



'SSB Going Forward'

Presentation to AGM

22 April 2025

Presentation overview

1. Introduction
2. Background to 'SSB Going Forward'
3. A summary of the process we've been through
4. The outputs coming out of it
5. Conclusions / next steps



Concerned about climate and nature?

Want to act locally to do something about it?



**Sustainable
South Brent**



We're looking for **Trustees**

What's in it for you?

- Satisfaction from knowing you're helping to make a resilient community where all life thrives
- Fun, friendship and skill development
- A chance to shape and influence projects which improve our local environment and community

Why now?

Some of our existing Trustees will be standing down at our AGM in April, so it's an ideal time to 'pick up the baton' and join the team to help run our strong, diverse and thriving organisation. There will be support and assistance for new Trustees. We very much welcome applicants from across our community. We especially need some-one with finance experience, to act as Treasurer (back-up support is available).

To find out more, email chair@ssb.org.uk



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

Sustainable South Brent, The School House, Totnes Road, South Brent TQ10 9BP
Registered Charity No: 1145553; Company No: 7309926

Background to 'SSB Going Forward'

- SSB has come a long way since it got going in 2006/07
- Some fabulous projects and successes since on the 'SSB Timeline'
- With ever more projects the charity is becoming more complex to manage (eg finance....)
- SSB is here for the long term (99 year lease in prospect for the market garden with SHDC, and a new 25-year lease on the Marsh)
- There could be many more projects in the future...
- We need to set things up in a way that is manageable for each project and for the Trustees of the charity as a whole
- Over the last couple of years it has become more difficult to recruit trustees and key volunteers (eg finance)...



SSB's Timeline - Some notable dates along the way...

- ❖ 2006 / 2007 – First informal discussions and three public meetings
 - ❖ 2007 – SSB forms as an Unincorporated Association / 1st AGM
 - ❖ 2010 – SSB becomes a Company and can enter into leases and contracts
 - ❖ March 2011 – First green waste arrives at the Marsh
 - ❖ 2011 – SSB members form the SBCES for community wind turbine project
 - ❖ Oct 2011 – Community school garden project gets green light (after two years...)
 - ❖ Jan 2012 – SSB becomes a Charity
 - ❖ 2013 – Hedges and Woodland Group gets going
 - ❖ 2017 – South Brent Wood Fair (1000+ people!)
 - ❖ 2019 – Brent Bees, Bugs, Butterflies (4Bs) - Health Centre orchard
 - ❖ July 2022 – Fair for South Brent (how many people?)
 - ❖ Oct 2022 – The Community Fridge goes live (>500Kg per week and counting...)
 - ❖ Summer 2023 – First hosting of work experience students from Ivybridge CC
 - ❖ [2023] – SSB takes on management of the Luces
 - ❖ July 2024 – Launch of the Repair Café
 - ❖ August 2024 – Market garden and orchard announcement
 - ❖ Autumn 2024 – Tuesday Fair Share launches at the Rec (250Kg per week...)
 - ❖ Jan-Mar 2025 – The planting of Hope Wood (Day 1: 2000+ trees in under 2 hours)
- + *community hub, energy cafes, school PV, talks, films, workshops, litter picking, other!*

The process we've been through, Jan – Apr 2025

- Three discussion meetings:
 - **15th January** – a 1st Discussion Meeting with Trustees in the Hub
 - **13th February** – 2nd Discussion Meeting with Project Co-Ordinators (PCs) and Key Volunteers (KVs) at the Den, SB Primary School
 - **25th March** – 3rd Discussion Meeting with Trustees, PCs and KVs in the upstairs meeting room at the Village Hall
- Written contributions ([10-page digest](#))
- Numerous conversations...
- Distillation of conclusions
- This presentation to AGM

What's come out of these discussions?

1. An **overall assessment of SSB's current position** using the 'SWOT' framework
2. Three **working statements to support SSB's governance**:
 1. The essential role of the charity
 2. The essential role of the Trustee group
 3. The 'accord' between the charity and each individual project
3. A feeling that the time has come **to explore options for paid support** to help with those tasks which it has proved difficult to find volunteers for and are not core to the trustee role
4. Working proposal for a new '**[SSB Forum for Project Co-Ordination and Support]**' meeting to be held twice per year
5. Option to simplify statutory reporting by becoming a '**Charitable Incorporated Organisation**' (CIO)

An overall assessment of SSB' current position

(using the 'SWOT' framework)

STRENGTHS, eg:

- + Membership
- + Volunteers
- + Projects / track record
- + Wider Community support
- + The SSB brand for fundraising

