

Chair's Introduction

The past year has been such a busy one for SSB, it's difficult to know where to start in sharing all our good news and keeping you up to date with the latest. So settle in, hear from our wonderful Project Coordinators about what's been happening and have a sneak preview of some exciting possibilities going forward.

Of course, the news isn't always so positive. I really understand how easy it is to feel hopeless and anxious in current times. Insufficient governments' action on climate change and the current challenges of cost of living plus decline in public services can't be denied. Yet when individuals/communities come together, we have the potential to do much more than we may think for the environment and community resilience.

The proof? Well, for a start, the many and various really practical activities/services provided by so many volunteers across the SSB projects. Last summer's Fair for South Brent, our new Community Fridge and the Hub/Warm Room are fantastic examples. My heartfelt thanks go to all the people in SSB who make things happen - whether by active volunteering and/or by supporting us as members.

SSB continues to inspire me and I feel proud to be part of it. I hope it inspires you too. If you'd like to find out more about any project, or you feel moved to join in any of our activities, just visit our website (ssb.org.uk) for more details. You can also contact the Project Coordinators directly, either via the emails given in this newsletter or by coming along to an event. A very warm welcome for all volunteers is guaranteed!

Andy Harker, Chair of Trustees

Inside this Newsletter

- Introduction
- Highlights
- Project Updates
 - Community Fridge
 - Marsh Compost
 - The Hub
 - School Garden
 - Talking Rubbish
 - Wood Group
 - Food@SB
 - 4B's
 - The Luces
 - YAA
 - Energy
 - Transport
- The Annual report bit
 - Treasurers Report
 - Fundraising
 - Membership
 - Vision Statement
 - Resources
 - Comms
 - Trustees
 - Opportunities
 - Thanks

 **Our existing projects successfully continued**

 **Community Fridge set up**

 **Over 1,000 visitors to our 'Fair for South Brent'**

★ **All thanks to our fantastic volunteers collectively investing over 4,000 hours of their time and energy** ★

Sustainability Hub opened, including a 'Warm Room' 

'Luces' Garden project started 

Record amount of compost processed 

2022-23 Highlights



Community Fridge

The latest from our Projects

On 10th November 2022, the South Brent Community Fridge at the Old School Community Centre officially opened for business. It was up and running with over 30 volunteers in only four months after the initial meeting was held to propose the idea - a really impressive achievement.

It now has a team of over 50 volunteers and is collecting food from four different outlets on a weekly basis, saving around 150 kilos of food going to waste each week. This adds up to 3.6 tonnes of food and 27.5 tonnes of carbon emissions saved since the start of the project.

An immediate success with local people, the fridge has been featured three times so far on Radio Devon and is already being used as a case study for other communities.



According to one local resident: “It’s great - I just pop in every now and then to see what’s there and help myself to whatever I can use, for free. I really love that I’m saving food from being thrown away and it doesn’t cost me anything”.

Anyone can use the fridge which is available 24 hours a day, stocked and monitored daily by volunteers. Food is sourced mainly from local businesses, but also from individuals with spare food (e.g. when going on holiday or with a ‘glut’ in the garden).

< Community Fridge Opening with Cllr. Daniel Thomas
Photo: Hayden Gabriel

We would like to thank the co-ordinating team, all the volunteers and the support of those who have made this really useful new facility in South Brent possible.

Nick Cape, Project Co-ordinator: fridge@ssb.org.uk



Marsh Community Compost Centre

Most South Brenters will be familiar with our biggest and probably most well-known project. Visitors often come from other areas to see and learn from this successful and thriving facility. Over the past year, a new management team and the incredible team of over 50 volunteers have successfully grappled with a deluge of compostable material following the temporary cessation of South Hams brown bin service.

The project is not resting on its laurels though, as Stuart Saunders, Project Co-ordinator explains: “We’re working on improving the current composting methods to reduce greenhouse gas (and other) emissions from processing and to reduce fossil fuel input (heavy equipment hours), as well as upgrading the finished product”.

Future plans being considered also include wood chipping (for mulches), food composting and a home composting resource centre. These will require investment in machinery and there are space and other constraints on site, but the possibilities are exciting. So ‘watch this space’ for developments.

Stuart Saunders, Project Co-ordinator: marsh@ssb.org.uk



SSB has been running the South Brent Sustainability Hub at the Old School Community Centre for a trial period from last Autumn to April. Visitors have enjoyed a varied ‘taster’ programme of activities so far at the Hub, including advice sessions, an energy café, workshops, talks and films around sustainability themes. The Hub has also been made available as a ‘Warm Room’, welcoming local people from December-April. Working with South Brent and District Caring, this has been a brilliant example of community collaboration. The use of the Hub is now being evaluated, to see if it should become a permanent facility.

