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Filename:	Sustainable Merton FS25 public.PDF
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025  
FOR  
SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

Hartley Fowler LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
4th Floor Tuition House  
27-37 St George's Road  
Wimbledon  
London  
SW19 4EU

**SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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## **SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives and aims**

Sustainable Merton is Merton's local environment charity giving local residents, community organisations and businesses the opportunity to stimulate practical action to make our area a sustainable community. The thinking behind this is simply that a borough using energy and resources in a sustainable way could, if well planned and designed, be more resilient, more abundant and more pleasurable than at present.

The charitable purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document are 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.

In early 2024 our Trustees revisited our Vision and Mission and decided that we needed to align ourselves more to the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goals. We have therefore revised our four key pillars to (i) protecting natural resources and restoring biodiversity; (ii) taking action on environmental risks to health and wellbeing; (iii) creating a more sustainable, connected food system and addressing food insecurity; (iv) reducing waste and transitioning to the circular economy.

We have continued to proactively work in partnership with Merton Council, along with many organisations and groups in the borough to support the community, to influence behaviour change and to inspire, to mobilise and to enable people to take part in tackling climate change.

Internally, our trustees have continued to run regular working committees covering finance, fundraising, HR and risk assessment; overseen updates of our policies; and held a strategic planning session to develop our business plan, resulting in a stronger emphasis on increasing non-restricted income and to secure grant funding to support our volunteer management and the development of our volunteer strategy. The Trustees met six times over the year to ensure our charity continues to be fit for purpose, has the right organisational structure in place and is meeting its obligations as a Charity.

##### **Significant activities**

A summary of the significant activities in the year is presented below.

Our Community Fridge continued to provide vital support to local people experiencing food insecurity. The project reduces food wastage (which in turn would produce greenhouse gas emissions contributing to the climate emergency) and benefits local residents with the supply of fresh and ambient food as well as referrals to other partner organisations who provide additional welfare.

Our growing space activity increased. Both Phipps Bridge Community Allotment and Mitcham Community Orchard and Garden, are green havens in different parts of Mitcham and provided opportunities for local residents to work together, benefiting from social interaction, exercise and gaining horticultural knowledge. We also organised volunteer planting days at Canons House and introduced initiatives to encourage people to grow their own food, and supplies to the Community Fridge, thereby reducing food miles.

Merton Garden Streets planting days offered residents social interaction and small scale outdoor projects which provided public benefit by beautifying local streets.

The Wheel project, which supports waste minimisation and the circular economy, was launched in summer 2022. The aim is to encourage networking and build capacity in waste minimisation and upcycling projects across the borough, reducing waste and carbon footprints of local businesses, while increasing opportunities for businesses to collaborate.

## **SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The Preloved Studio, based in Canons House in Mitcham, grew its textile reduction activity as a destination for local residents in the under-served East of the Borough to gain practical, financial and social benefits from learning textile skills.

We also continued our work in Pollards Hill in Mitcham, delivering the WeRPollards waste minimisation project, in partnership with Moat Housing.

Recent and current projects and activities include: The Wheel, Merton's Community Fridge, Merton Garden Streets, Repair Cafés, Pollards Hill Waste & Recycling Project, Mitcham Community Orchard & Gardens, Phipps Bridge Community Garden, The Preloved Studio, Green Coffee, and Merton Green Parents.

#### **Public benefit**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities we have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Trustees ensure that our activities are in line with our charitable objectives and aims, to protect and improve the natural environment. We measure the environmental impact that each of our programmes achieve, which are set out below. In addition, many of the programmes deliver added social benefits. As a result of our work:

- Less waste is sent to landfill/incineration - in particular food, packaging and fabrics.
- Greenhouse gas emissions are cut through reduced energy use and reduced waste of materials and food.
- Less pollution is created including reduced plastic pollution and air pollution.
- Our neighbourhoods are cleaner and people feel a sense of civic pride by participating in our community projects.
- People in hardship are given support, for example through the provision of healthy food, and better access to support and advice.
- People struggling with the cost of living are provided good quality food, contributing to their overall wellbeing.
- People gain new skills, knowledge and friends, contributing to the overall wellbeing of our community.

