Sustainable Amersham

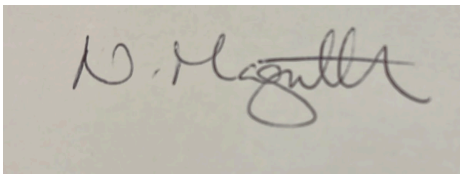
Annual Report 2025

Sustainable Amersham (SA) is a small community volunteer-run charity (charity number 1212349). We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. We work together with local residents, organisations, businesses and government to help the community take action to protect and restore nature, reduce carbon emissions and waste, and adapt to climate change.

We care passionately about our planet and its protection; work for and with our local community and share responsibility between members; are friendly, welcoming and inclusive; encourage creative ideas and solutions to empower people to take action on sustainability and nature and act with integrity, accountability and transparency.

For any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us via one of the channels below.

Signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board of Trustees



Nikki Magrath

www.sustainableamersham.org

@sustainableamersham

Sustainable Amersham

SustainableAmersham

1. Introduction

We have several volunteer teams who organise events and activities throughout the year: Communications; Climate Book Club; Wild Amersham; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; Repair Cafe; Green Families; Green Energy; Social Events; Future Amersham.

Find out more about their activities below.

This year we celebrated five years of our sustainability activities. This gave us the opportunity to appreciate and celebrate all the projects undertaken in the past while also aspiring to expand and develop in the future. We hope you will find encouragement and inspiration in the following pages.

As we write there is war in the Middle East and climate change is affecting all of us including local nature. This highlights the limitations of our dependency on fossil fuels. We think that self-reliance in the UK could be improved through the further development of renewable energy, the upgrade of our housing stock and increased focus on food security, and that nature should be made a priority in all these matters. We believe our activities support our community to save money, reduce our carbon footprint and improve local biodiversity and these aims will continue to provide a focus for our actions in the coming year.

None of our work is possible without the support of the community and the volunteer work of many people, and we give huge thanks to each and every one. Our team ranges in age from 16 to 93 and comes from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. We welcome new volunteers and members and are open to new ideas and any form of support. Please join us – links to sign up for our newsletter or to become a member can be found on our website (sustainableamersham.org) or you can email us on hello@ @sustainableamersham.org to find out more.

2. Climate Book Club

The Climate Book Club was revived in March 2025 and has since become a platform for exchange of ideas, learning and connection about sustainability issues. Meeting every other month, members unanimously select a book on a sustainability subject and come together to explore its themes, discussing key learnings, as well as its strengths and limitations.

The books serve as a source of inspiration and reflection on the changes we can collectively drive. During 2025 the group read the following books:

- Wasteland by Oliver Franklin-Wallis
- Environomics by Darshini David
- Not the End of the World by Hannah Ritchie.

The discussions on each book typically span over two sessions to allow for more meaningful engagement with the text. Attendees range in age from 20 to 90 and this intergenerational exchange enriches discussions, encouraging critical thinking and optimism in the face of uncertainty. These conversations often spark ideas that can be translated into practical sustainability projects within Sustainable Amersham.

Beyond books, the Club is a valuable space for members to meet, connect, share experiences and foster a sense of community. Looking ahead, we aim to grow participation and enhance the community spirit.

3. Wild Amersham

Wild Amersham encourages people to explore, protect and restore local nature together.

Exploring nature

Wild Amersham encourages people to explore nature by organising nature events. In 2025 we organised 13 local walks on subjects such as bats, wildflowers, river ecology, plant folklore, and birds; some of the walks were part of the Chiltern Walking Festival. We held two talks, on garden birds and hedgelaying. We also put together two children's events: a botany workshop for St Mary's School and a Wildlife Discovery Day at the Chilterns Open Air Museum. We hosted a nature art workshop at Amersham Museum. A design competition for young people resulted in the new Wild Amersham logo, featuring the (very local) Coralroot flower. We had lots of lovely responses to these events:

- 'Thank you for organising the fantastic Wildlife Discovery Day. We are already a nature-loving family but we learnt some very cool new facts and it fired up our interest even more!' (Wildlife Discovery Day)
- 'It was my first time attending a talk by Wild Amersham. I really enjoyed how relaxed it was in the feel and openness to questions etc. It felt like a nice kind of community of people.' (hedgelaying talk)
- 'It gave me ideas for involving non- environmental friends in looking at nature from a different perspective.' (plant walk)
- 'I enjoyed the calmness of listening to birds early in the morning, and learned about the variety of birds on my doorstep.' (dawn chorus walk)