Eva Stephens, SSB Trustee and Hub Co-ordinator says, “We’ve got some great plans for the Hub, if it continues. These include a regular programme of events, with monthly ‘Really Wild’ nature talks, workshops for children and adults, talk and film nights, and bi-monthly themed events, with a café. However, while we have had some lovely feedback and messages of support, it’s going to need funding and continued volunteer help to make it work”.

Everyone will be updated on progress, so keep an eye out for the latest Hub news on the SSB website and in SSB newsflashes.

Eva Stephens (Project Co-ordinator):
hub@ssb.org.uk



Warming up in the Hub | Photo: J. Nichols



Another well-loved SSB project, the School Garden (now in its 15th year) continues to involve and inspire local school children. Regular food growing sessions are run from March until October. The project is also helping to develop the wildlife area right next to the garden, with valuable help from SSB’s funding sub-committee. The plan is to create a safe, beautiful and biodiverse area for the children to work in all year round.

Helen Hall, Project Co-ordinator says “ The food-growing garden is great for involving and educating children and helping nature thrive. We were really pleased to have been able to share the food produced last year with the school kitchen and with families. Huge thanks to all who’ve supported our project, we couldn’t have managed without them”.

As if that wasn’t enough, the project has also been assisting the school with advice and funding to replace old light fittings with LED bulbs, to help reduce its energy costs, and with the ongoing improvements to recycling in the school.

The project is urgently looking for new volunteers, both for working with the children, and for one-off tasks to develop the site. If you’re interested, please contact Helen Hall.

Helen Hall, Project Co-ordinator: garden@ssb.org.uk



Talking Rubbish

This group's regular litter-picks are very popular with local people - both those taking part and those benefiting from the cleaner South Brent. Various well-attended workshops have also been run over the year. These include wax-wrap making and Christmas crafts for children.

Eva Stephens, Acting Project Co-ordinator says: "We've had great fun, creatively reducing waste in South Brent. We'd love to do more, but really do need more volunteers to make things happen. We don't just 'Talk Rubbish', we actively help reduce it!"

Eva Stephens, Acting Project Co-ordinator: rubbish@ssb.org.uk



Hedges & Wood Group

This year, the 'Steepers' ran their first Free Tree Giveaway event, in partnership with Devon Wildlife Trust. It was a great success, with around 50 people taking away 350 trees to plant.

It's also been the group's first year using the new wood store barn, as Robin Toogood, Project Co-ordinator explains: "This enables us to comply with new regulations for reducing particulate pollution from inadequately seasoned logs. Our firewood is now much better dried and has sold really well. The funds raised cover our costs plus a little bit more to plough back into further sustainable ventures."

Photo: Robin Toogood



In case you're wondering, the wood comes from the Group's regular winter programme of coppicing and hedgelaying at Penstave Copse, plus hedgelaying at South Brent Allotments and The Luces. This helps enhance and diversify nature and maintains the beautiful South Brent landscape.

Robin Toogood, Project Co-ordinator: woodgroup@ssb.org.uk

The Wood Group showing a few skills to a new generation at the Fair for South Brent 2022. Photos: Hayden Gabriel





Food@SB

Ruth's Garden at the Old School Community Centre is now flourishing again, with the help of volunteers from The Community School Garden and compost from the Marsh Composting Site. A wonderful selection of flowers, vegetables and herbs was successfully grown this year, available for picking by anyone passing by or using the Old School. All made possible thanks to an anonymous donation of three new custom-made planters, from the local charity LandWorks.

Project Co-ordinator Penny Wainwright says "We've had lots of positive feedback, as the Planters continue to be appreciated by many. We'll be doing more planting and maintenance this year. Thanks to everyone who helped with filling, planting and picking. We're also really grateful to all those who have made the Community Fridge possible".

Looking forward, Food@SB has already started working with the Primary School and the Community School Garden Project on supporting learning about 'Food'. A 'hands-on' experience is planned for the Spring and Summer Terms. Community food worker Karin Jordan, who many South Brent residents will know from previous SSB food events, will be making a welcome return to support this. In a great demonstration of co-operation between local organisations and communities, Food@SB recently introduced Karin to Ashburton Community Fridge, where she has been running successful community cooking workshops.

Food@SSB is also hoping to provide 'Low Cost Food' workshops here in South Brent, subject to funding and suitable locations being found. Another 'watch this space'!

This project has a small and enthusiastic group of volunteers, but diminishing numbers, so if you are keen to get involved, they would love to hear from you.

Penny Wainwright, Project Co-ordinator: food@ssb.org.uk



4B's (Brent Bugs, Bees & Butterflies)

Various plant and animal species are now thriving in the wildlife-friendly sites being managed by 4Bs across South Brent. And they have been given just that little bit more space to flourish, thanks to the Parish Council agreeing to reduce mowing of some of the roadside grass verges - with some encouragement and support from 4Bs.

Looking ahead, Kitty Ford, Acting Project Co-ordinator says: "We will be making paths for walkers in the new grass verge mini-meadows and we'll continue discussions about managing the remaining grass verges. We want to benefit all of nature, which of course, includes humans!"

Kitty Ford, Acting Project Co-ordinator: beesbugs@ssb.org.uk



Top: Scything the Exeter Road verge in late summer. Photo: J. Sabel
Bottom: Yellow Rattle and friends flowering by the bus stop. Photo: K. Ford



The Luces Garden

The end of the year was relatively quiet at the Luces, but if you walk up past the end of Hillside, you will see quite a change now that spring is just around the corner.

The roadside hedge has been cut back, allowing more light onto this plot, which was left by Noel for the benefit of villagers. Potentially hazardous trees have been felled by a tree surgeon, with traffic control and clearance from the project's volunteers. After two days of volunteering, in collaboration with the Wood Group, a beautiful 'midland' hedge has been made. Big thanks are due to all the volunteers and especially to James for his inspirational hedgelaying, and to the tree surgeon, Ken. The usable wood has been separated ready for transportation to the Marsh wood store, leaving a large pile of brush.

Photo: R. Toogood



Laying wood chip made from the brush



Photo: P. Armstrong



The brush has now been chipped and spread on the path and the bench at the top will return once it has been refurbished.

Project Co-ordinator Pat Armstrong encourages everyone to visit: "We are so lucky in South Brent to have places like the Luces that we can all enjoy. Do walk through to look at progress. If you would like to volunteer please contact me; we try to meet every other week on a Friday afternoon".

This is another SSB project to keep an eye on in the future, as plans progress.

Pat Armstrong, Project Co-ordinator: luc@ssb.org.uk



Youth Liaison

This year SSB once again reached out to engage and involve more young people and we're so pleased we did! Thanks to help from SSB's brilliant volunteers, there have been some great events with the Dartside Explorer Scouts, including Himalayan Balsam bashing, a 'Greening Christmas' craft event, and a very special tree-planting by torch- and moon- and firelight. In July, four Year 12 Work Experience students from Ivybridge Community College (ICC) were also hosted. They worked hard all week and did a great job painting the huge number of signs needed for the Fair for South Brent.

"I'd particularly like to thank our two Young Adult Ambassadors (YAAs) Eleanor and Izabel, who supported SSB so well over the year. It's great to have them on board," says Hayden Gabriel, Project Co-ordinator.



Looking ahead, more events are planned with the Scouts. Not least, we'll be mulching the trees already planted, hard work rewarded with a relaxing cream tea. Once again, Work Experience students from ICC will be with us for a week in July. This year we'll be asking them to get hands-on with as many SSB projects as we can fit into the week, while also reflecting on how those endeavours relate to the young people's career and conservation aspirations. We're also expecting to sign-up our first Duke of Edinburgh's Award candidate for a six-month volunteering project relating to the Energy Performance of South Brent's housing - and how that might be improved to reduce energy bills and carbon dioxide emissions.

Young volunteers are welcome on all projects (under 16s must be accompanied by an adult) and additional YAAs are also welcome.

Hayden Gabriel, Project Co-ordinator: yaa@ssb.org.uk



All photos: H. Gabriel



Energy

As changing energy use is key to reducing climate change, you may have been wondering what SSB is doing about it. Well, for a start, a highly successful ‘Energy Cafe’ was run, a ‘one-stop shop’ giving information and advice on all things energy-related.

However, despite investigating various possibilities for energy generation and saving, from solar car ports in the village car park to home insulation giveaways, progress on a large-scale project has been frustratingly slow.

Project Co-ordinator Hayden Gabriel explains: “ Due to the complexities involved, and lack of serious government support, we’ve been thwarted so far. But we’re not giving up! Two new volunteers (thanks Andy and Dan) have recently stepped up to research and operate a thermal imaging camera which works in infrared to detect heat loss from buildings. This is a service we have begun to offer so that householders can see where insulation most needs to be bumped up.”