#### **Volunteers**

Without its volunteers, Sustainable Merton could not achieve all that it does. Our volunteers include our Fridge Friends as well as Growing Spaces and Merton Garden Streets volunteers, those volunteering at our Repair Cafés, the Preloved Studio and at WeRPollards. We also have a number of volunteers that support us in other ways, contributing to our business planning, our fundraising and our communications. The number of volunteers increased to 341 and the number of hours given by our volunteers was 19,198.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

##### **Charitable activities**

**Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.**

We continue to grow our ambitions to take forward climate action projects, bring communities together and influence people to change their behaviours to achieve a more sustainable lifestyle whilst improving their health and wellbeing. We have done this in the context of the continuation of the cost of living crisis and unpredictable energy costs, and we are very mindful that we should be encouraging people to be community minded, have pride in their borough and be kind to each other and the world that we live in. We work proactively in partnership with many organisations and groups in the borough to support our work in the Merton borough.

#### **PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES AND RESTORING BIODIVERSITY**

##### **Merton Garden Streets**

In 2024, Sustainable Merton was awarded funding for Merton Garden Streets through the Merton's Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods and Community Climate Action Funds. The project's aims were to increase plant biodiversity in Merton by planting pollinator friendly plants, to reduce the likelihood of flash floods and to encourage intergenerational social cohesion through volunteer-led planting initiatives at community planting days.

114 streets signed up to Merton Garden Streets in 2024. Some of the previous year's sign-ups remained active volunteers, but chose not to sign up in 2024 as they had well established verges and did not need any plant supplies.

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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Three community planting days took place on the fourth weekend of May, June and July 2024. The first community planting day in May was preceded by a plant swap at Morden Baptist Church. Over 500 plants were swapped and the verge in front of the church was planted up. With a minimum average of 10 participants per road (114 total signups), we can estimate that at least 1,140 volunteers participated across the borough.

Volunteers planted over 5,000 plants in tree pits, verges and front gardens across Merton. Almost 2,000 plants were purchased, and 1,800 plants were donated from volunteers who propagated and grew their own plants. Approximately 500 plants and 500 bulbs were donated by Wimbledon Foundation, the Hampton Court Flower Show and Chelsea Flower Show and collected by street coordinators who distributed them via the network of volunteers who planted them across Merton. 300 plants were donated by Morden Hall Park Garden Centre. Local parks, which include John Innes, Wimbledon Park, South Park Gardens and Holland Garden who were turning over their beds, allowed volunteers to collect approximately 500 plants which were then planted on the verges instead of being turned into compost.

In autumn, over 3,000 bulbs (six different varieties) were planted by volunteers across Merton in October, November and December. At the same time, seed saving was encouraged and lots of resources and advice shared on the WhatsApp group and social media. A seed swap took place in November at Morden Park Baptist Church. It was very well attended, and hundreds of seeds were sorted, packaged and shared. Another seed swap took place in March 2025 at Wimbledon Library to make seeds easily available for anyone wanting to green their streets in spring. Over 50 volunteers and local residents attended.

Facebook page: 130 likes, 183 followers

Facebook group: 747 members

WhatsApp group: 105 members

#### Canons House Community Garden

We continued our partnership, with Merton Council, with grant funding, to look after and develop Canons House Community Garden. Twelve volunteer sessions were held between July and March. This included one bigger work day on 2nd July to clear up the site. Around 135 hours were given during the sessions with more being volunteered from a local school, charity and friends groups, tending to their own plots. The Canons Community Garden WhatsApp group was re-established and currently has 20 members. Information is also shared on our Growing Spaces social media page and Sustainable Merton's social media pages. Flyers and posters were designed and distributed amongst the community in 2024 to recruit new volunteers and promote opportunities. Social media assets have also been designed and are used regularly to promote each volunteer session. We have been working with Goodgym to recruit more volunteers since January 2025.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Due to lack of grant funding we have not been able to continue our Citizen Science project focusing on Air Quality and this activity ended in March 2024. We, however, welcomed the introduction of ULEZ in Merton, along with an increase in school streets, both of which have had a positive impact on the quality of the air we breathe.

