Annual Report & Financial Statements for Year Ended 31-Mar-26

Charity Number:
1207979

Southend Community Matters (SCM)

Annual Report for Year Ended 31-Mar-6

Registered Address & Contact Details:

Main Contact:

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Southend Community Matters

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Registered office:

Civic Centre
Victoria Avenue,
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SS2 6FY

Legal Structure:

Southend Community Matters is a (Foundation) Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO):-

Charity Number: 1207979
Date of Establishment: 23-Apr-24

Governing Document:

Constitution (Foundation CIO)

Objects:

The objects of the CIO are:

To further the benefit of the residents of Southend and broader Essex environs, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious, or other opinions by associating together the said residents, the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.

Board of Trustees:

1. Sarah Lander	Trustee/Chair
2. Stuart Long	Trustee/Treasurer
3. Laura Lewsey	Trustee/Secretary
4. Mobashar Mahmood	Trustee
5. Sirajun-Nessa Motin	Trustee

Structure & Governance:

Southend Community Matters was established to promote Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) across Southend. The charity continues to be managed directly by its Board of Trustees, who oversee governance, financial management, project delivery and strategic development.

During the year the Trustees focused on delivering the charity's first operational programme, "Connecting Communities", while continuing to develop policies, partnerships and infrastructure to support future growth.

The long-term vision remains to build a community-led organisation where local residents play an active role in identifying priorities, developing solutions and influencing decision-making. Trustees continue to work towards establishing community forums and pathways for local residents to become involved in governance and leadership of the organisation.

Objectives & Activities:

Southend Community Matters exists to strengthen local communities by bringing together residents, voluntary organisations, statutory partners and funders to identify local needs and develop community-led responses.

Following a developmental first year, SCM became operational during 2025-26 through delivery of the Connecting Communities Project on the Queensway Estate. This project applied Asset Based Community Development principles to support residents in identifying local priorities, building relationships, increasing participation and creating opportunities for community-led action.

Activities delivered during the year included:

- Community coffee mornings and resident meetings.

- Resident engagement and consultation activities.
- Production and distribution of a resident-led newsletter.
- Development of a digital Community Directory and website resources.
- Delivery of the Queensway Art Jam community art project.
- Community environmental action including a resident-led litter pick.
- Partnership working with local agencies, contractors and community organisations.
- Community surveys and research to identify resident priorities.

Achievements & Performance:

Becoming Operational

Year 2 marked a significant milestone for SCM as the charity moved from planning and development into direct delivery of community development activity.
Funding secured during Year 1 from Essex Community Foundation, together with additional support from the Norman Garon Trust and partner organisations, enabled SCM to employ a Part-Time Community Development Officer and commence delivery of activities on the Queensway Estate.

Community Engagement

The Connecting Communities Project directly engaged approximately 130 residents through community activities, events and meetings. Regular coffee mornings and resident meetings were established, creating welcoming spaces for residents to connect with one another, discuss local issues and influence decisions affecting their neighbourhood. A community survey completed by **129 residents** provided valuable evidence regarding local priorities and aspirations, helping shape future development plans and funding applications.

Strengthening Community Voice

A resident-led newsletter was developed and distributed to more than 430 households across the estate. The newsletter provided a valuable communication channel between residents, local organisations and regeneration partners, helping residents feel more informed and involved in changes affecting the area.

The project also facilitated engagement between residents and key stakeholders involved in the Better Queensway regeneration programme, helping ensure community voices were heard throughout ongoing regeneration discussions.

Community Pride & Environmental Improvement

SCM worked with local artists, residents and partners to deliver the Queensway Art Jam, creating opportunities for community participation, creativity and civic pride.

Residents also worked alongside contractors and local agencies to organise a community litter pick, collecting more than ten sacks of litter and improving the appearance of the local environment whilst building stronger relationships between neighbours.

Digital Development

During the year SCM developed its online presence through the creation of a project website and digital Community Directory.
The website received over 1,300 visitors and generated more than 2,400 page views during its first year, helping residents access information, services and opportunities available within their community.

Partnership Working

Strong partnerships were developed with:

- Southend City Council
- South Essex Homes
- ATF
- Active Essex
- Mind – South East and Central Essex
- Storehouse
- Local resident groups
- Contractors involved in the Better Queensway programme

These partnerships helped maximise resources, improve communication and create a stronger foundation for future community development activity.

Outcomes & Impact

The project demonstrated the value of resident-led community development by:

- Increasing community participation and engagement.
- Reducing social isolation through regular social activities.
- Improving communication between residents and local agencies.
- Building confidence and leadership amongst local residents.
- Creating stronger community networks and partnerships.
- Improving the physical environment through community action.
- Establishing a platform for future community-led initiatives.

Feedback from residents indicated improvements in community connection, confidence and sense of belonging, with some reporting they felt better informed and more able to influence local decisions.

