

Sustainable Cottenham

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Charity Number 1188763

Trustees' report for Annual General Meeting 16 March 2022

For period 1 January 2021 - 31 December 2021.

Emerging from COVID

2021 has been our first full year of operation as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and we have tentatively restarted some of our activities following enforced hibernation in 2020 due to COVID.

Our charitable objectives are:

To promote for the benefit of the public in and around the civil parish of Cottenham Cambridgeshire:

(1) the advancement of education in the subject of sustainable living in particular, but not exclusively, by raising awareness of the issues associated with sustainable resource use

(2) the advancement of education in the conservation, protection and improvement of the environment, in particular but not exclusively by encouraging the prudent use of natural resources, reducing pollution and raising awareness of environmental issues

The founding Trustees are: Catherine Burch, Jane Heath, Justin Hiscock and Christine Ward. We have since been joined by Vicky Lacey – whose father Ken Kelso originally set up a Parish Council working group with sustainability objectives which eventually became Sustainable Cottenham. There are currently 31 signed up members (up from 20 in 2020) although many more people are active in sub-groups and activities such as litter picks, Sunday Socials and Nature Recovery work parties.

A management committee, consisting of Catherine Burch (Treasurer), Jane Heath (Co-Secretary), Justin Hiscock (Co-Secretary) and Christine Ward (Chair) plus Clare Adamson, Sandra Cross, Beth Fleetwood, Samantha Upham, Vicky Lacey, Peter Pilbeam and Alana Sinclair decides on strategy and organises activities. There are also three sub-groups: Plastic-free Cottenham (with additional members Glynis Pilbeam, Heather Scicluna and Elizabeth Sharpe) and Eco Eats (headed up by Jane Heath and with additional member Amanda MacPhail). 2021 saw the formation of a new and very active Nature Recovery sub-group under the leadership of John Loveluck and additional members Mardi Sutton, Laura Osborne and Heather Mathews.

Sustainable Cottenham has a website www.sustainablecottenham.org.uk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/suscottenham which has 418 likes (up from 297 in 2020). There were 72 posts to the Sustainable Cottenham Facebook page (up from 40 in 2020), most of which were shared to the Cottenham group (3.5k members).

Activities

There have been four main activities in 2021:

- advocating more sustainable diets and reduced food waste. Sustainable Cottenham was awarded a South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Zero Carbon Communities grant in 2020 to hold an Eco Eats festival in association with Cambridge Sustainable Food. Plans had

to change because of COVID but we were able to adapt the project and held our first live Eco Eats event in September 2021 at Cottenham Allotments and Pavilion. The weather was summery and over 180 adults and children took part in a wide range of things veggie and fruity. It demonstrated what could be achieved by collaboration with similar-minded village groups and businesses: Fen End Farm, Bushel Box Farm Shop, Willingham, Cottenham Community Allotment, Cottenham WI and The Co-op supermarket. Eco Eats has been further supported indirectly by a grant from the SCDC ZCC fund (2021) to Cambridge Sustainable Food to enable them to deliver additional activities in Cottenham in 2022.

- encouraging social sustainability through the fostering of Cottenham Connected, an initiative led by youth worker Andrea Cowley which aims to reduce social isolation through inter-generational social events and activities. Because many of the participants are elderly and the events need to be held inside, these activities were particularly disrupted by COVID restrictions. However, we were able to restart them in September 2021 and held 3 monthly Sunday Socials before Omicron forced their suspension until further notice. Approximately 30 – 40 people aged between 4 and 90 attended each Sunday Social during autumn 2021. The main funding was from Cambridge Community Foundation's (CCF's) Cultivate Fund plus the Local Connections Fund for comfortable chairs, tables and games and equipment.
- supporting nature and biodiversity in Cottenham through the activities of the Nature Recovery group. Volunteers have sown a wildflower mini-meadow on the village green, helped create a pond on a field on Histon Road and improved woodland management at Fen Reeves wood. Achievements have been greatly helped through collaboration with Cottenham Parish Council and the New Life on the Old West project.
- reducing single-use plastic (through awareness raising, liaison with residents, schools and groups and supported by our participation in campaigns by Surfers Against Sewage). We were proud to appoint our first Plastic Free Business Champion: Fen End Farm. In addition, Sustainable Cottenham has organised twice-yearly village litter picks and cycle-path clean-up working parties. We carried out a brand audit after the summer litter pick and the biggest 'culprits' were Red Bull, Lucozade and Coca Cola.

Looking forward

Eco Eats has more live activities coming up in 2022 to explore tasty and climate-friendly eating. At the Fen Edge Festival in June, Sustainable Cottenham's stand will have ideas and inspiration for Eco Eating – a series of live cookery demonstrations by local chefs, plus special guest Chef Anthony Pitcher 'celebrating all things seasonal'; our Climate Food Flashcard challenge; and Cambridge Sustainable Food's stall with tempting tasters and expert advice.

The festival will be the launchpad for our new Eco Eats Recipe Book – an essential guide to simple and delicious ways to reduce the carbon footprint of our diet. And we will also be organising the arrangements for reusable cups at the festival so that single use plastic is kept to a minimum.

In the months ahead, helped by Cottenham Primary School, we're offering special family cookery workshops, run by our Eco Eats partner Cambridge Sustainable Food. These workshops will share easy ways to prepare tasty meals ticking all the boxes - healthy, economical and climate friendly. We're also collaborating with Adult Learning at Cottenham Village College to offer Eco Eats Saturday workshops later in the year.

Broadening our membership base will continue to be important as well as extending the number of trustees to include a broader range of Cottenham residents to take the charity forward.

Christine Ward

Chair, Sustainable Cottenham