

Sustainable St Albans

Annual report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

A group of local people ...



Working together for an environmentally sustainable district

Registered charity 1173118

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Introduction

Sustainable St Albans is an environmental charity working to help the city and district of St Albans ("the District") to become a more environmentally sustainable place, in response to the climate and ecological crises that we face. These problems require urgent action at all levels: internationally, nationally, locally, and individually. Sustainable St Albans raises awareness of these issues across the District, provides organisations and residents with information about the climate actions that they can take, and runs practical carbon-cutting projects.

The charity began the year ended 31 March 2023 (*referred to in this review as "the year"*) facing up to the loss (through ill health) of our then recently appointed community engagement leader but otherwise with all projects in at least reasonable shape. In the absence of any dramatic development, this report is in our usual format, but the longer period from March 2022 to the date of this report (*referred to in this review as "the period"*) has been one of mixed outcomes, requiring us to be frank about our disappointments whilst still celebrating our successes.

Think globally ...

We again note with sadness the many weather-related tragedies affecting societies around the globe. Although July 2023 did not offer the best holiday weather in the UK, it was, until August, the hottest month of the modern era based on global average temperatures. The latest epithet for human induced climate change seems to be "global boiling", and it seems as if no news broadcast is complete without footage of an uncontrollable wildfire or surging floodwaters from yet another country. The severity and extent of these, as well as of climate-induced heatwaves, droughts, ice melts, and hurricanes, take lives today, and make the future look harder even for those of us beyond the epicentres.

The challenge we all face is that these news stories take place in a world where emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) continue to rise, despite, for example, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("the IPCC") observing that limiting warming to 1.5°C requires "deep global GHG emissions reductions this decade".

We recognise that at all levels of society many fine words are said, and that positive actions are being taken, but the trustees continue to hold the view that much more must be done to encourage many more people, in all walks of life, to act if we are to ameliorate the effects of global heating. Accordingly, our work remains urgent and essential.



... act locally

As a charity, one of our tasks is to raise awareness of climate risks that we all face and to encourage the mitigation and adaptation that will be needed to stave off the worst impacts of the climate change. The principal way that we do this is to highlight the steps that individuals, households, organisations and communities can take to reduce their own ecological footprints.

We know that a climate neutral St Albans would have an imperceptible direct impact even on aggregate UK GHG emissions. The critically important objective is that our District can be counted in the movement that will catalyse the larger scale measures that are needed. Greta Thunberg's "You are never too small to make a difference" works for us!

Raising awareness and community engagement

What it is

This is an umbrella term for everything we do to increase the awareness and understanding of the public of environmental risk and sustainable behaviours, particularly, but not only, relating to climate change. Almost all of our activities raise that awareness, but in this section, we report on events and activities particularly intended to engage with and provide information to the community.

Our events and activities are for the benefit of the general public.

We produce a free, colourful and informative monthly newsletter by email which includes details of all of our upcoming activities and other items that we believe will be of interest to our subscribers. (To receive the newsletter please click the [sign up button](#) at the foot of our website home page.)

Our website is organised around four audiences: home, community, business and schools. The website displays increasing amounts of information and resources, including many blogs on sustainability themes, and information and reports on our activities and past events, as well as an events calendar showing our future programme.

In addition to the newsletter, the website and our social media postings, and the efforts of our contractors, we undertook a specific, multi-media campaign to increase local engagement with the charity and our sustainability objectives in the spring of 2023. A key theme was to highlight the cost of living savings to be had from energy-saving sustainability actions, targeting the community at large through radio advertising and the well off with "advertorial" material in an upmarket lifestyle magazine.

Statistics

The Sustainable St Albans website: 61,000 page views, year to 31 March 2023
(year to March 2022, 45,000)

The Sustainable St Albans newsletter: 1,650 subscribers at 31 March 2023)
(31 March 2022, 1,350)

At the year end, we had 2,950 followers on Facebook and 2,450 on Instagram.

How we deliver our projects and activities

Following the departure of the first appointed community engagement contractor for personal reasons, we engaged the services of a local, well-staffed environmental charity for six months to help us to continue the funded work. This was the first time that we have contracted with an established charity and their professionalism, responsiveness and effectiveness in setting in place clear processes was immediately apparent. Despite making considerable efforts, the contractors experienced challenges in establishing meaningful engagement in the designated community groups (unsurprisingly, given the short duration of the contract), and Count Us In continued to be a problematic “call to action”. This was communicated to the funders, St Albans District Council, and a less resource-intensive approach, contracted with a non-specialist individual, is now in place.

What happened in the period



We have continued to encourage local people to commit to one or more **Count Us In** actions and to identify these themes in our website. There is more information at [St Albans Climate Action Network - Sustainable St Albans](#)

We have been disappointed by the numbers of people and pledges registered in our “[Count Us In](#)” community. At 31 August 2023, this showed 100 committed actions with an estimated carbon saving of just under 2 tonnes of CO₂, including only one additional sign up since 30 September 2022.

These 16 steps (shown above) are all good suggestions, and there is no cost to maintaining our existing commitment. Other local groups are now promoting a newer, but very similar, concept, “Take the Jump”, which has six suggested lifestyle “shifts”, so we will also need to consider the significance of that in deciding how we brand our encouragement of lifestyle changes in the future.