The Cost of Living crisis has continued to affect Merton residents and our Community Fridge supports people who struggle with being able to buy sufficient food to stay healthy. Evidence collected from all our projects demonstrate that our activity around connecting with nature, growing food, food insecurity and taking positive climate action and making new social connections, has a positive effect on people's overall health and wellbeing.

#### FOOD SYSTEMS AND FOOD INSECURITY

##### Merton's Community Fridge

Our Community Fridge, run from Morden Baptist Church, continues to be in demand and we are working to find long term funding solutions to support this vital service. During the year, we experienced a number of staff changes, but managed to keep the service active and we currently have a team consisting of a Manager, a Coordinator and two ebike couriers. We also have 65 volunteer Fridge Friends, who are central to our service, some of whom have been recipients and volunteer as part of their payback to society.

Facing longer term funding pressure, we launched our first individual fundraising campaign in November 2024. We did a mini survey of members of the Fridge and had many who were willing to be filmed or give us audio clips. When combined with our corporate fundraising, we exceeded our £10,000 goal and raised £12,000 - a fantastic result for our first effort.

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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We were successful in a bid for Hubbub's investment fund for £5k to build a bike shed at the church. Unfortunately, the cut in Merton Council funding for the 2025/26 year meant we needed to redirect this to support continued use of the e-bike following the end of Hubbub's FoodConnect program in March 2025. The bike is currently stored for free at the storage container at an Id Verde depot. A more suitable long-term solution needs to be found depending on the long-term use of the e-bike and trailer.

In February 2025 Merton Council announced that they were changing their funding model for 2025/26 and required us to transition to a pantry model of delivery. As our service focuses on using food that would otherwise be thrown away and our belief that this should be free to our Fridge members, we decided not to adopt the pantry model and this has resulted in a 70% funding cut. To ensure the Fridge can remain open in 2025/26, a reduced schedule was agreed for the new financial year. As a result of our funding cuts, we have also had to opt out of our coordination role for Merton's Food Response Network.

In February 2025, Hubbub asked if they could visit the Fridge with their CEO and 2 reps from Sainsbury's. The visit was very successful and led to them asking to film us for their new promo video which is now on their website.

We are thankful to our hosts at Morden Baptist Church for providing space to deliver this project and also to London Borough of Merton for providing additional storage at the Civic Centre.

Our Community Fridge has seen a fairly consistent increase in visitors as well as food collected. Volunteer hours were somewhat erratic with lower hours following the staffing changes, and increasing again from September/October. We also began tracking food waste (either from expired food or food not suitable for distribution) and this averages 8-10% per month).

During the year we had 10,949 visits (almost 10% up on last year); redistributed 63,824 kg of surplus food, equivalent to 153,178 meals; and saved 204,238 of CO2 emissions. Our 65 volunteers contributed 4962 hours.

#### Mitcham Community Orchard and Garden

Mitcham Community Orchard and Garden, a beautiful urban growing space and peaceful haven for people and nature, right in the heart of Mitcham, provides a community-led green space where fruit and vegetables are grown using sustainable and organic methods, and where a range of different habitats are maintained to support biodiversity whilst also providing environmental benefits to Merton.

The dedication and commitment of our volunteers has seen Mitcham Orchard come along in leaps and bounds. 37 Growing Friday volunteer sessions and 10 weekend Action Days were planned and delivered. Significantly, we introduced community cooking to our Saturday Action Days where we prepare and cook nutritious vegan food, using products grown at the orchard, to share with volunteers. Close to 2000 hours of volunteer time was given in 2024.

We planned and delivered our regular spring open day on 11th May and our harvest festival on 22nd September. We also delivered an informal wassail on 11th January and a Blossom Walk and Talk on 26th April. These events aim to bring local people into the space who may not be able to, or want to, join our gardening sessions.