Volunteers planting hedge plants at St Mary's School and Amersham Band

Protecting and restoring nature

Through our events we hope people are encouraged to protect and restore nature better in their own gardens - and beyond. We also held a seed swap to help them do this. We think it might work, given comments such as: ‘I learnt lots of facts about bats [on the walk] and it also inspired me to seek to protect nature in my area.’ (bat walk). Wild Amersham also receives requests for advice from other nature organisations in the Chilterns. Our volunteers also directly work on practical protection and restoration of local nature on four sites of partner organisations whom we help manage their land for nature. This includes:

- a wildflower meadow, native hedge and nestboxes at Amersham Band; volunteers helped to bash nettles (not all!); pruned, planted and watered additional hedge plants and helped scythe the meadow, twice; other volunteers put up nestboxes and checked and cleaned them.
- a wildflower meadow, heritage orchard and native hedges at St Mary’s School. In 2025 Wild Amersham volunteers helped plant extra hedgelings, watered these and the orchard in summer, scythed the meadow and pruned the fruit trees.
- Wildflower meadows and nestboxes at Amersham Hospital; we put up, checked and cleaned the nest boxes, raked leaves off the meadow and planted some plug plants with the help of a local company.
- Together with Amersham Museum, St Mary’s Church and Amersham Town Council, in 2025 Wild Amersham started a new project called ‘Bring it Back’. Young adults learned from experts about the local history of and nature in St Mary’s churchyard, and designed interventions to ‘bring back’ this history and biodiversity to the churchyard and the community. Wild Amersham organised seven sessions with nature experts for the young people (and other community members), resulting in various practical plans to ‘bring back biodiversity’, such as installation of wildflower circles, nestboxes and planting of native hedges, spring flowering bulbs and wildflower plugs some of which have already been implemented by the young people

We also protect and restore nature through monitoring local wildlife. In 2025, five volunteers walked three bird monitoring transects every single month. The Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group trained 10 volunteers in monitoring amphibians, and helped us organise toad patrols near local ponds. Upper Thames Butterfly Conservation trained 12 people to survey butterflies. Monthly plant quadrat checks were done by six volunteers at Amersham Band. Six members of the Central Chilterns Botany Group conducted inventories of every single wildflower present on the four sites we help manage, resulting in yearly data on how plantlife in the meadows is improving. We share all this data with national organisations.





A river Misbourne walk and talk, and volunteers being trained on amphibian and reptile surveying

Some of the Wild Amersham impact we are proud of in 2025:

- 47 events and volunteer sessions held in nature attended by over 550 people.
- Over 100 volunteers aged 16 to 80 helped at events and volunteer sessions.
- 52 surveys done of bats, plants, amphibians, reptiles, and birds done by 22 volunteers.
- 37 partner organisations and nature experts provided support.
- 300 hedgelings donated by the Woodland Trust and Conservation Volunteers; food and in kind items donated by Tesco and volunteers.
- £1735 donated by Veolia and Amersham Town Council for events and nature items.
- 80 bird species were spotted by our bird monitors. 15 indicator fungi species found by Bring it Back volunteers and the Bucks Fungi Group in the churchyard. Two bat species seen on bat monitoring walks. Grass snakes and slow worms spotted at the Band and in St Mary's School meadow. A number of frogs, toads and newts were saved by Toad Patrols.
- Without sowing any seed, 128 native plant species now grow at St Mary's School, 114 at Amersham Band, and 156 at Amersham Hospital, where a few years ago there were less than 40. Many insects were seen to be enjoying them.
- The Amersham Hospital gardening volunteer team (which includes the Wild Amersham meadow work) was runner up for the Volunteer Award of the Bucks Healthcare Trust Awards.

In 2026 we aim to organise another 12 events at least, and continue to look after the four sites we help manage and continue our surveying of local wildlife, ideally including moths and butterflies.

4. Reduce, Re-use, Recycle (previously Waste Matters)

In 2025 the Waste matters project was renamed 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle' to align better with the aims of the project and more clearly direct people to the information they seek on our website. People still want information and guidance on recycling but our intention was to place more emphasis on reducing waste and re-use. The Team works closely with the Waste Management team at 'Bucks Recycles' (Buckinghamshire County Council) who support our work to share information at local Amersham events.

In 2025 we:

- set up an information stall at four Repair Cafes and two market days. The purpose was to raise awareness of better management of domestic waste and to highlight what to do with soft plastics.
- We also collected cabling from electrical items to recycle; a total of 14 large refuse bags of cabling were collected and recycled over the year.
- 2025 saw the installation of the first public Recycling Noticeboard outside the REGUS offices in Old Amersham. This was achieved in partnership with Amersham Town Council which provided funding through the Mayor's fund for small local community projects. The Noticeboard highlights what people can recycle at home in their kerbside collection and also where other items can be taken to be recycled in the high street (eg make up, toothbrushes, batteries, glasses, contact lenses etc).