The group continues to look for opportunities to help reduce South Brent’s carbon footprint, working together with Devon County Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority, National Grid and others. Additional input would be very welcome.

Hayden Gabriel, Project Co-ordinator: info@ssb.org.uk



Transport

Transport is another key area in reducing climate change and increasing community resilience.

SSB ‘Free to Loan Bike Bank’ continues to run, whatever the weather. Anyone aged 16yrs (with adult consent) or over can borrow one of our three hybrid pedal bikes for up to 7 days at a time. The Bikes are light and easy to ride (even up hills!) and will take you where you want to go with just a little effort. They come complete with all you need to get on the road, plus information on where to ride locally and further afield.

For more details and to book a bike, just head to: ssb.org.uk/projects/cycling/ or contact Penny Wainwright: bike@ssb.org.uk

Ross Kennerley, SSB Trustee says: “Going forward, possibilities include electric car charging and car sharing schemes. However, SSB’s current volunteers are fully stretched in other areas. So if you’re enthusiastic about this crucial area, and would like to take part in this project area, please contact us. A Project Co-ordinator would be particularly welcomed!”

Ross Kennerley: info@ssb.org.uk



Jeremy with his Electric Car at the Fair | Photo. H Gabriel

£2 Single Fares on buses

This Government scheme is being extended til the end of June, so from South Brent you can get to Totnes, Paignton, Exeter, Plymouth and back for £4! See the Stagecoach website for details of the Gold and x38 Services which have new Timetables from 2nd April.

'Engine room' updates

Treasurer's Report

Income
£15,363

Surplus
£6,225

Cash
£17,988

Reserves
£29,093

For the financial year October 2021 to September 2022, SSB achieved an increase in income to £15,363 (from £12,013 in the previous year) with a surplus of £6,225 (£5,836 in the previous year).

Income was boosted by the Fair for South Brent which generated £3,167 of income on the day. The charity also received £3,050 in grant funding, of which £1,550 was to support the Fair for South Brent (in addition to the income received), and £1,500 was to fund the launch of the Community Fridge. We also saw slightly higher income levels at the Marsh due to continued cessation of the brown bin collections in the parish. Membership receipts, other grant and event income, plus other donations provided the rest of the income.

Total costs in the 2021/22 financial year were £9,138 (£6,177 in previous year). The increase in costs is attributable to the costs of running the Fair for South Brent, which overall generated a surplus of funds.

Total cash held by SSB at the end of the financial year was £17,988 and Charity Reserves were £29,093. In line with recommended good practice, SSB aims to keep reserves in excess of £10,000 to ensure we can cover annual running costs, so not all reserves are available to fund new projects/additional costs. Steve Wills, Treasurer, says: "Thank you to everyone who either volunteered (and in doing so helped to raise money), and/or donated to SSB through 2021/22.

We aim to keep at least £3,000 of available reserves in the Sustainability Fund to support local community projects. If you would like to apply for funds from SSB for such projects, please feel free to contact one of the Trustees or Project Coordinators."

The full end of year accounts are archived on the SSB website. If you do have any queries regarding these, please contact Steve.

Steve Willis, Treasurer: treasurer@ssb.org.uk

Fund-raising Committee

This year the Fund-raising Committee has really got into its stride and is helping to support SSB projects. Huge thanks to all our donors who've helped make things happen, including: South Hams District Council (several different funds); Devon County Council; the Co-operative Society; South Brent Feoffees; South Brent Parish Council; and the NHS via LiveWest NHS.

SSB have also just been awarded £1,100 for electric fleece blankets which will be distributed in collaboration with South Brent and District Caring next Autumn.

These successes are a great credit to all involved, particularly Jessica Shipp. Fundraising isn't restricted to grant funding, so if anyone has ideas they want to share about fundraising (for example, running a community fundraiser), or want to make a specific donation to one of the SSB projects, please get in touch with Jessica:

funding@ssb.org.uk

Membership Report

Our membership has risen from 168 in mid-April last year to 201 at the end of February, with some of last year's members still in progress with their renewal payments.

Alastair Cuthbertson, Membership Secretary, welcomes members old and new: "It's great to have your support, which is helpful in forging new partnerships and making grant applications. More importantly, it shows that our initiatives and contributions to community life are valued. And of course, your subscriptions help finance our projects."

The reception desk at the Hub is a convenient place to renew, by card or cash, with the chance for some time and refreshment in the 'warm room' (up until the end of March). SSB's post-box on the wall by the entrance to the Old School House, across the car park, is still in use too, and accessible '24/7': don't forget to identify your payment with your name, if you're using that.

