



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

		Period start date			Period end date		
From	1	April	2020	To	31	March	2021

Charity name

Sustainable Merton

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

1156639

Charity's principal address

The Old Boiler House, Morden Hall Park,

Morden Hall Rd, Morden

Postcode SM4 5JD

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Gillian Leigh			
2	Ruth Baber	Secretary		
3	Isabelle Bano		Until 22/10/20	
4	Blanca Pena-Mendez		From 17/9/20	
5	Juliet Boyd			
6	Ben Cuddon	Chair		
7	James Webb	Vice Chair from 14/1/21		
8	Vera Lahme		Until 22/2/21	
9	Louisella Lazzarino		From 17/9/20	
10	Alan Maries		From 16/7/20	
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Diana Sterck – Chief Executive



Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	election

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
relationship with any related parties;
trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Staff were transferred from fixed term to permanent contracts reflecting their value to the charity. All staff received the London Living Wage as a minimum. Several staff were allocated increased hours as a result of additional funding gained.

In February 2021 Sustainable Merton took on a Community Fridge Co-ordinator on a sessional basis.

The Trustees appreciate that neither they, nor the staff, nor the volunteers reflect Merton's ethnic make-up and are attempting to rectify this, recognising that this is likely to be a long-term task.

As the charity has grown considerably and circumstances changed since the last formulation of its overall strategy, in February the Trustees met (remotely) with an external consultant to review the charity's overall strategy and consider our Vision and Mission statements. The work continued in 2021/22 developing short and medium term priorities and KPIs

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

To promote for the benefit of the public in and around the London Borough of Merton:

- (a) the conservation, protection and improvement of the environment, in particular but not exclusively by encouraging the prudent use of natural resources, and raising awareness of environmental issues;
- (b) the advancement of education of the public in the subject of sustainable development, in particular, but not exclusively by raising awareness of the issues associated with peak oil and climate change and the consequent need to develop a low carbon, sustainable future.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

In common with all organisations Sustainable Merton had to adapt its operations to deal with the restrictions and new needs thrown up by the **pandemic**. The staff worked from home, the Trustees held meetings including the AGM on Zoom, and many other activities took place online rather than in person.

The recruitment of new **Community Champions** continued. Through their awareness raising work supporting Sustainable Merton's four key areas of work (food, waste, energy and air quality) they helped residents benefit from lower energy, water and food bills and a cleaner environment. Community Champions themselves benefited opportunities to extend their skillset when in person activities were possible and some training sessions at events which moved online due to the pandemic.

The **Community Fridge** launched just at the time when it was urgently needed as households fell into food poverty due to the pandemic. Volunteer Fridge Friends organised and ran the fridge sessions, taking in donated food, much of which would otherwise have gone to waste, and handing out food parcels to anyone in need, without the need for formal referrals. In February 2021 a part-time (sessional) Fridge Co-ordinator post was created, enabling permanent staff to concentrate on other work for the charity. The Community Fridge concept was extended through a partnership with the Polish & Eastern European Families Network, Commonsense Development Trust and Wimbledon Guild creating a network of fridges across the borough, with SM being the lead partner funded by LB Merton.

SM's gardening projects were able to continue running throughout the pandemic with some additional safeguards, as they take place in a low risk outdoor spaces where social distancing is easily achieved. The **Phipps Bridge Community Garden** continued to flourish with regular volunteers working there each week. Community Harvest funding for seeds and plants boosted the volume of produce. Volunteers benefited from the fruit and vegetable harvest shared amongst them, as well as in person (socially distanced) social interaction and physical exercise. The users of the Community Fridge also benefited from the organic fruit and vegetables donated from the garden.

Since the lead volunteer for **Mitcham Orchard** left the area, site had become a little neglected. The few remaining volunteers asked SM to take over responsibility for the project and handed over their funds. The administration was brought entirely in house. New volunteers were enrolled and work sessions and training workshops reinstated from July, albeit with limited numbers due to Covid restrictions. Community Harvest funding was obtained to purchase compost to reinvigorate the garden beds. A local company donated and installed a new shed.

Funding from **Sustain** was used to link all the local community gardens that grow food (including those run by organisations other than SM) to the network of Community Fridges.

