a vital community resource.

Youth and Environment Officer: This role was created to act as a liaison between the charity and children and families in our community. The Youth and Environment Officer focuses on engaging young people in environmental activities, promoting sustainability, and offering educational opportunities in an outdoor environment.

Forest School Practitioner: An additional Forest School Practitioner was appointed to enhance our outdoor learning programs. This role supports the delivery of Forest School activities, fostering children's development through nature-based learning and outdoor play, which has been integral to our educational offering.

Paddle Instructor: Lastly, a Paddle Instructor role was introduced to offer water-based activities and develop further the paddle Hub created in Minworth. The hub has offered kayaking and Bellboating activities that have helped to engage participants in physical activities while promoting outdoor adventure and environmental education.

These new roles have allowed the charity to maintain its commitment to serving the community despite the challenges posed by the loss of a key staff member. The

restructuring has enabled us to better meet the growing demand for outdoor activities and volunteer engagement, ensuring the continuation and growth of our services and interventions.

PROJECTS - Activities for Public Benefit

EDUCATION (Services delivered to schools)

FOREST SCHOOLS

Forest Schools (FS) is an innovative educational approach of playing and learning that uses the environment as a tool to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. This includes engaging with children with additional support needs, particularly learners who demonstrate antisocial behaviour and/or other learning or socialising difficulties (ASD, ADHD).

Children, under the supervision of a qualified FS Practitioner, visit local woodland or stay on school grounds on a regular basis (2 hours a week) over an extended period (minimum of 6 weeks to a maximum of 32).

Through small achievable tasks in a stimulating environment, children are encouraged to be independent and enabled to build self-esteem and develop social and behaviour management skills.

Forest School offers freedom to explore independently, which is vital if children are to learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. It also allows time to revisit past areas and experiences, to reflect upon and consolidate their learning. Forest school sessions are mainly child led, but activities are tailored to individual learning styles and linked to the school's curriculum.

The benefits of Forest Schools are the natural environment provides a wealth of opportunity and resources to expand children's/young people's learning, whilst building a sense of independence, high self-esteem and teamwork skills. It provides a stimulating experience where children can self-explore and use multiple senses, helping to develop children's physical capabilities as well as learning acceptable boundaries of behaviour.

All practitioners (and volunteers participating in the project) have current, enhanced DBS certificates. Practitioners also hold outdoor First Aid.

Despite the challenges faced that year, CET continued delivering Forest School sessions, offering a total of 15 sessions per week in 6 different educational institutions between April 23 and July 23. This included one after-school club at a local secondary school, where older children were actively engaged in the development of their school's grounds providing children with valuable outdoor learning experiences.

The staffing challenges led the trust to the employment of 3 freelance practitioners to cover the majority of the sessions, existing members of staff continued to deliver the remaining Forest School sessions. Despite our best efforts, we sadly had to discontinue services with one school due to the inability to find a suitable staff member or freelance practitioner available to cover those specific hours.

While the additional freelance support was invaluable, we felt somehow disconnected from the project. Not having direct input in the delivery of the sessions and not being able to take pictures, resulted in a missed opportunity to celebrate the children's progress and share their experiences with the wider community.

Overall, CET engaged with a total of 535 children over that period.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Castle Vale Nursery Bramford	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery High Meadow Community School	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery
pm	High Meadow Community School Bramford	Oasis Academy Short Heath	High Meadow Community School Chivenor Primary	Oasis Academy Short Heath	Chivenor Primary
After school			Greenwood Academy		

Forest Schools and after-school sessions		
April 23– July 23	Frequency	Beneficiaries
High Meadow	3	210
Chivenor	2	72
Oasis Academy Short Heath	2	60
Castle Vale Nursery	5	60
Bramford Primary	2	120
Greenwood Academy	1	10
Total	15	532

The new academic year started in September 2023. It was with great sadness that we had to say goodbye to Birches Green Junior as they decided not to renew the contract and get a different company to deliver an outdoor education programme instead. As reported by the school, the cancellation of the programme was not a reflection of the service and support that CET has given them over the years but to changes in management and school outcomes. Birches Green Junior has been benefiting from the delivery of Forest School sessions since 2010; the Forest School programme was embedded in their school curriculum and the former Head Teacher was an exceptional advocate of the programme.

On the other hand, Chivenor Primary increased the number of sessions to 2 per week and we signed up a new contract with Bramford Primary. In addition, after-school sessions at Greenwood Academy and Castle Bromwich Junior continued.

As the new academic year began, we welcomed both an existing member of staff who had been on long sick leave and a new practitioner employed in September. The new academic year started again with some challenges we needed to navigate through. Two schools reduced the number of Forest School sessions which impacted our overall session delivery. However, two other schools increased their allocation, helping to partially offset the reduction. As a result, the total number of sessions delivered between September 2023 and March 2024 was 12 per week, slightly fewer than the 15 provided in the previous academic year. Despite the reduction, the number of participants engaged with this project remained strong, with a total of 590 children benefiting from the Forest School Programme.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Chivenor Primary Bramford	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	
pm	Chivenor Primary Bramford	Chivenor Primary Bramford	High Meadow Community School	Oasis Academy Short Heath High Meadow Community School	

Forest Schools and after-school sessions		
September 23 – March 24	Frequency	Beneficiaries
High Meadow	2	240
Chivenor	3	72
Oasis Academy Short Heath	1	48
Castle Vale Nursery	3	50
Bramford Primary	3	180
Total	12	590

TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Community Engagement and Conservation programme aims to engage with members of the community, residents and other organisations to transform their local area through conservation sessions. The focus is on the Castle Vale Conservation Area, the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. Tasks would help to restore heritage and improve the quality, access and security of Castle Vale Conservation Area and other urban open spaces, whilst also reconnecting local people with their landscape. In addition, the improvements will make a significant contribution to the local environment by promoting and increasing biodiversity.

Additionally, the project also aims to improve people's mental and physical well-being (Social Prescribing), increase and promote diversity (outdoor events and workshops) and inspire future generations (formal/informal training)

The Community Engagement and Conservation Officer Work continued with the organisation and delivery of a wide range of activities, workshops, events and volunteering opportunities to actively engage with our local community and people from the surrounding areas. The work included the following:

- Bi-weekly volunteer sessions at the Community Garden between April and October totalling 40 sessions and amassing 335 volunteer hours over 7 months. 6-10 volunteers regularly attended sessions. A range of practical and educational tasks took place over those months, helping to improve attendees' knowledge, skills, and confidence. The focus of the Spring and Summer volunteer sessions was mostly in the community garden at the allotments. This involved not only growing healthy food in a sustainable way, but also improving the garden space by encouraging and working with biodiversity. By their very nature, the tasks were physical and therefore a form of exercise, this kept our volunteers in good physical shape along with aiding their social and mental health through mixing with fellow volunteers. The food that we grew and harvested benefitted our volunteers as well as the local community through foodbank donations. Various specialist staff were invited to deliver a wide range of workshops for our volunteers, plot holders and public.

Topics covered included hot bin composting, wormery composting, plant propagation and wildlife gardening. These workshops were well received, and the feedback suggests that we need them more regularly.

- Delivery of 26 weekly Wednesday Well-being Walks around the Castle Vale Conservation Area as part of our commitment to promoting mental, physical and social wellbeing within the community. Each week the walks attracted between 7-10 participants creating a steady and engaged group of members of the community who valued the regular opportunity for outdoor activity and social connection. The walks were enhanced by additional activities which helped to further engage participants and enrich their experience, such as litter picking, bird spotting or tree identification.
- 6 Corporate Social Responsibility sessions were facilitated for various businesses who generously donated their time and efforts to support our mission and strengthen community engagement. Their participation in our conservation and gardening projects has not only been a great contribution towards the improvement of our local environment but also an important legacy for future generations. Their time and support have also helped us increase the charity's impact and provide sustainable long-term support. The work they carried out ranged from reinstating a pond fence to hedgerow planting or litter picking in the Conservation Area to various garden makeover sessions to improve our community garden, such as the creation of an outdoor stay&play area, the development of a sensory garden, building new raised beds or painting garden furniture.
- Several informal outdoor activities were offered to young people and families during Easter, May and October Half-term and Summer holidays

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME – GLOBAL TRAINING

The CET internship programme is the result of an agreement between the charity and Global Training, a Spanish company funded by the Basque Government. The purpose of the programme is to provide a work placement of approximately 6 months for Spanish graduates. The programme is aimed at cross-border cooperation between Spain and the UK to provide an excellent chance of work experience abroad. Successful candidates are granted a scholarship for the duration of the placement.

In 2021, CET became a licensed sponsor under the charity immigration route. Last year, we ran our third and successful internship programme. The work experience volunteering programme started in January 23 and lasted until July 23. In the reporting period, our charity hosted two interns who played an instrumental role in supporting various aspects of our operations.

The Project Assistant Intern supported the delivery of projects, activities and events. He also led volunteers in gardening sessions, nature walks for adults and environmental outdoor activities during the school holidays for young people. When not in projects, he supported the CE&CO and Project Manager with administrative tasks including designing event posters, CET leaflets, preparing an event calendar, designing activity programmes and attending meetings.

The Admin and Finance Intern supported the Project Manager with financial and administrative tasks and carried out a wide range of office activities. Some of the tasks included updating cashbooks, helping to prepare financial updates and cashflow charts, dealing with telephone inquiries, sending and responding to emails, liaising with contractors visiting the premises, and filing, amongst others.

On November 23, 3 new candidates applied for the internship programme, including 2 for the Admin and Finance positions. After an interviewing process, 2 people were shortlisted, and they started the programme on January 24. Like the previous year, the work provided by the interns has been very beneficial for the organisation and has provided invaluable work experience to the candidates hosted by the Trust.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Projects and Activities provided to a wider audience)

VALE YOUTH GREEN ACTION (VYGA)

VYGA is an environmental youth provision for children/young people aged 8-14 which runs during the school holidays, including school half-terms and summer play schemes. Programmes are made up of projects, workshops, environmental/outdoor and educational activities and trips.

VYGA encourages the older members (over-14's) to get involved in assisting and leading the younger members in activities by incorporating their ideas when designing and producing the holiday play-scheme programmes and funding-bid applications. They are part of VYGA's Young Leaders Scheme. The project also has a group of experienced regular volunteers who support the delivery of activities. All volunteers hold current enhanced DBS certificates.

This project encourages the utilisation of local green spaces and resources in a sustainable way to provide opportunities for play, gaining environmental and practical knowledge/skills and it encourages an active and healthy lifestyle.

As mentioned in our last report, the charity faced a period of understaffing which impacted the delivery of our youth programmes. During this time the CE&CO stepped in to temporarily oversee the youth program. Despite ongoing responsibilities for other conservation sessions, the Conservation Officer successfully managed to deliver 2-3 youth sessions per holiday scheme, ensuring that the children continued to receive valuable activities during this transitional period.

Thank you to the Conservation Officer’s dedication and flexibility, the core elements of the youth programme continued with minimal disruption although we experience a slight reduction in attendance and participation.

Five activities were offered in the Easter Holiday Programme, and an additional two sessions were organised and delivered during the May half-term. Activities ranged from gardening to pond dipping, Bellboating, and even a trip to Middleton Lakes.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Easter Holidays 2023		
Gardening session	4	£4
Bellboating and discovering the canals	10	FREE
All bird things	5	£4
Pond dipping and meadow exploring	8	£4
Easter Hunt	7	£4
May Half-Term 2023		
Urban gardening	6	£4
Trip to Middleton Lakes	9	£6

In the summer 2023, CET’s Youth and Environment Officer started and organised, with the support of the CE&CO, a series of engaging summer activities for children over a 4-week period. 13 activities were held, including environmental outdoor sessions, trips, and workshops. These initiatives were designed to provide a fun, educational, and active summer experience for children, encouraging physical activity, teamwork, and environmental awareness. Overall, a total of 109 children were engaged across the different activities and we raised £416 which will be reinvested in future programmes, ensuring that more children can be reached and benefit from similar activities.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Pond Dipping at Plantsbrook	5	£4
Kayak at Minworth	8	Free
Woodwork	6	£6
Leaf printing	7	£4
Secret garden design and prep	9	£4
Bug hotel	9	£4
Woolly birds	8	£4
Minibeast and trap doors	9	£4
Bushcraft and tool use	9	£4
Food for Free	6	£4
Secret Garden Makeover	7	£4
Survival skills	13	£4
Outdoor cooking	13	£4
TOTAL	109	£416

The newly appointed Youth and Environment Officer, adapted quickly to her new role and brought fresh ideas to the programme. She put her own stamp on how activities were delivered, introducing a more tailored approach to meet the needs of the children. One key change was reducing the age range of the group, making it easier to cater for the specific developmental needs of the participants. This adjustment resulted in increased engagement from the children, as activities became more age-appropriate, ensuring greater participation and enjoyment.

Half-Term October 2023		
Spooky Crafts	15	£4
Kayaking at Minworth	10	FREE
Bows and arrows	16	£4
Christmas 2023		
Christmas workshop	Family event	
February Half-Term 2024		
A variety of activities delivered between CET's community garden and the secret garden (den building, conservation, making a terrarium,	12	£4
	9	£4
	10	£4

DUKE OF EDINBURGH (DofE)

Duke of Edinburgh is a youth award programme aimed at young people aged 14-25. As part of the programme, they must complete different sections that involve helping the community/environment, becoming fitter, developing new skills, planning, training for and completing an expedition. The award is about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries.

DofE participants have been meeting at CET premises every Thursday since November. A meeting was arranged in January with the participants, DofE Manager and Chase Training to agree upon the expedition dates, themes and place. It was agreed that the practice and qualifying expedition were going to be held from 29th-31st March and 24th-26th of May respectively.

Young people organised a fundraising day at Young Stars Hub on Saturday 4th February, the money raised was used to subsidise part of the cost of the expedition and the other half was donated to Stepaway, a charity our beloved member of staff Ben was actively involved with. In addition, participants also ordered Duke of Edinburgh hoodies featuring a special message dedicated to Ben.

While things didn't go exactly as planned for the Gold practice expedition, due to an unfortunate incident involving a CET staff member, the expedition was still able to proceed thanks to the unwavering support and effort from the parents, DofE staff, and Chase Training (the organizations leading the expedition on behalf of CET). Their commitment, combined with

the determination of the participants to complete their practice expedition, ensured the success of the initiative.

CET Trustees and the Project Manager worked diligently to implement appropriate measures in response to the incident, ensuring that the necessary provisions were in place to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

BACK TO NATURE

Back to Nature are outdoor environmental sessions aimed at families with under-fives.

The project uses CET's Community Garden and the Conservation Area where children have the freedom to explore using their senses and families bond and reconnect with nature.

Both spaces offer a safe and engaging environment to play and promote early childhood development through outdoor exploring and social interaction.

In the summer, the charity launched 'Back to Nature' sessions as a pilot program to engage families with children under the age of 5. Prior to this, there were no provision in Castle Vale for this age group. Despite being held just once a week, the sessions were highly popular and proved to be a great success. The initiative provided families with the opportunity to reconnect with nature, engage in outdoor activities, and foster early childhood development.

Based on the success and demand, these sessions continued to be developed in future holiday schemes and were expanded to 3 days per week to accommodate greater demand. These sessions were held from 9:30-10:30 am, providing a short but engaging experience early in the day to help with children's concentration and attention spans. The activities were designed to be both, fun and educational, with themed sessions based around the seasons and holidays, such as making witches' brooms and potions at Halloween or willow hearts for Valentine's Day.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden is situated in the Castle Vale Allotments. The aim of this project is to increase local community's accessibility to gardening activities in a safe and friendly environment.

It allows community groups to have access to the site to learn how to grow vegetables, it enables a wide range of educational-based activities, helps to reduce social isolation and brings together different generations in an inspirational environment where knowledge can be shared and utilised.

In February, the charity undertook an exciting repurposing of the Community Garden, following the vision of the Youth and Environment Officer. This project was made possible thanks to the funding provided by the Shared Prosperity Fund and Grantham York Fund. The garden will be transformed into two new, distinct areas: a sensory garden which will be co-designed with Spring Hill High School¹ and an outdoor 'Stay & Play' area co-design with Spurgeons². In addition, the existing grow space will be also re-designed by CET's Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator to become more functional and efficient.

The work started in late February and throughout March. Delivery of sessions will start from April onwards.

Regular gardening and food growing sessions started in the garden in April and continued until October. Volunteers have attended sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, this has allowed them to participate in an enjoyable, healthy and social activity in a safe, outdoor environment, whilst developing knowledge and skills to grow food and flora. Their work has also helped maintain and develop the garden.

¹ **Spring Hill High School** is a Special School in Birmingham for students with social, emotional and mental health needs, mild to moderate learning difficulties and/or autism aged 11-19 years.

² **Spurgeons** is a large national children's charity working with vulnerable families, children and young people

In addition, the site has benefited from the work carried out by XXX groups of corporate volunteers. 2 companies came on the same week as part of the National Volunteer Week, CET benefit from two groups of corporate volunteers:

- 21-04-2023. A small but mighty group of volunteers from Flomatik returned to the Community Garden in April to carry out hedge planting in Area 6.
- 05/06/23 4 volunteers from Business Volunteers led by Paul Corcoran, carried out various tasks in the community garden, such as mulching, path clearance and fixing benches and raised beds.
- 06/07/23 – 16 volunteers from Sainsbury’s carried out improvement work in the Community Garden including weeding and putting membrane in the seating area, general organising and tidying of the space, along with painting and fixing garden features.
- 20-11-2023 A group of 10 volunteers from I.M. Properties helped transform two main areas of the Community Garden. The improvements carried out helped us to get the best use of the area, these included: preparation of the ground for the outdoor ‘Play & Stay’ area, coppice the willow tree, replacement of broken planks in the sitting area, dismantling existing brick beds, repair and paint existing garden features, improving accessibility to the polytunnel (removal of the grass mound in the path and dismantling an existing rotten raised bed) and other general gardening maintenance tasks.
- 22-11-23: A group of 11 senior members of staff from HS2 continued with the work started by I.M Properties. The corporate volunteers created a mud pit, built a mud kitchen, weeded and mulched the forest garden, orchard and paths and prepared the ground for the sensory garden.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

CET’s Community Orchard is managed in partnership with the Castle Vale Allotments and supported by Fruit & Nut Village. The orchard is located in the Castle Vale Allotments and it is split into three different areas. 29 fruit trees, including apple, pear, plum, damson and cherry, have been grown successfully on site.

Dr. Rob Tilling, Fruit & Nut Village, delivered winter and summer fruit tree pruning workshops at the Community Orchard. These initiatives aimed to provide practical learning opportunities for individuals interested in maintaining and expanding local orchards and promoting environmental sustainability through the introduction of diverse tree species. The workshops were well-received, with a high level of interest and engagement from the community. A majority of attendees were from nearby allotment sites, highlighting the relevance and appeal of the workshops for local gardeners and allotment holders.

In addition to the pruning workshops, a fruit tree planting event was organised to expand the existing orchard and introduce a wider variety of tree species, including soft-pitted fruit and nut trees.

CONSERVATION AREA and MEADOWS

Castle Vale Conservation Area (CVCA) is the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. It is situated to the southeast of Castle Vale, around the allotments and the stable's paddocks. The existing landscape consists of rough grassland with substantial woodland planting, fencing, a pond, a path system and seats.

Castle Vale Meadows are at the centre of the Conservation Area. They were created in 2013 as a result of a successful partnership with Birmingham City Council, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust (Nature Improvement Area Staff) and the University of Wolverhampton. The area used to be an unused, former paddock and it was transformed into a magnificent meadow using green hay from two 'donor' sites, Eades Meadow and Draycote Meadows, both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) creating 9.7 acres of 2 new-species rich meadows.

CVCA is owned by Birmingham City Council. However, the site has mainly been managed by CET, which informs and seeks permission from BCC before carrying out any activities. CET's practical conservation management days complement BCC service plans for the area.

CET is continuing its work to protect the Conservation Area and to utilise it as part of its project programmes.

The CE&CO started a pilot in April to reduce litter dropping in the area. 5 black bags were placed around the conservation area, in strategic locations, checked on a weekly basis and emptied and replaced as it was needed. By the end of July, 21 checks have been carried out, with each bin needing to be replaced more than half of the times that it was checked. Contents were mostly dog poop, food/drink packaging and alcohol bottles/cans. Since trialling this, there has been a noticeable reduction in the amount of dog mess it is seen on site. The bags continued on site and being replaced until November. Since the CE&CO left, our regular walking group has continued checking the bags every Wednesday. This pilot has allowed us to monitor the type of litter, quantities and areas where the future installation of bins would be more beneficial. There is enough evidence now to put a case forward to the council.

CET also started to conduct an informal consultation in the conservation area with all the different site users in July. The aim of this was to gather any feedback about the greenspace, how it's used, what they like and dislike about it and any feedback and potential interest in helping to proactively look after the site. The majority of the people spoke to were dog walkers followed by members of the community who used the site for walking and exercising or observing wildlife. The main themes for the feedback were bins/litter/dog mess and CCTV/safety.

July 23 marked the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Castle Vale Meadows, a partnership project between CET, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and Wolverhampton University that was possible thanks to Nature Improvement Area funding. The meadow has become a symbol of environmental restoration, community involvement, and biodiversity conservation. Over the past decade, the meadow has transformed into a vital natural space that supports a wide range of species and provides educational opportunities for local primary schools, residents and university students. To commemorate this milestone, the BBC interviewed CET's CE&CO and a Senior member of the BBCWT in June. They discussed the importance of the Castle Vale Meadow as a thriving and unique habitat. The interview highlighted the immense value of the meadow, not only for its ecological benefits but also for the positive impact it has had on the local community.

Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust approached CET last year to request green hay from The Castle Vale Meadows to create a new one at Heybarnes Recreational Grounds. CET's Project Manager met with BCC officers to discuss and early cut of the meadow. The meadow was cut on the 17th of July, a total of 58 bales were harvested. Thank

you to the joined efforts of all three teams 52 bales were delivered to Heybarnes and 6 at the Castle Vale Allotments to enhance Area 6's meadow.

The Conservation Area continued to benefit greatly from the generosity and dedication of corporate volunteers. Last year we were fortunate to receive valuable support from 2 corporate volunteer groups. Their contributions have been instrumental in maintaining and enhancing our green spaces.

- **ISG Volunteers (22/05/23)** Two volunteers from ISG kindly assisted in the reinstatement of the broken fence around the seasonal pond. Their hard work and commitment ensured that the fence and the gate around the pond were rebuilt and installed, helping to maintain the safety and aesthetics of the area for the benefit of the community and wildlife.
- **KPMG Volunteers (01/06/23):** A group of 16 volunteers from KPMG played a crucial role in widening and maintaining the paths around the conservation area. This work not only improved access but also contributed to the overall sustainability and preservation of the area. Additionally, these volunteers helped to finish the fence repairs that were started by ISG, further enhancing the security and functionality of the site.

CASTLE VALE STABLES

CET signed in 2016 a Head of Terms to lease the Castle Vale Stables and paddock land for 15 years to protect the land and ensure it remains paddock and green land. Since then, CET has been providing support to the Castle Vale Stables with administrative and financial tasks, including managing the expectations of the horse owners, managing the number of horses/ponies on the land, dealing with health and safety, insurance, horticultural maintenance and payment of business rates, utility bills and repairs. Castle Vale Pony Owners Association continues looking after the horses and managing the run of the stables.

CET continues to maintain a strong and productive partnership with the stables, supporting some of the administrative tasks and working collaboratively on a range of initiatives aimed at achieving shared goals of community development, such as facilitating the move of horse manure from the stables to the allotments or opening up paths within the Conservation Area to ensure safe and smooth rides.

CET PADDLE HUB (Minworth)

Minworth Bell Boating Hub is part of a wider project called Paddle Sport in Birmingham (PSiB), which is trying to create several community paddle hubs across the West Midlands Combined Authority with the aim to provide regular, sustainable and thriving paddle sports to different communities in deprived areas and with low opportunities in water sports activities.

The CET Paddle Hub had a successful year of growth and development, marking significant progress in providing access to water-based activities for the community and increasing its wellbeing offer. In April 2023, CET's Manager approached the Boat Inn to request permission for the installation of a container in their car park. The pub owners generously granted permission, allowing us to proceed with the project. In the same month, CET was successful in securing funding from British Canoeing to purchase 14 kayaks, paddles, and buoyancy aids. This milestone greatly enhanced our ability to offer sessions without having to borrow any equipment, making the project more sustainable and efficient.

With the invaluable support of Olympic Canoeist, Andy Train, in May we launched free Kayak taster sessions once per month between May and September as part of our community outreach. These sessions, open to children, adults, and families, provided an opportunity for up to 12 participants to explore kayaking in a fun and supportive environment. These events saw strong attendance, with people of all ages enjoying the chance to try a new sport.

In May, our long-term sustainable partner, I.M. Properties agreed to a donor-directed grant to purchase a Bell Boat, enabling us to expand our paddling activities whilst offering accessible and safe paddling experiences for people of all ages. From September we were able to offer group sessions including sessions for families with children under the age of 7, those with mobility problems and those who were very confident near water. Regular In wellbeing sessions for over 50's had been held every Friday morning. In addition several school groups and youth groups (worth Unlimited, Compass-Support and Scouts) have also benefited from this new initiative

In addition, CET secured a 12-month free hire of a 20ft container from Cleveland Containers at the end of June 2023. This generous donation provided the Paddle Hub with much-needed storage space to house equipment and keep it easily accessible. The container was installed on the 2nd of July. Through further support from the Peddimore Community Fund, CET was able to offer several free kayaking sessions throughout the summer holidays. These sessions allowed children and adults alike to try a new sport, gain confidence on the water, and be inspired to continue participating in outdoor activities.

Between May 23 and March 24, CET has delivered 80 Paddle Sessions (Come&Try Kayaking, Kayaking for youth groups and Bell Boating for schools, families and groups) engaging with an overall of 758 people.

Looking forward, the CET Paddle Hub will continue to build on this momentum, offering more opportunities for the community to connect with nature and stay active.

NATURE NEIGHBOURHOODS

CET was approached in October 2023 to get involved with the National Trust, RSPB and WWF in a new initiative called Nature Neighbourhoods. 18 community organisations across the UK were chosen to create a Nature Neighbourhood Plan that will help mobilise their community and lead positive change for people and nature. The action local plan, which will be presented in September 2025, will be delivered locally, co-designed with the local community and key stakeholder, and will address community priorities.

The project required attending monthly meetings with other project beneficiaries and officers from the partner organisations and the submission of quarterly reports to inform funders on project progress.

The first step to achieve this long-term plan was to organise a 'Walk & Talk' with relevant stakeholders to have a better understanding of our existing green infrastructure, what could they offer, what the opportunities were, how we could build community action for nature together and what the next steps could be.

The Walk and Talk took place on the 6th of March around the Castle Vale Conservation Area. A wide range of people was invited to the meeting to get broader and more diverse vision that would help us understand and capture better diverse influences and local needs. 17 people attended the event, including the following: landowners, Housing and Local Partners, NN Project Officers and Funders, Educational Institutions and Young people, local organisations, residents and CET Trustees.

After the walk, it became clear that to create quality green spaces and increase engagement, is crucial to design and manage spaces around how they would be used and to ensure that the spaces are relevant to community needs and that will bring long-term value.

After analysing the data, 6 main thematic clusters and three subclusters arose. Based on that, CET's action plan will focus in the upcoming months on the key drivers (subjects that were mentioned more often during the walk) as they would have the highest impact on the area, those will be: Green Infrastructure and Facilities, Participation and Engagement and Natural Capital (awareness).

PROJECTS – Other work

COMMISSIONED WORK

RE-FUTURE COLLECTIVE

CET delivered 5 sessions between April 23 and March 24. The sessions were aimed at young people from the Waterworks estate in Ladywood (ArtPad), adults referred via social prescribing (Forms of Clouds) and young asylum children living with their families on temporary accommodation at the Collective Hotel in Hagley Road . The work carried out included environmental workshops, environmental art and trips to art galleries.

DRUIDS HEATH REGENERATION PROJECT_ (Pioneer Group/Loconomy)

The Project Manager has continued supporting the consultation in Druids Heath in her capacity as a Resident Engagement Advisor. The consultancy work commissioned on this second phase by Birmingham City Council and done on behalf of Pioneer Group focussed on Druids Heath South and aimed primarily at engaging with Birmingham City Council tenants living in tower blocks and bungalows. Through several door-knocking sessions, community events and engagement workshops in various key locations of the estate, we were able to inform about the regeneration plans and engage with all residents, including those living in houses. This intensive consultation process would lead to the reveal of the Masterplan for the whole of Druids Heath. The team assisted in the process of dialogue with the local community and stakeholders. January 24 was the last month of engagement, the potential extension of the project beyond March didn't happen due to the Council wanting to take the lead back on the process.

In addition, CET continued assisting with administrative tasks: preparing paperwork to comply with due diligence when delivering events, managing the budgets allocated for the community engagement events and communications, keeping track of expenditure (invoicing and refunds) and GDPR management. For this additional work, CET continued receiving a management fee.

READY TO LEVEL UP LOCONOMY

In January 2024, CET was approached by Loconomy to actively participate in the Ready 2 Level Up project. CET mentored an anchor organisation based in East Birmingham and co-designed a local Ready 2 Level Up Action Plan. The process involved holding a strengths dialogue to explore the anchor organisation's mission, approach and local offer, attending 4 collaborative learning sessions to bring organisations together to learn about the inclusive growth and levelling up approach in East Birmingham, and capturing the learning on a bespoke learning platform.

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PARTNERSHIP WORK

- The Project Manager has continued to support Birmingham Open Spaces Forum in her capacity as Treasurer and Trustee
- Regular meetings are held with local Castle Vale partners including Pioneer Group, Compass-Support, Spitfire Services and Castle Vale Allotments.
- CET has continued to forge strong, sustainable partnership with three local companies, Bureau Veritas, I.M. Properties and Flomatik, each of whom has played an important role in supporting our mission and projects throughout the year.

TRAINING

After successfully completing all her MBA academic modules and the dissertation with 'Distinction', the Project Manager focused on the completion of her Functional Skills Examination which she passed on the 18th of August, and the preparation of the End Point Assessment (EPA) which will include a 20-minute presentation followed by 35 minutes questions about the project and 1.5hours of a professional discussion with a CMI assessor.

All the necessary information to go through the EPA point was approved at end of March (690 hours off-the-job records, 12 personal reflections demonstrating how she has gained 79 new skills and 4,000 work project showcase) and the EPA was booked for April.

WORK EXPERIENCE

CET hosted 2 work-experience students, one from Fairfax and the other from Plantsbrook. Both spent most of their time with CET's CE&CO taking part in gardening, growing, conservation and health and wellbeing activities. One of the students continued supporting the delivery of activities during the summer holidays.

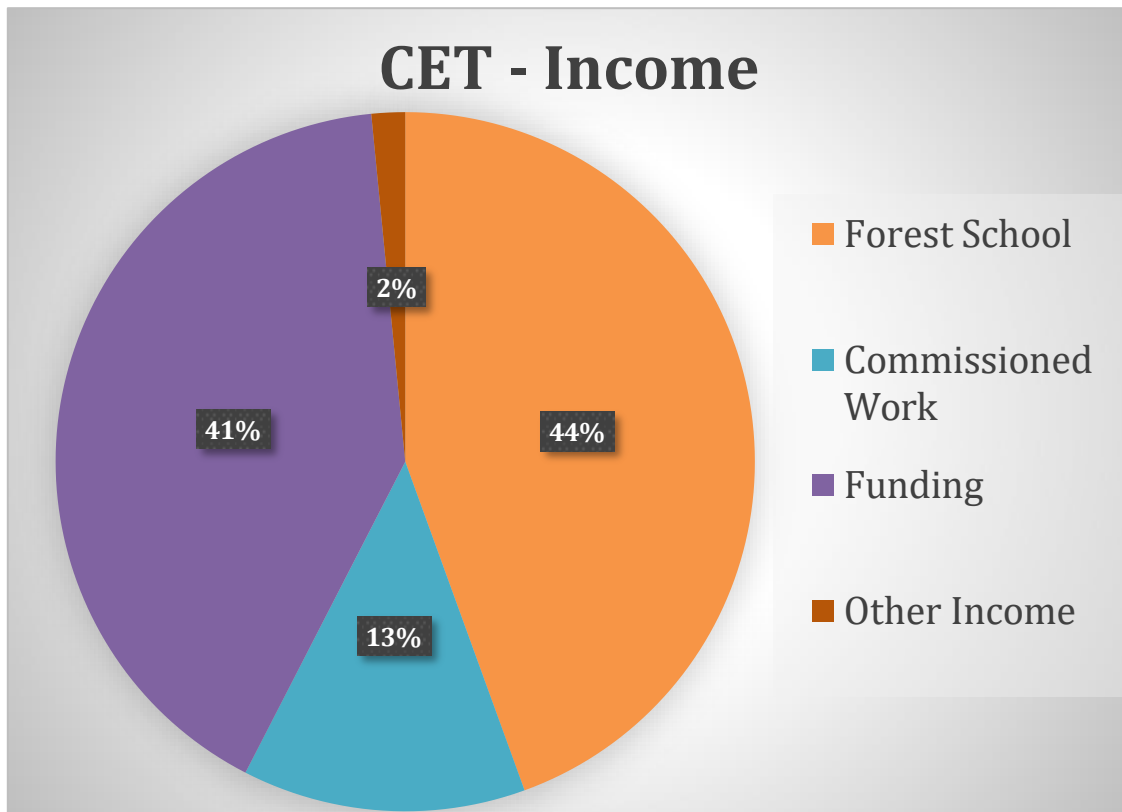
COMMUNITY EVENTS

- **Bell Boating Event (04/04/23):** During the Easter holidays CET hosted a Bell Boating event funded by Street Games. The event was part of a wider project involving British Canoeing and Canal River Trust to help increase access to paddle sport and the canal network. The session helped to promote accessible physical and enrichment activity for local communities in a safe, fun and sustainable. Over 80 people attended the event and 74 participated in the activity, including VYGA, Worth Unlimited Youth Group and residents from Minworth, Castle Vale, Hodge Hill, Erdington, Sutton Coldfield and Walmley.
- **City Nature Challenge (28/04/23)** – CET invited local residents to participate in this annual competition between cities all over the world. CET staff recorded 28 species. BCC rangers visited the site for an hour and helped us with the identification of species growing in the meadow.
- **Kayak taster sessions (06/05/23).** Session was delivered by Andy Train and supported by CET staff and a local volunteer, Ian Cooke. Despite the wet weather, 34 people attended. The sale of chocolates provided by Ian helped us raise £34.
- **Night Paddle for families in need (19/03/23):** In partnership with The Boat Inn and Compass Support, we delivered a fun Christmas Bellboat Trip just after dark on the Minworth Canal. It was a closed invitation event, targeting those most at need of a joyful time in the winter months. The families enjoyed, a boat ride with illuminations and adults dressed up as elves to entertain them. Followed by a meal provided by The Boat Inn, with presents bought by two local residents to unwrap afterwards and a visit from Father Christmas.
- **Xmas decoration (21/12/23):** our annual Xmas decoration workshop was held at the Castle Vale Stadium. 2 Trustees, Karen Frost and Alison Wilkes, helped with the preparation and delivery of the workshops. In addition, 5 young people from the DofE group helped host the event by greeting and welcoming participants, explaining the different workshops offered on the day and also supporting the delivery of some workshops. Over 50 people attended the event.
- **International Women's Day (08/03/24):** CET hosted a small event on the 8th of March at the Community Garden to recognise and support International Women's Day. CET staff made willow hearth wrapped in purple ribbon and hanged them all

over the garden as a way to symbolized and celebrate women’s strength and resilience.

Financial review

Last year’s most significant contributors towards the charity’s income were the delivery of Forest School programmes and Grants



Forest Schools was the largest source of income for the reporting period. 44% of the total income generated last year came from the delivery of Forest School Programmes. CET received £75,160 (unrestricted funds) from participating schools.

The charity also received substantial financial support through various grants, which were critical in supporting our operations and mission. The amount received last year, £69,127, was 41% of charity’s total income. The grants and contributions came from the following funders and bodies:

- £7,680 from British Canoeing to contribute towards the Minworth Paddle Hub project (purchase of kayaks, paddles and buoyancy aids)

- £12,731 from Groundwork/HS2 to pay for the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer post and pay for some other costs associated to this project, such as mileage and tools. This will be the last payment CET will receive from Groundwork as the 3 year project came to an end in September 2023
- £5,750 from the Peddimore Community Fund – donor direct grant for the purchase of a bell boat
- £1,980 from Peddimore Community Fund to contribute towards staffing cost for the delivery of Summer Playscheme Activities
- £9,990 from Awards for All to support the operations of the allotments, Plantsbrook and engagement in Minworth
- £9,999 from Shared Prosperity Fund to increase the capacity of the activities delivered in the Community garden, including food growing sessions, stay and play and SEND.
- £2,500 from Grantham Yorke Fund To support the delivery of SEND sessions
- £5,997 from Sutton NNS to support the work carried out at the Minworth Paddle Hub – purchase equipment and delivery of wellbeing sessions for over 50's
- £12,500 from National Trust
- CET still benefited from some of the grants received in the previous financial year, such, as DofE* and Birmingham Food Legend. The last one was received at the end of March 2023 and spent entirely during the 23-24 financial year. The funding was used to contribute towards staffing costs and enhancements of the food growing project in the Community Garden.

* DofE is the budget holder for the funds granted last year, therefore no money was transferred to CET's account.

In addition, the charity undertook commissioned work, providing services and expertise to other organisations which earned CET the following:

- £1269.15 for the delivery of eco-workshops for Re-Future
- £1,105 from Compass Support for the delivery of evening youth sessions and kayaking in the canal during the school holidays
- £13,492 from the Pioneer Group for the resident engagement work carried out in Druids Heath as part of the regeneration process.

- £5,350 from Loconomy for the mentoring sessions as part of the Ready 2 Level Up project.
- £500 from Birmingham City University for the participation in the Graduate + week and delivery of workshops.
- £100 from Upcycle for the delivery of a Christmas decoration workshop
- £330 from Friends of Wylde Green Station for the design of an interpretation panel and information leaflet about bees

The remaining 2% of the total income, £2,625, represents miscellaneous income, including donations, one-off payments, refunds and money raised through the delivery of youth activities:

- £375 refund for late filing
- £640 was raised as part of CET's youth provision activities. The session price was increased from £3 to £4 to help generate a bit of revenue whilst allowing families to take part in affordable activities. Trips had different prices depending on the distance, entrance fee and length of the session.
- £1,000 – a direct donation from Bureau Veritas, one of our long-term partners
- £500 through the delivery of CSR sessions
- £110 from Birmingham Open Spaces Forum for the monthly submissions of volunteer data

22-23 showed the importance of income diversification to help with the financial sustainability of the Trust, therefore in 23-24 the Trust has continued applying its new operating model which involved more bid writing and consultancy work to have a more balanced approach to income generation. By relying on a variety of revenue streams the charity has been better positioned to unexpected fluctuations in any of our existing sources of income, reducing financial risk and expanding its impact.

The charity's Forest School programmes represent a significant income stream. They don't only contribute to the financial sustainability of the charity but they also support directly its missions by engaging children in outdoor education. CET will continue to expand and refine these offerings, increasing outreach and engaging with new educational institutions

and groups, such as home-schoolers and/or childminders.

To ensure ongoing support, CET will continue applying for grants which will enable us to develop new projects to meet the needs of our local community as well as support our mission and core activities. We will continue working closely with the Castle Vale Head of Fundraising to ensure a healthy cashflow.

An increase on commissioned work from external organisations has proved crucial to providing a steady stream of unrestricted revenue. CET is planning to increase its capacity to take on more commissioned projects in the upcoming financial year, particularly those that help us fulfil our mission statement and align with our values.

Last year, the Trustees highlighted the growing importance of the charity's website in both fundraising and programmes promotion. The website was seen as a critical tool for raising awareness, showcasing the charity's work, and connecting with funders, schools, and potential partners. As a result, the charity invested in the development and creation of a new website which has helped us reach broader audiences and improve engagement.

Lastly, in addition to income diversification, the charity will continue strengthening partnerships with local businesses. By working closely with local organizations, the charity can secure sponsorships, offer joint initiatives, and create mutually beneficial opportunities that will enhance both, financial support and community engagement.

Reserves policy

It is the charity's policy to ensure that the reserves account holds enough money to ensure that the charity remains financially secure, capable of meeting its obligations and maintaining its operations for at least three months. The reserves should also cover any redundancy cost if funding difficulties arise.

At the end of March 2024, the account held £41,564.38. The reserves policy is reviewed periodically to ensure it aligns with the charity's current financial position and operational needs. Reserves levels will be adjusted in the future as perceptions of risks and other factors change, e.g. school budget cuts, reduction of commissioned work.

Funds held as a Custodian Trustee

CET does not hold funds as a Custodian Trustee.

Future

With the continued support of our Trustees, CET is committed to ensuring a future that not only empowers individuals to protect and enhance green spaces but also strengthens our financial sustainability. This will enable us to reach more people, expand our impact, and deepen our community engagement.

We aim to grow our educational and youth programs, particularly those that empower youth to take action in environmental conservation, and further strengthen our work with volunteers in the community garden and conservation areas. These efforts will cultivate a lasting connection to nature and encourage local participation in our initiatives.

Additionally, CET will actively seek and build strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations and stakeholders, working collaboratively to expand our reach and effectiveness. By fostering these relationships, we will ensure that CET remains resilient and well-positioned to continue its mission for many years to come.

Trustees Report (Including Directors Report)

Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors 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 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

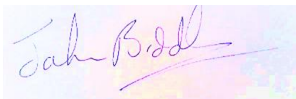
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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.

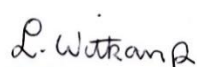
Approval

The Trustee's Report was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees



Lynne Witkamp - Vice-Chair



Dated: 20/12/24

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF COMMUNITY ENVIROMENTAL TRUST

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Community Environmental Trust for the year ending 31 March 2024 as set out on pages 43 to 52.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

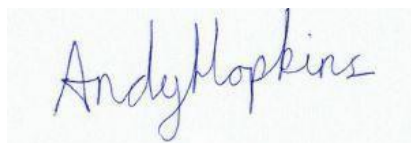
Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for an independent examination. I report in respect of the examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (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

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 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).;

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.



Andy Hopkins
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
Latham House
33-34 Paradise Street
Birmingham
B1 2AJ

Dated: 19 December 2024.

Community Environmental Trust

**Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2024
Including Income and Expenditure Account**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES:					
Incoming Resources from charitable activities					
Services - Project Income		133,912	0	133,912	99,168
Grants Receivable		5,054	19,368	24,423	37,096
Incoming Resources from generated funds					
Donations		7,856	0	7,856	381
Interest		1,325	0	1,325	227
Total Incoming Resources		<u>148,147</u>	<u>19,368</u>	<u>167,515</u>	<u>136,873</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED:					
Charitable Expenditure		112,488	19,368	131,856	120,419
Bank Charges and Taxation		106	0	106	110
Total Resources Expended		<u>112,594</u>	<u>19,368</u>	<u>131,962</u>	<u>120,529</u>
NET INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>35,553</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>35,553</u>	<u>16,344</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		133,168	0	133,168	116,824
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>168,721</u></u>	<u><u>0</u></u>	<u><u>168,721</u></u>	<u><u>133,168</u></u>

Balance Sheet
As at 31st March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	4	<u>509</u>	<u>-</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and Prepayments		1,795	1,723
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>195,439</u>	<u>156,190</u>
		197,234	157,912
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	5	<u>29,021</u>	<u>24,744</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>168,213</u>	<u>133,168</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>168,722</u>	<u>133,168</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted funds - general Reserves		168,721	133,168
Restricted funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>168,721</u>	<u>133,168</u>

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. No members have required the company to obtain an audit of the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2023 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

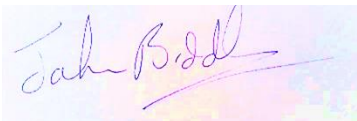
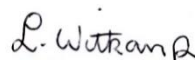
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on behalf of the board by:

John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees

Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair

Dated: 20/12/24

Community Environmental Trust

Notes to the Financial statements Year ended 31 March 2024

Note

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)” (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The charity is a “Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

- * The charity becomes legally entitled to the resources after any performance conditions have been met;
- * The trustees are virtually certain that they will receive the resources; and
- * The monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income is deferred when monies are received in advance relating to projects commencing after the financial year where the contract period is specified by the funder.

Community Environmental Trust

Notes to the Financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

Note

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Resources expended

Charitable activities includes all costs relating to general administration, which support the charitable purpose.

Grants offered subject to conditions, which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings that have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives, which is considered to be 4 years.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

Incoming resources with related expenditure

When incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) both are reported gross in the SOFA.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with bankers, other short term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 "Basic Financial Instruments" and Section 12 "Other Financial Issues" of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there

Community Environmental Trust

Notes to the Financial statements Year ended 31 March 2024

Note

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market value of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

De-recognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

Pensions

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the company to the fund for the year.

Community Environmental Trust

Notes to the Financial statements Year ended 31 March 2024

Note

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year (2022 - £nil).