We held 2 formal working group meetings online with our core group of 9 volunteers who commit so much time and energy to the project. Work continued to promote our volunteer sessions via WhatsApp, social media and on our website. We entered into the London in Bloom awards for the second time and achieved the highest level 'Outstanding' in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' category.

In terms of infrastructure, we created a new composting system, fixed the existing tap and added two extra stand pipes and created a new smaller raised bed for the roses. The pond has been developed with additional planting. We're also thrilled to have a brand-new outdoor shelter, thanks to the amazing generosity of GreenLight, a local business.

#### Morden Hall Park Community Kitchen

From November 2023 to February 2025, we transformed the kitchen garden in Morden Hall Park into a thriving and productive growing space, supplying locally grown fresh produce to people experiencing food poverty in Merton. In the process, this green space became a community resource, providing volunteer opportunities for Merton residents and for schools and corporate groups. Two regular weekly volunteer sessions were delivered with volunteers giving over 500 hours in time to help look after the garden and care for the crops.

Our ambition for the garden was to grow a meaningful amount of fresh fruit and vegetables for donation to our Community Fridge and network. We harvested and donated 222 kg of crops, including brassicas, root crops, greens, onions, beans and rhubarb.

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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The funding has now ended and it has been handed back over to the National Trust to continue this great work.

#### Community Food Growing Project

Due to high demand from its street coordinators, Merton Garden Streets launched its new Community Food Growing Project in October 2024. Funding until June 2025 was secured through the Hubbub Community Food Hub Grant. The project aims to bring together a community of food growers from across the borough and create connections for locally grown food to be shared within the community and with Merton's Community Fridge Network. At monthly events, street coordinators and local residents can learn all about growing fruit, vegetables, and herbs. Between October 2024 and March 2025, 7 workshops took place with 95 residents attending (on average 13 per workshop).

#### Merton's Green Social Prescribing Project

The final green social prescribing workshop 'Working with Natural Dyes' was held at Mitcham Orchard in April 2024 and was a great success. This funding has now ended and a final report was sent to Merton Connected who administered the funding.

#### Phipps Bridge Community Allotment

The Phipps Bridge Community Allotment continued to offer twice weekly sessions to volunteers from across Merton enabling people to learn about organic gardening and to enjoy fresh air and exercise as well as social contact. The demographics of the two sessions are different - retired people, part-time workers, vulnerable and disabled adults on Wednesdays and younger working adults on Sundays; thus we consider it important to continue to offer the Sunday session even though they are less well attended. The total number of hours contributed was 1398 and the total weight of fruit and vegetables was just over half a ton at 543kg. The produce is shared amongst volunteers and donated to Sustainable Merton's Community Fridge.

#### WASTE REDUCTION AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

##### The Wheel

The Wheel is our circular economy project, originally developed by Merton's Climate Action Group and has received grant funding from Merton Council. With our delivery partners we developed and managed the following initiatives and events::

- \* 5 Repair Cafés at Canons House, Cricket Green Ward (Mitcham),
- \* 1 Repair Café at Moat's Wellbeing Studio, Pollards Hill Ward (Mitcham)
- \* Additional and separate furniture repair and upcycling workshop at NEMCA, Graveney Ward (Mitcham),
- \* 1 public film screening and panel discussion event on environmental impacts of fast fashion at Vestry Hall, Cricket Green Ward (Mitcham),
- \* 1 public panel discussion event on low waste living in a circular economy at Merton Arts Space, Hillside Ward (Wimbledon)
- \* The creation of 100 draught excluders made from scrap and donated fabrics for community use,
- \* The creation of 100 reusable fabric food produce bags made from preloved and donated fabrics for community use,
- \* Updated The Wheel Website to signpost residents to waste reduction options in Merton.
- \* Became an official supporter of London Repair Week.

Through these initiatives, The Wheel had 71 attendances across 6 Repair Cafes and 135 attendances including the repair team. Through these initiatives the Wheel directly prevented 513 kg of waste with 38 unique volunteers giving over 210 hours to the project. The avoided GHG emissions were estimated (based on stated assumptions) to be 2,539 kg CO2e.