The Comms Team produced the posters for the noticeboard, and a short information video about the Noticeboard was created with the help of one of our members to post on You Tube and TikTok.

- In conjunction with the Midsomer Murders & More group a litter picking station was installed on Church Mead behind the Memorial Gardens.



There is still a lack of understanding about food waste recycling, with 30% of the contents of every black bin collected being food waste. The process of recycling food waste is poorly understood by the public and many are sceptical of how it is treated (in fact, food waste is used to generate bioenergy and create fertilisers for farmers). This will be the focus of the RRR Team going forward as we aim to reduce the amount of food wastage and how much is put into the wrong waste stream.

5. Repair Café

The Amersham Repair Café continued to go from strength to strength in 2025, running six sessions on the first Saturday mornings of alternate months. Across the year, 313 items were brought in for repair (with a consistent 50 to – 55 items per session). Of these, 187 items were successfully repaired, saving an estimated 6,100 kg of CO_2e by extending their lifespan and avoiding replacement — equivalent to over 25,000 miles of driving.

The Repair Café's success is driven by its enthusiastic and collaborative volunteers. The Team is a diverse group aged 16 to 93, with 8 to 10 repairers each session supported by a similar-sized front of house team at each session. Together, volunteers contribute over 500 hours annually, equivalent to around three months of full-time work.



Repair volunteers in action

The variety of items brought in is always surprising and too wide-ranging to categorise. Repair skills offered include electrical, mechanical and technical repairs, alongside sharpening, gluing, jewellery repair and sewing. While not every repair is successful, there is real value in attempting to extend an item's useful life and raising awareness of sustainable behaviour.

Many items also carry strong emotional significance. Because people sit with the repairer during the process, conversations about what an item means to them can be just as important as the repair itself and we often share these stories in local media.

Beyond repairs, the Café acts as a welcoming community hub, hosting activities such as tool sharpening workshops, green cleaning sessions, recycling advice, a cable recycling point, as well as seed and book swaps. It has become a place to drop in, feel part of the community, enjoy a cuppa — and, thanks to generous donations and wonderful home baking, a slice of cake.

In 2026 we aim to hold another six Repair Café sessions, possibly adding tech and bike repair.

6. Communications

The Comms Team shares information to encourage people to live more sustainably. Alongside this we promote and advertise the many events held by Sustainable Amersham and those held by local organisations/groups whose aims align with ours.

Our main channels for this are the Sustainable Amersham website, Facebook page and group, Instagram , Linked In, TikTok, WhatsApp groups and our monthly email newsletters. Additionally, we publicise our activities by writing articles for local publications and sometimes display posters. The following are some of the results for this year:

- Much time has been spent revamping our email newsletter, so it is now a more streamlined and concise version with attractive graphics. Additionally, the SA website has been worked on to make it easier to navigate and ensure users are able to find the information they require more easily.
- In 2025 the Comms Team added new team members who produced lovely reels for social media which gained a lot of views (one had over 1600!) There is also a small but valuable graphics team who have produced some great new graphics for us to use.
- We have been fortunate to have a number of wonderful articles written about the Repair Café and Wild Amersham events which have found their way into the Bucks Free Press and local magazines.

- Instagram followers are now 1179 compared with 911 in March 2025 (up 29%) and we have 753 members in our very active Sustainable Amersham Facebook group (up 10%).

Towards the end of the year a small group of us wrote a Comms strategy for 2026 to 2027. The purpose and strategic objectives are described below:

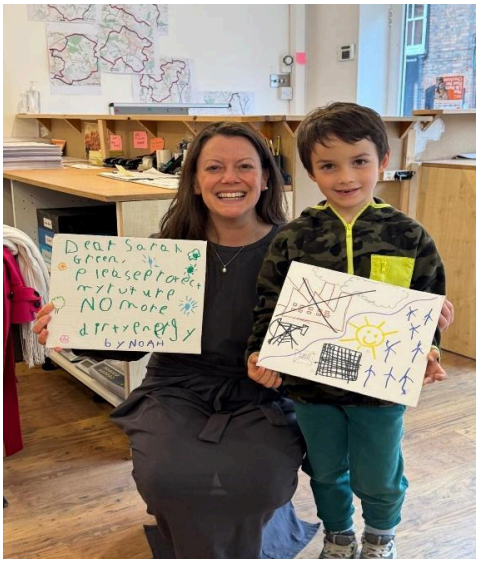
In 2026/7 we will continue to build our trusted presence in Amersham, inspire residents to be more engaged, and promote sustainable living through clear consistent comms.