These gardening projects benefit local residents by providing opportunities for reducing food miles, teaching about gardening and eating seasonally, and most importantly during the pandemic, offering opportunities to improve mental and physical health through social interaction and exercise.

Sustainable Merton's partnership with Clarion Housing Association for their **Tree project** continued. Volunteers watered the trees in containers and the new native hedge and mowed the grass, bringing beauty to a somewhat neglected corner of Morden Recreation Ground.

Sustainable Merton continued to chair and manage LB Merton's **Environment Sub-Group**, now moved online, bringing together interested parties from within and beyond Merton Council to discuss topics such as air quality and the circular economy.

SM worked in partnership with Merton Council and the **Library of Things** to introduce a waste reduction project to the borough where tools and equipment can be hired, saving residents expensive purchases and reducing the amount of equipment lying unused in people's homes. A Community Champion was appointed to co-ordinate the Library of Things based in Morden Library. Due to the pandemic the launch of this project was deferred until 2021/22.

In response to Merton Council's declaration of a **Climate Emergency** in July 2019 3 SM members continued to sit on the Working Group drafting a Climate Strategy and Action Plan. This 30 year plan sets out a vision for Merton in 2050 and the key actions required to get to net-zero carbon across four thematic areas (the Green Economy, Buildings and Energy, Transport and Greening Merton), as well as how the Council is going to decarbonise its own operations by 2030. The whole borough will benefit over the coming years.

SM volunteers participated in the **Great British September Clean up** acting individually, rather than together in a single location. Litter picking continued on a monthly basis, where individuals posted photos and reports of their activities.

Funding was obtained to co-ordinate, finish and present a textile momento of lockdown relating to sustainability and the environment as part of the **Loving Earth** project set up by a Sustainable Merton supporter. Individuals produced panels of a uniform size, using any textile techniques they wished, with accompanying short texts explaining their sources of inspiration. Online workshops supported those new to textile work and provided a forum for exchange of ideas.

Abundance Wimbledon continued its work to minimise waste of fruit and provide fresh fruit for other groups which feed those in need. The group were able to organise a well attended covid-safe Fruit Day on 19/9/20.

Sustainable Merton continued its work of **awareness raising** of issues related to climate change in weekly or monthly webinars on a wide variety of sustainability topics given by Community Champions and outside experts. **Green Coffee** continued online and offers a considerable archive of past newsletters with information on all types of local sustainability issues. **Green Drinks** took place online for some months, providing a forum for more informal discussion of

sustainability issues and offering opportunities for informal social interaction at a time when social isolation was a significant problem for some.

The trustees have regard to the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance would be relevant.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

Sustainable Merton does not make grants, but uses its funds to execute the projects undertaken to enable it to achieve in line with its charitable objects.

Sustainable Merton is grateful for the many hours of unpaid work over 150 volunteers have put in to run projects. In addition the CEO, Community Champions Project Manager, Trustees and other volunteers have spent many hours in Zoom meetings with Merton Council officers and councillors, funders and other groups pressing for actions to combat climate change and introduce sustainability initiatives for the benefit of local people, in addition to seeking further funding for the charity's activities.

The Trustees are extremely grateful for the quick response and hard work of the staff team during the pandemic which has kept the charity afloat during a very challenging year. The charity owes much to their tolerance and willingness to adapt their working methods

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The sudden onset of the covid 19 pandemic demanded a significant change in working methods and increasing prioritisation of projects offering community support. The staff team responded extremely quickly, followed up new funding streams and supported each other in working from home. Due to their hard work the charity has increased its reach and raised significant extra funds in very difficult circumstances.

By March 2021 there were 117 **Community Champions**.

Over the year 1212 food parcels were put together and distributed by 40 Freidge Friends who volunteered 860 hours of their time at Sustainable Merton's **Community Fridge** in Morden. 10,971kg of food (equivalent to 26,295 meals and 35,056kg of CO2) donated by around 20 businesses as well as several local gardening projects was distributed to those in need.

Community Champion volunteers at **Phipps Bridge Community Garden** contributed 1538 hours of work and harvested a record breaking tonne of fruit and vegetables, a significant proportion of which was donated to the Community Fridge.