In addition to these impacts, the initiatives also contributed to a range of co-benefits such as improved mental health & wellbeing, civic pride, social cohesion, building green skills, behaviour change, and saved money through avoided cost of buying new items during an ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Evidence of co-benefits was gathered through participant satisfaction surveys and written testimonials. Survey respondents who attended our repair events estimated a total combined saving of £1,922 thanks to the free community repair on offer.

##### The Preloved Studio

The Preloved Studio is a community space dedicated to textile repair, reuse and repurposing. It is located within Canons House in Mitcham. This year, Sustainable Merton developed and managed the following activities:

- \* 3 residency spaces for local sustainable textile businesses (Barjis, Little ARK and RE-RUNN CIC)
  - \* Weekly social sewing drop-in sessions
  - \* 6 free sewing workshops to upskill the local community
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## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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- o 2 x Sewing Machine 101 for Beginners (Delivered by Sustainable Merton)
- o Making Lavender Bags from Scrap Fabrics (Delivered by Little ARK CIC)
- o Making Bucket Hats from Scrap Fabrics (Delivered by Sustainable Merton)
- o The Ancient Art of Ajrak Print using Preloved Fabrics (Delivered by Barjis)
- o Upcycled Fashion (Delivered by RE-RUNN CIC)

Through these activities the Preloved Studio directly prevented 323 kg of waste. The avoided GHG emissions were also estimated (based on stated assumptions) to be 1,024 kg. This was a significant over-delivery on the Preloved Studio project targets for 2024-25 of 200 kg avoided waste and 720 kg avoided CO2 emissions.

Over 360 people visited the Studio and volunteers gave a total of 1360 volunteer hours.

In addition to these impacts, the activities also contributed to a range of co-benefits such as improved mental health and wellbeing, civic pride, social cohesion, building green skills, behaviour change, and saved money through avoided cost of buying new items during an ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Evidence of co-benefits was gathered through participant satisfaction surveys and written testimonials. Survey respondents who attended workshops, or regular / semi-regular attendees of drop-in Social Sewing Sessions estimated a total combined saving of £1,980 thanks to Preloved Studio activities.

#### WeRPollards

Back in 2022, Moat and Sustainable Merton partnered to bring a recycling and behaviour campaign to the Pollard's Hill estate in Mitcham. Now branded WeRPollards the goal was to recruit community waste champions to help tackle contamination and dumping issues and build a brand promoting responsibility in waste disposal. Fast forward to where we are now, the WeRPollards campaign has been a successful model for changing attitudes and behaviours, has made significant inroads in tackling waste issues on the estate, as well as building a dedicated resident led community and provided a legacy for a new model for WeRPollards from September 2025.

Results include:

- The group reforming in the new Wellbeing Studio with a stronger emphasis on education particularly around the idea of 'reduce and recycle'.
- New partnerships and collaborations.
- In October 2024 we delivered Pollards Hill first ever Repair Cafe which included training and delivery by our waste champions in Wellbeing Studio. - Residents brought along clothes and electrical items and were able to renew items and save money. This prevented 6kg of waste, saved 84 kg of CO2 emissions and saved residents £135.
- In December we launched the Waste to Waves: Sea Life Sculpture challenge. Children from William Rose Primary School used sustainable materials to produce over 20 sculptures.
- In March we produced a display using the sculptures. 7 children helped build the display and it has since been displayed around the community.
- In April we completed a new round of bin sticker installation, with around 80% of the site now having improved recycling messaging and WeRPollards branding.

#### COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS

In 2024-25, Sustainable Merton's communications and engagement activity continued to raise awareness, strengthen partnerships, and inspire local action on sustainability and community wellbeing. Our storytelling, campaigns, events and media presence reached a wide local audience, showcasing the power of collective community action.