WEAKNESSES, eg:

- Organisational arrangements for handling ever more projects
- Mechanisms for tracking restricted / unrestricted funds by project
- No regular forum for projects to meet together

OPPORTUNITIES, eg:

- + Local amenity and sustainability through ever more projects...
- + Volunteering opportunities
- + Partnering with other organisations
- + Exemplar / inspiration for other villages and communities

THREATS, eg:

- Exhaustion through taking on too much
- Tensions that can arise if organisational arrangements are not clear / commonly understood
- Not being able to recruit enough trustees

SSB Going Forward – Next steps

After formal AGM business is complete the following charts will be up on the wall:

1. SSB Timeline
2. SSB Current Position ('SWOT')
3. The essential role of the SSB Charity
4. The essential role of the SSB Trustee Group
5. The 'accord' between the charity and each individual project
6. Options for paid support (working notes)
7. SSB Forum for project co-ordination and support (working notes)

What would you add or change?

Please write any comments-questions-suggestions directly on the chart or alternatively send an email to rjtc1234@gmail.com by the end of the week.

These outputs will form part of the handover to the new Trustee Group for their consideration after the AGM.

And finally...

'SSB Going Forward, January – April 2025'

Thanks to the Trustees, Project Co-Ordinators and other Key Volunteers who have contributed one way or another to these discussions:

- Alastair Cuthbertson
- Becky Warnes
- Caroline Grundy
- Daniel Parnell
- David Butcher
- Eleanor Keay
- Eva Stephens
- Felicity Ferry
- George Link
- Harry Jennings
- Hayden Gabriel
- Helen Hall
- Jane Nichols
- Jeannie Hodder
- Jenny Harker
- Joanna Rothon
- Joddy Chapman
- John Rawlinson
- John Severn
- Jude Bishop
- Kim Howard
- Kitty Ford
- Michael Cady
- Penny Wainright
- Richard Chapman
- Richard Fone
- Richard Walters
- Robin Toogood
- Ross Kennerley
- Rowan Wylie
- Stuart Saunders

Exploring options for paid support

The majority supported this at the third discussion meeting (16 'yes', 0 'no', 2 'maybe' + 4 abstentions)

Options to consider, e.g.:

1. Possible scope of the role? eg:

1. General administration of the charity, eg:

1. Co-ordinating agendas and minutes
2. Finance, book-keeping, financial reports and accounts
3. Google workspace admin, mapping SSB email accounts
4. Volunteer co-ordination & support

2. Communications, eg:

1. Newsletters, Print media / PR, Website content
2. Social media
3. Events

3. Fundraising, eg:

1. Light touch co-ordination of project fundraising applications being made in SSB's name to ensure no overlapping / conflicting fundraising bids to the same funder
2. Leading on FR applications for SSB's core costs and reporting to funders

2. Person spec? What qualities are we looking for?

3. Total hours needed? What can we afford?

4. Whether one person or two (or more) adding up to the same hours would be better?

5. Type of contract - staff, contractor, other?

6. Terms & conditions including remuneration?.

7. Day to day decision-making and support arrangements?

Next step: New Trustee Group to explore options for paid support to support the core operation for those tasks for which it proves / has proven difficult to recruit volunteers.

SSB Forum for project co-ordination and support



All comments received after the 3rd Discussion Meeting support this idea. Initial planning notes:

1. General aims of the forum, eg:

1. To build collaboration and synergies between projects;
2. To identify opportunities for fundraising, new projects or project 'extensions';
3. To identify and raise subjects that may need Trustee attention.

2. Organisation of the forum, eg:

1. Volunteer Convenor to co-ordinate arrangements?
2. Support from a small working group of Trustees and Co-Ordinators?
3. Use a facilitator for the first few meetings?

3. Time & Place

1. Max 2-hours on a weekday evening?
2. Venue big enough for [30] people?

4. Attendees:

1. At least one rep per project? At least two trustees?

5. Priority topics, eg:

1. Collaborative fundraising opportunities
2. Exploring how projects can help each other out ('operational synergies')
3. Building the SSB volunteer community
4. Making the best use of SSB funds available
5. Issues for the attention of SSB Trustees

Next step: Appoint a volunteer convenor / working group to co-ordinate arrangements for the first SSB Forum meeting

SSB Going Forward

'SSB's most important role(s) going forward'

After discussion meeting held on 25th March 2025

"Looking to the future (and with SSB as a whole in mind) , what is the most important and useful role that SSB can play in response to the climate and biodiversity crisis? What is 'essential'? What is 'optional'?"