Governance & Risk Management

The Trustees recognise their responsibility for ensuring that Southend Community Matters is well governed, financially sustainable and compliant with its legal and regulatory obligations as a registered charity.

The Board meets regularly to oversee the charity's activities, review financial performance, monitor progress against objectives and consider risks that may affect delivery of its charitable purposes. Trustees review policies and procedures to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place for all activities undertaken by the charity.

As a small developing charity, the Trustees regularly review potential risks together with actions to mitigate them ad plan to develop a risk register to track this.

Key Risks and Mitigating Actions

Funding Sustainability

As a grant-funded organisation, the charity's ability to deliver services depends upon securing external funding.

Mitigation: The Trustees actively seek funding from a range of grant makers and local partners, whilst working to develop a diverse funding base that includes unrestricted income where possible.

Capacity and Staffing

During the year, the Board undertook a review of its skills, experience, and future governance requirements to ensure the charity is well positioned for continued growth and development. As a result, a trustee recruitment process was undertaken to strengthen the Board's collective expertise and capacity. New trustees were appointed to bring additional skills and experience in key areas including community development, governance, finance, partnership working, communications and voluntary sector leadership. The appointments have enhanced the Board's ability to provide effective strategic oversight, support organisational sustainability, and ensure the charity remains responsive to the needs of the communities it serves. The charity remains committed to maintaining a diverse and representative Board that

reflects the communities it serves and will continue to review its skills and succession needs on an ongoing basis.

Mitigation: During the year, the charity undertook trustee recruitment to increase Board capacity and broaden the range of skills and experience available to support organisational growth. Trustees will continue to review Board effectiveness, succession planning, and future recruitment requirements.

Governance and Compliance

There is a risk that, as a growing organisation, governance requirements may become more complex.

Mitigation: Trustees maintain appropriate policies and procedures and keep abreast of Charity Commission guidance and legal requirements.

Reputation and Community Trust

As a community development organisation, maintaining positive relationships with residents, partners and funders is essential.

Mitigation: The charity operates transparently, engages residents in decision-making and works collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure activities are responsive to local needs.
The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate systems are in place to manage the principal risks facing the charity and that these risks are regularly reviewed throughout the year.

Financial Review:

Funding & Fund-Raising

During the year SCM secured and utilised funding from:

- Essex Community Foundation
- Norman Garon Trust
- In-kind support from ATF and partner organisations

Income for the year totalled approximately **£6,000**, comprising:

- £4,000 restricted grant funding from Essex Community Foundation.
- £2,000 grant funding from the Norman Garon Trust.

These funds enabled delivery of the Connecting Communities Project and associated community development activities.

Expenditure

Expenditure during the year included:

- Community Development Officer staffing costs.
- ICT, website and digital platform costs.
- Publication and newsletter production costs.
- Queensway Art Project costs and other community engagement activities.

The majority of expenditure was directly related to project delivery and community engagement.

Reserves Policy

As a developing charity, SCM remains committed to prudent financial management. Trustees continue to maintain a reserves policy aligned with Charity Commission guidance, with a long-term aim of building unrestricted reserves equivalent to between three and six months of operating costs.

Future funding applications will seek both project funding and contributions towards core costs to ensure the charity's long-term sustainability and growth.

Future Plans

Building upon the success of the Connecting Communities Project, SCM intends to:

- Secure further funding to continue community development work within Queensway.
- Establish a resident-led community forum.
- Expand community engagement activities across other neighbourhoods in Southend.
- Develop initiatives focused on community safety, older residents and opportunities for young people.
- Strengthen volunteer involvement and resident leadership.
- Continue developing partnerships across the voluntary, community and public sectors.
- Build organisational capacity to support the appointment of additional staff as funding allows.

The Trustees believe the foundations established during Year 2 place Southend Community Matters in a strong position to expand its impact and continue supporting residents to create positive and lasting change within their communities.

Signed:



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Sarah Lander (Chair)
[On behalf of Southend Community Matters]

Southend Community Matters (SCM)

Accounts to 31-Mar-26

Southend Community Matters (SCM)

Accounts 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

	Un-Restricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Income :			
Money in Bank (ECF)	-	4,000.00	4,000.00
Norman Garon Trust award		2,000.00	2,000.00
cashback	0.14		0.14
Total Income	**0.14**	**6,000.00**	**6,000.14**
Expenditure :			
ICT and website	-	650.00	650.00
Publications		40.92	40.92
Community Projects (Queensway Art)		590.04	590.04
Salaries (CD Project Worker)		2,971.19	2,971.19
Total Expenditure	**-**	**4,252.15**	**4,252.15**
Surplus / Deficit	0.14	1,747.85	1,747.99
Funds Brought Forward	-	-	-
Funds Carried Forward at 31/03/26	**0.14**	**1,747.85**	**1,747.99**

Sarah Lander(Chair): ... . **Stuart Long (Treasurer):** ....