We began the year by hosting key public debates and community events to place sustainability firmly on the local agenda. Our Electoral Environmental Debate in partnership with Merton Friends of the Earth and Merton Cyclists Group brought together over 80 residents to question London Assembly candidates, with press coverage in the South West Londoner. Our CEO, Diana Sterck, also chaired the Wimbledon Hustings event ahead of the General Election, ensuring environmental issues were at the forefront of political discussion.

Our visibility grew through strong media partnerships. Diana appeared live on BBC Radio London, sharing how our 400 volunteers contribute over 19,000 hours annually - the equivalent of 10.5 full-time staff - to projects from food growing and waste reduction to Merton's Community Fridge. We were also featured on BBC Radio 4 as part of The Orchard Project's Radio 4 appeal, which was recorded with Julia Bradbury at Mitcham Community Orchard & Gardens.

Our work was recognised borough-wide when Sustainable Merton was named "Charity of the Year" at the Merton Best Business Awards 2024, a proud achievement reflecting the collective impact of our small team, volunteers, and supporters.

## **SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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Throughout the year, we engaged the public through creative campaigns, markets, and events that connected environmental action with everyday life:

- Partnered with Love Wimbledon for Sustainable September and ran a stall at their Sustainable Market on Wimbledon Piazza, where we launched our reusable water bottles to promote reuse and raise funds.
- Hosted our first-ever Greener Living Pop-Up Market at Elys, Wimbledon, and later our Greener Giving Holiday Pop-Up at Wimbledon Quarter, both celebrating local sustainable businesses and inspiring low-waste lifestyles.
- Organised an exclusive screening of "Fashion Reimagined" during Sustainable Fashion Week, followed by a panel discussion with industry experts exploring circular fashion.
- Partnered with Wimbledon Guild in Morden for our first photo exhibition at Metronome coffee shop, showcasing the breadth of our volunteer-led climate action projects.

Our storytelling highlighted the social side of sustainability. We celebrated Volunteers' Week and proudly shared news of our volunteers' recognition at the Merton Partnership Civic Pride Volunteer Awards. We launched our video-led "Feed Families, Fight Waste" campaign to raise urgent funds for Merton's Community Fridge amid increasing need, using real stories to show how the project is a lifeline for local families. The campaign was a success with over £12,400 being generously donated to keep the Fridge open.

Community and environmental impact were also recognised through awards, including London in Bloom's "Outstanding" rating for Mitcham Community Orchard and Gardens. We continued to grow public engagement through awareness campaigns such as No Mow May, World Refill Day, and Clean Air Day.

We strengthened relationships across the sector, welcoming visits to Merton's Community Fridge from national environmental charity Hubbub and Sainsbury's, and connecting with local partners at community events and beyond.

Finally, we launched our Friends of Sustainable Merton membership scheme in March 2025, inviting residents to become part of a growing movement for a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient Merton.

Through dynamic communications and meaningful engagement, Sustainable Merton has continued to build a strong, connected community that takes tangible action for people and the planet.

#### **Fundraising activities**

The Trustees set up a fundraising committee in 2023 with the purpose of increasing the charity's financial resilience by growing its proportion of unrestricted funding. During the year, £18,717 was received from unrestricted donations and we are thankful to all those who supported us through donations and activity in kind. Looking ahead, we have drawn up a 3 year fundraising strategy with stretch targets for donations and unrestricted income as well as donations in kind.

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

##### **Financial position**

During the year our grant income decreased by 36% on the previous year to £235,949 and our overall income reduced to £261,782 from £391,447, reflecting the competitiveness of bidding for grants within the Charity sector. The trustee-led finance committee continued to meet 3 times a year to review our financial position in detail, including our reserves position along with management accounts and the production of the annual accounts.

We raised £25,833 in donations and other restricted and unrestricted income, a 15% increase on the previous year of £22,538. The Trustees have approved a 3 year fundraising strategy which aims to reduce the charity's reliance on restricted grant income and includes stretch targets for unrestricted income.

The Charity remains in acceptable financial health with funds to cover its contractual commitments.