We have recruited and trained a volunteer group of **Climate Champions**. Members of this team have represented us at markets and fairs, and similar events, but they are particularly available to talk to any group about the whys and wherefores of climate change.

For part of the year, this work was managed by the local charity referred to above, and for the latter part of the period it has been managed by a committed individual contractor. The potential and importance of this initiative was endorsed at the outset, and again after a year's activity, by the District Council, which has partly funded its promotion and administration, and we know from direct feedback that these talks are engaging and informative.

However, for all our effort, the level of interest in this format of community engagement appears to have waned, and the numbers of engagements has tailed off over time. Our Champions remain an important volunteer group, but it is not clear how or if we can generate significant further demand for this form of outreach.

During the year we delivered two of our **workshops** suitable for **not-for-profit groups** on formulating a climate action plan specifically for **schools**, and a similar **workshop for businesses**.

We extended our business networking by sponsoring the “**Sustainable Business of the Year**” category and announced the winner at the St Albans District Chamber of Commerce 2022 awards dinner.



For people wanting, or wanting to share, a more private introduction, our **Climate Conversation** action and resource pack can help anyone to discuss the climate crisis, their thoughts for the future, and the actions they might take, with friends or family or colleagues. This is free to download at [climate conversations - Sustainable St Albans](#)

Community engagement also includes **Our Planet Our Future (OPOF)**, which began as a festival and continues as a series of open events, including talks with guest speakers presenting interesting and sometimes novel perspectives on moving towards a more sustainable life and a lower carbon economy.

OPOF is a continuing programme with events held approximately every two months.

What happened in the OPOF year

During the year, we

- Visited Rothamsted Research for a guided walk and open air talk on sustainable agriculture
- Enjoyed a discussion led by HEART (“Hertfordshire Enabling and Adapting for Resilience Together”) with a focus on the emotional resilience we need as we adapt to a changing world
- Held “green drinks”, with conversations inevitably focussed on the climate crisis
- Listened intently to the inspiring Judith Leary-Joyce as she generalised her experiences of retro-fitting her own home into quicker fixes for reducing home energy consumption
- Held a networking event with the RSA (Royal Society of Arts) Eastern Region, and
- Gave a platform for each of six local eco-businesses to introduce themselves.

A full report on each of our OPOF events is signposted at [Our Planet Our Future - Sustainable St Albans](#)

Statistics

Typically 25-30 people attend these events; approximately 50 came to the RSA networking evening.

The Sustainability Festival (SuStFest)

What it is

The charity, with support from the District Council, curates a festival during which any local organisation that wishes to participate puts on an event or events, of their own design but relating to sustainability, for the general public. Our key roles are to encourage and then coordinate participants, and to promote the festival as a whole.

The charity itself runs some events within the festival, and, in addition, other organisations, particularly schools, hold private events that take place during the festival and can be acknowledged in the programme.

What happened in the year

SuStFest22

We believe that SuStfest22 was a great success, despite operating with a more limited budget than previously. We opened this year’s festival with a sustainability market in Harpenden.

Online events remained part of the mix, of course, but outdoor events generally were popular, as were those featuring guest speakers. Sadly there were fewer public events than last year, and some paid-for and midweek events struggled to find audiences, so that a few registered events were cancelled.

As always, feedback from the community groups that took part was good, and schools were back in force with the disruptions of Covid-19 finally behind us.



Statistics

The total number of registrations, including all multiple and private events, was 166. There were 85 public events (counting multi-day events separately).

We estimate that 1,200 people attended public events.

What happened after the year end

An excellent SuStFest 23 ran from 10 to 18 June 2023 across St Albans, Harpenden and the villages. We will cover that in our next annual report.

Sustainable Markets

What are they

At a Sustainable Market all the traders offer products and services that support a sustainable lifestyle. Pitches are also offered to charities and community groups with objectives consistent with the preservation and improvement of the environment.



The first of these, in 2019, was known as the Market Takeover, when, in addition, a festival character was achieved by securing the closure of St Peter's Street, St Albans, and providing entertainment.

Now, the market is run 5 times a year, in Harpenden, in collaboration with Harpenden Town Council. Stall holders are charged a modest pitch fee, and net profits are shared equally between the Council and the charity,

What happened in the period

Markets were held in July, September and November of 2022, and in March, May, July and September of 2023.

Shortly after the year end we acquired our own, branded market stall/gazebo, for use at the markets, and elsewhere.

Playing Out

What it is

Playing Out is a nationwide concept where residents obtain permission to close their road to through traffic, for a few hours, as often as eight times per year. This allows the children to come out onto the street and cycle, scoot and play together in the road, and is a fabulous way to build communities. All residents benefit, especially

children, parents and isolated older people, as everyone can get to know their neighbours, and this helps to build more resilient and environmentally sustainable communities.

Road closures for Playing Out must be formally approved by the Council but it is Sustainable St Albans that promotes, enables and in large part manages the scheme throughout the District. [Playing Out](#) is more fully described on our website.



Our Playing Out team are also responsible for **Our Street Party** in the District, and their skills and energy were doubtless a factor behind St Albans and Harpenden accounting for about 20% of Hertfordshire's 600 or so sanctioned Jubilee street parties in 2022.

What happened in the period

A key focus of this year was to get out into the community to spread the word about the project. In addition to our usual information sessions, this included contacting new community groups, family centres, nurseries and schools, and holding stalls in key wards that we were targeting, using a grant from the St Albans Community Fund.

We held our first Playing Out Advisory Group meeting in June 2022 including local specialists, council officers and councillors, and a second one in March 2023. These are an excellent way of sharing information and gaining insights from interested parties that are not involved in the day to day running of the project.

Playing Out was featured in an ITV Anglia news broadcast in July 2022, with St Albans streets forming the heart of the item.

Statistics

Streets with Playing out permission (calendar year)	2022 27 (2021 29)
Streets that held Playing out sessions (calendar year)	2022 27 (2021: 27)
The Playing Out newsletter	March 2023 600 subscribers (March 2022 500)

Thermal Imaging Camera project

What it is

We have two thermal imaging cameras which are free for residents of the District to borrow. The camera enables you to see heat leaking from, or cold air entering, a building, by taking colour-coded images that highlight temperature differences.



For example, the camera can highlight insufficient loft insulation, gaps in floorboards, draughty windows and badly fitted loft hatches. Areas like this allow warmth to escape, meaning you use more fuel to keep your house warm. For these purposes, the cameras work most effectively in the colder months.

More [information about the camera project](#), including how to borrow one, is available from our website.

What happened in the year

The warm autumn meant a slow start to the camera season, but the arrival of the cold weather and cost of living concerns helped to drive record levels of interest in the cameras. Investment in a card reader made the security deposit easier to handle and facilitated an increase in donations from users. We printed hundreds of copies of Judith Leary-Joyce's "[Stay Warm for Less](#)" booklet and distributed this compendium of quick fixes to camera users and at events.

Seven schools used a camera to check out their buildings, and one community group borrowed the camera on behalf of residents who would have had difficulty funding the security deposit themselves.

Statistics

Attendance at information/training sessions	year to March 2023 306 (2022 113)
Number of times camera was borrowed	year to March 2023 274 (2022 108)

Sustainable schools

What it is

An information and resource hub supporting local schools to teach their children, staff, PTA and governors about environmental issues and how to reduce their school's ecological footprint; find out more at [Sustainable Schools - Sustainable St Albans](#). This includes

- teaching and assembly resources suitable for all school ages

- actions that schools can take as communities, and
- opportunities for schools to join local and national initiatives.

What happened in the period

We held two of our networking events for teachers, and we updated our ready-made assemblies for SustFest22. Young people from at least 39 primary and secondary schools in St Albans, Harpenden and the villages, as well as Guiding, Scouting and Woodcraft Folk, threw



themselves into eco activities for Sustainable Schools Week. From assemblies to beetle banks, seed planting to debates, Clothes Switches to Waste Weeks, there was a huge variety of sustainable activities.

Looking ahead

With the recent announcement from DfE that all schools should have a Sustainability Lead and Climate Plan in place by 2025, our focus for the 2023/24 academic year is to offer support to schools on this journey. We hope to offer in-school advice and support visits, as well as helping starting schools buddy-up with another more experienced school that already has Sustainability firmly embedded.

Statistics

Our Schools newsletter >180 subscribers, including some from beyond the District (August 2022 >160)

Open Food Gardens

What it is



Open Food Gardens is an annual programme of local gardens open to visitors during the summer months. The programme is run by residents of the District who are passionate about growing food, and who have been sharing their experiences with hundreds of visitors to the food gardens, allotments and community growing projects since 2009, making this our longest running project.

What happened in the period

Due to shortage of volunteers to organise helpers and garden owners, we were unable to run a full programme in 2022. Two gardens did open and a third was cancelled for safety reasons due to the extreme heat.

The autumn did end on a bright spot though. We were delighted to receive a commendation from the CPRE – a Bronze Standard award to celebrate our work in helping to protect, promote and enhance Hertfordshire’s countryside.

Repair Fairs

What it is

The St Albans District Fixers team is now an established project under the Sustainable St Albans banner. We have built up a core group of skilled amateur fixers ready to tackle the repair of all manner of portable electrical and electronic goods at the Repair Fairs we hold around the District. We offer fabric and clothing repairs at most events, but we no longer provide a bike repair service as we considered that this was encroaching on local commercial interests.



Our ambition remains to help other local groups to set up their own “fixing community”.

What happened in the period

We ran six sessions during our year to March 2022, and have run another four since, with two more planned in the remaining months of 2023.

We now have a pool of over 30 fixers. Our mentor scheme of partnering an experienced fixer with a new joiner combined with our “watch one, help one and finally fix one” approach is proving to be a success.

That said, some fixers prefer to help only at “their own” local church or community venue, and the demand for repair fairs seems high. So we would very much welcome offers from more fixers and event helpers. Please do get in touch; a willingness to give it a go is the key attribute.

The most common items repaired have been power tools. We have also repaired treasured family heirlooms in the forms of old portable radios and ancient audio systems, and more mundane yet practical items such as toasters, vacuum cleaners, flat TV screens and computers.

The “ones that get away” have often been branded capsule coffee machines. We have seen several with faults we would have expected to tackle, but these devices are not repairable because they have been manufactured with sealed, plastic “close

once” bodies. It is a great pity to have items with such inbuilt obsolescence; our experience demonstrates how much further “right to repair” legislation could go.

Future repair fairs, like all our events, are listed at [Upcoming Events – Sustainable St Albans](#).

Statistics

In the year to August 2023 we worked on 171 items (up from 91 the year before); of which 88 were fixed (33 the year before) and 45 were deemed repairable (39 the year before).

We estimate that these six events prevented 203 kg of landfill by weight (previous four events, 121 kg) and 1,497 kg of CO₂ emissions (previous four, 981 kg).



We add our statistics to the impressive national totals at [Restarters](#).

Our relationship with Transition Network

What it is

[Transition Network](#) is a body which encourages and facilitates the creation of “transition town” groups and provides various forms of support to its autonomous members, primarily by non-financial means. As the “central body” the Transition Network is in addition able to seek funding for national initiatives.

“Transition” means the shift from “business as usual” to a low-carbon and locally resilient economy. To expand on that:

“[Transition] is about communities stepping up to address the big challenges they face by starting local. By coming together, they are able to crowd-source solutions. They seek to nurture a caring culture, one focused on supporting each other, both as groups or as wider communities. ... In practice, [transition communities] are reclaiming the economy, sparking entrepreneurship, reimagining work, reskilling themselves and weaving webs of connection and support. It’s an approach that has spread now to over 50 countries, in thousands of groups: in towns, villages, cities, Universities, schools.

[Extract from Transition Network website]

Sustainable St Albans is a member of the Transition Network. Transition Network has no authority over the charity, which is controlled and directed by its own constitution and the trustees.

What happened in the period

We received two grants from the Transition Network:

- £2,300 towards a coordinated communications campaign of community engagement, using paid advertising across press, radio, and social media on a scale designed to reach audiences beyond the “Green Bubble”. Our messaging highlighted the cost-savings and ancillary benefits of a more sustainable lifestyle.
- £500 in seed funding to explore the concept of a centrally-located, eco-friendly physical base or “eco-hub” in the city centre. Funding was to be used to research existing hubs in other towns and to consult within our community, which included running stalls in the city’s Charter Market, to talk to people face-to-face.

Plans for the hub, now named the **Green House**, are well established. The Green House and the charity are independent entities, but with some overlap of governance to emphasise our collaborative intent and shared visions.

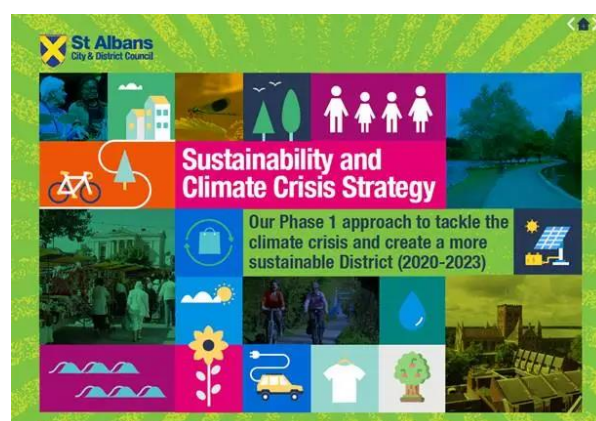


Grant funding by Transition Network was made possible by the financial support of the National Lottery.

Engaging with local government

We continue to value our close working relationships with local government.

Principal amongst these is with the St Albans City and District Council (SADC), and in particular our place on the group that is assisting the Council in the development of its Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy. We especially value our part in supporting the Council as it acts to reduce its own carbon footprint and in ensuring that the plan’s rather wider objective - of the whole district becoming net zero carbon by 2030 - remains front and centre.



We also work with Harpenden Town Council (and the Harpenden Trust), with Sandridge and other Parish Councils, and with Hertfordshire County Council and a number of County Councillors. All of these parties have at various times over the last few years provided grant funding to the charity.

What happened in the period

These valuable relationships have continued. We particularly acknowledge the various funds received from SADC including a substantial contribution towards our community engagement work.

We contributed to the drafting of an SADC funding application that has since realised a six-figure sum largely for the Council's own climate emergency centred community engagement, and are members of the **St Albans Greener Together** advisory group that will add guidance to the use of these funds.

Our impacts

Our ecological footprint

The Trustees seek to minimise the charity's negative impact on the environment and have adopted policies that seek to address the environmental costs of our internal meetings and of our events, with particular regards to travel, necessary consumables and our choices of suppliers.

Of increasing concern globally is the carbon cost of society's digital footprint. The charity has a content rich website, holds numerous internal meetings and events online, and communicates largely by email, including our regular newsletters.

The trustees will continue to develop the charity's environmental policies, and to monitor, and seek to measure and minimise, our ecological footprint.

Our positive impacts

In the notes above we have included various statistics that indicate our "reach" and in the repair fair section, some direct measures of environmental impact.

However, we cannot reliably estimate how many individuals, households, groups, organisations or businesses have reduced their ecological footprints as a direct or indirect result of our work, let alone calculate their collective positive impact on the environment.