We're proposing membership changes that should make it easier and clearer for everyone. Annual Adult membership will continue at £6 per person, with a concessionary rate of £3. So if you already have a standing order for SSB, you are a member.

Lastly, we have a few changes coming up that will mostly apply to future members. We want to enable them to 'sign up' and pay online, i.e. paperless. We hope to be ready to tell you briefly about this at the AGM. Of course, if you're fully paid up by then you'll be able to vote on any resolutions that are put to a vote during the evening.

If you're not already a member and this newsletter has inspired you, we'd love to welcome you! For details on how to join, just go to our website: ssb.org.uk/join/

Alastair Cuthbertson, Membership Secretary: membership@ssb.org.uk

Vision Statement

We've given our vision statement a refresh, so, subject to approval at the AGM, it will now be:

Creating a resilient, low-carbon community where all life thrives

We hope you agree that this neatly sums up what SSB is all about.



Fair for South Brent 2022 in full swing | Photo: H. Gabriel

SSB resources

Did you know you can find lots of useful information in the resources section of SSB's website? Check it out for, among other things, many of SSB's documents, policies and procedures (both updated and new ones), agendas and minutes of Trustee meetings.

ssb.org.uk/resources

Would you like to...?

Here are the latest volunteering opportunities with SSB:

- Do you have a passion for nature and good organisation skills? Then you could be the new 4B's Project Co-ordinator.
- Determined to help reduce waste? Come and help organise actions as the new 'Talking Rubbish' Group Project Co-ordinator.
- Transport Project Co-ordinator: Want to help make a difference in this key area? SSB needs you!
- Publicity/communications - what do you think of SSB's communications? Think you could do better (or at least no worse!)? Fresh ideas and ways to engage younger people are especially welcome.
- Trustees: We always welcome new Trustees. In particular, we could do with people with experience in/passion for the following areas: H&S/Safeguarding; Energy; Transport; Waste reduction; Publicity/Communications)

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact, in the first instance:

info@ssb.org.uk, stating your interest. We can then forward you details about Project Co-ordinator/Trustee/publicity roles and arrange for an informal chat.

Trustees

We welcomed two fantastic new Trustees, Steve Willis and Joanna Rothern in the past year and sadly said "see you around" to Kitty Ford in September.

Current Trustees:

- Andy Harker, Chair
- Hayden Gabriel, Vice-Chair, Link Trustee: Youth Liaison; Energy; (Wood Group; Luces & 4Bs until April 23)
- Pat Armstrong, Link Trustee, Food and Land: The School Garden; Food @SB;The Community Fridge
- Nick Cape, Link Trustee, Biodiversity: Hedges and Woodland Group; The Luces; 4Bs (from April 23)
- Eva Stephens, Link Trustee: The Marsh; Talking Rubbish; The Hub (standing down at the AGM)
- Kim Howard, Lead Trustee: Written Communications; Policies and Procedures
- Joanna Rothern (since Sept.22)
- Jane Nichols, Lead Trustee: Engagement; Link Trustee: The Hub
- Ross Kennerley, Link Trustee: Transport;The Marsh
- Steve Willis, Treasurer
- David Hancock, Link Councillor with South Brent Parish Council

Members who are not Trustees, but play a vital supporting role include:

- John Severn, Company Secretary
- Alastair Cuthbertson, Membership Secretary
- Kitty Ford: Newsletter/newflash graphic design and digital communications distribution
- Alan Lewis: IT support
- Vanessa Lewis: Social media
- John Rawlinson: Website
- Jessica Shipp: Fund-raising
- Robin Toogood, Stuart Saunders, Helen Hall, Penny Wainwright: Project Co-ordinators

The Trustees meet on the first Tuesday of every month at the Old School Community Centre. Members are encouraged to bring ideas to the Trustee meetings by arrangement. Contact: info@ssb.org.uk

Lastly, and most importantly....

Our grateful thanks

To all our wonderful Trustees, project co-ordinators and other volunteers, past and present, for their great contribution to SSB, including those who have stepped down this year from various posts:

Kitty Ford: your thoughtful contributions and presence on the Board of Trustees are missed.

Eva Stephens: you have given so much to so many projects and to the Board, we understand something had to give. It's just a pity we can't clone you! Trustees are going to miss your effervescence and words of wisdom at Board meetings.

Jeremy Sabel: Nature in general and 4Bs in particular have benefitted from your excellent guidance as 4Bs' Project Co-ordinator.

Tina Munro: The 'Talking Rubbish' Group will miss your friendly guidance as Project Co-ordinator.

