

Sustainable Cottenham

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Charity Number 1188763

Trustees' report for Annual General Meeting 22 March 2023

For period 1 January 2022 - 31 December 2022

Emerging from COVID

2022 has been our second full year of operation as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and we have been continuing to build our range of activities.

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 Trustees are: Catherine Burch, Jane Heath, Justin Hiscock, Vicky Lacey and Christine Ward.

There are currently 38 signed up members (up from 31 in 2021) although many more people are active in sub-groups and activities such as litter picks 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, Vicky Lacey, Peter Pilbeam, Samantha Upham and Rob Moorcroft decides on strategy and organises activities. There are also two main sub-groups: Eco Eats (headed up by Jane Heath) which directs our climate-friendly diet activities and the Nature Recovery group. Thanks to the leadership of John Loveluck the latter was very active in 2022, organising several work parties in collaboration with New Life on the Old West on parish council owned green spaces in Cottenham. Plastic Free Cottenham has been less active in 2022.

Sustainable Cottenham has a website www.sustainablecottenham.org.uk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/suscottenham which has 495 likes (up from 418 in 2021) and 576 followers. There were 52 posts to the Sustainable Cottenham Facebook page (compared with 72 in 2021), most of which were shared to the Cottenham group (4.7k members).

Activities

There have been four main activities in 2022:

- Continuing to advocate more sustainable diets and reduced food waste. Sustainable Cottenham created an impressive exhibition at the Fen Edge Festival in June including: 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 was also 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 organised the reusable cups so that single use plastic was kept to a minimum at the festival. Eco Eats was 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, including a Family Cooking workshop and ‘Disco Soup’ at Cottenham Primary School. Unfortunately, the Eco Eats Saturday cookery workshops at Cottenham Village College did not run owing to fewer than the required minimum number signing up.

- Supporting nature and biodiversity in Cottenham through the activities of the Nature Recovery group. Volunteers have cleared out the Moat on Tenison Manor to encourage newts, planted hedges and wildflowers around the new ponds in the Old Rec on Broad Land and improved woodland management at Fen Reeves community wood. Achievements have been greatly helped through collaboration with Cottenham Parish Council, the New Life on the Old West project and Cottenham Scouts.
- Collaborating with Cottenham Community Centre to present a Home Energy Saving event in October - providing information and advice on energy saving, roof and wall insulation, solar panels and air source heat pumps. The event was not as well attended as we had hoped, possibly due to the timing (Sunday) and short notice. One of our members, Rob Moorcroft, was trained in thermal imaging and undertook some surveys of houses in Cottenham.
- Conducting two village litter picks (April and November) which this year involved youth groups such as Cottenham Guides as well as residents and families willing to spend a couple of hours improving their village environment (and enjoying tea and cakes afterwards.)

Sustainable Cottenham also supports Cottenham Repair Café which takes place every few months.

Looking forward

Members of Sustainable Cottenham were greatly saddened to hear of the sudden death of John Loveluck while fell walking on New Year’s Day. Plans are already in place to continue his efforts in the Nature Recovery group.

Eco Eats has more activities in 2023 to explore tasty and climate-friendly eating: a meal and quiz in collaboration with Cottenham Primary School PTCA and cookery workshops at Cottenham Village College. We are also looking at organising a Swish clothes exchange later in 2023. Our links with youth groups such as Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Beavers are growing: we welcome their involvement in our events and have given talks to them on sustainability, waste and biodiversity.

Our major challenge continues to be engaging people in events which test their assumptions and secondly, expanding the team who organise such events. Many people enjoy turning up for work parties and litter picks when they can spend a couple of hours in the fresh air and see a clear impact afterwards, but it is much harder to get people to attend events where their views might be challenged, or put hours into discussing and planning events. We have an excellent core team but could always do with additional help and enthusiasm.

Early in 2023 Cottenham Parish Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and Sustainable Cottenham members have been active in the working party to draft an action plan – including preparing a baseline carbon assessment for the parish council activities.

Broadening our membership base will continue to be important as well as extending the organising team to spread the load and include a broader range of Cottenham residents taking the charity forward.

Christine Ward, Chair, Sustainable Cottenham