Nevertheless, we remain firmly of the view that the charity is making a difference in precisely these incalculable ways, and consider this report to be a fair summary of what have achieved.

Membership of the charity

Our constitution includes a voting membership to ensure that the trustees are expressly accountable to the community of its supporters. Individual supporters may become members of the charity. Members declare their active support for the charity's objectives and exercise certain governance duties, for example by voting at

General Meetings on the appointment and re-appointment of trustees. Members receive no personal benefits, nor is there currently a membership subscription.

To find out more about membership please email us at info@sustainablestalbans.org

Statistics

On 21 September 2023 we had 97 members (30 September 2022 96).

Thank you

The trustees would like to thank everyone who has assisted Sustainable St Albans in any way during this period, and would particularly like to record our thanks to everyone who has volunteered their help. These thanks extend also to our contractors, who give commitments of time and expertise that we likely could not afford at commercial rates.

Looking forward

We believe that the charity and some of its projects are by now part of the fabric of the District, and we are confident that we can at least continue our current projects.

However, like all organisations with a similar focus, we face two challenges. The first is to keep the need for action on the climate crisis in people's minds while our world is beset by so many other concerns. The second is to have a bigger impact.

Our task is to find the ways and means to meet those challenges, and that must include:

- continuing to engage with the wider community in order to broaden our reach
- enhancing our relationships with the Council and other influential local bodies
- ensuring that we work to find synergies with new local groups that have similar aims
- maintaining an attractive and effective portfolio of projects and events.

Peter Block, Helen Burridge, Jack Easton, Lesley Flowers, Sarah Gataora, Laura Grenier, Ruth James and Jill Watson

(The trustees)

21 September 2023

This trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2023 is prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Charities SORP, taking advantage of the exemptions and simplified disclosures permitted to a smaller charity.

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity are:

- 1) to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, acting primarily within the City and District of St Albans, by promoting, for the benefit of the public, the sustainable use of resources; and
- 2) to advance the education of the public in the sustainable use of resources and the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, acting primarily within the City and District of St Albans.

In determining what activities to undertake, the trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Activities, achievements and performance

The principal *charitable activities* undertaken during the period and the charity's achievements and (non-financial) performance are described in the Annual Review (pages 2 to 16 above).

Financial review

Our income and expenditure for the year is summarised in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 21, with more detail shown in note 8 on page 29. Overall these show moderate levels of income, with relatively low amounts raised for SuStFest when compared to the past. The unrestricted surplus in the year can be largely attributed to two very welcome but unsolicited grants of £500, including one from the Cathedral Mission Giving fund, and to Sustainable Markets income. The significant restricted funds deficit is primarily due to the utilisation of the substantial funds previously raised towards community engagement.

The 31 March 2023 year end position is shown in the balance sheet on page 22. This shows a sound financial position, primarily due to the current level of surplus on unrestricted funds.

Reserves policy

Our current policy is to maintain unrestricted, undesignated reserves of between £4,000 and £8,000, so that we can undertake unfunded activities from time to time.

At the year end the charity had unrestricted, undesignated reserves of approximately £8,000 (2022 £6,000), within total unrestricted reserves of approximately £11,500

(2022 £10,500). Unrestricted cash at the year end amounted to £7,601 (2022 £8,252).

Structure, governance and management

The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with voting members other than its charity trustees. It is governed by a constitution that was prepared from the Charity Commission model constitution for a CIO with a voting membership, adapted only in the sense that the founding trustees determined which of the model's alternative provisions should be adopted.

No external body has a right to appoint any trustee. The appointment of trustees is provided for in section 13 of the constitution thus:

- (1) At every subsequent annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the charity trustees shall retire from office. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office, but if there is only one charity trustee, he or she shall retire;
- (2) The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot;
- (3) The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled as provided in sub-clause [4] of this clause;
- (4) The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed in accordance with clause 15 (Retirement and removal of charity trustees), or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit specified in clause 12(3) on the number of charity trustees [*which is 12*] would not as a result be exceeded; and
- (5) A person so appointed by the members of the CIO shall retire in accordance with the provisions of sub-clauses (2) and (3) of this clause. A person so appointed by the charity trustees shall retire at the conclusion of the next annual general meeting after the date of his or her appointment, and shall not be counted for the purpose of determining which of the charity trustees is to retire by rotation at that meeting.

One new trustee was appointed during the year. The appointment followed informal meetings with existing trustees, attending two trustee meetings as an observer, and a formal interview.

We will approach the recruitment of new trustees in the same way for the foreseeable future, with an emphasis on ensuring that potential trustees have the fullest possible understanding of the charity and the way it works before their appointment. The trustees always welcome expressions of interest from individuals who might wish to become trustees.

Reference, administrative and trustee details

The charity is the successor organisation to Transition St Albans (TSA) which was founded in 2009, and formally dissolved on 6 April 2020.