Community Environmental Trust

Notes to the Financial statements Year ended 31 March 2024

Note

4. STAFF COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries including	71,925	74,436
Social Security	10,480	17,758
Pension contributions	<u>4,045</u>	<u>4,245</u>
	<u>86,450</u>	<u>96,439</u>

The average number of administration employees during the year was 4 (2023 – 4), who did not earn more than £60,000 in either year.

Pension commitments

The charitable company operates a defined contribution scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company and are independently administered. The pension cost charge above represents contributions payable by the charitable company to the fund. No contributions (2023 – nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date.

5. Financial Instruments

	2024 £	2023 £
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Carrying value of financial liabilities		
Measured on amortised costs	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Community Environmental Trust

Notes to the Financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

Note

6. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Plant and Machinery	Computer Equipment	Totals
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2023	16,137	6,205	22,342
Additions during the year	-	678	678
At 31 March 2024	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,883</u>	<u>23,020</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	16,137	6,205	19,254
Charge for the year	-	170	170
At 31 March 2024	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,375</u>	<u>22,511</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>509</u>
At 1 April 2023	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

Community Environmental Trust

**Notes to the Financial statements
Year ended 31 March 2024**

Note

7. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

Due within one year	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade Debtors	0	0
Prepayments	<u>1,795</u>	<u>1,723</u>
Total Debtors	<u><u>1,795</u></u>	<u><u>1,723</u></u>

8. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Tax and social security	1,476	949
Accruals	450	450
Deferred Income	<u>27,095</u>	<u>23,345</u>
	<u><u>29,021</u></u>	<u><u>24,744</u></u>

Community Environmental Trust

**Notes to the Financial statements
Year ended 31 March 2024**

Note

9. Funds

Project	Opening Reserves	Incoming	Expenditure	Closing Reserves
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Reserves	<u>133,168</u>	<u>148,147</u>	<u>112,594</u>	<u>168,721</u>
Restricted Reserves				
HS2	0	12,731	12,731	0
VYGA	0	640	640	0
NNS	0	5,997	5,997	0
Total Restricted Reserves	<u>0</u>	<u>19,368</u>	<u>19,368</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Reserves	<u><u>133,168</u></u>	<u><u>167,515</u></u>	<u><u>131,962</u></u>	<u><u>168,721</u></u>

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2023 are represented by current assets/(liabilities

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1144788

Accounts

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2023

TRUSTEES and DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Reference and Administrative information

Charity name:	Community Environmental Trust
Charity registration number:	1144788
Company registration number:	3907328
Registered Office and operational address:	1 Whittle Croft Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DN
Charity contact details:	Tel: 0121 747 3579 E-mail: info@environmentaltrust.org.uk Website: www.environmentaltrust.org.uk
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank PLC 207 High St Erdington Birmingham B23 6SZ

Board of Trustees

John Biddle – Chair (Director)	Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair (Director)
Ifor Jones – Trustee	Alison Wilkes – Trustee
Karen Frost – Trustee	Mary McManus -Trustee

The Community Environmental Trust (CET) is the leading environmental charity within Castle Vale, working successfully for over 23 years empowering communities to protect and enhance their environment, its wildlife and habitat by delivering outdoor educational activities and providing volunteering opportunities. Through this the organisation continues to bring relevant matters to the attention of the public, media, politicians and Government agencies alike.

Overview 2022-2023

2022-2023 had a very good start but ended with devastating news for the Trust, a member of staff going on long-term sickness due to a previously undetected health issue and the passing of a vibrant and valued member of staff on December 22. CET's Project Officer and DoFE Manager was a great role model and an inspiration to many young people he came across with. His work ethic, passion for the environment and determination to make a difference in young people's lives was an example to us all. He is greatly missed.

From an operational point of view, CET managed to get all the projects going and offer continuity to volunteering programmes, adult interventions and school sessions. However, staff absences and recruitment left the Trust understaffed putting the organisation under pressure and in a strained situation. In addition, the dreadful loss left the team distressed and in a huge shock. Thank you to CET's reliable, stable and healthy cashflow, there were no significant effects on the finances or general running of the Trust.

Employing new members of staff was very challenging. Jobs were advertised for several months on various platforms, social media and via partners but no applicants came forward. Eventually, three freelance were hired between January and March to cover the delivery of forest school sessions. In addition, a long-term volunteer with 9 years of experience doing early interventions in schools was employed to also cover additional sessions in schools.

Until new members of staff were in place, all projects were run by the CE&CO and the Project Manager to minimise disruption and continue supporting service users during that period. In addition, the Project Manager had to continue with her MBA studies.

Similarly, to the previous year, two volunteers from Spain started an internship programme in January. The new additions provided invaluable support to the organisation in terms of project delivery and assistance with the office and finances. The new interns allowed the organisation to operate more efficiently and to share the workload.

Aims and Objectives

MAIN AREAS OF SERVICE PROVISION

1. Maintenance and creation of wildlife habitat in local urban green spaces.
2. Raising environmental awareness by providing activities and advice on environmental issues.
3. Providing opportunities for volunteering and training.

These services were designed to fit into the following categories:

Environmental Education: Includes schools, local communities and other professionals (CET has been particularly strong in delivering environmental education by establishing and maintaining positive links with local schools).

Neighbourhood Management: Improving the quality of life for residents by encouraging and supporting sustainable regeneration and development plans.

Community Development: Participation of residents in the care of their environment, enabling them to gain new skills and experiences.

Objectives

- The conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment for the public's benefit.

- To further benefit the residents of Birmingham without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, or political and other opinions. To advance the education in relation to the above and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, for recreation and leisure time occupation, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.
- The advancement of using the environment as an educational tool, including but not exclusively for local children from local schools and young adults aged 18 – 25.
- The promotion of good health by providing or assisting in the provision of organised outdoor activities.
- Where it is for the protection of the environment, to provide or carry out maintenance or improvement of: Community Garden and any other public amenity

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14th January 2000 and registered as a charity on 24th November 2011.

It is governed by Articles of Association, having been amended following approval by the members at the AGM on 7th November 2011. In the event of the company being wound up the members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The management of the Trust is vested in the Trustees who are elected by the membership and act in a voluntary capacity. In compliance with the Articles of Association at the next Annual General Meeting, which must be held no more than 15 months after the previous one, officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) will be stepping down by rotation. All will be eligible to offer themselves for re-election.

All Trustees are required to sign a Registration of Trustees and a Trustees' Code of Conduct. Business and conservation skills are well represented among the Trustees. To maintain this broad skills mix, the CET Board of Trustees undertakes an annual review of its effectiveness.

If skill gaps are identified, new Trustees are sought by open advertisement, or individuals are approached to offer themselves for election.

Board meetings are held every 6-8 weeks to keep the Trustees fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction.

Due to the difficult circumstances, no AGM was held last year. John Biddle and Lynne Witkamp continued to be CET's Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. All our board members also continued in their roles as Trustees. CET's Chair has however announced that he will only stand one more year as a chair.

There were 6 Trustees in post by 31st March 2022. Three Trustees resigned last year, two of our long-standing trustees stepped down due to lack of time to commit to their roles and responsibilities; our youngest and newest recruitment left on the 17th of October due to a change of job and moving to London. On the positive side, we recruited two new Trustees Mary MacManus and Alison Wilkes, they are bringing to the board expertise, knowledge and experience in school governance and management, and conservation and protection of the environment, respectively.

It is our aim to continue enriching and widening our Board's cross-functional skill base. CET will also continue looking for a Treasurer who can support and assist the Project Manager with the financial aspects of the charity on a more regular basis. CET Board is also looking for a Trustee with a Human Resources background who could join the team and oversee organisational functions and provide support and advice managing employees.

Risk Management

The Trustees actively review the major risks that the Charity faces when preparing and updating the strategic plan, however, detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Project Manager. Risks are identified and assessed, and controls are established throughout the year, but a formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis.

Risk is managed under the headings of financial sustainability, operations, governance and compliance with law and regulation. The charity has developed systems to monitor and control these risks to mitigate any impact they may present in future.

The investment policy is to hold most of its investments in a low-risk interest savings account. The reserves policy is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months of unrestricted payments to cover emergencies that may arise from time to time.

Chair, Vice-Chair and Project Manager exercise careful control of costs by setting an annual budget and periodically reviewing progress against it.

Management Structure

The Project Manager's role is to ensure the long-term continuance and expansion of the services provided by the Trust and the successful delivery of environmental projects. The Project Manager oversees the overall management of the Trust, undertaking a wide range of jobs. These include raising funds, maintaining budgets, attending regular project meetings with the Neighbourhood Manager, increasing awareness of and improving the local environment through a range of activities and media, undertaking administrative work, overseeing the organisation's strategic links and development. Since 2016, the Project Manager has also been responsible for CET's payroll and invoice operations, bookkeeping, records of financial transactions, producing financial forecasts and creating budget reports every 6-8 weeks. The Project Manager also generates income by providing consultancy support to other organisation and delivering environmental, educational and conservation projects. The Project Manager receives support from the Project Coordinator, the Project Officer and the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer.

The Project Coordinator's role is to deliver a wide range of environmental, educational and conservation projects in the local area by increasing awareness, understanding and support from residents, community groups, associations and local schools. The Project Coordinator also promotes environmental awareness and education across the local community, as well as creating and developing environmental initiatives. The Project Coordinator manages two main projects: Forest School Scheme and Youth Provision. She also attends meetings,

writes bids and seeks funding for environmental activities with the youth group as well as coordinating and arranging work experience placements.

The Project Officer's role is to deliver Forest Schools sessions, youth activities and manage the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Project. The Project Officer works very closely with the Project Coordinator in the planning and delivery of youth activities. His role as DofE manager involves day-to-day operational activities of the DofE programme and being responsible for the delivery of the annual plan. Tasks include the delivery of volunteering sessions, recruiting and managing participants, monitoring progress of participants' online logbooks, assessing participants' reports and leading an expedition.

The Community Engagement and Conservation Officer (CE&CO) is a 3-year fixed-term position created thanks to HS2's Community and Environment Fund (October 2020-October 2023). Primarily, the CE&CO's role is to engage with residents and stakeholders, to deliver conservation activities, workshops and events that will help attract new users to the area. During the summer months, their activities are moved to the community garden where the focus is on food growing. The role also involves planning and managing the Conservation Area sustainably and enhancing existing features that will help change the designation of the land to a Local Nature Reserve.

All members of staff are employed on a permanent and full-time basis, except the CE&CO who is on a 2-year fixed term. The Chair's key role is to guide and support the organisation, assist with overall strategy and strategic direction and act as the line manager for the CET Project Manager. The Chair and the Project Manager are in contact weekly to ensure that the Project Manager receives the support needed.

PROJECTS - Activities for Public Benefit

EDUCATION (Services delivered to schools)

FOREST SCHOOLS

Forest Schools (FS) is an innovative educational approach of playing and learning that uses the environment as a tool to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. This includes engaging with children with additional support needs, particularly learners who demonstrate antisocial behaviour and/or other learning or socialising difficulties (ASD, ADHD).

Children, under the supervision of a qualified FS Practitioner, visit local woodland or stay on school grounds on a regular basis (2 hours a week) over an extended period (minimum of 6 weeks to a maximum of 32).

Through small achievable tasks in a stimulating environment, children are encouraged to be independent and enabled to build self-esteem and develop social and behaviour management skills.

Forest School offers freedom to explore independently, which is vital if children are to learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. It also allows time to revisit past areas and experiences, to reflect upon and consolidate their learning. Forest school sessions are mainly child led, but activities are tailored to individual learning styles and linked to the school's curriculum.

The benefits of Forest Schools are the natural environment provides a wealth of opportunity and resources to expand children's/young people's learning, whilst building a sense of independence, high self-esteem and teamwork skills. It provides a stimulating experience where children can self-explore and use multiple senses, helping to develop children's physical capabilities as well as learning acceptable boundaries of behaviour.

All practitioners (and volunteers participating in the project) have current, enhanced DBS certificates. Practitioners also hold outdoor First Aid.

Between April and July, CET delivered 12 sessions per week in 5 different educational institutions. In addition, 2 sessions per week were requested in June by Bramford Primary, a school based in Dudley whose head of school is the same as Chivenor. Even though it was a bit of the distance from Castle Vale, we agreed to offer a 6-week pilot in June/July before we committed to the full delivery of the programme in September 2022. Overall, CET engaged with a total of 360 children over that period.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery
		Bramford	High Meadow Community School		
pm	High Meadow Community School	Oasis Academy Short Heath	High Meadow Community School	Oasis Academy Short Heath	Birches Green Junior
		Bramford		Chivenor Primary	

Forest Schools		
April 22 – July 22	Frequency	Beneficiaries
High Meadow	3	150
Chivenor	1	20
Oasis Academy Short Heath	2	60
Castle Vale Nursery	5	70
Birches Green Junior	1	30
Bramford Primary	2	30
Total	14	360

In addition, we continued with the after-school sessions in Castle Bromwich Junior and Greenwood delivering a total of 2 sessions per week. 40 children benefitted from this outdoor education sessions.

After school sessions April 22- July 22		
	Frequency	Beneficiaries
Greenwood Academy	1	10
Castle Bromwich Junior	1	30
TOTAL	2	40

The new academic year started in September 2022. It was with great sadness that we had to say goodbye to Birches Green Junior as they decided not to renew the contract and get a different company to deliver an outdoor education programme instead. As reported by the school, the cancellation of the programme was not a reflection of the service and support that CET has given them over the years but to changes in management and school outcomes. Birches Green Junior has been benefiting from the delivery of Forest School sessions since 2010; the Forest School programme was embedded in their school curriculum and the former Head Teacher was an exceptional advocate of the programme.

On the other hand, Chivenor Primary increased the number of sessions to 2 per week and we signed up a new contract with Bramford Primary. In addition, after-school sessions at Greenwood Academy and Castle Bromwich Junior continued.

Between September 2022 and March 2023, CET delivered 16 sessions per week in 7 different educational institutions, working with 702 children over that period.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery High Meadow Community School	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery
pm	High Meadow Community School Bramford	Oasis Academy Short Heath	High Meadow Community School Chivenor Primary	Oasis Academy Short Heath	Chivenor Primary
After school		Castle Bromwich Junior	Greenwood Academy		

Forest Schools and after-school sessions		
September 22 – March 23	Frequency	Beneficiaries
High Meadow	3	360
Chivenor	2	72
Oasis Academy Short Heath	2	60
Castle Vale Nursery	5	60
Bramford Primary	2	120
Greenwood Academy	1	15
Castle Bromwich Junior	1	15
Total	16	702

TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Community Engagement and Conservation programme aims to engage with members of the community, residents and other organisations to transform their local area through conservation sessions. The focus is on the Castle Vale Conservation Area, the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. Tasks would help to restore heritage and improve the quality, access and security of Castle Vale Conservation Area and other urban open spaces, whilst also reconnecting local people with their landscape. In addition, the improvements will make a significant contribution to the local environment by promoting and increasing biodiversity.

Additionally, the project also aims to improve people's mental and physical well-being (Social Prescribing), increase and promote diversity (outdoor events and workshops) and inspire future generations (formal/informal training)

The Community Engagement and Conservation Officer Work has organised and delivered a wide range of activities, workshops, events and volunteering opportunities to actively engage with our local community and surrounding areas. The work included the following:

- Bi-weekly volunteer sessions at the Community Garden between April and September totalling 45 sessions and amassing 304 volunteer hours over 6 months. 6-10 volunteers regularly attended sessions. A range of practical and educational tasks took place over the Spring and Summer months, helping to improve attendees' knowledge, skills, and confidence. The focus of the volunteer sessions was centred around growing and self-sufficiency. A variety of fruits and vegetables were grown in an organic fashion, with the volunteers getting to harvest and consume clean and healthy food. Through this, volunteers were encouraged to try fruit and vegetables that they had never tried before and shown how to grow them in their own spaces too. In addition, volunteers also helped to propagate and plant native woodland wildflowers such as wood sorrel and wood speedwell in woodland sections within the Conservation Area.

- Bi-weekly volunteer sessions at the Castle Vale Conservation Area between October and March totalling 39 sessions and building up 223 volunteer hours over 6 months. The autumn and winter volunteer sessions aimed to make habitat improvements for both, nature and for people. A total of 134 native trees were planted. These have created an area of approximately 30 metres of hedge containing 104 trees in the conservation area and a copse with 30 trees so far in the adjoining landscape. In addition, sections of woodland were improved by removing dead trees/branches, crown lifting sections to let light in and creating dead hedges to provide safe corridor for wildlife. In Addition, path widening and maintenance was also carried out throughout the 6 months to make the area more accessible and improve safety.

- Delivery of weekly Wednesday well-being sessions:
 - The CE&CO facilitated the delivery of 30 Tai Chi sessions at the allotments. Overall, the project benefited 8 separate individuals. Attendance was not as successful as we had anticipated, therefore sessions stopped in December. Nevertheless, those who came together in this safe and secure environment to take part in gentle exercise confirmed that the sessions helped them improve their health and wellbeing.
 - A total of 49 Health and Wellbeing walks were delivered around the conservation area. Between 7-10 people have been attending the walks

regularly. This has been an invaluable weekly activity that has helped to improve both the mental, physical and social wellbeing of the participants. Walks were enhanced by doing nature spotting and identifying species.

- 7 Corporate Responsibility Sessions were facilitated for various businesses. Their participation in our conservation and gardening projects has not only been a great contribution towards the improvement of our local environment, but also an important legacy for future generations. Their time and support have also helped us increase the impact of the charity and provide sustainable long-term support .

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME – GLOBAL TRAINING

The CET internship programme is the result of an agreement between the charity and Global Training, a Spanish company funded by the Basque Government. The purpose of the programme is to provide a work placement of approximately 6 months for Spanish graduates. The programme is aimed at cross-border cooperation between Spain and the UK to provide an excellent chance of work experience abroad. Successful candidates are granted a scholarship for the duration of the placement.

In 2021, CET became a licensed sponsor under the charity immigration route. Last year we ran our second and successful internship programme. The work experience volunteering programme started in January 22 and lasted until July 22. Between March and July, candidates provided invaluable support which also enriched their personal and professional experience.

The Project Assistant Intern supported the delivery of projects, activities and events. She has also led volunteers in gardening sessions, nature walks for adults and liaised with the tai-chi instructor. During the February half-term holidays, she organised and led workshops for young people. When not in projects, she supported the CE&CO with administrative tasks including designing event posters, CET leaflets, preparing an event calendar, designing activity programmes and attending meetings.

The Admin and Finance Intern supported the Project Manager with financial and administrative tasks as well as carrying out a wide range of activities in the office. Some of the tasks included: updating cashbooks, helping to prepare financial updates and cashflow charts, dealing with telephone inquiries, sending and responding to emails, liaising with contractors visiting the premises and filing amongst others.

In November 22, 4 new candidates applied for the internship programme, including 3 for the Admin and Finance position. After an interviewing process, 2 people were shortlisted and they started the programme from January 23 until July 23. Alike to the previous year, the work provided by the interns has been very beneficial for the organisation and has provided invaluable work experience to the candidates hosted by the Trust.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Projects and Activities provided to a wider audience)

VALE YOUTH GREEN ACTION (VYGA)

VYGA is an environmental youth provision for children/young people aged 8-14 which runs during the school holidays, including school half-terms and summer play schemes. Programmes are made up of projects, workshops, environmental/outdoor and educational activities and trips.

VYGA encourages the older members (over-14's) to get involved in assisting and leading the younger members in activities by incorporating their ideas when designing and producing the holiday play-scheme programmes and funding-bid applications. They are part of VYGA's Young Leaders Scheme. The project also has a group of experienced regular volunteers who support the delivery of activities. All volunteers hold current enhanced DBS certificates.

This project encourages the utilisation of local green spaces and resources in a sustainable way to provide opportunities for play, gaining environmental and practical knowledge/skills and it encourages an active and healthy lifestyle.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, CET delivered 5-holiday schemes including one over the summer.

7 activities were offered in the Easter Holiday Programme, including a family event organised on Friday 8th of April to support the Great British Spring Clean promoted by Keep Britain Tidy. The programme was codesigned with some of CET’s young leaders and the activities were well attended. 3 activities were organised and delivered during the May half-term, including gardening activities at the Community Garden, a trip to Sutton Park to learn about survival and bushcraft skills and a crafty session using natural materials.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Easter Holidays 2022		
Great British Spring Clean	N/A	FREE
Recycling	7	£3
Trip to Middleton Lakes	15	£5
Easter Pinata	12	£3
Minibeast hunt at Plantsbrook	14	£3
Gardening	11	£3
Trip: Farm	15	£10
May Half-Term 2022		
Gardening and Games	7	£3
Survival skills at Sutton Park	8	£3
Natural crafts	9	£3

In the summer 2022, CET ran a full 3-week summer holiday scheme providing a total of 14 activities including trips, workshops and gardening sessions, engaging overall with a total of 182 children.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Conservation	8	£3
Walsall Arboretum	9	£5
Bee homes	12	£3
Arts & Crafts	11	£3
Castle Vale Festival	14	£3
Mini Bioblitz	13	£3
Trip to Conkers	15	£10
Woodwork	14	£3
Archery	14	£3
Trip to Dovedale	15	£10
Woodlands Adventure	15	£15
Outdoor cooking	13	£3
Trip to Bradgate Deer Park	15	£5
Picnic and Games	14	£3

As mentioned at the beginning of the report, CET became understaffed in October. The CE&CO stepped in and took over the youth programme and organised a couple of activities for the young people in October and February half-term. Sadly, our 7 young leaders dropped out of the group to focus on their studies, work and DofE Gold award. Recruitment of new members didn't start again until Summer 2023.

Half-Term October 2022		
Woodland management and Halloween Crafts	4	£3
Litter Picking and seed planting	4	£3
Christmas 2022		
Christmas workshop	Family event	
February Half-Term 2023		
Birdsongs and crafts	11	£3
Scavenger Hunt and wildflower planting	7	£3

DUKE OF EDINBURGH (DofE)

Duke of Edinburgh is a youth award programme aimed at young people aged 14-25. As part of the programme, they must complete different sections that involve helping the community/environment, becoming fitter, developing new skills, planning, training for and completing an expedition. The award is about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries.

Weekly volunteer sessions at the Community Garden started in February and continued until June with an average attendance of 5 young people. In April a new member from CET's youth Group was signed up for the Bronze Award. In Addition, one of the existing members showed interest in doing more work with CET, leading to the submission of their name to become CET's DofE Young Leader. They undertook the introduction training and will have future training on two aspects of the job role of DofE Leader. This will slowly train them up to adulthood so they can be a future DofE Leader and help run sessions and expeditions with CET. The DofE manager worked with the new Young Leader to recruit on social media that will appeal to the younger audience.

On the 17th of June, CET was invited to be part of the Platinum Jubilee Walkway unveiling in Birmingham as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award party. The event was held at The Exchange Centenary Square. Our DofE manager had the opportunity to speak with HRH Prince Edward about our young people's hard work and achievements doing the DofE award. He also helped carry the plaque through the city centre to its permanent place in Victoria Square.

As part of the DofE programme, CET organised two expeditions in August. A bronze for our newer members and a silver expedition for the participants who did their bronze last year. Prior to the expedition participants had one day of camp craft training at the allotments, one day of navigation training in the office and around Shustoke Reservoir, and one day of expedition practice from the office to Kingsbury Water Park.

Bronze expedition was two days and one overnight camp setting off from our office on foot heading towards Kingsbury waterpark and further. 6 participants took part, 4 participants already had the bronze award but were using the experience as practice for their Silver and 2 young people were working towards their bronze award. The route was completed but

due to an incident participants could not stay overnight. This didn't allow them to fully complete their bronze award.

The silver route was much more taxing and took place in the Shropshire hills and the Long Mynd. This was three full days and two nights camping. 4 successful participants completed their Qualifying expedition and 1 completed their Practice expedition.

This was the first time that expeditions were run and organised solely by CET's DofE's Manager as last year's funding allowed us to get support from Chase Training whilst he was finishing the training and qualifications required to lead groups in expeditions. The silver expedition was supported by another CET member of staff. After the expedition, the DofE manager signed off all their final sections of evidence and sent them to be verified. Out of 5 young people, 4 completed their entire Silver award and they were moved up to the Gold level.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden is situated in the Castle Vale Allotments. The aim of this project is to increase local community's accessibility to gardening activities in a safe and friendly environment.

It allows community groups to have access to the site to learn how to grow vegetables, it enables a wide range of educational-based activities, it helps to reduce social isolation and brings together different generations in an inspirational environment where knowledge can be shared and utilised.

Regular gardening and food growing sessions started in the garden in April and continued until October. Volunteers have attended sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, this has allowed them to participate in an enjoyable, healthy and social activity in a safe, outdoor environment, whilst developing knowledge and skills to grow food and flora. Their work has also helped maintain and develop the garden.

In addition, the site has benefited from the work carried out by 3 groups of corporate volunteers:

- 20-06-22: A group of 15 volunteers from HS2 helped with a Community Garden makeover. The keen volunteers helped repaint the wooden shed, fixed the guttering, tidied up the polytunnel, created 2 new raised beds and helped with weeding the edible forest garden.
- 20-3-23: Bureau Veritas carried out various improvements both structurally and aesthetically that helped us to get the best use of the area. Activities included the following: weeding raised beds, painting garden features, clearing out the bug hotel, removing vegetation to create a wildflower meadow.
- 27-03-23: 12 members of staff from Palletline, continued with the work started by Bureau Veritas the week before. More garden features were repaired and painted, created two mini-meadows and a compound for deadwood and sorted out the ground beds and herb wheel by the polytunnel.

ALLOTMENTS

An AGM was held on Saturday 8th of October, the purpose of the meeting was the election of a new committee (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Members), discuss current issues and remind plot holders of allotment rules. The Project Manager was re-elected as treasurer and will continue supporting the Allotments Association.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

CET's Community Orchard is managed in partnership with the Castle Vale Allotments and supported by Fruit & Nut Village and Slow Food. The orchard is located in the Castle Vale Allotments and it is split into three different areas. 29 fruit trees, including apple, pear, plum, damson and cherry, have been grown successfully on site.

A winter and summer fruit tree pruning workshops were delivered by Dr. Rob Tilling at the Community Orchard. A total of 15 participants attended and learned pruning techniques and general orchard care.

CONSERVATION AREA and MEADOWS

Castle Vale Conservation Area (CVCA) is the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. It is situated to the southeast of Castle Vale, around the allotments and the stable's paddocks. The existing landscape consists of rough grassland with substantial woodland planting, fencing, a pond, a path system and seats.

Castle Vale Meadows are at the centre of the Conservation Area. They were created in 2013 as a result of a successful partnership with Birmingham City Council, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust (Nature Improvement Area Staff) and the University of Wolverhampton. The area used to be an unused, former paddock and it was transformed into a magnificent meadow using green hay from two 'donor' sites, Eades Meadow and Draycote Meadows, both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) creating 9.7 acres of 2 new-species rich meadows.

CVCA is owned by Birmingham City Council. However, the site has mainly been managed by CET, which informs and seeks permission from BCC before carrying out any activities. CET's practical conservation management days complement BCC service plans for the area.

CET is continuing its work to protect the Conservation Area and to utilise it as part of its project programmes.

The CE&CO has been carrying out safety walks twice per week. As part of the conservation sessions various surveys have also been conducted to record current flora and fauna and work has been carried out to improve access and safety in the area. In March, he started a pilot to try reducing litter dropping in the area. 5 black bags were placed around the conservation area and emptied and replaced as it was needed. This will allow us to monitor the type of litter, quantities and areas where the future installation of bins would be more beneficial.

CET has worked closely with Sutton Park Senior Ranger and BCC Principal Ecologist/Arboriculturist to start the process of changing the designation of the Conservation Area to Local Nature Reserve. The first step was to define the boundaries of the area which will come under the new designation and the nomination, as it will influence the management plan that has to be produced for the site and clarify who would the

management stakeholders be (those with a financial input or liability for the site and its management). The work also focused on understanding BCC's priorities and green spaces strategy so it could be incorporated into the plan of action. The process included finding ownership of different pockets of land next to the Conservation Area. The CE&CO has already started the assessment of the Conservation Area using BCC's Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT) for the maintenance and development of green spaces.

Several Corporate Volunteer days were arranged throughout the year to improve and enhance the Conservation Area. The work was chosen based on the CAT priorities.

- 20-05-22: a group of 15 people from PWC created a natural barrier in a stretch of a woodland running parallel to the train tracks, helped plant native woodland flora in a birch coppice and made solitary bee homes that were installed around the meadow.
- 17-03-23: A team 10 members of staff from Flomatik carried out litter picking activities around the Conservation Area collecting over 20 bags in 3 hours.
- 31-10-23: a small but mighty group of volunteers from HS2 undertook clearance work in the path that runs at the back of the stables into the Conservation Area. The path had become narrow and, in some places, completely overgrown. Volunteers cut vegetation to widen and reinstate the path making it safer and more accessible for pedestrians, horse riders and other users. The cut vegetation was used to create dead hedges on either side of the walkway.

To ensure the optimal cut and collection of the Castle Vale Meadow in that year and subsequent ones, the Project Manager met on-site with BCC officers. The successful meeting helped to improve communication moving forward and put in place processes to work closely in the future to ensure the best management and possible use of the hay.

Castle Vale Meadows were cut on the 11th of July whilst still green. The green hay was used to enhance the 3 other meadows in the south of Birmingham: Manor Farm Park, Meadow Brook and Ley Hill. This was part of the BBCWT's Natural Rivers and Green Corridors (NRGC) project, a three-year project to improve woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and watercourses along the River Rea and its tributaries in south-west Birmingham and the River Tame in West Birmingham.

In addition, we were given the opportunity to enhance our current meadow with green hay from species-rich Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) meadow. BBCWT arranged the delivery of 6 green bales on Tuesday 26th of July and hay was strewed across the two sites. Hay strewing is a traditional technique in which green hay is cut and baled from an existing species-rich meadow and transported to a new one where it will be spread to help with seed dropping. The green hay has helped enhance and create a more diverse meadow. 12 volunteers supported the session including 2 members of the green party, members from partner organisations (Castle Bromwich Gardens and Chester Road Station Adopters), CET trustee and local residents from Castle Vale, Erdington and Water Orton.

On the downside, there was a fire incident in the meadows in July. Emergency services were called into the area and 3 fire engines managed to keep it under control and stop it promptly. The area was assessed by the team and no irreparable damage happened. The cause of the fire is still unknown, although the extreme heat in the preceding days could have played a part.

FRIENDS OF PLANTSBROOK

Friends of Plantsbrook is a friend's group whose aim is to protect, maintain and enhance Plantsbrook Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of wildlife, residents and other LNR users.

The group has continued to work independently with the support of the Project Manager.

CASTLE VALE STABLES

CET signed in 2016 a Head of Terms to lease the Castle Vale Stables and paddock land for 15 years to protect the land and ensure it remains paddock and green land. Since then, CET has been providing support to the Castle Vale Stables with administrative and financial tasks, including managing the expectations of the horse owners, managing the number of horses/ponies on the land, dealing with health and safety, insurance, horticultural maintenance and payment of business rates, utility bills and repairs. Castle Vale Pony Owners Association continues looking after the horses and managing the run of the stables.

The stables faced several problems last year that CET helped with, these included mainly repair work and maintenance in the paddocks. CET organised two CSR sessions with Groundwork and our local contractors Lovell.

In April, a group of 13 people from carried out post and rail fencing. The volunteers fully reinstated a broken partition by erecting a 2-tier post and rail fencing between the retained paddock and 'no man's land.' In addition, the group also removed young self-seeded trees and bramble within the paddock.

Furthermore, due to the pandemic and existing problems with the current tractor, an unmanageable large amount of manure was accumulating in one of the stables' yards. With no resources available to move it to the allotments, manure kept piling up restricting access and raising safety issues. CET's Project Manager spoke to Lovell's Community Engagement Manager who arranged for three workers from the construction firm carrying out work at Lovell's 'The Point' development to help on the day. Thanks to their support and the use of a mini-digger and 2 dumper trucks, several tones of manure were moved in one day from the stables to the allotments. In addition, workers helped horse owners clear vegetation from the edges of the stables and move old timber posts and rails.

CET PADDLE HUB (Minworth)

Minworth Bell Boating Hub is part of a wider project called Paddle Sport in Birmingham (PSiB), which is trying to create several community paddle hubs across the West Midlands Combined Authority with the aim to provide regular, sustainable and thriving paddle sports to different communities in deprived areas and with low opportunities in water sports activities.

In 2022, CET started looking for a suitable location for its paddle sports hub. A place was found by Caters Bridge in Minworth. Before deciding on the setting up of the hub, CET carried out a 12-month consultation in the area which involved regular engagement to establish quick links, connect with local groups and existing organisations to create and help facilitate a vision around opportunities for all.

The consultation underlined the lack of outdoor activities for people, families and young

people in the area and created a unique opportunity to retain the focus on the local community and put the right interventions in place to level up communities.

Alongside the consultation, the Project Manager tried to find out land ownership of a strip of land situated between Cater's Bridge and the Oaken Hayes estate. It took several months to find out who owned the land and what permissions were needed to set up a hub. As the project needed to progress, permission to install a container was also sought in two other nearby areas. In March 2022, permission was granted by The Boat Inn owners to use a small space within their car park for one year. In addition, Canal and River Trust also agreed to provide a key to access Cater's Bridge safely.

Three funding applications were submitted throughout the year to purchase the necessary equipment and protective equipment to run the hub and deliver water activities. At the end of March, we received an email from Andy Train, Olympic canoeist, who is overseeing the Birmingham Paddle Sport project and has supported the creation process of CET hub, confirming that British Canoeing had approved the grant for our project.

Paddle equipment (kayaks and paddles) and buoyancy aids will be purchased in the upcoming months.

PROJECTS – Other work

COMMISSIONED WORK

RE-FUTURE COLLECTIVE

Due to staff shortage, CET was only able to commit to the delivery of 4 sessions between April 22 and March 23. The sessions were aimed at young people from the Waterworks estate in Ladywood (ArtPad) and adults referred via social prescribing (Forms of Clouds). The work carried out included environmental workshops and therapeutic sessions (gardening and environmental art), respectively.

THE PIONEER GROUP

At the end of November, the Project Manager carried out a street cleanliness audit on behalf of The Pioneer Group. The survey provided a 'snapshot' of the types and sources of litter present and other elements affecting the quality of the environment including graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping. 130 transects were surveyed against a set of criteria agreed at the training provided by Keep Britain Tidy and a report was written and sent in February.

DRUIDS HEATH REGENERATION PROJECT (Pioneer Group)

The Project Manager has continued supporting the consultation in Druids Heath in her capacity as a Resident Engagement Advisor. Part of the consultancy work commissioned by Birmingham City Council and done on behalf of Pioneer Group included the following: the creation of a portfolio of Druids Heath's green spaces (land designations, TPO, local sites surveys and assessments), set up of stakeholders' Green Spaces Group, assist in the process of dialogue with the local community and stakeholders, the organisation of several community events in April, June and August to inform and engage residents in the consultation process leading to the reveal of the Masterplan for the East Druids Heath.

In addition, CET has also been assisting with administrative tasks: preparing paperwork to comply with due diligence when delivering events, managing the budgets allocated for the community engagement events and communications, keeping track of expenditure (invoicing and refunds) and GDPR management. For this additional work, CET receives a management fee.

SAATHI HOUSE

The Saathi House is a community organisation committed to supporting, empowering and upskilling women and young girls so they can lead independent lives and drive positive change in their communities. CET was commissioned for the delivery of sessions/workshops to improve and develop three outdoor spaces. The work was carried out by the Project Coordinator with the support of the Project Assistant Intern.

The three areas were enhanced with very simple but effective environmental features that helped attract and protect wildlife, as well as green up some of the concreted areas of the garden. Features and techniques were chosen in terms of sustainability and low maintenance. Most importantly, the experiences and skillsets of the participants were also improved through the short but intense program of activities that was carried out. Participants were empowered and given the confidence to try something new, learn skills and succeed. The sessions also allowed them to interact with one another in an outdoor setting whilst connecting with nature.

PARTNERSHIP WORK

- CET partnered up in May with the National Literacy Trust, a charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. CET registered as an Eco-Literacy Champion to support NLT's Birmingham Stories project which aims to raise literacy levels and change the life stories of young people and adults across the city. We helped spread literacy awareness and promote reading amongst our service users and young people through our projects, especially through the Forest School Programme. In addition, we created an eco-library for everybody to use. The Ecobooks were purchased and donated by Birmingham Stories.
- CET hosted two Spanish teachers from the 8th-14th of July as part of an Erasmus + Staff Mobility Programme. Erasmus + is a European programme that enables teachers to participate in short-term mobility projects to share good practices. The primary school teacher and Head Teacher came to the UK to gain a broader perspective on education, exchange knowledge and pick up good educational practices. They were particularly interested in a better understanding of how to use the local environment as an educational resource and to engage with diversity or tackle diversity inequalities. CET arranged a wide variety of activities for them including the following: shadowing of Forest School sessions, meetings with teaching staff and head teachers, visits to our sites (conservation areas and community garden) and meeting with other partners (Civic Square, Red Shed and Oasis Academy Foundry).
- The Project Manager has continued to support Birmingham Open Spaces Forum in her capacity as Treasurer and Trustee

TRAINING

Between April and March, the Project Manager continued her MBA studies completing successfully all her academic modules and the dissertation with 'Distinction'. She now needs to complete the SLMDA, practical side of the MBA, which involves a 20-minute presentation in front of a panel of 3 members of the Chartered Management Institute. Her knowledge and skills will also be assessed with the following: 4,000 word project showcase, 650 'off-the-job' logged hours and 10 personal reflections that demonstrate she has gained 79 new skills. Before doing the final exam she will have to take a Level 2 Functional Skills English exam.

Together Centre, a non-profit organisation of special needs professionals serving the community, delivered two training sessions on special needs for CET staff.

WORK EXPERIENCE

CET has hosted 3 Sixth Form students during July. Students came from Greenwood Academy, Streetly Academy and Plantsbrook and supported the delivery of Forest School sessions and conservation/gardening tasks, including surveying species in the Conservation Area. One of the students has continued volunteering with the Trust afterwards.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- CET carried out a litter pick in the conservation area with volunteers and members of the public as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Spring Clean campaign. Additionally, a clean-up at the allotments was arranged on the 1st week of April, plot holders gathered all the rubbish and split it into green and general waste.
- At the end of April, CET took part in the City Nature Challenge, which is an annual competition between cities all over the world to see how many wild species their citizens can spot over a period of four days. To support the challenge CET was at Castle Vale Meadows recording species and helping to identify local flora and fauna. Two outdoor drop-in stations were set up to give advice, help and support those who took part whilst on their daily walk. The CE&CO led guided walks around the Castle

Vale Meadow and showed the public how to identify and spot various species of insects and wildflowers. A total of 70 species were recorded on the day.

- 6 'Back to Nature' sessions were delivered during the summer holidays. The sessions aim was for parents and young children to spend time connecting with nature, have fun participating in inspiring outdoor activities where they will learn about the environment. A total of 6 sessions were delivered and CET engaged with 10 different families.
- In July, CET was invited to participate in the Commonwealth Games Festival, a community celebration of Birmingham for hosting the Commonwealth Games. Castle Vale was chosen as one of the Games Festival sites and CET prepared and led a 'make your own medal' activity within the community tent. Participants decorated wooden disk to take home and to hang on a community tree.
- Participation in the 'pop-up garden project' created in Victoria Square. The project started on the 24th of May when marigold seeds were sent to CET to grow them in CET's raised beds and volunteer's households. On the 2nd of September the CE&CO took 9 participants to Victoria Square where they planted up the marigolds grown and nurtured at the community garden alongside other community groups. All participants were interviewed by an evaluator afterwards and given a gift voucher for taking part.
- In December CET organised a festive online family workshop to celebrate Christmas. The Family Christmas Decoration workshop was a great success, not only did we have great participation rates, but it also allowed us to see some of our regular families and offer a festive and relaxing session for parents and children to work together. CET staff collected the natural resources necessary for the workshop, made individual packs for the families, and arranged two days for families to come and pick up the packs from CET premises.
- A birdwatching walk around the Castle Vale Meadows was organised in January. 23 different species were identified in total including redwings, pied wagtail, mistle and song thrush, goldfinches and chaffinches, amongst others. The birds spotted on the day counted towards the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, which would help to increase understanding of the challenges faced by common garden birds and track how certain species have declined or recovered. 19 people attended the event and were taught how to identify birds using their calls and by visible features.

- Lastly, CET hosted an event on the 8th of March to recognise and support International Women's Day. The community, volunteers and a local school came together to learn more about influential women in science and the environmental movement whilst walking around the Conservation Area.

Financial review

Last financial year CET received grants from the following funders:

- £25,643 from Groundwork/HS2 to pay for the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer post and pay for some other costs associated to this project, such as mileage and tools.
- £2,880 from Thomas Dole to contribute towards staffing costs to plan, prepare and deliver a Youth Group Summer Programme 2022.
- £2,600 from Lovell, to support the delivery of an after-school programme at Greenwood Academy.
- £5,000 from Food Legends to support the production of locally grown food in the Community Garden and Orchard
- CET still benefited from some of the grants received in the previous financial year, such as DofE* and Tai-chi (BOSF) **.

* DofE is the budget holder for the funds granted last year, therefore no money was transferred to CET's account.

** Payments to the Tai-chi instructor were done directly by BOSF. CET has only claimed refreshments offered to participants.

Half of the income generated last year came from the delivery of CET's Forest School Programmes. CET received £77,620 (unrestricted funds) from participating schools. The income growth is due to the 9% increase applied to the cost of the programme to afford the cost-of-living increase.

£1460 was raised as part of CET's youth provision activities. Sessions were charged at £3 to help generate a bit of income whilst allowing families to take part in affordable activities.

Trips had different prices depending on the distance, entrance fee and length of the session.

Work commissioned by other organisations have earned CET the following:

- £522.99 for the delivery of eco-workshops for Re-Future
- £3,500 from the Saathi house for undertaking the training, evaluation and support in developing three outdoor areas.
- £14,781.68 from the Pioneer Group for the resident engagement work carried out in Druids Heath as part of the regeneration process.
- £2,500 from the Pioneer Group for carrying out an LEQ survey and audit, and producing a report about Castle Vale street cleanliness.
- £200 from Civic Square for the support delivering bell boating activities.
- £700 from Birmingham City University for the participation in the Graduate + week and delivery of workshops.

In addition, CET received the following donations:

- £550 through the delivery of CSR sessions
- £130 from Birmingham Open Spaces Forum for the monthly submission of volunteer data
- £135 was donated by the Bunce Long Mynd Camp towards DofE project

21-22 showed the importance of income diversification to help with the financial sustainability of the Trust, therefore in 22-23 the Trust has continued applying its new operating model which involved more bid writing and consultancy work to have a more balanced approach to income generation. Some of the projects included environmental audits, increase of commissioned sessions, consultancy support and incorporation of blue spaces in CET's portfolio.

As part of the new strategy, sub-groups formed by staff and Trustees were created to focus on finance, educational projects and conservations projects. The educational project subgroup discussed different avenues to approach and engage with new schools which included: targeting specific National Curriculum topics (habitats, life cycles), assemblies (environment, mental well-being, resilience) or special events, such as tree planting or bird week. Trustees also highlighted the importance of a working website and requesting and

recording regular feedback from participants. The website still needs to be redone, but regular feedback has been conducted after every event and workshop to measure the impact of our projects and interventions.

With the help of the Head of Neighbourhood Fundraising, CET will continue applying for funding to support existing projects and the creation of new ones. Furthermore, with the support of partners and local businesses we will continue securing funding and work to ensure a stable and healthy cashflow.

Due to the financial constraints that schools are undergoing, CET will need to continue recruiting new schools interested in the Forest School programme and also offer after-school activities. In addition, environmental workshops, gardening sessions and family learning days will continue to be offered to new partners, organisations and local companies to continue raising our profile.

Reserves policy

As part of the Trust's Reserves Policy, CET has been transferring £500 per month to a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. After April 2022, the transfer has been paused due to having reached an acceptable amount to cover what is stated in our Reserve's policy. At the end of March 2023, the account held £41,126.44

The reserves policy is still kept under periodic review and reserves levels will be adjusted in the future as perceptions of risks and other factors change, e.g. school budget cuts, reduction of commissioned work.

Funds held as a Custodian Trustee

CET does not hold funds as a Custodian Trustee.

Future

CET will continue to enhance and improve urban green and blue spaces by delivering and developing existing and new projects, and by continuing to work with other organisations within and outside Castle Vale.

CET will also continue using its educational and youth programmes, including Forest School, Duke of Edinburgh and Vale Youth Action, as well as other structured activities to build and deepen the confidence and capability of our young people. Blue spaces have now been included in the activities portfolio and will help diversify income from next year.

CET's Project Manager and Project Coordinator, with the support of the Board of Trustees, will continue to develop a strategic plan to ensure enough funds are received every year to continue with the work we do. Measures will continue to be put in place to reduce costs where possible, and new ways of generating income will be explored. More consultancy work will be done to ensure the generation of unrestricted funds.

Trustees Report (Including Directors Report)

Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors 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 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

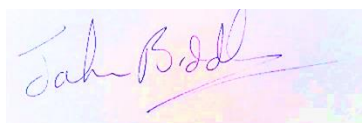
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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.

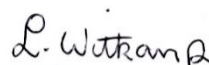
Approval

The Trustee's Report was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees



Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair



Dated: 20/12/23

Independent Examiner's Report

To the Trustees of Community Environmental Trust

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Community Environmental Trust for the year ending 31 March 2023 set out on pages 36 to 43.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

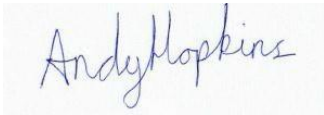
Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for an independent examination. I report in respect of the examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (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

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 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light grey rectangular background.

Andy Hopkins
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
First Floor, Livery Place
35 Livery Street
Birmingham
B3 2PB

Dated: 19 December 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES:					
Incoming Resources from charitable activities					
Services - Project Income		99,168		99,168	51,820
Grants Receivable		2,572	34,524	37,096	53,018
Incoming Resources from generated funds					
Donations		381		381	2,368
Interest		227		227	10
Total Incoming Resources		102,349	34,524	136,873	107,216
RESOURCES EXPENDED:					
Charitable Expenditure		84,897	35,522	120,419	112,034
Bank Charges and Taxation		110	0	110	96
Total Resources Expended		85,007	35,522	120,529	112,130
NET INCOMING RESOURCES		17,342	-998	16,344	-4,914
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds bought forward		115,826	998	116,824	121,738
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		133,168	0	133,168	116,824

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023**

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	4	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and Prepayments		1,723	1,253
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>156,190</u>	<u>131,725</u>
		157,912	132,978
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	5	<u>24,744</u>	<u>16,154</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>133,168</u>	<u>116,824</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>133,168</u>	<u>116,824</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted funds - general Reserves		133,168	115,826
Restricted funds		<u>0</u>	<u>998</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>133,168</u>	<u>116,824</u>

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. No members have required the company to obtain an audit of the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2023 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

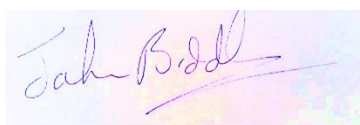
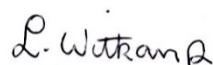
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on behalf of the board by:

John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees

Lynne Witkamp - Vice-Chair

Dated: 20/12/23

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)” (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The charity is a “Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis in accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

- The charity becomes legally entitled to the resources after any performance conditions have been met;
- The trustees are virtually certain that they will receive the resources; and
- The monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income is deferred when monies are received in **NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

advance relating to projects commencing after the financial year where the contract period is specified by the funder.

Resources expended

Charitable activities includes all costs relating to general administration, which support the charitable purpose.

Grants offered subject to conditions, which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings that have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives, which is considered to be 4 years.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

Incoming resources with related expenditure

When incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) both are reported gross in the SOFA.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with bankers, other short term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 “Basic Financial Instruments” and Section 12 “Other Financial Issues” of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity’s balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the assets and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market value of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

De-recognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

Pensions

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the company to the fund for the year.

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year (2022 - £nil).

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

4. Staff costs	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries including	74,436	72,772
Social Security	17,758	16,284
Pension contributions	<u>4,245</u>	<u>4,448</u>
	<u>96,439</u>	<u>93,504</u>

The average number of administration employees during the year was 4 (2022 – 4), who did not earn more than £60,000 in either year.

Pension commitments

The charitable company operates a defined contribution scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company and are independently administered. The pension cost charge above represents contributions payable by the charitable company to the fund. No contributions (2022 – nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date.

5. Financial instruments	2023	2022
	£	£
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Carrying value of financial liabilities		
Measured on amortised costs	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

6. Tangible assets

	Plant and Machinery	Computer Equipment	Totals
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2022	16,137	6,205	22,342
Additions during the year	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2023	16,137	6,205	22,342
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2022	16,137	6,205	22,342
Charge for the year	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2023	16,137	6,205	22,342
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2023	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

7. Debtors

Due within one year	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade Debtors	0	0
Prepayments	<u>1,723</u>	<u>1,253</u>
Total Debtors	<u>1,723</u>	<u>1,253</u>

8. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Tax and social security	949	3
Accruals	450	450
Deferred Income	<u>23,345</u>	<u>15,701</u>
	<u>23,798</u>	<u>16,154</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

9. Funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

Project	Opening Reserves	Incoming	Expenditure	Closing Reserves
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Reserves	<u>115,826</u>	<u>102,349</u>	<u>85,007</u>	<u>133,168</u>
Restricted Reserves				
HS2	0	25,643	25,643	0
ENNS	0	6,000	6,000	0
NNS	998	0	998	0
Thomas Dole	0	2,880	2,880	0
Total Restricted Reserves	<u>998</u>	<u>34,523</u>	<u>35,521</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Reserves	<u>116,824</u>	<u>136,873</u>	<u>120,528</u>	<u>133,168</u>

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2022 are represented by current assets/(liabilities).

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1144788

Accounts

Charity Registration Number: 1144788

Company Registration Number: 3907328 (England and Wales)

**COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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Statement of financial activities	32
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Notes to the financial statements	34 to 41

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES and DIRECTORS' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

LEGAL AND ADMINSTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity name:	Community Environmental Trust
Charity registration number:	1144788
Company registration number:	3907328
Registered Office and operational address:	1 Whittle Croft Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DN
Charity contact details:	Tel: 0121 747 3579 E-mail: info@environmentaltrust.org.uk Website: www.enviromentaltrust.org.uk
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank PLC 207 High St Erdington Birmingham West Midlands B23 6SZ

The Community Environmental Trust (CET) is the leading environmental charity within Castle Vale, working successfully for over 21 years to protect and enhance the environment, its wildlife and habitat, delivering outdoor educational activities and providing volunteering opportunities. Through this the organisation continues to bring relevant matters to the attention of the public, media, politicians and Government agencies alike.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report and unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2022.

Trustees

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the unaudited financial statements were:

John Biddle – Chair (Director)

Rita Gries - Trustee

Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair (Director)

Ifor Jones – Trustee

Karen Frost – Trustee

Cllr. Mick Brown – Trustee

Daniel Kennedy -Trustee

Janice Davis – Trustee

Overview 2021-2022

2021-2022 has been a very distressing and difficult year for CET. The pandemic and precipitous recession have had significant effects on the Trust and its funds. In addition, staff absences, resignations and staff recruitment have put additional pressure on the organisation and the Team.

From an operational point of view, Covid-19 was still affecting our project work between April and June. Adult sessions were only limited to those in which we work with vulnerable adults. Some schools cancelled the forest school sessions temporarily, and most of them, including after-school clubs were only reinstated in June, at the end of the academic year; as a result, earned income dropped substantially. Both, Project Coordinator and Project Officer, were on flexible furlough until forest school sessions returned full-time. Similarly to the previous year, although at a smaller scale, the charity also suffered other knock-on effects, such as the increase in workload (policies, safety procedures, office adaptations) and having to come up with new ways of delivering and operating.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

In September, CET's Project Coordinator was on sickness absence for over 4 months, at the same time the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer presented her resignation letter. This meant that between September and November the Trust was very understaffed, putting the Trust under pressure and in a strained situation.

Employing new members of staff was very challenging. Jobs were advertised for over a month on various platforms, social media and via partners but only a few candidates applied for the jobs. Two new people were eventually employed at the end of November. A full-time Community Engagement and Conservation Officer (2 years fixed term) and a part-time Forest School Practitioner (4 months fixed term).

Until the two new members of staff were in place, all projects were run by the Project Officer and Project Manager to minimise disruption and continue supporting service users during that period. In addition, the Project Manager had to continue with her MBA studies. Due to the workload and personal circumstances, she had to take a 3 months break from her studies to focus on work and her personal life.

On the positive side, two volunteers from Spain started an internship programme in January. The new additions provided invaluable support to the organisation in terms of project delivery and assistance with the office and finances. The new interns allowed the organisation to operate more efficiently and to share the workload.

We are very proud of all that we have achieved together under the difficult circumstances we went through. The challenges and opportunities will continue, but we feel we are now more prepared to face unforeseen situations.

Aims and Objectives

MAIN AREAS OF SERVICE PROVISION

1. Maintenance and creation of wildlife habitat in local urban green spaces.
2. Raising environmental awareness by providing activities and advice on environmental issues.
3. Providing opportunities for volunteering and training.

These services were designed to fit into the following categories:

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Environmental Education: Includes schools, local communities and other professionals (CET has been particularly strong in delivering environmental education by establishing and maintaining positive links with local schools).

Neighbourhood Management: Improving the quality of life for residents by encouraging and supporting sustainable regeneration and development plans.

Community Development: Participation of residents in the care of their environment, enabling them to gain new skills and experiences.

Objectives

- The conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment for the public's benefit.
- To further benefit the residents of Birmingham without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, or political and other opinions. To advance the education in relation to the above and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, for recreation and leisure time occupation, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.
- The advancement of using the environment as an educational tool, including but not exclusively for local children from local schools and young adults aged 18 – 25.
- The promotion of good health by providing or assisting in the provision of organised outdoor activities.
- Where it is for the protection of the environment, to provide or carry out maintenance or improvement of: Community Garden and any other public amenity

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14th January 2000 and registered as a charity on 24th November 2011.

It is governed by Articles of Association, having been amended following approval by the members at the AGM on 7th November 2011. In the event of the company being wound up the members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

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Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The management of the Trust is vested in the Trustees who are elected by the membership and act in a voluntary capacity. In compliance with the Articles of Association at the next Annual General Meeting, which must be held no more than 15 months after the previous one, officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) will be stepping down by rotation. All will be eligible to offer themselves for re-election.

Due to the current difficult circumstances no AGM was held last year. John Biddle and Lynne Witkamp continued to be CET's Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. All our board members also continued in their roles of Trustees. The Treasurer position became vacant after the person who was going to fill it up temporarily, a local resident who is also a Senior Finance Officer for our partner The Pioneer Group, resigned soon after having agreed to the position due to her personal circumstances, busy work schedule and limited time. However, this person continues to support the Trust on an advisory capacity and on an ad-hoc basis, whilst the Project Manager continues undertaking most of the day-to-day financial duties (payroll, invoicing, bookkeeping, budgeting, etc).

All Trustees are required to sign a Registration of Trustees and a Trustees' Code of Conduct. Business and conservation skills are well represented among the Trustees. To maintain this broad skills mix, the CET Board of Trustees undertakes an annual review of its effectiveness. If skill gaps are identified, new Trustees are sought by open advertisement, or individuals are approached to offer themselves for election.

There were 8 Trustees in post by 31st March 2022. We have not had new members joining the Board, but one Trustee resigned on the 5th of February due to a change of job and moving to a different country but continued supporting the Trust until April 21. CET's aim is to continue enriching and widening our Board's cross-functional skill base. CET will also continue looking for a Treasurer who can support and assist the Project Manager with the financial aspects of the charity on a more regular basis. CET Board is also looking for a Trustee with a Human Resources background who could join the team and oversee organisational functions and provide support and advice managing employees.

Board meetings are held every 6-8 weeks to keep the Trustees fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction,

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Risk Management

The Trustees actively review the major risks that the Charity faces when preparing and updating the strategic plan, however, detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Project Manager. Risks are identified, assessed and controls are established throughout the year, but a formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis.

Risk is managed under the headings of financial sustainability, operations, governance and compliance with law and regulation. The charity has developed systems to monitor and control these risks to mitigate any impact they may present in future.

The investment policy is to hold most of its investments in a low-risk interest savings account. The reserves policy is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time.

Chair, Vice-Chair and Project Manager exercise careful control of costs by setting an annual budget and periodically reviewing progress against it.

Management Structure

The **Project Manager's** role is to ensure the long-term continuance and expansion of the services provided by the Trust and the successful delivery of environmental projects. The Project Manager oversees the overall management of the Trust, undertaking a wide range of jobs. These include raising funds, maintaining budgets, attending regular project meetings with the Neighbourhood Manager, increasing awareness of and improving the local environment through a range of activities and media, undertaking administrative work, overseeing the organisation's strategic links and development. Since 2016, the Project Manager has also been responsible for CET's payroll and invoices operations, bookkeeping, records of financial transactions, producing financial forecasts and creating budget reports every 6-8 weeks. The Project Manager also delivers environmental, educational and conservation projects. The Project Manager receives support from the Project Coordinator, the Project Officer and the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer.

The **Project Coordinator's** role is to deliver a wide range of environmental, educational and conservation projects in the local area by increasing awareness, understanding and support from residents, community groups, associations and local schools. The Project Coordinator also promotes environmental awareness and education across the local community, as well as creating and developing environmental initiatives. The Project Coordinator manages two main projects: Forest

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School Scheme and Youth Provision. She also attends meetings, writes bids and seeks funding for environmental activities with the youth group as well as coordinating and arranging work experience placements.

The **Project Officer's** role is to deliver Forest Schools sessions, youth activities and manage the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Project. The Project Officer works very closely with the Project Coordinator in the planning and delivery of youth activities. His role as DofE manager involves day-to-day operational activities of the DofE programme and being responsible for the delivery of the annual plan. Tasks include the delivery of volunteering sessions, recruiting and managing participants, monitoring progress of participants' online logbooks, assessing participants' reports and leading an expedition.

The **Community Engagement and Conservation Officer (CE&CO)** is a 3-year fixed-term position created thanks to HS2's Community and Environment Fund (October 2020-October 2023). Primarily, the CE&CO's role is to engage with residents and stakeholders, to deliver conservation activities, workshops and events that will help attract new users to the area. The role also involves planning and managing the Conservation Area in a sustainable manner and enhancing existing features that will help change the designation of the land to a Local Nature Reserve.

All members of staff are employed on a full-time basis, although the CE&CO is on a 2-year fixed term. The Chair's key role is to guide and support the organisation, assist with overall strategy and strategic direction and act as the line manager for the CET Project Manager. The Chair and the Project Manager are in contact on a weekly basis to ensure that the Project Manager receives the support needed.

PROJECTS - Activities for Public Benefit

EDUCATION (Services delivered to schools)ⁱ

FOREST SCHOOLS

Forest Schools (FS) is an innovative educational approach of playing and learning that uses the environment as a tool to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. This includes engaging with children with additional support needs, particularly learners who demonstrate antisocial behaviour and/or other learning or socialising difficulties (ASD, ADHD).

Children, under the supervision of a qualified FS Practitioner, visit local woodland or stay on school grounds on a regular basis (2 hours a week) over an extended period (minimum of 6 weeks to a maximum of 32).

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Through small achievable tasks in a stimulating environment, children are encouraged to be independent and enabled to build self-esteem and develop social and behaviour management skills.

Forest School offers freedom to explore independently, which is vital if children are to learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. It also allows time to revisit past areas and experiences, to reflect upon and consolidate their learning. Forest school sessions are mainly child led, but activities are tailored to individual learning styles and linked to the school's curriculum.

The benefits of Forest Schools are the natural environment provides a wealth of opportunity and resources to expand children's/young people's learning, whilst building a sense of independence, high self-esteem and teamwork skills. It provides a stimulating experience where children can self-explore and use multiple senses, helping to develop children's physical capabilities as well as learning acceptable boundaries of behaviour.

All practitioners (and volunteers participating in the project) have current, enhanced DBS certificates. Practitioners also hold outdoor First Aid and MIDAS certificates.

Last year the Forest School programme was still severely disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, with sessions running intermittently between January and May. All schools received regular sessions between the end of May and July. CET continued delivering 14 sessions per week in 8 different educational institutions, engaging with a total of 410 children over that period.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery Paget	Castle Vale Nursery High Meadow Community School	Castle Vale Nursery Paget	Castle Vale Nursery
pm	High Meadow Community School Wylde Green	Oasis Academy Short Heath	High Meadow Community School Pegasus Primary	Oasis Academy Short Heath Chivenor Primary School	Birches Green Junior

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Forest Schools		
April 21 – July 21	Frequency	Beneficiaries
Paget	2	30
High Meadow	3	120
Chivenor	1	10
Oasis Academy Short Heath	2	60
Castle Vale Nursery	3	60
Birches Green Junior	1	30
Wylde Green	1	30
Pegasus	1	60
Total	14	410

In addition, after-school sessions were requested in June by Castle Bromwich Junior, Greenwood and The Shrubbery, delivering a total of 4 sessions per week and engaging with 48 children.

After school sessions Jun 21- July 21	Lockdown period– working only with vulnerable pupils and children of key workers	
	Frequency	Beneficiaries
The Shrubbery	2	30
Greenwood Academy	1	8
Castle Bromwich Junior	1	40
TOTAL	4	78

The new academic year started in September 2021 and presented itself as a very challenging year due to the loss of three contracts. As reported by the schools, the cancellation of the programme was not a reflection of the service and support that CET has given them over the years but due to budget cuts because of falling numbers. Two of these schools, Pegasus Primary and Paget Primary, had been partners with CET since 2008 and 2010 respectively, and the forest school programme was embedded in their school curriculum. The third educational institution, Wylde Green Primary, had been benefiting from Forest School sessions for nearly 4 years.

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On the other hand, Castle Vale Nursery increased the weekly hourly sessions from 14h to 16.5h and after-school sessions continued at Greenwood Academy and Castle Bromwich Junior. In addition, Birches Green Junior requested a special session for Y3 to enhance the learning of the pupils and linking with the stone age topic. Between September 2021 and March 2022, CET delivered educational outdoor sessions per week in 7 different educational institutions, working with 475 children over that period.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery High Meadow Community School	Castle Vale Nursery	Castle Vale Nursery
pm	High Meadow Community School	Oasis Academy Short Heath	High Meadow Community School	Oasis Academy Short Heath Chivenor Primary	Birches Green Junior
After School	Castle Bromwich Junior		Greenwood		

Forest Schools and after-school sessions		
September 21 – March 21	Frequency	Beneficiaries
High Meadow	3	180
Chivenor	1	40
Oasis Academy Short Heath	2	60
Castle Vale Nursery	3	60
Birches Green Junior	1	90
Greenwood Academy	1	15
Castle Bromwich Junior	1	30
Total	12	475

TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

The Community Engagement and Conservation programme aims to engage with members of the community, residents and other organisations to transform their local area through conservation sessions. The focus is on the Castle Vale Conservation Area, the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. Tasks would help to restore heritage and improve the quality, access and security of Castle Vale Conservation Area and other urban open spaces, whilst also reconnecting local people with their landscape. In addition, the improvements will make a significant contribution to the local environment by promoting and increasing biodiversity.

Additionally, the project also aims to improve people's mental and physical well-being (Social Prescribing), increase and promote diversity (outdoor events and workshops) and inspire future generations (formal/informal training)

Between April and September 21, CET's newly appointed Community Engagement and Conservation Officer worked incessantly to achieve project outcomes during this very difficult time. Work carried out included the following:

- Bi-weekly volunteer sessions carried out at the Castle Vale Conservation Area and Community Garden totalling 539 volunteer hours. 6-10 volunteers regularly attended sessions, and 15 individuals are registered.
- Establishment and development of the Local Flora Project in partnership with Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust (BBCWT), which included the propagation of wood sorrel and wood speedwell which will then be planted in our local nature reserve
- Supported the delivery of youth activities sessions during the holiday schemes by leading environmental, conservation and growing sessions with young people. Activities ranged from pond dipping to allotment maintenance
- Delivery of free family walks and environmental activities throughout August to reconnect people with nature
- Delivery of weekly health and wellbeing walks around the conservation area through TAWS social prescribing programme.
- Supported litter picking activities every Wednesday afternoon,

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In September the current officer handed in her resignation. Whilst recruiting for a new member, the Project Manager covered volunteering sessions to provide continuity to the programme. At the end of November, a new Community and Conservation Officer was employed. Between November 21 and March 22

- Led 21 volunteer sessions totalling 182 volunteer hours, covering bramble and scrub clearance, dead hedge creation, organising the tool shed, uprooting self-seeded aspen trees, crown lifting and widening paths by scraping off the moss.
- Led 13 guided walks and enhanced the sessions by doing nature spotting.
- Assisted with the organisation and delivery of weekly Tai Chi classes at the allotments.
- Delivered 2 tree planting sessions in January and February with Greenwood Academy. 40 young people got involved, 109 trees were planted, creating 32 metres of hedge.
- Managed to get CET to participate in the PoliNations project which will see volunteers and allotment involvement with the sensory garden creation in Victoria Square to celebrate the completion of the Commonwealth games.
- Liaised with Groundwork West Midlands to arrange regular corporate volunteer sessions throughout the new financial year.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME – GLOBAL TRAINING

The CET internship programme is the result of an agreement between the charity and Global Training, a Spanish company funded by the Basque Government. The purpose of the programme is to provide a work placement of approximately 6 months for

Spanish graduates. The programme is aimed at cross-border cooperation between Spain and the UK to provide an excellent chance of work experience abroad. Successful candidates are granted a scholarship for the duration of the placement.

In order to continue with the Internship Programme of EU volunteers, CET had to apply for a Sponsor Licence from the Home Office. Applying for the licence was a difficult and bureaucratic process that involved the introduction of new processes and systems in the organisation.

The project Manager, with the support of one of the Trustees, read the guidance collection provided by Home Office, gathered the supporting evidence necessary to apply for the licence and submitted the information in August. In December, CET found out that its application with Home Office was successful, becoming a licensed sponsor under the charity immigration route.

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Two candidates were shortlisted in October to join CET for a period of six months: a Project Assistant Intern and an Admin and Finance Intern. Successful candidates applied for their Visa in December and started the internship on Jan 22, the work experience volunteering programme lasted until July 22. Between January and March candidates provided invaluable support which also enriched their personal and professional experience.

The Project Assistant Intern supported the delivery of projects, activities and events. She has also led volunteers in gardening sessions, nature walks for adults and liaised with the tai-chi instructor. During the February half-term holidays, she organised and led workshops for young people. When not in projects, she supported the CE&CO with administrative tasks including designing event posters, CET leaflets, preparing an event calendar, designing activity programmes and attending meetings.

The Admin and Finance Intern supported the Project Manager with financial and administrative tasks as well as carrying out a wide range of activities in the office. Some of the tasks included: updating cashbooks, helping to prepare financial updates and cashflow charts, dealing with telephone inquiries, sending and responding to emails, liaising with contractors visiting the premises and filing amongst others.

The programme has proven to be very beneficial for the organisation and has provided invaluable work experience to every candidate hosted by the Trust.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Projects/Activities provided to a wider audience)

VALE YOUTH GREEN ACTION (VYGA)

VYGA is an environmental youth provision for children/young people aged 8-14 which runs during the school holidays, including school half-terms and summer play schemes. Programmes are made up of projects, workshops, environmental/outdoor and educational activities and trips.

VYGA encourages the older members (over-14's) to get involved in assisting and leading the younger members in activities by incorporating their ideas when designing and producing the holiday play-scheme programmes and funding-bid applications. They are part of VYGA's Young Leaders Scheme. The project also has a group of experienced regular volunteers who support the delivery of activities. All volunteers hold current enhanced DBS certificates.

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This project encourages the utilisation of local green spaces and resources in a sustainable way to provide opportunities for play, gaining environmental and practical knowledge/skills and it encourages an active and healthy lifestyle.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, CET delivered 5-holiday schemes including one over the summer. In-person activities were offered on Easter for the first time since the pandemic started and a symbolic £2 charge was applied to the activities. This allowed the youth scheme to remain inclusive under such extraordinary circumstances.

Bell boating was the big highlight of the May holiday scheme as it was the first trip since February 2020. The group went to the Port Loop and spent the day paddling in the canals, from Ladywood to Brindley Place and the Mailbox. Young people had the opportunity to experience what it was like going in the canal locks. This session was possible thanks to the support of Canal River Trust and Andy Train, Olympic canoeist, who not only lent us the equipment and PPE, but also accompanied the young people in one of the boats.

Thanks to funding granted by Peddimore Community Fund, we were able to offer 4 exciting activities in October half-term, including a subsidised trip to 'Go Ape', a place which was chosen by participants.

4 activities were also offered in the February half-term, including a trip to Middleton Lakes, an RSPB nature reserve and bird sanctuary.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Easter Holidays 2021		
Easter Hunt	11	£2
Minibeasts	12	£2
Gardening	12	£2
May Half-Term 2018		
Orienteering	15	£3
Bell Boating	14	£3
Twisted Nature	7	£3

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Half-Term October 2021		
Gardening and hedgehog homes	17	£3
Litter picking and Conservation	16	£3
Trip to Go Ape	15	£12
Halloween Art and Crafts	17	£3
Christmas 2021		
Christmas workshop	family event	
February Half-Term 2022		
Trip to Middleton Lakes	11	£5
Nature Art	8	£3
Taskmaster	9	£3
Conservation	7	£3

In the summer 2021, CET ran a 3-week summer holiday scheme providing a total of 12 activities including trips, workshops and gardening sessions, engaging with a total of 114 children.

VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Bell boating	11	£12
Minibeast	11	£2
Sutton Park	10	£5
Outdoor games	13	£5
Conkers	14	£15
Woodwork	8	£2
Conservation	8	£2
Arts and Crafts	10	£2
Middleton Lakes	8	£5
Cooking	4	£2
Woodland Walk	7	£5
Picnic at Pype Hayes Park	10	£5

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DREAM GREEN

Dream Green came together as a group in June 2018. It is a self-led group of young people aged 11+ who uses the Community Garden as a platform to learn and develop practical gardening skills and environmental knowledge.

Dream Green sessions were run in the Community Garden every Thursday afternoon between June and the end October. Young people have been helping to maintain the garden and have carried out gardening activities including watering existing beds, weeding, and cleaning the polytunnel. One young person has been working hard on his little area of the community garden, getting it ready for next year so he can grow things after not being able to do so in the previous year.

Sessions in the garden stopped in October. The group has not been meeting much with the night falling earlier over the winter and keeping safe with indoor meetings. The Project Officer is keeping in touch through emails and electronically inside the DofE app.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH (DofE)

Duke of Edinburgh is a youth awards programme aimed at young people aged 14-25. As part of the programme, they must complete different sections that involve helping the community/environment, becoming fitter, developing new skills, planning, training for and completing an expedition. The award is about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries.

Between April and June young people continued working on their portfolios from home and uploading evidence of volunteering and skills to their logbooks. Volunteering activities for DofE participants were restarted in June. Participants did one hour of gardening/volunteering and one hour of camp craft lessons with the Project Officer. Further training was delivered at the beginning of the summer holidays when DofE participants undertook and completed 2-day training sessions with Chase Training, in preparation for their Bronze Qualifying and Silver Practice expedition. Sessions included a camp-craft lesson and a navigation day at Sutton Park.

DofE expedition took place at the end of August around the Clent Hill and Bromsgrove areas. 7 young people took part in this great and enjoyable experience. CET provided most of the kit and equipment needed for the expedition. Waterproof clothing and walking boots were purchased with the funding granted by DofE. 4 participants successfully completed their Bronze awards.

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As a reward for the hard work done for their DofE Award, CET's Project Officer arranged an activity day for them. The group travelled to Fladbury (Worcestershire) for a 9-mile hike and 3 hours playing on the water at Fladbury Paddle Club. Andy Train facilitated the water sports which included kayaking and paddle boarding.

To celebrate the achievements an Award Ceremony was held on the 28th of October at the Community Garden where 7 participants were presented with their full Bronze award, consisting of a certificate and a pin badge. Two further participants were awarded with their certificate of achievement for Bronze. Families, friends and two Trustees attended the event. Young people organised and ran games and a raffle to help them raise funds for the DofE group. An inspirational and local speaker, Richard Wilcox, was invited to share his story of becoming a runner; couch to 100 miles!

Also in October, CET was invited to be a guest speaker at the DofE stakeholders' conference. The one-week conference presented DofE new strategy which included four strands: Access, Impact, Relevance and Quality. CET's Project Officer talked about CET's work with the environment and the importance of creating cleaner and greener urban spaces and links with well-being. The talk focused on the 'relevance' strand and highlighted the work that was undertaken by our young people.

There is an ongoing process of recruiting new participants and networking via meetings and events.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden is situated in the Castle Vale Allotments. The aim of this project is to increase local community's accessibility to gardening activities in a safe and friendly environment.

It allows community groups to have access to the site to learn how to grow vegetables, it enables a wide range of educational-based activities, it helps to reduce social isolation and brings together different generations in an inspirational environment where knowledge can be shared and utilised.

In April 21, participants from CET's social prescribing programme showed interest in the Community Garden, and in developing growing skills. Since then, they spent the spring/summer months maintaining and improving the garden and the community orchard and growing vegetables.

In July a group of 10 corporate volunteers from Gernserv led by Business Volunteers, a company whose aim is to make employee volunteering easy and accessible for businesses across the UK, carried out improvement work in the Community Garden. Some of the tasks included weeding, restoring and

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mulching the seating area, repairing the spiral raised bed, building a trestle staging for the polytunnel and installing a water harvest system in the log cabin. Another team of 14 volunteers came in September to continue enhancing the garden.

A fruit tree pruning and care workshop was organised at the allotments in February for plot holders, volunteers and people from other allotments. 12 people attended the session which covered pruning techniques, how to spot diseases, best tools to use when pruning orchards and how to dispose of cankerous plant parts. Dr. Rob Tilling led this workshop.

ALLOTMENTS

CET's Project Manager continued supporting the Allotments Association. Most of the work carried out between April and May involved monitoring and ensuring that Covid-19 rules for Allotment sites were followed. From June, the allotment association was allowed to let plots out again, although contact was minimised and paperwork was kept to a minimum.

After the summer, the allotments association became inactive and most of the members resigned. In October, CET's Project Manager did the rent collection by herself, she also carried out administrative tasks that included plot cancellation and plot letting.

In March 22 the Community Log Cabin and other plot holder sheds were broken into just after midnight. The Project Manager reported it to the police and sent a list of plot holders' details, including descriptions of the damage, missing items and photos. Perpetrators broke shed's locks, doors and windows using tools taken from people's plots. Only a few tools were stolen. One week earlier, 5 sheds had also been broken into (no damage to doors), a power drill and a circular saw were taken but nobody reported it to the police. It is believed that they used a key to access the site as there are no signs of the main gate being forced or broken fence. CCTV has footage of a vehicle leaving the area 20 mins after the break-in was reported to the police. One of the plot holders saw the vehicle parked outside the gates at 12.10 am when she was alerted by sensor cameras on her plot.

After the unfortunate event, plot holders have decided to get together in April to form a new committee. Plot holders want to change the padlock at the entrance and install cameras.

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MOTHER GARDEN and COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Mother Garden is a partnership project between CET, the Castle Vale Leisure Gardens Association (CVLGA) and Food Forest Brum. Castle Vale is acting as a hub for growing, propagating and the distribution of edible plants. CET and CVLGA are supporting other projects and local groups to develop a working network of mutually supported communities to create permanent food landscapes that can function beyond funding. Edible plants and advice are provided to local community groups, schools and projects.

CET continues to grow and propagate plants to give to other groups. Felipe from Food Forest Brum and Spring into action delivered a few perennial edible plants to our Community Garden in May. Plants were propagated and used in the garden as well as donated to other Mother Garden sites. In June, the organisation was invited again to deliver a Forest Garden workshop to explain to volunteers how to look after and maintain edible forest gardens. The organisation donated several plants to enhance the current garden.

In May, CET and Firs & Bromford held their first joint 'Plant and Seed Swap' event on the 22nd of May at CET's Community Garden, as part of the Northeast Cluster of Mother Gardens. The event was well attended by members of both communities.

CONSERVATION AREA

Castle Vale Conservation Area (CVCA) is the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. It is situated to the southeast of Castle Vale, around the allotments and the stable's paddocks. The existing landscape consists of rough grassland with substantial woodland planting, fencing, a pond, a path system and seats.

CVCA is considered part of the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Open Spaces and as such it is owned by the Council. However, the site has mainly been managed by CET, which informs and seeks permission from BCC before carrying out any activities. CET's practical conservation management days complement BCC service plans for the areas identified by CET to be developed or improved upon.

CET is continuing its work to protect the Conservation Area and to utilise it as part of the project programme. Due to the pandemic no Forest School sessions were delivered in the Conservation Area between April and July. Some schools, such as Birches Green Junior and Chivenor have occasionally used it between September and March, although most sessions have been delivered at Sutton Park or on their school grounds.

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The CE&CO has been carrying out safety walks twice per week. As part of the conservation sessions various surveys have also been conducted to record current flora and fauna and work has been carried out to improve access and safety in the area. She has also been in contact with Birmingham City Council to ensure that the Castle Vale Meadows were cut, bailed and collected at the right time. The meadow was cut at the beginning of September

A corporate volunteer day was arranged in November. A team of 30 graduates from PWC donated their time to enhance the Conservation Area. The team was led by two Groundwork officers and supported by the Project Manager. The volunteers cut vegetation back and widened the path situated at the back of the stables. As a result, access, visibility and safety have been improved. Cut material was used as dead hedging.

FRIENDS OF PLANTSBROOK

Friends of Plantsbrook is a friend's group whose aim is to protect, maintain and enhance Plantsbrook Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of wildlife, residents and other LNR users.

In April AG attended the first virtual meeting held by Friends of Planstbrook. A plan of action was discussed and work agreed once government restrictions are eased. In the meantime, individual activities to maintain and protect the site continued including daily safety checks, litter picking and minor repair work.

The first in-person meeting was held at the end of January 22. The group did a safety walk around writing down jobs for future conservation days. 2 trees were reported to the Tree Officers and have been booked to be felled in April. An additional meeting was arranged in February with Danny Squire, from Birmingham City Council, to confirm which work can be done without ranger supervision. Some of the agreed tasks will be carried out by a group of Corporate Volunteers in March.

The group has continued to work independently with the support of the Project Manager.

CASTLE VALE STABLES

CET has been for the past three years in the process of leasing the Castle Vale Stables and paddock land for 15 years to protect the land and ensure it remains paddock and green land. As a result, CET would have full responsibility for managing the site, however Castle Vale Pony Owners Association will

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continue looking after the horses and managing the run of the stables. CET is currently giving support with administrative and financial tasks, which include the following: managing the expectations of the horse owners, managing the number of horses/ponies on the land (with the aim of reducing the numbers), health and safety, insurance, horticultural maintenance and payment of business rates, utility bills and repairs.

CET has continued supporting the management of the stables. The stables faced several problems that CET helped with, these include: young people trying to ride horses and leading horses around the paddock, people trying to light fires at the rear of the paddocks and broken fences.

3rd SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

The Castle Vale Voluntary Sector Partnership is an informal association of constituted third sector agencies operating from within Castle Vale. The members of the core partnership are: Castle Vale Neighbourhood Partnership, Active Arts, Compass Support, Spitfire Services and Community Environmental Trust. It was created to fulfil the role of a steering group in relation to the Endowment Trust Fund legacy and with the aim to champion and advocate for the wider network of voluntary and community organisations in Castle Vale, share best practices, explore wider funding, networking and partnership opportunities with the view to increasing skills and building capacity of local groups.

CET has continued attending regular meetings hosted by the group.

COMMISSIONED WORK

Re-Future

Between April 21 and March 22, CET delivered 14 sessions in Ladywood, these included workshops for young people (ArtPad) and therapeutic sessions (gardening and environmental art) for adults referred via social prescribing (Forms of Clouds). Due to RE-future's Covid-19 operating guidelines and procedures, number of participants were restricted and face masks were used at all times.

The Pioneer Group

In July a street cleanliness audit was carried out on behalf of The Pioneer Group. The survey provided a 'snapshot' of the types and sources of litter present and other elements affecting the quality of the environment including graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping. 130 transects were surveyed against a set

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

of criteria agreed at the training provided by Keep Britain Tidy and a report was written and sent at the beginning of September.

In February CET carried out a tree planting day as part of Pioneer's carbon offsetting programme. CET staff with the support of volunteers and the youth group created 75m of new hedgerow. 239 trees were planted along the paddock fence situated on the northeast side of the Castle Vale Conservation Area. The sponsored trees made a positive contribution to the fight against climate change and would help to compensate for any negative impact that the group's activities might have on the local environment.

Druids Heath Regeneration Project – CET was invited in January to be part of a project led by Pioneer Group. The project aims to regenerate the area by empowering and engaging residents of the Druids Heath Estate. CET's Project Manager role was to advise on community sustainability and the effective engagement of green spaces. An Open Spaces strategy for the area would be devised based on residents' and stakeholders' feedback, including recommendations that would increase the biodiversity of the local green infrastructure, as well as create more opportunities for leisure and recreation.

Other commissioned work

CET was asked to hold a fire at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Sutton Coldfield on Saturday 30th October as part of their All Hallows Eve celebration and Forest Church. Part of the celebration included experiencing a fire and roasting marshmallows. Holy Trinity Parish Church did a donation of £40.

PARTNERSHIP WORK

- CET delivered and supported activities as part of a programme put together with Compass-Support to promote health and well-being during Mental Health Awareness Week. The CE&CO led litter-picking activities and nature walks around the conservation area. The Project Manager ran a willow weaving workshop and delivered a plant propagation session at the Community Garden.
- In August, a project visit was arranged with HS2 staff. Three officers accompanied by a photographer, visited the Castle Vale Conservation Area to see the improvements carried out and the impact of the Greener Communities project on our current beneficiaries. Funders

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

were taken for a site visit and introduced to service users to discuss project updates and outcomes. The Project Manager and the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer, participated in a photo session and a video interview.

- CET has been in talks with Andy Train and other sites which currently deliver bell boating activities, to present ideas and proposals to put to British Canoeing. There are potentially 5 to 6 different sites across Birmingham which will become part of the consortium. CET is planning to create a Bell Boating Hub which can serve Castle Vale and Minworth Communities.
- CET's project manager has continued to support Birmingham Open Spaces Forum in her capacity as Treasurer and Trustee.

TRAINING

During the Easter holidays, the Project Officer undertook the Lowland Expedition Leader (LEL) Level 3 course. Additional hours of teaching as part of this course were completed in June, including leading activities for a group of silver participants in Long Mynd (heathland and moorland plateau in Shropshire). This qualification would allow him to take groups out on the expedition part of the Bronze and Silver Award

On the 1st and 2nd of May, 3 members of staff and a young leader from the youth group undertook a Bell Boat Helm Training. The training has allowed us to take groups of up to 14 children in Bell Boats (twin-hulled open canoes) in the canals

Between April and August, the project Manager continued her MBA studies completing successfully another 3 modules. In September the examination board decided that she could proceed to the dissertation stage of her degree programme. A research proposal was submitted in October and a Project Report in March. At the same time a series of 10 leadership webinars as part of Aston Edge was completed.

EVENTS

On the 30th of May, CET took part in the City Nature Challenge, an annual competition between cities all over the world to see how many wild species their citizens can spot over a period of four days. CET supported this year's challenge by setting up an outdoor drop-in station at the Castle Vale Meadows and recording species found in the Conservation Area and Meadows. Collectively, over 100 species were recorded by CET whilst engaging with members of the public.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

CET organised an event on the 30th of October in partnership with the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and Andy Train, Olympic canoeist, to promote water and paddle activities and raise awareness of the intrinsic value of this local asset. On the day, people enjoyed free bell boating activities along the canal, bulb planting, environmental activities and a nature trail along the towpath. The event was well attended (over 40 people) and we received very good feedback.

In December CET organised a festive online family workshop to celebrate Christmas. The Family Christmas Decoration workshop was a great success, not only did we have great participation rates, but it also allowed us to see some of our regular families and offer a festive and relaxing session for parents and children to work together. CET staff collected the natural resources necessary for the workshop, made individual packs for the families, and arranged two days for families to come and pick up the packs from CET premises.

A birdwatching walk around the Castle Vale Meadows was organised in January. 21 different species were identified in total including redwings, pied wagtail, mistle and song thrush, goldfinches and chaffinches, amongst others. The birds spotted on the day counted towards the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, which would help to increase understanding of the challenges faced by common garden birds, and track how certain species have declined or recovered

CET hosted an event on the 8th of March to recognise and support International Women's Day. CET staff with the invaluable support of volunteers, members of the community, and plot holders built a bird feeding station for the Community Garden. A total of 15 people, including CET members of staff, attended the event. The permanent feature will be a celebration of the social, political, and economic achievements of women.

CET carried out a litter pick in the conservation area with volunteers and members of the public as part of last year's Spring Clean. Additionally, a clean-up at the allotments was arranged on the 1st of April, plot holders gathered all the rubbish and split it into green and general waste.

Financial review

Last financial year CET received grants from the following funders:

- £1,871.92 from HMRC as part of the Job Retention Scheme to support the Trust to pay workers' wages as they were unable to work during the coronavirus crisis.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

- £6,000.49 from Erdington Neighbour Network Scheme to offer beneficiaries the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to grow food and flora
- £1,986.82 from Peddimore Community Fund, to support the delivery of CET's October half-term scheme for young people and one family event.
- £2,500 from 3 small Trusts: Bernard Piggot Fund (£1,000), Grimmit Trust (£1,000) and Eric W. Vincent Trust (£500) for the development and enhancement of the Castle Vale Conservation Area.
- £24,240.90 from Groundwork/HS2 to pay for the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer post and pay for some other costs associated to this project, such as mileage and tools.
- £1,000 from The Pioneer Group to carry out a tree planting event to carbon offset the organisations activities.
- CET still benefited from some of the grants received in the previous financial year, such as DofE*
- Funding granted by BOSF has allowed CET to offer Tai-Chi sessions at the Castle Vale Allotments/Conservation Area**.

* DofE is the budget holder for the funds granted last year, therefore no money was transferred to CET's account.

** Payments to the Tai-chi instructor were done directly by BOSF. CET has only claimed refreshments offered to participants.

Half of the income generated last year came from the delivery of CET's Forest School Programmes. CET received £63,172.00 (unrestricted funds) from participating schools. The income reduction due to the loss of three contracts was partially compensated by the hour increase of Castle Vale Nursery and the delivery of regular after-school sessions at Castle Bromwich Junior and Greenwood Academy.

£1,177 was raised as part of CET's youth provision activities. It was decided to charge only £2 for the activities delivered in April to help families recovering from the effects of Covid and to give children the opportunity to participate again in outdoor and on-line activities. From May onwards workshops were charged £3 per session. Trips had different prices depending on the distance, entrance fee and length of the session.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Work commissioned by other organisations, Re-Future and The Pioneer Group, earned the Trust £2,966.81 and £2,500 respectively

In addition, CET received the following donations:

- £120 from Birmingham Open Spaces Forum for the monthly submission of volunteer data
- £103.16 were donated anonymously via PayPal
- £50 from Compass-Support for supporting the delivery of wellbeing activities during the Mental Health Awareness Week
- £63 from participants attending a family event in October (Bell boating and environmental activities)
- £40 from Carr Forest Church for the delivery of a fire session at the church

20-21 showed the importance of income diversification to help with the financial sustainability of the Trust, therefore in 21-22 the Trust started to apply its new operating model which involved more bid writing and consultancy work to have a more balanced approach to income generation. Some of the projects included environmental audits, increase of commissioned sessions and incorporation of blue spaces in CET's portfolio.

As part of the new strategy, sub-groups formed by staff and Trustees were created to focus on Finance, educational projects and conservations projects. The educational project subgroup discussed different avenues to approach and engage with new schools which included: targeting specific National Curriculum topics (habitats, life cycles), assemblies (environment, mental well-being, resilience) or special events, such as tree planting or bird week. Trustees also highlighted the importance of a working website and requesting and recording regular feedback from participants.

With the help of the Head of Neighbourhood Fundraising, CET will continue applying for funding to support existing projects and the creation of new ones. In addition, letters will be sent out to businesses, and foundations as a new fundraising approach.

Due to the financial constraints that schools are undergoing, CET will need to continue recruiting new schools interested in the Forest School programme and also offer after-school activities. In addition, environmental workshops, gardening sessions and family learning days will continue to be offered to new partners, organisations and local companies to continue raising our profile.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Reserves policy

As part of the Trust's Reserves Policy, CET continues to transfer £500 per month to a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. At the end of March 2022, the account held £40,548.26

Based on last year's expenditure, transfers to the reserves account will need to continue for, at least, another 8 months (November 2022) to reach the amount stated in CET's reserve policy. In September the amount will be reviewed by Trustees.

The reserves policy will be kept under periodic review and reserves levels will be adjusted as perceptions of risks and other factors change, e.g. school budget cuts, reduction of commissioned work.

Funds held as a Custodian Trustee

CET does not hold funds as a Custodian Trustee.

Future

CET will continue to enhance and improve urban green spaces by delivering and developing existing and new projects, and by continuing to work with other organisations within and outside Castle Vale.

CET will also continue using its educational and youth programmes, including Forest School, Duke of Edinburgh, Dream Green and Vale Youth Action, as well as other structured activities to build and deepen the confidence and capability of our young people. Blue spaces have now been included in the activities portfolio and will help diversify income.

CET's Project Manager and Project Coordinator, with the support of the Board of Trustees, will continue to develop a strategic plan to ensure enough funds are received every year to continue with the work we do. Measures will continue to be put in place to reduce costs where possible, and new ways of generating income will be explored. More consultancy work will be done to ensure the generation of unrestricted funds.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors 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 Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

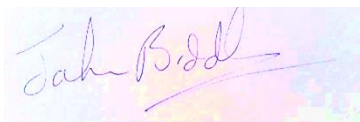
Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that 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 SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

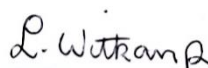
The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding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

Approval

The Trustee's Report was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees



Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair

Dated: 26/01/22

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF COMMUNITY ENVIROMENTAL TRUST

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Community Environmental Trust for the year ending 31 March 2022 set out on pages 34 to 41.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for an independent examination. I report in respect of the examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (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 2011Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed mu 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 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).;

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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.



Jasbir Rai ACMA
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
138 Digbeth
Birmingham
B5 6DR

Dated: 30/01/23

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £	2021 Total Funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES:					
Incoming Resources from charitable activities					
Services - Project Income		51,820		51,820	78,792
Grants Receivable		18,383	34,635	53,018	12,000
Incoming Resources from generated funds					
Donations		2,368		2,368	1,046
Interest		10		10	28
Total Incoming Resources		<u>72,581</u>	<u>34,635</u>	<u>107,216</u>	<u>91,866</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED:					
Charitable Expenditure		78,397	33,637	112,034	85,320
Bank Charges and Taxation		96	0	96	82
Total Resources Expended		<u>78,493</u>	<u>33,637</u>	<u>112,130</u>	<u>85,402</u>
NET INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>-5,912</u>	<u>998</u>	<u>-4,914</u>	<u>6,464</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		121,738	0	121,738	115,274
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>115,826</u></u>	<u><u>998</u></u>	<u><u>116,824</u></u>	<u><u>121,738</u></u>

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

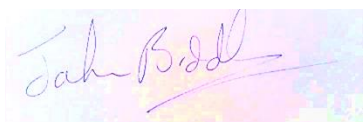
	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	4	<u>0</u>	<u>3088</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and Prepayments		1,253	1262
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>131,725</u>	<u>133678</u>
		132,978	134940
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	5	<u>16,154</u>	<u>16290</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>116,824</u>	<u>118650</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>116,824</u>	<u>121738</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted funds - general Reserves		115,826	121738
Restricted funds		998	0
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>116,824</u>	<u>121738</u>

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. No members have required the company to obtain an audit of the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2022 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

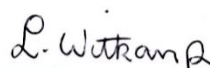
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on behalf of the board:



John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees



Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair

Dated: 26/01/23

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)” (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The charity is a “Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

- The charity becomes legally entitled to the resources after any performance conditions have been met;
- The trustees are virtually certain that they will receive the resources; and
- The monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income is deferred when monies are received in advance relating to projects commencing after the financial year where the contract period is specified by the funder.

Resources expended

Charitable activities includes all costs relating to general administration, which support the charitable purpose.

Grants offered subject to conditions, which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings that have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives, which is considered to be 4 years.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Incoming resources with related expenditure

When incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) both are reported gross in the SOFA.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with bankers, other short term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 “Basic Financial Instruments” and Section 12 “Other Financial Issues” of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity’s balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the assets and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market value of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

De-recognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

Pensions

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the company to the fund for the year.

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year (2021 - £nil).

4. Staff costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries including	72,772	63,216
Social Security	16,284	2,811
Pension contributions	4,448	3,808
	<u>93,504</u>	<u>69,835</u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The average number of administration employees during the year was 4 (2021 – 4), who did not earn more than £60,000 in either year.

Pension commitments

The charitable company operates a defined contribution scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company and are independently administered. The pension cost charge above represents contributions payable by the charitable company to the fund. No contributions (2021 – nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date.

5. Financial instruments

	2022	2021
	£	£
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
 Carrying value of financial liabilities		
Measured on amortised costs	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6. Tangible assets

	Plant and Machinery	Computer Equipment	Totals
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2021	16137	6205	22342
Additions during the year	0	0	0
At 31 March 2022	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,205</u>	<u>22,342</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2021	13,094	6,160	19,254
Charge for the year	3,043	45	3,088
At 31 March 2022	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,205</u>	<u>22,341</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2022	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>3,043</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>3,088</u>

7. Debtors

Due within one year	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade Debtors	0	0
Prepayments	1,253	1,262
Total Debtors	<u>1,253</u>	<u>1,262</u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Tax and social security	3	1,856
Accruals	450	450
Deferred Income	15,701	13,984
	<u>16,154</u>	<u>16,290</u>

9. Funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

Project	Opening			Closing
	Reserves	Incoming	Expenditure	Reserves
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Reserves	121,738	72,581	78,493	115,826
Restricted Reserves				
	0			0
Eric Trust	0	500	500	0
Grimmit Trust	0	1,000	1,000	0
HS2	0	25,148	25,148	0
Heart Of England	0	1,987	1,987	0
NNS	0	6,000	5,002	998
Awards for All	0			0
Total Restricted Reserves	<u>0</u>	<u>34,635</u>	<u>33,637</u>	<u>998</u>
Total Reserves	<u>121,738</u>	<u>107,216</u>	<u>112,130</u>	<u>116,824</u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2021 are represented by current assets/(liabilities).

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COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1144788

Accounts

Charity Registration Number: 1144788

Company Registration Number: 3907328 (England and Wales)

**COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	John Biddle – Chair (Director) Rita Gries – Trustee (resigned February 2021) Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair (Director) Ifor Jones – Trustee Jean Kelley – Trustee Karen Frost – Trustee Mandy Williams – Trustee (resigned April 2020) Daniel Kennedy -Trustee Janice Davis – Trustee Cllr. Mick Brown – Trustee
Registered Office	1 Whittle Croft Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DN
Charity contact details	Tel: 0121 747 3579 E-mail: info@environmentaltrust.org.uk Website: www.environmentaltrust.org.uk
Charity number	1144788
Company number	3907328 (registered in England and Wales)
Independent Examiner	Paul Bowater ACA
Accountants	BVSC 138 Digbeth Birmingham B5 6DR
Bankers	Lloyds Bank PLC 207 High St Erdington Birmingham West Midlands B23 6SZ

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT) 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 and unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2021.

Trustees

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the unaudited financial statements were:

John Biddle – Chair (Director)

Rita Gries – Trustee (resigned February 2021)

Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair (Director)

Ifor Jones – Trustee

Jean Kelley – Trustee

Karen Frost – Trustee

Mandy Williams – Trustee (resigned April 2020)

Daniel Kennedy -Trustee

Janice Davis – Trustee

Cllr. Mick Brown – Trustee

None of the directors has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of winding up.

Objectives and activities

The Community Environmental Trust (CET) is the leading environmental charity within Castle Vale, working successfully for over 21 years to protect and enhance the environment and its wildlife and habitat, delivering outdoor educational activities and providing volunteering opportunities, as well as continuing to bring matters to the attention of the public, media, politicians and Government agencies alike.

Main areas of service provision

1. Maintenance and creation of wildlife habitat in local urban green spaces.
2. Raising environmental awareness by providing activities and advice on environmental issues.
3. Providing opportunities for volunteering and training.

These services were designed to fit into the following categories:

Environmental Education; includes schools, local communities and other professionals (CET has been particularly strong in delivering environmental education by establishing and maintaining positive links with local schools).

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Neighbourhood Management; improving the quality of life for local residents by encouraging and supporting sustainable regeneration and development plans.

Community Development; participation of residents in the care of their environment, enabling them to gain new skills and experiences.

Objectives

- The conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment for the public's benefit.
- To further benefit the residents of Birmingham without distinction of sex, sexual orientation and race or of political, religious or other opinions. To advance the education in relation to the above and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.
- The advancement of using the environment as an educational tool, in particular but not exclusively for local children from local schools and young adults aged 18 – 25.
- The promotion of good health by providing or assisting in the provision of organised outdoor activities.
- Where it is for the protection of the environment, to provide or carry out maintenance or improvement of:
 - Community Garden
 - Any other public amenity

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 14th January 2000 and registered as a charity on 24th November 2011.

It is governed by Articles of Association, having been amended following approval by the members at the AGM on 7th November 2011. In the event of the company being wound up the members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The management of the Trust is vested in the Trustees who are elected by the membership and act in a voluntary capacity. In compliance with the Articles of Association at the next Annual General Meeting, which must be held no more than 15 months after the previous one, officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) will be stepping down by rotation. All will be eligible to offer themselves for re-election.

Last year's AGM was held on 09th November 2020. John Biddle and Lynne Witkamp were nominated and elected again for their original posts, Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. All our board members were also nominated and voted to continue their roles of Trustees. The Treasurer position was filled up temporarily by a local resident who is also a Senior Finance Officer for our partner The Pioneer Group. However, due to her personal circumstances, busy work schedule and limited time, her role and responsibilities were adapted. The new Treasurer would be supervising CET's overall financial affairs and activities on advisory capacity and on an ad-hoc basis, whilst the Project Manager continues undertaking most of the day-to-day financial duties (payroll, invoicing, bookkeeping, budgeting, etc).

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All Trustees are required to sign a Registration of Trustees and a Trustees' Code of Conduct. Business and conservation skills are well represented amongst the Trustees.

To maintain this broad skills mix, the CET Board of Trustees undertakes an annual review of its effectiveness. If skill gaps are identified, new Trustees are sought by open advertisement, or individuals are approached to offer themselves for election.

There were 8 Trustees in post by 31st March 2021. We have not had new members joining the Board, but one Trustee resigned on the 5th of February due to a change of job and moving to a different country. CET's aim is to continue enriching and widening our Board's cross-functional skill base. CET will also continue looking for a Treasurer who can support and assist the Project Manager with the financial aspects of the charity on a more regular basis. CET Board is also looking for a Trustee with a HR background who could join the team and oversee organisational functions and provide support and advice managing employees.

In order to keep the Trustees fully informed of the progress of the projects and to ensure that staff are provided with support and strategic direction, board meetings are held every 6-8 weeks.

Risk Management

The Trustees actively review the major risks that the Charity faces when preparing and updating the strategic plan, however detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Project Manager. Risks are identified, assessed and controls established throughout the year, but a formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis.

Risk is managed under the headings of financial sustainability, operations, governance and compliance with law and regulation. The charity has developed systems to monitor and control these risks to mitigate any impact they may present in future.

The investment policy is to hold the majority of its investments in a low risk interest savings account. The reserves policy is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months' unrestricted payments to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time.

Chair, Vice-Chair and Project Manager exercise a careful control of costs by setting an annual budget and periodically reviewing progress against it.

Management Structure

The Project Manager's role is to ensure the long-term continuance and expansion of the services provided by the Trust and the successful delivery of environmental projects. The Project Manager oversees the overall management of the Trust, undertaking a wide range of jobs. These include raising funds, maintaining budgets, attending regular project meetings with the Neighbourhood Manager, increasing awareness of and improving the local environment through a range of activities and media, undertaking administrative work, overseeing the organisation's strategic links and development. Since 2016, the Project Manager has also been responsible for CET's payroll and invoices operations, bookkeeping, records of financial transactions, producing financial forecasts and creating budget reports every 6-8 weeks. The Project Manager also delivers environmental, educational and conservation projects. The Project Manager receives support from the Project Officer, the Project Assistant and the Community Engagement and Conservation Officer.

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The Project Officer's role is to deliver a wide range of environmental, educational and conservation projects in the local area by increasing awareness, understanding and support from residents, community groups, associations and local schools. The Project Officer also promotes environmental awareness and education across the local community, as well as creating and developing environmental initiatives. The Project Officer manages two main projects: Forest School Scheme and Youth Provision. She also attends meetings, writes bids and seeks funding for environmental activities with the youth group.

The Project Assistant's role is to deliver Forest Schools sessions and assist in projects, research and clerical-related services with minimum supervision. The Project Assistant works very close with the Project Officer in the delivery of youth activities. Since December 2019, the Project Assistant has also become a Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Manager for the organisation. This new role involves running the day-to-day operational activities of the DofE programme and be responsible for the delivery of the annual plan. Tasks include the delivery of volunteering sessions, recruiting and managing participants, monitoring progress of participants' on-line logbooks, assessing participants' reports and leading an expedition.

The Community Engagement and Conservation Officer (CE&CO) is a 3 year- fixed term position created thanks to Community and Environment Fund HS2's. Primarily, the CE&CO's role is to engage with residents and stakeholders, to deliver conservation activities, workshops and events that will help attract new users to the area. The role also involves planning and managing the Conservation Area in a sustainable manner and enhancing existing features in order to change the designation of the land to a Local Nature Reserve.

All members of staff are employed on a full-time basis. The Chair's key role is to guide and support the organisation, assist with overall strategy and strategic direction and act as the line manager for the CET Project Manager. The Chair and Project Manager are in contact on a weekly basis to ensure that the Project Manager receives the support needed.

PROJECTS - Activities for Public Benefit

EDUCATION (Services delivered to schools)

Forest schools

Forest Schools (FS) is an innovative educational approach of playing and learning that uses the environment as a tool to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. This includes engaging with children with additional support needs, particularly learners who demonstrate antisocial behaviour and/or other learning or socialising difficulties (ASD, ADHD).

Children, under the supervision of a qualified FS Practitioner, visit local woodland or stay on school grounds on a regular basis (2 hours a week) over an extended period of time (minimum of 6 weeks to a maximum of 32).

Through small achievable tasks in a stimulating environment, children are encouraged to be independent and enabled to build self-esteem and develop social and behaviour management skills.

Forest Schools offers freedom to explore independently, which is vital if children are to learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. It also allows time to revisit past areas and experiences, to reflect upon and consolidate their learning. Forest school sessions are mainly child led, but activities are tailored to individual learning styles and linked to the school's curriculum.

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The benefits of Forest Schools are the natural environment provides a wealth of opportunity and resources to expand children's/young people's learning, whilst building a sense of independence, high self-esteem and teamwork skills. It provides a stimulating experience where children can self-explore and use multiple senses, helping to develop children's physical capabilities as well as learning acceptable boundaries of behaviour.

All practitioners (and volunteers participating in the project) have current, enhanced DBS certificates. Practitioners also hold outdoor First Aid and MIDAS certificates.

Last year the Forest School programme was severely disrupted and affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The delivery of FS sessions and after school clubs was cancelled on the 17th of March and by the 20th, all schools were closed. To continue supporting our local schools, CET offered to deliver natural resources and educational materials, including lesson plans, to the schools that remained open for children of front-line workers. In addition, CET posted environmental activities on its social media channels for parents and schools to follow and produced educational packs for teachers to use (#CETdaily challenge).

In June, Forest School sessions were re-started at Yardley Primary School every Tuesday and Thursday, and CET delivered 6 sessions per week for 6 weeks. After-school activities were cancelled completely.

It is difficult to quantify beneficiaries of the programme, as in-person sessions were only delivered at Yardley for a short period of time during the last part of the academic period. However, schools confirmed that the resources and activities delivered to them were used on a weekly basis with those children attending school and that they found the material very useful. In addition, the CET daily challenges posted on Twitter and Facebook proved to be very popular as indicated by the high number of Twitter impressions.

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Forest Schools	
March 20-Sept20	Action
Chivenor	on-line support/ donation of 20 laptops
Pegasus	Delivery of resources every two weeks, including donations of plants and vegetables
C V Nursery	Delivery of resources every two weeks, including donations of plants and vegetables
Oasis Academy SH	Delivery of natural materials (one-off), educational packs for teachers and on-line resources and support
Birches Green Junior	no resources/ on-line support
Paget	Delivery of natural materials (on-off), and educational packs for teachers, and on-line resources and support
Yardley	Delivery of natural materials (one-off), educational packs for teachers and on-line resources and support
High Meadow	Delivery of resources every two weeks, including donations of plants and vegetables, educational packs for teachers and on-line resources and support
Wylde Green Primary	no resources /on-line support

After school		
March 20- Sept 20	Weekly Frequency	Beneficiaries
Castle Bromwich Junior - FS	Cancelled	Cancelled
Chivenor – Gardening	Cancelled	Cancelled

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At the end of April CET found out that one of its major school contracts, Yardley Primary School, was not going to renew the FS programme, due to financial restraints and having a member of staff trained as a FS practitioner. This school in itself brought £21,000 a year to the Trust. In addition, because of the pandemic, no after-school clubs or activities were offered by the schools until June, just before the end of the academic year.

The new academic year started in September 2020. Between September 2020 and Dec 2020, CET delivered 14 educational outdoor sessions per week in 8 different educational institutions, working with 294 children over that period.

Forest Schools Sept 20 -Dec 20	Frequency	Beneficiaries
Chivenor	1	12
Pegasus	1	30
Castle Vale Nursery	3	45
Oasis Academy SH	2	60
Birches Green Junior	1	30
Paget	2	60
High Meadow	3	150
Wylde Green Primary	1	24
Total	14	294

In January 2021, there was a new lockdown announcement. Once again, schools remained open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers, however most pupils continued to learn from home. This time, some of the schools decided to continue benefiting from the programme. This meant that 2 practitioners continued delivering 8 sessions per week in-person in 2 different schools and one nursery. During the lockdown period, 95 pupils benefitted from the delivery of outdoor sessions.

Forest Schools Jan 21-March 21	Lockdown period- working only with vulnerable pupils and children of key workers	
	Frequency	Beneficiaries
Paget	2	30
High Meadow	3	30
Castle Vale Nursery	3	35
TOTAL	8	95

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TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING

Community Engagement and Conservation

The Community Engagement and Conservation programme aims to engage with members of the community, residents and other organisations to transform their local area through conservation sessions. The main focus is on Castle Vale Conservation Area, the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. Tasks would help to restore heritage and improve the quality, access and security of Castle Vale Conservation Area and other urban open spaces, whilst also reconnecting local people with their landscape. In addition, the improvements will make a significant contribution to the local environment increasing and promoting biodiversity.

Additionally, the project also aims to improve people's mental and physical wellbeing (Social Prescribing), to increase and promote diversity (outdoor events and workshops) and inspire future generations (formal/informal training)

Between October and March, CET's newly appointed Community Engagement and Conservation Officer worked incessantly to achieve project outcomes during this very difficult time. Work carried out in the first 6 months of the post included the following:

- Set up a new volunteer group. Volunteer days started in the Castle Vale Conservation Area in November. 6-10 volunteers have regularly attended sessions, and 15 individuals are registered. Over 60% of volunteers were referred through a social prescribing programme.
- 395 volunteer hours were completed in the first 6 months of the project. with. Tasks carried out including path maintenance, willow coppicing, woodland work and litter picking. 50m of hedge was planted in Area 6 (Allotments) to increase biodiversity and make the site more environmentally friendly. Engagement was limited until lockdown measures eased.
- A university student was mentored for 8 weeks. The CE&CO offered support to the work experience student on a 1-2-1 basis. The student volunteered every Thursday, his work experience focussed on developing his confidence and conservation practical skills.
- 5 sessions were facilitated with estate services team to open up one of two local routes to Castle Vale Conservation Area, improving access for site users. CET received very positive feedback from partners and members of the public and it is now used often by residents.
- Supported the delivery of 3 school holidays from October to March.
- 2 areas near Sainsbury's shopping centre, were litter picked. 17 black bags were filled over 2 sessions of 2.5h each. Areas were classed as 'hot spots' for litter and had been repeatedly reported by residents at Tasking Meetings.
- The 'Growing Local Flora' project, a partnership project with Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, started in February. This involved propagating locally sourced woodland plants such as primrose, ground ivy, wood sorrel, wood anemone and dog violet. These plants will then be planted out on nature reserves across the local area to improve individual site species diversity and increase the amount of these plants to counter those that are being lost across Birmingham and black country.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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- Networking and partnership work was initiated with the following partners:
 - Birmingham and Black Country Amphibian and Reptile group to discuss potential habitat work, talks and events.
 - Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust to discuss further project planning, as part of the BBCWT Nature Improvement Area Programme. Future projects included, planting woodland trees in the FS area, sowing woodland seeds, planting climbers for green barrier along railway boundary, planting new hedgerow and possible restoration of large onsite pond.
 - Compass-support to develop strong links with various departments to encourage referrals (Link Workers, Job and Employment Team, Health and Wellbeing Team)
 - The Pioneer Group to support monitoring and reporting environmental issues in Castle Vale.
 - Castle Vale Equestrian Centre to identify areas and paths that need to be improved to facilitate horse access to the Conservation Area.
 - Tame Valley Wetlands to strengthen existing partnership and to discuss the delivery of training days in conservation and heritage to increase knowledge and skills of participants. Due to national lockdown, it was put on hold adding a delay to our project.

International Erasmus programme

The Erasmus Programme is an EU exchange student programme whose purpose is to provide foreign exchange opportunities for students from within the European Union. The programme is aimed at cross-border cooperation between EU countries to aid the growth of international studying.

The loss of UK access to the Erasmus programme post-Brexit meant the end of this valuable international experience. CET will not be hosting students until the Erasmus programme is replaced by another one.

Internship programme – Global Training

The CET internship programme is the result of an agreement between the charity and Global Training, a Spanish company funded by the Basque Government. The purpose of the programme is to provide a work placement of approximately 6 months for Spanish graduates. The programme is aimed at cross-border cooperation between Spain and the UK to provide an excellent chance of work experience abroad. Successful candidates are granted a scholarship for the duration of the placement.

Last year, CET did not benefit from the help of an Admin and Finance intern from Global Training. Due to the pandemic, no candidates were shortlisted or interviewed. To be able to continue with this important programme after January 2021, CET had to apply for a Sponsor Licence from Home Office.

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Applying for the licence is a difficult and bureaucratic process that involves many processes and systems in place. Trustees and staff have decided to go ahead with the programme as it has proved to be very beneficial for the organisation and has provided invaluable work experience to every candidate hosted by the Trust. Application for the Sponsor Licence will be submitted after the summer.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Projects/Activities provided to a wider audience)

Vale Youth Green Action (VYGA)

VYGA is an environmental youth provision for children/young people aged 8-14 which runs during the school holidays, including school half-terms and summer play-schemes. Programmes are made up of projects, workshops, environmental/outdoor and educational activities and trips.

VYGA encourages the older members (over-14's) to get involved in assisting and leading the younger members in activities by incorporating their ideas when designing and producing the holiday play-scheme programmes and funding-bid applications. They are part of VYGA's Young Leader's Scheme. The project also has a group of experienced regular volunteers who support the delivery of activities. All volunteers hold current enhanced DBS certificates.

This project encourages the utilisation of local green spaces and resources in a sustainable way to provide opportunities for play, gaining environmental and practical knowledge/skills and it encourages an active and healthy lifestyle.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, CET only delivered 2 holiday Schemes (October and February Half-term). The 5 activities offered were not as well attended as previous schemes, as sessions had to be adapted and were delivered in a different way to meet government and safety guidelines. February half-term activities were delivered on-line for the first time, which unfortunately excluded those families with no computers or internet access.

In addition, CET also offered in December a festive on-line family workshop to celebrate Christmas. The Family Christmas Decoration workshop was a great success, not only did we have great participation rates, but it also allowed us to see some of our regular families and offer a festive and relaxing session for parents and children to work together. CET staff collected the natural resources necessary for the workshop, made individual packs for the families, and arranged two days for families to come and pick up the packs from CET premises.

A symbolic £2 charge was applied to the activities, this allowed the youth scheme to remain inclusive under such extraordinary circumstances

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VYGA	Number of beneficiaries	Charge
Easter Holidays 2020 - CANCELLED DUE TO LOCKDOWN		
May Half-Term 2020 - CANCELLED DUE TO LOCKDOWN		
Summer 2020 - CANCELLED DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS		
October Half-Term 2020		
Halloween	7	£2
Planting	5	£2
Conservation work	6	£2
TOTAL	18	£36
Christmas 2020 - On-line session (Family event)		
Christmas decorations	40	Free
February Half-Term 2020 - session delivered on-line due to LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS		
Birds	8	£2
Crafts	8	£2
TOTAL	16	£32

Dream Green

Dream Green came together as a group in June 2018. It is a self-led group of young people aged 11+ who uses the Community Garden as a platform to learn and develop practical gardening skills and environmental knowledge.

The group activities stopped in March. In July, young people met for the first time at the Community Garden with CET's Project Manager and Sophie Green, Future Parks Accelerator for Employment and Jobs in Shard End. FPA was holding "green conversations" at the time with young people to talk about the future of the parks, to understand how green spaces were used and perceived by young people and to find out what else could be done to engage with more young people.

Six members were interviewed and recorded. The audios and videos were part of the material that FPA programme was collating for a virtual skills showcase. They were posted on FPA's YouTube channel to promote the green sector, green opportunities and to inspire other young people.

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Duke of Edinburgh (DofE)

Duke of Edinburgh is a youth awards programme aimed at young people aged 14-25. As part of the programme, they must complete different sections that involve helping the community/environment, becoming fitter, developing new skills, planning, training for and completing an expedition. The award is about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries.

Volunteering activities for DofE participants stopped in March. Young people continued working on their portfolios uploading evidence of volunteering and skills to their logbooks.

Volunteering sessions were restarted in September, and the group was very active until the December's lockdown announcement. Participants attended in October two training days led by Chase Training, which included the following activities: campcraft, kit and equipment, outdoor cooking, intro to map reading and navigation skills. Those who attended both days were ready to do their expedition in November; however, due to lockdown and campsites being closed, the expedition had to be postponed until next year.

In January, sessions were cancelled again until the group restrictions were lifted. During that period CET's Project Assistant and DofE Manager attended various training courses funded by DofE, including the following: Introduction to DofE, Intermediate DofE, DofE Manager's Induction, Expedition Assessor Accreditation Scheme and Award Verifier. Level 3 in Lowland Leader training has also been booked, provisionally, for April 12-16.

A ceremony to celebrate group achievements will be organized once restrictions are lifted.

Community Garden

The Community Garden is situated in the Castle Vale Allotments. The aim of this project is to increase local community's accessibility to gardening activities in a safe and friendly environment.

It allows community groups to have access to the site to learn how to grow vegetables, it enables a wide range of educational-based activities, it helps to reduce social isolation and brings together different generations in an inspirational environment where knowledge can be shared and utilised.

Activities carried out in the Community Garden were suspended in March. In July, new Covid-19 Safety guidelines were produced in terms of using facilities and borrowing tools. Groups were informed and guidelines displayed in the portacabin in case community groups wanted to re-start using the facilities. No community groups used the site between March 20 and September 20, apart from young people from Dream Green who agreed to come to the garden once per week to weed and maintain the whole area in July and August.

In March 21, participants from CET's social prescribing programme showed interest in the Community Garden, and in developing growing skills. Since then, they have been involved in maintaining and improving the garden and the community orchard.

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Allotments

During lockdown, CET's Project Manager continued supporting the Allotments Association. Most of the work carried out between April and May involved monitoring and ensuring that Covid-19 rules for Allotment sites were followed. From June, the allotment association was allowed to let plots out again, although contact was minimised, and paperwork was kept to minimum.

In October, during the rent collection period, CET's Project Manager supported the Association in her capacity as treasurer, but also carried out administrative tasks that included rent collection, plot cancellation and plot letting. To avoid handling cash payments, the association introduced for the first time on-line and bank payments. It was very challenging as most plot holders didn't have internet access and/or used online banking. Members of the association advised plot holders how to do the payments and for those unable to go to the bank, alternative payment options were offered.

Mother Garden and Community Orchard

Mother Garden is a partnership project between CET, the Castle Vale Leisure Gardens Association (CVLGA) and Food Forest Brum. Castle Vale is acting as a hub for growing, propagating and the distribution of edible plants. CET and CVLGA are supporting other projects and local groups to develop a working network of mutually supported communities to create permanent food landscapes that can function beyond funding. Edible plants and advice are provided to local community groups, schools and projects.

No events or plant swaps were held last year.

Conservation area

Castle Vale Conservation Area (CVCA) is the largest area of informal public open space in Castle Vale. It is situated to the southeast of Castle Vale, around the allotments and the stable's paddocks. The existing landscape consists of rough grassland with substantial woodland planting, fencing, a pond, a path system and seats.

CVCA is considered part of the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Open Spaces and as such it is owned by the Council. However, the site has mainly been managed by CET, which informs and seeks permission from BCC before carrying out any activities. CET's practical conservation management days complement BCC service plans for the areas identified by CET to be developed or improved upon.

CET is continuing its work to protect the Conservation Area and to utilise it as part of the project programme. Due to the pandemic no Forest School sessions were delivered in the Conservation Area during this financial year

In May, CET was approached by a very active member of the community who had started a campaign to keep the Castle Vale Conservation Area and Farnborough Fields litter-free. The #pickup6 campaign was encouraging people to pick up 6 pieces of litter whilst they were doing their daily walk. CET provided black bags, litter pickers and safety gloves. Bags were put in different areas to encourage people to use them, to help us monitor how much litter was collected and find out whether having bins on site would help to keep the site cleaner.

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Recurrent fly tipping was observed in the car park at the entrance of the conservation area between October and December. Different agencies and partners, including Estate Services, Birmingham City Council Parks, Birmingham City Council Planning and local councillors were brought together to investigate and resolve the problem. The area is better now although fly tipping is still happening occasionally.

Friends of Plantsbrook

Friends of Plantsbrook is a friend's group whose aim to protect, maintain and enhance Plantsbrook Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of wildlife, residents and other LNR users.

Friends of Plantsbrook have continued working independently and with very little support from the Trust. Individual activities were carried out during lockdown as part of their daily exercise and included daily safety checks, litter picking, conservation tasks, minor repair work and wildlife rescue activities.

CET officers visited the site in November to assess and report a fallen tree blocking the main path around one of the pools and to empty temporary bins put up by the friends' group to reduce litter in the nature reserve.

First virtual meeting with the Friends Group was held in March to discuss how to move projects forward after lockdown. It was agreed that work repairing the portacabin was going to be restarted once government restrictions were eased. Daily safety check walks and litter picking activities are still carried out by members of the group. Repair work in the portacabin is expected to continue once groups are allowed to meet up again indoors.

Castle Vale stables

CET has been for the past three years in the process of leasing the Castle Vale Stables and paddock land for 15 years to protect the land and ensure it remains paddock and green land. As a result, CET would have full responsibility for managing the site, however Castle Vale Pony Owners Association will continue looking after the horses and managing the run of the stables. CET is currently giving support with administrative and financial tasks, which include the following: managing the expectations of the horse owners, managing the number of horses/ponies on the land (with the aim of reducing the numbers), health and safety, insurance, horticultural maintenance and payment of business rates, utility bills and repairs.

CET's Project Manager produced safety Covid19 procedures for the stables to help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus. Information was displayed on the noticeboard at the entrance of the building. In addition, a bid was also written on their behalf to carry out urgent repairs in the current fencing and menage area, where horses are being schooled and trained and improve their coordination and muscle strength

3rd Sector partnership

The Castle Vale Voluntary Sector Partnership is an informal association of constituted third sector agencies operating from within Castle Vale. The members of the core partnership are: Castle Vale Neighbourhood Partnership, Active Arts, Compass Support, Spitfire Services and Community Environmental Trust. It was created to fulfil the role of a steering group in relation to the Endowment Trust Fund legacy and with the aim to champion and advocate for the wider network of voluntary and community organisations in Castle Vale, share best practices, explore wider funding, networking and partnership opportunities with the view to increasing skills and building capacity of local groups.

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CET has continued attending regular meetings hosted by the group. In April, the group got together to apply for Covid-19 Emergency Response Funding. CET decided not take part as it was currently understaffed (only one worker) and travelling restrictions made difficult participate and deliver action in Castle Vale.

In August, the group carried out a resilience health check, which involved completing a questionnaire. Results were shared and discussed. The exercise was very important as it gave all groups a clearer picture of the work we were doing, the pressures we were facing and the work that we all needed to do to future proof our operations and finances.

COMMISSIONED WORK

Re-Future

In March 2020, Re-future commissioned CET the delivery of gardening sessions for vulnerable adults suffering from isolation and/or mental and physical wellbeing issues. Sessions were held at the Perrott's Folly and participants were referred to the 'Form of Clouds' project from 5 different local GP surgeries, including Ladywood, City Centre, Harborne and Quinton. Sessions were due to start at the end of March, but were postpone until July. ArtPad sessions with young people were also re-started in July.

Between July and March, CET delivered 17 sessions in Ladywood. Due to the size of the garden, numbers were restricted to 7 participants per session. In order to provide the maximum benefit for the community and work with a higher number of beneficiaries, 2 one-hour sessions were delivered on the same day.

PARNERTSHIP WORK- Other organisations

In May CET was invited to be part of two groups, Brum Growing Communities and urban Farming Collective. They both are a Birmingham partnership network of groups and individuals interested in growing and supporting sustainable growing communities. In addition, CET also became a 'Grow Connector' – Through swap plant schemes (free plants during Covid-19), CET acquired donated vegetable plants for the community garden, Dream Green participants and our local primary schools. The schemes tried to encourage more people to grow and share plants and were linked to our work at the Community Garden and Mother Garden Network.

CET's electric trike was lent to the Youth Team Leader from Compass-Support to help him deliver food parcels to vulnerable families in Castle Vale and Erdington. The trike would help to make journeys more efficient, as they were easier to ride and could transport more food thanks to a lockable box attached at the back.

In September, Birmingham City Council introduced in Castle Vale the 'Places for People' programme which aimed to reduce traffic in residential areas by introducing modal filters. The programme included road markings, signs and the installation of planters. CET worked in partnership with Sustrans to raise awareness of the modal filters and to plant them.

In January, a global technology company called ZF approached CET to offer a donation of IT equipment. CET gave the 20 donated computers to Chivenor Primary School, this allowed pupils to continue with their home learning and to join virtual sessions during lockdown.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

In January and February CET's minibus was used to collect food from various food banks and deliver it to Spitfire Services. The food collected was used to stockpile Castle Vale's food bank.

In February, Castle Vale Estate Services offered CET the opportunity to attend the Local Environment Quality training delivered by Keep Britain Tidy. With this training, CET can now carry out street cleanness surveys in Castle Vale on behalf of Pioneer Group. The street audits will focus on 4 indicators of street cleanness: litter, detritus, fly-posting and graffiti.

In March 21 CET was invited by Birmingham City University to participate in its 'Green week'. Project Manager and the CE&CO delivered a specialist online talk about bats for an audience of 30 people which included staff and students

In March, CET partnered with Slow Food to support their project 'Adopt a tree' that aims towards promoting and raising awareness about food justice. Sponsored fruit and nut trees were donated to CET and planted in the Community Orchard and more trees will be planted in the Conservation Area. All trees will have a geolocation with the expectation that can be visited by the adopter and the fruit publicly shared

CET's project manager has continued to support Birmingham Open Spaces Forum on her capacity as Treasurer and Trustee.

In March CET was approached by Aston University to offer a member of the management team a funded place in their triple-accredited Executive MBA Apprenticeship, provided that criteria was met and application and interview were successful. At the end of April CET's Project Manager started the MBA course, which includes an academic and a practical side. The degree apprenticeship has been a fantastic opportunity for the Trust to invest and upskill its workforce.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

2020-2021 has been a very distressing and difficult year for CET. The pandemic and precipitous recession have clearly had significant effects on the Trust and its funds, and the future course of the pandemic is still uncertain.

The start of the pandemic saw a call to action. Decisions were made quickly to meet the needs of the organisation and our main beneficiaries: we stopped and adapted services, provided support to schools, started on-line services to engage with young people and families and ensured safe access to sites and facilities. By consulting and listening to our main stakeholders and beneficiaries we were able to prioritise their needs and to deliver, within our limited circumstances, the support they needed.

From an operational point of view, the biggest impact of Covid-19 was the reduction in project work (cancellation of school sessions, events and workshops) and diversion of vital funds (mainly Covid-19 Emergency Response Funding). In addition, the charity also suffered other knock-on effects, such as the increase in workload (policies, safety procedures, office adaptations) and having to come up with new ways of delivering and operating. As a result, earned income has dropped substantially.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

At the end of April, the team did a review of the activities that were carried out at the time. Our every-day job had been directly affected by Covid and there was not enough work available for employees, therefore, it was unanimously decided to go under the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) and furlough two members of staff temporarily. This left the charity understaffed, as for over 5 months the organisation was run solely by the Project Manager with the support of the Board of Trustees.

At the same time, CET was approached by Aston University to offer the charity a funded place for a member of the management team in their Level 7 Executive MBA apprenticeship, provided that the criteria were met, subject to the application and interview being successful. At the beginning of May, the Project Manager started the course which involves both an academic and a practical part.

In October a new member of staff joined the team thanks to funding from HS2. Funds were granted in December 2019 and approved in March 2020. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the nature of the role – Community Engagement and Conservation Officer – recruitment and interviewing processes had to be postponed until restrictions were eased.

The new addition has allowed the organisation to operate more efficiently, to define and to specialise the roles of existing members of staff. Project Officer and Project Assistant have focused their work on young people (schools, youth provision and Duke of Edinburgh Awards). The newly appointed person will be engaging with residents, families and other community members in conservation and outdoor activities. The Project Manager has been able to concentrate on the management of the organisation, build up new partnerships and to implement and put in practice the knowledge and skills gained through her MBA studies.

We are very proud of all that we have achieved together under the difficult circumstances we went through. The challenges and opportunities will continue, but we feel we are now more prepared to face unforeseen situations.

Overview of the year

Last year CET received grants from the following funders:

- £9,984 from Awards for All to empower the community to participate in environmental improvement projects.
- £4,000 from Duke of Edinburgh for the purchase of essential equipment, clothing and footwear to enable participants to complete the Bronze expedition.
- £12,000 from Groundwork/HS2 to pay for the first 6 months of Community Engagement and Conservation Officer post and provide the worker with a work laptop.
- CET still benefited from some of the grants received in the previous financial year, such as DofE*

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

*Note: DofE is the budget holder for the funded granted last year, therefore no money was transferred to CET's account.

During the year CET received £14,823.65 from HMRC as part of the Job Retention Scheme to support the Trust to pay worker's wages as they were unable to work during the coronavirus crisis.

Half of the income generated last year came from the delivery of CET's Forest School Programmes. CET received £49,440 (unrestricted fund) from participating schools, which is nearly half of the money raised in previous years, this was due to the loss of CET's major contract (Yardley Primary) and a 10% discount offered to schools in compensation for the sessions they had missed due to the pandemic.

£68 was raised as part of CET's youth provision activities. It was decided to charge only £2 for the activities to help families recovering from the effects of Covid and to give children the opportunity to participate again in a outdoor and on-line activities.

Work commissioned by other organisations (Re-Future , Active Arts and Birmingham City University) have earned the Trust £2,376.26.

In addition, CET received the following donations:

- £110 from Birmingham Open Spaces Forum for the monthly submission of volunteer data
- £160 were donated by a member of staff from Birmingham City University, who led a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds on behalf of CET.

In December, CET's Project Manager, with the support of a Trustee, organised a workshop to develop and craft the organisation's strategy. The workshop involved a thorough review of the organisation's operating model and operating context. The analysis showed that our income operating model had worked for the charity for many years. However, recent events highlighted the importance of income diversification and the need to improve and balance those projects that are financially unsustainable but of great importance and benefit for the community.

As a result, CET's new financial strategy will be to keep a more balanced approach to income generation which includes grants, services to schools, commissioned work and project diversification. As part of the diversification strategy two new projects have been lined up in the pipeline: incorporation of blue spaces in CET's portfolio (bell boating activities) and environmental audits. Both activities will provide the Trust with unrestricted funds which will help to cover overheads and running costs.

With the help of the Head of Neighbourhood Fundraising, CET will continue applying for funding to support existing projects and the creation of new ones. In addition, letters will be sent out to businesses, and foundations as a new fundraising approach.

Due to the financial restraints schools are undergoing, CET will need to continue recruiting new schools interested in the Forest School programme and also offer after school activities. In addition, environmental workshops, gardening sessions and family learning days will continue to be offered to new partners, organisations and local companies to continue raising our profile.

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Reserves policy

As part of the Trust's Reserves Policy, CET continues to transfer £500 per month to a reserves account to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of at least three months, and that redundancy costs are covered if funding difficulties arise. At the end of March 2021, the account held £34,544.83

Based on last year's expenditure, transfers to the reserves account will need to continue for, at least, another 6 months (September 2020) to reach the amount stated in CET's reserve policy. In September the amount will be reviewed by Trustees.

The reserves policy will be kept under periodic review and reserves levels will be adjusted as perceptions of risks and other factors change, e.g. school budget cuts, reduction of commissioned work.

Future developments

CET will continue to enhance and improve urban green spaces by delivering and developing existing and new projects, and by continuing to work with other organisations within and outside Castle Vale.

CET will continue using its educational and youth programmes, including Forest School, Duke of Edinburgh, Dream Green and Vale Youth Action, as well as other structured activities to build and deepen the confidence and capability of our young people.

CET's Project Manager and Project Officer, with the support of the Board of Trustees, will continue to develop a strategic plan to ensure enough funds are received every year to continue with the work we do. Measures will continue to be put in place to reduce costs where possible, and new ways of generating income will be explored

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS REPORT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors 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 Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

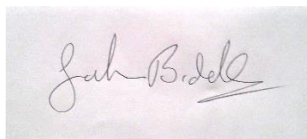
Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that 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 SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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.

Approval

The Trustee's Report was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees



Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair

Dated: 15/12/21

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Community Environmental Trust for the year ending 31 March 2021 set out on pages 24 to 31.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for an independent examination. I report in respect of the examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (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

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 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).;

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.



Paul Bowater ACA
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
138 Digbeth
Birmingham
B5 6DR

Dated: 16 December 2021

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES:					
Incoming Resources from charitable activities					
Services - Project Income		78,792	-	78,792	94,741
Grants Receivable		-	12,000	12,000	5,362
Incoming Resources from generated funds					
Donations		1,046	-	1,046	2,384
Interest		28	-	28	41
Total Incoming Resources		79,866	12,000	91,866	102,528
RESOURCES EXPENDED:					
Charitable Expenditure	3,4	68,858	16,462	85,320	91,645
Bank Charges and Taxation		82		82	85
Total Resources Expended		68,940	16,462	85,402	91,731
NET INCOMING RESOURCES		10,926	(4,462)	6,464	10,798
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		110,812	4,462	115,274	104,477
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		121,738	-	121,738	115,275

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

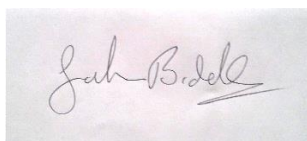
	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	6	<u>3,088</u>	<u>8,673</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	7	1,262	1,157
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>133,678</u>	<u>137,523</u>
		134,940	138,680
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	8	<u>16,290</u>	<u>32,079</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>118,650</u>	<u>106,601</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>121,738</u>	<u>115,274</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted funds - general Reserves	9	121,738	110,812
Restricted funds	9	-	4,462
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>121,738</u>	<u>115,274</u>

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. No members have required the company to obtain an audit of the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2021 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on behalf of the board by:



John Biddle - Chair of the Trustees



Lynne Witkamp – Vice-Chair

Dated: 15/12/21

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)” (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The charity is a “Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

- The charity becomes legally entitled to the resources after any performance conditions have been met;
- The trustees are virtually certain that they will receive the resources; and
- The monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income is deferred when monies are received in advance relating to projects commencing after the financial year where the contract period is specified by the funder.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Resources expended

Charitable activities includes all costs relating to general administration, which support the charitable purpose.

Grants offered subject to conditions, which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings that have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives, which is considered to be 4 years.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

Incoming resources with related expenditure

When incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) both are reported gross in the SOFA.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with bankers, other short term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 “Basic Financial Instruments” and Section 12 “Other Financial Issues” of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity’s balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the assets and settle the liability simultaneously.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market value of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

De-recognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

Pensions

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the company to the fund for the year.

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year (2020 - £nil).

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

4. Staff costs

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	63,216	68,408
Social Security	2,811	3,448
Pension contributions	<u>3,808</u>	<u>3,562</u>
	<u>69,835</u>	<u>75,417</u>

The average number of administration employees during the year was 4 (2020 – 3), who did not earn more than £60,000 in either year.

Pension commitments

The charitable company operates a defined contribution scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company and are independently administered. The pension cost charge above represents contributions payable by the charitable company to the fund. No contributions (2020 – nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date.

5. Financial instruments

	2021 £	2020 £
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Carrying value of financial liabilities		
Measured on amortised costs	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

6. Tangible assets

	Plant and Machinery	Computer Equipment	Total
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2020	16,137	6,205	22,342
Additions during the year	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	<u>16,137</u>	<u>6,205</u>	<u>22,342</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2020	9,060	4,609	13,669
Charge for the year	<u>4,034</u>	<u>1,551</u>	<u>5,585</u>
At 31 March 2021	13,094	6,160	19,254
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2021	<u>3,043</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>3,088</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>7,077</u>	<u>1,596</u>	<u>8,673</u>

7. Debtors

Due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	<u>1,262</u>	<u>1,157</u>
Total Debtors	<u>1,262</u>	<u>1,157</u>

8. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Tax and social security	1,856	1,503
Accruals	450	450
Deferred Income	<u>13,984</u>	<u>30,125</u>
	<u>16,290</u>	<u>32,078</u>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

9. Funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

Project	Opening Reserves	Incoming	Expenditure	Closing Reserves
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Reserves	<u>110,812</u>	<u>79,866</u>	<u>68,940</u>	<u>121,738</u>
Restricted Reserves				
Ambassadors for Good	4,462	-	4,462	-
HS2	-	12,000	12,000	-
Total Restricted Reserves	<u>4,462</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>16,462</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Reserves	<u><u>115,275</u></u>	<u><u>91,866</u></u>	<u><u>85,402</u></u>	<u><u>121,738</u></u>

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2020 are represented by current assets/(liabilities).