## **SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

##### **Principal funding sources**

The majority of our funding came from grants. During this financial year Sustainable Merton delivered grants awarded from:

- The London Borough of Merton
- Clarion Futures
- Pollards Hill Community Initiative Fund
- Hubbub Foundation
- CoOp Community Fund
- Merton Giving
- Magic Little Grant
- Wandle Valley Forum

##### **Reserves policy**

Sustainable Merton's Reserves Policy was changed in 2024 and is to retain unrestricted funds to the value of 6 months' core expenditure. This amount includes non-project funded salaries and office costs, enabling the charity to continue running during lean periods between the award of grants.

Details of the amount of reserves held (prior to the change in our Reserves Policy) are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities for the year and the balance sheet for the year end.

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Governing document**

The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and is regulated by the Charity Commission. The activities of the CIO are controlled by its constituting document which is based on the Charity Commission model association CIO constitution.

##### **Recruitment and appointment of new trustees**

New trustees are co-opted by the Board of Trustees during the year and confirmed by election at the AGM.

##### **Organisational structure**

The Board of Trustees delegate the day to day running of the charity to the CEO and team. Our CEO, Diana Sterck, oversees a team, which includes a Communications Manager, Project Managers and Coordinators, each working on specific community projects. We also had 2 ebike couriers and self-employed finance, project management and PR support. All our project managers are supported by a large pool of local volunteers who are integral partners in project delivery. We collaborate with local businesses, schools and other charities within the borough. In 2025 we had 4.5 full time equivalent staff.

##### **Induction and training of new trustees**

All new trustees have received induction training on their governance responsibilities, including financial controls, safeguarding and other policies.

##### **Wider network**

The Sustainable Merton CEO is responsible for managing the charity's operational activity, overseeing a team of staff, volunteers and self-employed contractors. Sustainable Merton takes a very active part in the local community and borough networks, and much of its activity is undertaken in partnership with local organisations as outlined in the previous sections.

##### **Risk management**

We have one Trustee who takes the lead on our organisational risk assessment and he has worked with other trustees and the CEO to review our organisational and project risks. The report is reviewed by all Trustees twice a year. We use the risk assessment methodology recommended by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Controls and mitigating actions are in place to minimise risks in the areas of governance, finance, operations, external factors and regulatory and compliance activities.

## **SUSTAINABLE MERTON**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

##### **Registered Charity number**

1156639

##### **Principal address**

The Old Boiler House  
Morden Hall Park  
Morden Hall Road  
Morden  
SM4 5JD

##### **Trustees**

A Wildman - Chair (appointed 10/7/25)  
R Baber - Secretary  
A S Randall - Treasurer  
Dr J D Boyd  
S Kim-Stroud  
A Laidler  
Dr G Leigh  
A Maries  
K Punungwe-Mutandiro (resigned 12/5/25)  
A Tacu  
B M Cuddon - Chair (resigned 10/7/25)

##### **Independent Examiner**

Hartley Fowler LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
4th Floor Tuition House  
27-37 St George's Road  
Wimbledon  
London  
SW19 4EU

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 15 January 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

A Wildman - Chair - Trustee

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SUSTAINABLE MERTON

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### Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Sustainable Merton

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Sustainable Merton (the Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

### 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 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### Independent examiner's statement

Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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 accounts to be reached.

  
Jonathan Askew

Hartley Fowler LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
4th Floor Tuition House  
27-37 St George's Road  
Wimbledon  
London  
SW19 4EU