Sustainable St Albans is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation that was registered by the Charity Commission on 19 May 2017, with registration number 1173118. Sustainable St Albans has no premises of its own, but correspondence can be sent to its registered address, 21 Marlborough Gate, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3TX, the home of one of the trustees. The trustees, and therefore the charity, can also be contacted by email using the address trustees@sustainablestalbens.org

The trustees that acted during the year were:

- Peter Block
- Helen Burridge
- Jack Easton
- Dan Fletcher (resigned 6 December 2022)
- Lesley Flowers
- Sarah Gataora
- Ruth James (appointed 15 December 2022)
- Catherine Ross (resigned 6 December 2022)
- Jill Watson

Laura Grenier was appointed a trustee on 18 May 2023, and Duncan Gibbons was appointed as a trustee on 21 September 2023, immediately after the then trustees had approved the annual report and financial statements.

Approval

This trustees' report was approved by the current trustees as a body on 21 September 2023 and signed on their behalf by:



Jack Easton
Trustee and treasurer



Sarah Gataora
Trustee

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Sustainable St Albans

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Sustainable St Albans (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity 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 Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with the accounting 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.



Helen Evans, FCA

23 Beaumont Avenue
St Albans
AL1 4TL

15 October 2023

Statement of financial activities

		1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023			1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022		
	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from							
Donations and legacies		2,237	12,692	14,929	936	33,278	34,214
Charitable activities		0	1,250	1,250	0	9,250	9,250
Other trading activities		1,045	0	1,045	9,877	0	9,877
Investments		107	0	107	3	0	3
Total income	4, 8	3,389	13,942	17,331	10,816	42,528	53,344
Expenditure on							
Raising funds	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charitable activities		2,120	38,964	41,084	1,716	33,035	34,751
Total expenditure	4, 8	2,120	38,964	41,084	1,716	33,035	34,751
Net income (or deficit)		1,269	(25,022)	(23,753)	9,100	9,493	18,593
Net transfers between funds		(352)	352	0	(5,129)	5,129	0
Total funds brought forward		10,558	33,454	44,012	6,587	18,832	25,419
Total funds carried forward		11,475	8,784	20,259	10,558	33,454	44,012

Balance Sheet at

	Notes	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2022 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	5	5,485	4,433
Current assets			
Debtors	6	2,934	5,460
Cash at bank		23,820	40,140
Total current assets		26,754	45,600
Liabilities			
Creditors*	7	(11,980)	(6,021)
<i>*amounts falling due within one year</i>			
Net current assets		14,774	39,579
Total assets less liabilities	9	20,259	44,012
Funds			
Unrestricted funds	8	11,475	10,558
Restricted funds	8	8,784	33,454
Total charity funds		20,259	44,012

These financial statements were approved by the trustees as a body on 21 September 2023 and signed on their behalf by:



Jack Easton
Trustee and treasurer



Sarah Gataora
Trustee

1. Administrative details

Basic administrative details are set out in the statutory trustees' report on page 19.

2. Basis of preparation

Applicable accounting regulation

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s).

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the Charities Act, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), taking advantage of the exemptions and simplifications available to smaller charities, including the exemption from preparing a statement of cash flows. The charity is a "Public Benefit Entity" as defined by FRS 102.

Adoption of the going concern basis

The trustees have prepared these financial statements on a going concern basis. The trustees have made their assessment of the charity's ability to continue as a going concern by having regard to the following key factors:

- The charity has neither premises nor staff. The only material, recurring, unfunded operating costs are public liability insurance, and the costs of IT and communications facilities, such as our web site and online event and meeting accounts.
- The trustees seek specific funding for any charitable activities that will require material expenditure.
- The charity has a satisfactory level of reserves.

Restricted and designated funds

In accordance with the requirements of the Charities SORP, restricted and unrestricted funds are classified and presented separately. Funds are restricted when received on terms that limit their use to identifiable and specified purposes. The restriction may be identifiable from the terms of the appeal or request for funding, or from the terms of the grant disbursement, or both.

Where a donation is received under an expressed but non-binding preference, these are unrestricted funds, but the trustees designate that such funds are held and used for the expressed purpose and towards allocated support costs. When that activity is completed, any residual surplus is available to charity for use in any of its charitable activities.

The trustees may also designate existing unrestricted funds so as to earmark them for an intended future activity.

The designation of unrestricted funds from any source is not binding on the trustees and may be reversed on the completion of an activity or otherwise if the trustees consider that it is in the best interests of the charity to do so.

Offsetting

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 SORP or by FRS 102, except for the immaterial fundraising costs discussed in note 4.2.

Significant judgments and estimates

No significant judgment was necessary in applying the accounting policies below when preparing the 2023 or 2022 financial statements, nor are there any estimated amounts that might require material adjustment on their final determination.

3. Accounting policies

3.1 Income from grants and donations

Income from grants is recognised in full when the charity becomes entitled to a determinable amount of grant and it is also probable that the funding will be received. *(This can and often does have the effect that income is included in the financial statements in an earlier accounting period than the related expenditure.)*

Income from other donations is recognised when it is received.

3.2 Donated goods and services

Where it is practical to identify the value of donated goods or services, their estimated fair value is included in income when the goods or services are received, if in addition it is also material.

Except to the extent of specific contracts that are let to enable larger projects to take place, the charity relies very substantially on the contributions of unpaid volunteers (including trustees when acting as volunteers) to carry out its activities. It is not practical to make a reliable estimate of the value of volunteer services received, and accordingly the hugely significant and essential contribution of volunteers is not given a monetary value in the financial statements.