Around 40 Sustainable Merton volunteers participated in **Mitcham Community Orchard**.

A Community Champion was appointed to co-ordinate the **Library of Things** based in Morden Library, whose launch was considerably delayed due to the pandemic.

LB Merton's **Climate Action Plan**, to which SM members made significant contributions, was published in September 2020 and adopted by the Council in November 2020.

Sustainable Merton staff and volunteers submitted a response to **consultation** on the **Local Plan**

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Sustainable Merton's policy is to maintain reserves of £1,500 or 3 months estimated running costs, whichever is the larger in order to ensure the sustainability of the charity. £26,262 unrestricted funds were available at the end of the period

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Expenditure for Sustainable Merton's activities has been covered by grants specifically obtained in relation to each project and general donations. Sustainable Merton receives no core funding, but is paying essential office and support staff from its own funds, in addition to project funding provided for this purpose.

Due to the pandemic some existing funders cancelled old funding streams and created emergency funds which Sustainable Merton was able to tap into. A substantial amount of new funding from the People's Postcode Trust, Merton Giving, London Community Response Fund, Wimbledon Foundation, the team's 2.6 challenge and Waitrose Raynes Park green tokens, fully funding the running of the **Community Fridge** during 2020/21 and also making substantial contributions to the charity's overall running costs. Care has been taken not to incur additional costs for the charity as the funds we have are limited, but Local Giving has proved a cost effective way of individual receiving donations.

Merton Council funded the **Community Champions** for a further year, whilst Clarion Housing continued to fund the Tree Project.

Arrangements were put in place to claim Gift Aid from HMRC, as an earlier arrangement had lapsed.

Section F**Other optional information**

--

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

Ruth Baber

Benedict Michael Cuddon

Full name(s)

Ruth Baber

Benedict Michael Cuddon

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Secretary to the Trustees

Chair of Trustees

Date

24th January 2022



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	Wednesday, April 01, 2020		31 March 2021

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations , memberships etc	3,858	-	-	3,858	4,329
DIG Merton	-	150	-	150	20
Community Champions	-	50,000	-	50,000	30,000
Mitcham Community Garden	-	2,103	-	2,103	4,328
Clarion Housing	-	6,315	-	6,315	6,315
Food Poverty Action Plan	-	-	-	-	-
Library of things	-	-	-	-	7,320
Community Fridge	-	107,743	-	107,743	5,670
Loving Earth Project	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
Recycling on the go	-	5,184	-	5,184	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	3,858	176,495	-	180,353	57,982
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	3,858	176,495	-	180,353	57,982
A3 Payments					
General	8,265	-	-	8,265	14,137
DIG Merton	-	172	-	172	932
Community Champions	-	39,938	-	39,938	30,000
Mitcham Community Garden	-	1,139	-	1,139	1,952
Food Poverty Action Plan	-	-	-	-	1,000
Clarion Housing	-	6,315	-	6,315	10,681
Library of things	-	2,320	-	2,320	2,000
Community Fridge	-	45,389	-	45,389	2,129
Loving Earth Project	-	4,000	-	4,000	-
Recycling on th go	-	-	-	-	-
Office overhead	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	8,265	99,273	-	107,538	62,831
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	8,265	99,273	-	107,538	62,831
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 4,407	77,222	-	72,815	- 4,849
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	30,669	24,278	-	54,947	59,796
Cash funds this year end	26,262	101,500	-	127,762	54,947

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	CAF Bank	26,262	17,907	-
	Cooperative Bank		83,593	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	26,262	101,500	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Key deposits		-	
	nest pension		-	
	accruals		-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Print Name		Date of approval
Signature		Ruth Baber		24/01/22
Benedict Cudden		Benedict Cudden		24/01/22



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
SUSTAINABLE MERTON

On accounts for the year
ended

31 MARCH 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1156639

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2021.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

KA Mallett

Date:

26 / 01 / 2022

Name:

KEVIN A. MALLETT

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

ICAEW

Address:

18 THE BROADWAY
STONELEIGH, EPSOM
SURREY, KT17 2HU