Date: 20/01/2026

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>					
Donations and legacies		18,717	380	19,097	20,396
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
General		5,532	235,949	241,481	370,756
Other trading activities	2	1,016	-	1,016	-
Investment income	3	188	-	188	295
<b>Total</b>		<u>25,453</u>	<u>236,329</u>	<u>261,782</u>	<u>391,447</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>					
Raising funds		1,449	-	1,449	1,015
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
General		<u>31,864</u>	<u>271,944</u>	<u>303,808</u>	<u>369,798</u>
<b>Total</b>		<u>33,313</u>	<u>271,944</u>	<u>305,257</u>	<u>370,813</u>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		(7,860)	(35,615)	(43,475)	20,634
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Total funds brought forward		75,723	56,075	131,798	111,164
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u><u>67,863</u></u>	<u><u>20,460</u></u>	<u><u>88,323</u></u>	<u><u>131,798</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### BALANCE SHEET 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	6	2,164	-	2,164	4,136
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stocks	7	473	-	473	-
Debtors	8	6,505	3,000	9,505	22,284
Cash at bank		98,921	48,988	147,909	171,679
		105,899	51,988	157,887	193,963
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(40,200)	(31,528)	(71,728)	(66,301)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		65,699	20,460	86,159	127,662
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		67,863	20,460	88,323	131,798
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		67,863	20,460	88,323	131,798
<b>FUNDS</b>	10				
Unrestricted funds				67,863	75,723
Restricted funds				20,460	56,075
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>				88,323	131,798

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 15 January 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:

A Wildman - Chair - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

##### **Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

##### **Income**

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

##### **Expenditure**

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

##### **Tangible fixed assets**

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

Plant and machinery	- 33% on cost
Computer equipment	- 33% on cost

Where restricted funds are used to acquire assets for ongoing use by the charity the expenditure is included as direct charitable expenditure of restricted funds with the restriction treated as having been met on acquisition. Where the assets remain within the control of the charity the assets are revalued based on their original costs and treated as unrestricted fixed asset additions.

Depreciation is charged on fixed assets from the date on which they are brought into use. No depreciation is charged where the assets are not brought into use prior to the year end.

##### **Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

##### **Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

##### **Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

##### **Hire purchase and leasing commitments**

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.



## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 2. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Merchandise income	<u>1,016</u>	<u>-</u>

#### 3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2025 £	2024 £
Deposit account interest	<u>188</u>	<u>295</u>

#### 4. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

##### Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

#### 5. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>			
Donations and legacies	20,396	-	20,396
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
General	3,432	367,324	370,756
Investment income	-	295	295
<b>Total</b>	<u>23,828</u>	<u>367,619</u>	<u>391,447</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>			
Raising funds	-	1,015	1,015
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
General	<u>2,985</u>	<u>366,813</u>	<u>369,798</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>2,985</u>	<u>367,828</u>	<u>370,813</u>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>	20,843	(209)	20,634
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>			
Total funds brought forward	54,880	56,284	111,164
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u>75,723</u>	<u>56,075</u>	<u>131,798</u>

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
<b>COST</b>			
At 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025	4,348	3,097	7,445
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
At 1 April 2024	1,092	2,217	3,309
Charge for year	1,092	880	1,972
At 31 March 2025	2,184	3,097	5,281
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
At 31 March 2025	2,164	-	2,164
At 31 March 2024	3,256	880	4,136

Fixed assets acquired with restricted funds are capitalised with the restriction treated as satisfied on acquisition. The purchase cost is reflected initially as restricted expenditure with the assets acquired being revalued and included as unrestricted fixed asset additions where they remain within the control of the charity.

#### 7. STOCKS

	2025 £	2024 £
Stocks	473	-

#### 8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Other debtors	2,290	14,506
Accrued income	3,000	6,527
Prepayments	4,215	1,251
	9,505	22,284

#### 9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	11,898	10,127
Taxation and social security	3,366	3,576
Other creditors	56,464	52,598
	71,728	66,301

## SUSTAINABLE MERTON

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/4/24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/25 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	75,723	(7,860)	67,863
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Restricted	56,075	(35,615)	20,460
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>131,798</u>	<u>(43,475)</u>	<u>88,323</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	25,453	(33,313)	(7,860)
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Restricted	236,329	(271,944)	(35,615)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>261,782</u>	<u>(305,257)</u>	<u>(43,475)</u>

#### Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/24 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	54,880	20,843	75,723
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Restricted	56,284	(209)	56,075
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>111,164</u>	<u>20,634</u>	<u>131,798</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	23,828	(2,985)	20,843
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Restricted	367,619	(367,828)	(209)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>391,447</u>	<u>(370,813)</u>	<u>20,634</u>

**11. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES**

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2025.