Other than volunteer time, examples of the types of donated goods and services that are not recognised in these accounts include: free use of commercial premises (occasionally, for public meetings), specific skills donated by commercial organisations (again, occasionally), free distribution of promotional material (once), the time given by guest speakers at events, the hosting of organisational and some operational meetings by volunteers, and the travel and domestic costs of volunteers whilst active in the charity's affairs.

3.3 Income from commercial sponsors

When a commercial sponsor is rewarded with a substantive degree of publicity, such sponsorship income is regarded as the sale of advertising and promotional services by the charity.

The income is apportioned over the duration of the promotional period, which for practical purposes is regarded as the period from the publication of the event programme until the end of the relevant event.

3.4 Income from the supply of charitable services

Where the charity has a contract to supply particular services that are charitable activities, income is recognised to the extent that the charity has completed the contracted activity. Any funds received in advance of completing part or all of the specified activity is deferred and included in the balance sheet as a creditor.

3.5 Income from event entry charges

Income from ticket sales, and from similar charges for other forms of participation in events, such as market stall pitch fees, is recognised in the period in which the event takes place.

3.6 Expenditure

Expenditure is written off in the period in which it is incurred, except to the extent that an asset has been purchased for continuing use by the charity.

3.7 Tangible Fixed Assets

Playing Out resources comprise road signs, which are expected to have a long life, vinyl road closed signs and “kitbags” of equipment which are loaned to the organisers of playing out sessions for as long as their street remains part of the scheme.

Other equipment comprises a PAT tester for use at repair fairs, a white board and a card reader.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to apportion their costs over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Signs	10 years
Kitbags	5 years
Thermal imaging camera	5 years
Other equipment	5 years

Tangible fixed assets are reviewed for impairment as at the year end and any identified impairment loss is charged to expenditure as additional depreciation. (Impairment losses to 31 March 2023 - £Nil, to 31 March 2022 – £Nil.)

3.8 Financial instruments

The charity is party only to certain basic financial instruments (as defined in paragraph 10.7 of FRS 102) – being cash at bank, short term debtors and creditors for expenditure incurred, and complies with the accounting requirements applicable to financial instruments. These are accounted for at the transaction price, which is also the expected settlement amount.

Financial assets are reviewed for impairment as at the year end and any identified impairment loss is charged to expenditure. (Impairment losses to 31 March 2023 – £Nil, to 31 March 2022 – £Nil.)

4. Additional notes on income and expenditure

4.1 Income

The income attributable to each charitable fund is shown in note 8.

Donations and legacies is a mandatory caption. This category of income includes grants; no legacy income was received.

(Local) **government grants** received in the year to 31 March totalled £5,400, £1,500 towards Playing Out, £600 towards Repair Fairs, £2,300 towards SustFest 2022 and £1,000 towards SustFest 23 (2022: £4,344, £3,454 for Playing Out and £890 towards SuStFest22).

Income from *charitable activities* comprises income earned from contracts or performance-related grants which have conditions that specify the provision by Sustainable St Albans of particular (charitable) goods or services. In the year ended 31 March 2023 £9,250 (2022 £9,250) was receivable, relating to one Community Engagement agreement with St Albans City and District Council, which continued after the year end.

Income from *other trading activities* comprises trading activities that raise funds for the charity, such as ticket sales relating to events and corporate sponsorships.

Income from *Investments* comprises bank interest.

4.2 Expenditure

The expenditure attributable to each charitable fund is shown in note 8. The charity gave no grants in the year (2022: £nil). Expenditure was therefore incurred only on charitable activities, fundraising costs and support costs.

Fundraising costs

The charity's fundraising efforts, principally applying for grants and seeking sponsorships, are undertaken by volunteers; their contribution is not recognised in these accounts, in accordance with the accounting policy set out in note 3.2. Donations and ticket sales that are received via online platforms net of handling fees are recognised in income at the net amount. For the years ended 31 March 2023 and 2022, handling fees were trivial in amount.

Support costs

The charity's principal support costs are public liability insurance, IT costs (including domain, website, online conferencing and messaging services), general promotion, and other costs such as the AGM and other meetings not directly attributable to the activities that are separately analysed in these accounts. Most of the restricted funds currently in hand may not be used on general costs, and so, with that limitation, aggregate support costs are allocated in approximate proportion to the time spent on the activities undertaken in the year.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Governance (the cost of the AGM)	40	93
IT and communications	374	348
Other general publicity	0	375
Insurances	562	407
Other administration	612	214
Total support costs	1,588	1,437

Support costs are allocated as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
SuStFest21	0	205
SuStFest22	227	205
SustFest23	227	0
Sustainable Markets	227	205
Community education (restricted fund)	455	410
Our planet our future	113	103
Thermal imaging cameras	113	103
Open food gardens	113	103
Repair fairs	113	103
	1,588	1,437

5. Tangible fixed assets

	TIC	Repair	Playing Out		Total
	£	Fairs* £		£	£
			Road signs	Kit bags	
Cost at the beginning of the year	2,309	82	2,581	1,321	6,293
Additions	0	551	1,758	0	2,309
Cost at the end of the year	2,309	633	4,339	1,321	8,602
Depreciation at the beginning of the year	462	16	710	672	1,860
Depreciation charged in the year	462	127	404	264	1,257
Depreciation at the end of the year	924	143	1,114	936	3,117
Net book value, end of the year	1,385	490	3,225	385	5,485
Net book value, beginning of the year	1,847	66	1,871	649	4,433

*Repair Fairs includes other office equipment with a net book value of £49 (2022 £66).

6. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Prepayments	1,800	0
Accrued income	1,134	5,460
	2,934	5,460

7. Creditors, amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Deferred income	8,000	0
Other creditors - accruals	3,980	6,021
	<u>11,980</u>	<u>6,021</u>

Analysis of deferred income

	2023	2022
	£	£
At the beginning of the year	0	7,012
Released to income in the period	0	(7,012)
Received during the period	8,000	0
	<u>8,000</u>	<u>0</u>

The deferred income relates to the SADC community engagement contract, which is continuing in the current financial year.

8. Analysis of charitable funds

Year ended 31 March 2023	Fund balances				Fund balances
	Brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
SuStFest22	1,400	4,792	(6,544)	352	0
SuStFest23	0	1,500	0		1,500
Playing Out	7,021	3,000	(4,810)		5,211
Community engagement	23,752	3,550	(27,212)		90
Schools	944	0	0		944
Our Planet Our Future	337	0	(40)		297
Repair fairs	0	600	(207)		393
Green House seed fund	0	500	(151)		349
TOTAL Restricted funds	33,454	13,942	(38,964)	352	8,784
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS					
Designated funds / (deficits)					
SuStFest21 and earlier	689	0	0	(352)	337
SuStFest22	(205)	0	(227)		(432)
SustFest23	-	0	(227)		(227)
Community engagement	541	0	0		541
Our Planet Our Future	(1,009)	4	(193)		(1,198)
Sustainable Markets	3,418	1,045	(254)		4,209
Thermal imaging cameras	1,141	299	(992)		448
Open food gardens	138	0	(114)		24
Repair fairs	(103)	201	(113)		(15)
TOTAL Designated funds	4,610	1,549	(2,120)	(352)	3,687
General funds	5,948	1,840	0		7,788
TOTAL Unrestricted funds	10,558	3,389	(2,120)	(352)	11,475
TOTAL FUNDS	44,012	17,331	(41,084)	0	20,259

Year ended 31 March 2022	Fund balances				Fund balances
	Brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
SuStFest21	6,193	1,470	(12,792)	5,129	0
SuStFest22	-	3,380	(1,980)		1,400
Playing Out	6,628	5,845	(5,452)		7,021
Community engagement	4,340	31,833	(12,421)		23,752
Schools	944	0	0		944
Our Planet Our Future	727	0	(390)		337
TOTAL Restricted funds	18,832	42,528	(33,035)	5,129	33,454
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS					
Designated funds / (deficits)					
SuStFest21	(477)	6,500	(205)	(5,129)	689
SuStFest22	-	0	(205)		(205)
Community engagement	397	144	0		541
Our Planet Our Future	(906)	0	(103)		(1,009)
Sustainable Markets	534	3,233	(349)		3,418
Thermal imaging cameras	1,458	247	(564)		1,141
Open food gardens	22	303	(187)		138
Repair fairs	-	0	(103)		(103)
TOTAL Designated funds	1,028	10,427	(1,716)	(5,129)	4,610
General funds	5,559	389	0		5,948
TOTAL Unrestricted funds	6,587	10,816	(1,716)	(5,129)	10,558
TOTAL FUNDS	25,419	53,344	(34,751)	0	44,012

9. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	2023	2023	2023	2022	2022	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets						
Tangible fixed assets	1,434	4,051	5,485	1,913	2,520	4,433
Current assets						
Debtors	2,934	0	2,934	835	4,625	5,460
Cash at bank	7,601	16,219	23,820	8,252	31,888	40,140
Total current assets	10,535	16,219	26,754	9,087	36,513	45,600
Current liabilities						
Deferred income	0	(8,000)	(8,000)	0	0	0
Other creditors - accruals	(494)	(3,486)	(3,980)	(442)	(5,579)	(6,021)
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(494)	(11,486)	(11,980)	(442)	(5,579)	(6,021)
Total assets less liabilities	11,475	8,784	20,259	10,558	33,454	44,012

10. Related parties and related party transactions

The trustees consider that the charity's related parties are the trustees, and persons closely connected to them (as defined more precisely in the Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

Trustees

The trustees receive no remuneration from the charity for their work as trustees (and nor do these financial statements include as a donation any amount in recognition of the value of the time that they have given). Trustees are authorised to settle expenditure directly where this is necessary; when this has occurred, they have been reimbursed.

No trustee has been re-imbursed for expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as a trustee.

Payment to trustees by a charity for (other) services received is permitted by the Charity Commission, subject to appropriate safeguards. Payment to the trustees of Sustainable St Albans by the charity for services received is permitted by the charity's constitution, which in this regard adopts the Charity Commission's standard wording. The trustees have careful regard to the relevant Charity Commission guidance before contracting to acquire any services from any trustee.

No trustee has provided any paid service to the charity in either of the years ended 31 March 2023 or 2022.

The trustees and persons closely connected to them donated a total of £250 to the charity in the year (2022 £830).