Essential roles of the SSB Charity:

- To provide organisational support / infrastructure for projects that need it eg legal entity to hold leases, policy framework, insurance, bank account
- To serve the community we are part of by thinking and acting with the longer term in mind (25 year lease on the Marsh, 99 year lease in prospect on the market garden and orchard)
- To work collaboratively and well with other local community organisations and the parish council for the common good

Optional roles:

- To be a focus for communications about all things sustainable in the area
- Co-ordinating local sustainability projects whether or not they are part of SSB
- To show leadership and help generate sustainability strategy for the village

General ambitions / highest aspirations of the SSB Charity, eg:

- Empowerment of the community - helping people to think/feel they can make a difference
- Building community resilience (eg food)
- Helping people deal with the 'overwhelm' of engaging with the climate and biodiversity crisis
- Nature-based volunteering opportunities
- Education / awareness / understanding
- Enthusiasm / inspiration / energy

Other points made:

- This list is intimidating / overwhelming and could put off potential trustees
- The level of ambition needs to align with the level of resources available and our capacity to deliver

SSB Going Forward: What is the essential role of SSB Trustees?

V1.3 @ 11 April 2025

Essential trustee roles - the bare minimum ('safe, legal, solvent')

1. **Legal / compliance:** To operate in accordance with and regard to:
 - a. **Company law and charity law** including the preparation and filing of statutory returns and accounts to Companies House and the Charity Commission,
 - b. **SSB's Articles of Association** eg
 - i. If Trustee Meetings are held, to ensure a minimum quorum of 3 Trustees.
 - ii. To hold at least one General Meeting of Members per year (the AGM) and
 - iii. To maintaining the register of Members (membership management)
 - c. **Charity Commission advice** eg maintaining a risk register and ensuring that appropriate risk management measures are in place including insurance;
2. **Policy framework:** keeping SSB policies up to date, and on occasions introducing new policies if strictly necessary
3. **Finance** - To maintain a sufficient financial oversight and scrutiny to be assured of the proper use of charitable funds and accuracy of financial reports of the charity's position
4. **Contracts and leases** - to enter into contracts (eg leases) on behalf of SSB Projects when necessary
5. **Project oversight** - to maintain a 'project register' and agreeing project aims, plans and budget with the teams running SSB projects
6. **Management and support of (i) volunteers and (ii) paid support** playing roles in support of the SSB organisation as a whole
7. **Co-option of trustees** between AGMs when needed.

Optional trustee roles

1. Co-ordinating overall SSB strategy, fundraising and external partnerships
2. Actively identifying and helping to initiate new SSB projects and activities
3. Project support through 'Link Trustees'

Other critical tasks

(which can be undertaken by Trustees and/or other volunteers and/or paid support)

1. **Meeting management:** eg Co-ordinating agendas, papers for meetings, collating reports, taking minutes etc
2. **Finance:** Book-keeping and the preparation of financial reports and accounts
3. **Communications:** eg SSB Mailing list management, Newsletter, Flashes, Event Posters, SSB Website, Social media
4. **IT:** eg Website management and maintenance, domain renewals, SSB Email accounts and forwarding arrangements, administration of the Google Office Workspace, Training in use of the system

SSB Going Forward

The 'accord' between the trustee group and project teams

v1.0 after discussion meeting held on 25th March 2025

SSB's projects run themselves within an overall governance framework maintained by the charity's trustees that is kept as simple as possible while doing what is essential for SSB to remain 'safe, legal and solvent'.

<p>SSB Trustees provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A framework of SSB policies to support safe operation and fundraising efforts• Insurance cover and risk assessment• Banking facilities and financial reports• A legal entity to hold any legal contracts / leases required for the project to operate• General publicity through the website and SSB newsletters etc• Start up support and funding as energy and funds permit• General support for the recruitment of volunteers (the SSB 'offer')• <i>[Other?]</i>	<p>SSB projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organise themselves in their own way including planning, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, publicity and (project-level) risk assessment• Manage income and expenditure within agreed limits• Comply with SSB policies• Contribute to SSB's funds when it can• Submit an annual report to Trustees for inclusion in SSB's Annual Report to members, and other working reports when necessary to ensure 'no surprises'• Collaborate with the Trustee group if/when the time comes to 'lay the project down'• Keep trustees in the loop when exploring significant new opportunities• <i>Other?</i>
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Both parties agree to engage in this accord without which the project would not be able to continue under SSB governance.

Signed for SSB:

Signed for the project: