

Charity Registration Number: 1144788

Company Registration Number: 3907328 (England and Wales)

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

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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.enviromentaltrust.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

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.

#

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.

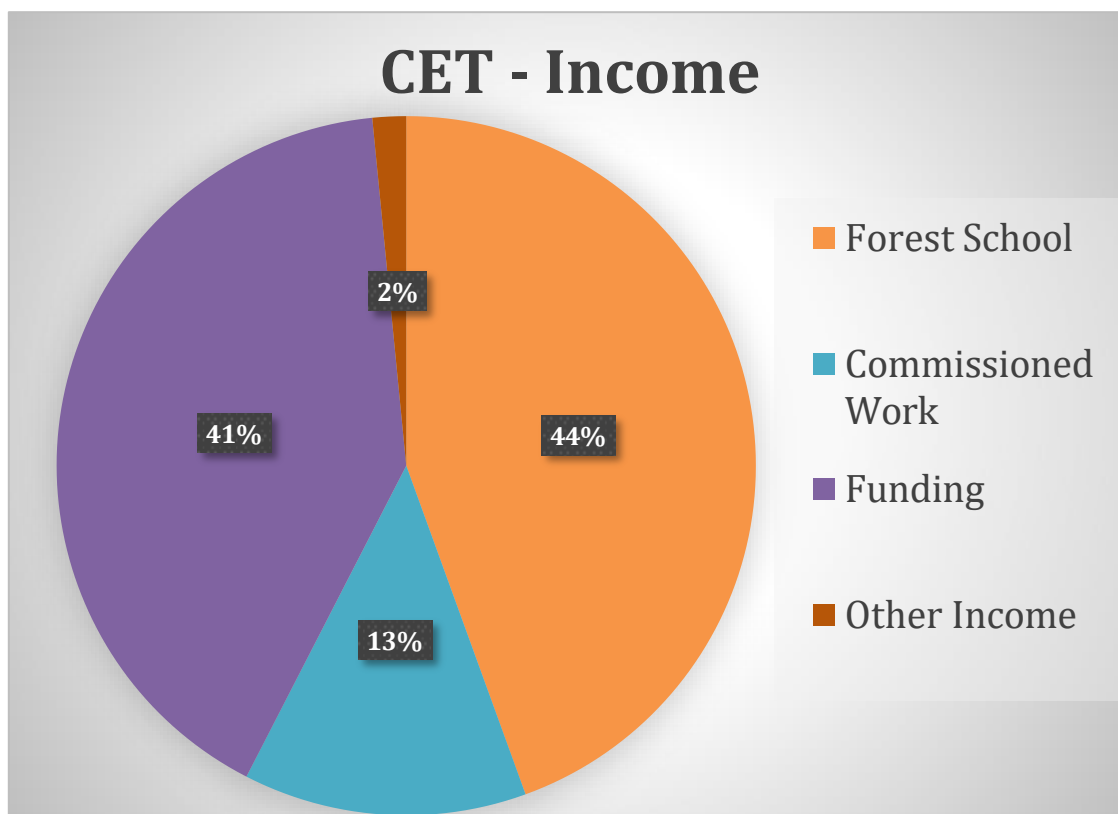
COMMUNITY EVENTS

- **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

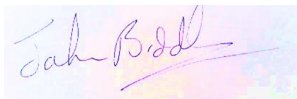
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures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

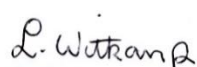
Approval

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).

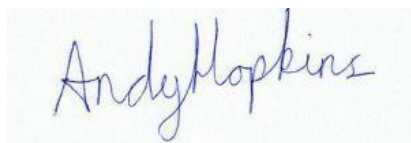
Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for an independent examination. I report in respect of the examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 144 of the Charities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

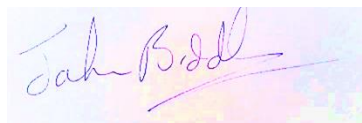
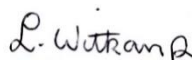
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

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 carries 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	16,137	6,883	23,020
 Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	16,137	6,205	19,254
Charge for the year	-	170	170
At 31 March 2024	16,137	6,375	22,511
 Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2024	-	509	509
At 1 April 2023	-	-	-

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