- Raise awareness of sustainability and SA's role.
- Grow volunteer engagement by +25% by the end of 2027.
- Build partnerships with businesses, churches, schools and community groups.
- Encourage behaviour change in low-carbon living, waste reduction, recycling and protect biodiversity.
- Improve SA visibility and consistency across channels.

7. Green Families

In 2025 the Green Families group concentrated on continuing to deliver Toy Swaps. There were three, in February, June and November, at St Michael's church. They were, as usual, well attended, with a total of 110 happy families and 545 toys rehomed, with parents noting how useful it was to have a way to rotate old toys for new ones.





The toy swap in action and meeting local MP Sarah Green

We donated any leftover toys to the Chilterns Toy bank (making many children in need happy for Christmas) and to school Parent Teacher Association teams in the local area. We are now looking for a new project lead to bring the Toy Swaps to life in 2026.

Some of our parents also worked with the NGO Parents for Future to go to Westminster to lobby MPs there, and locally met with MP Sarah Green against Rosebank, the new oil field in the North Sea.

8. Green Energy

The Green Energy group aspires to encourage households in Amersham to improve their home insulation and to consider renewable energy generation. The group has a partnership with Buckinghamshire Community Energy and together we co-hosted a Green Energy Fair in St Michael's Church in November 2024. There were stalls for renewable energy and insulation installers and a sequence of talks about heat pumps, battery storage and internal wall insulation.

We also attended the Repair Café over the winter of 2024/2025 to talk to attendees about their home energy situation. We spoke to over 30 Amersham residents and these conversations reveal a wide range of experiences and issues including challenges paying utility bills, problems with heat loss, difficulty finding trusted sources of information and trusted installers, and interest in home renewable energy systems.

We hope to have additional funding in 2026 to allow us to offer more detailed home energy surveys. We also intend to collate information about the housing stock in Amersham to enable us to highlight opportunities for group purchasing of renewable technologies.

9. Social events

We celebrated the 5th birthday of Sustainable Amersham in August 2025 with a gathering where we reviewed the past five years and looked forward to the next five. We also held regular evening socials and coffee mornings throughout the year which are an opportunity to discuss sustainability topics in a relaxed environment and often spark new project ideas and plans as well as providing an opportunity to strengthen the community.

10. Future Amersham

Our five year anniversary stimulated us to focus more widely on the future of Amersham. We have been questioning how we can do more to promote the resilience of our community in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss. We have been in dialogue with other community groups (in Buckinghamshire and nationally) who share our concerns and we are learning from their proposed solutions.

This led us to begin a series of conversations with local businesses, civil organisations and faith groups in Amersham to better understand their activities and actions as we all attempt to mitigate and adapt to these challenges. We will work further on this in 2026.

11. Governance



2025 was a significant year for Sustainable Amersham as we went from being an unincorporated community association to becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO, charity number 1212349). This new CIO status provides us with the benefits of recognised charitable status and enables us to better manage risk. We drew up a new CIO constitution in February (you can find it on the Charity Commission website) and we now have a Board of Trustees rather than officers. In 2025 we had six trustees from the Amersham community: Nikki Macgrath, Anne Fullelove, Jill Staite, Sam Free, Mariangeles Martin Leon and Marieke Bosman.

We take an inclusive approach to our governance. Our Trustees meet bimonthly within a wider governance team to manage and make decisions on governance issues. This wider

governance team, to which any member can be invited, enables us to bring in broader expertise and allows members to learn more about us and try out governance before they offer to stand as a Trustee. Members who have served at least a year on the governance team can offer or be invited to be elected to the Board. All Trustees stand down annually at the AGM and are then re-elected for a maximum of six years in total. New Trustees are given recent reports and accounts and at each Trustee meeting all Trustees are trained on a particular governance issue to keep everyone up to date.

Our new constitution requires us to have members and the votes of those members help shape and prioritise our work. Membership is free and carries no commitment beyond supporting the Sustainable Amersham aims and values, although we would hope many members end up being involved in some way. The more members we have, the stronger our voice on community matters - if you would like to add to our representation in this way, do become a member – a link is on our home page on the website or please email hello@sustainableamersham.org.

We were very honoured that at the Proud of Bucks Awards for 2024 our co-founders, Nikki Magrath and Anne Fullelove were highly commended for the Good Neighbour Award' *for setting up Sustainable Amersham and developing it into the hugely successful organisation it is today, raising awareness and supporting the community to make small changes with a big impact'.*

12. Public benefit

Sustainable Amersham aims to benefit everyone in the community. All our events and activities are open to all, widely advertised and are either free or charge a minimal fee (generally £3 to £5; we did not want to charge but sadly found that if we did not charge many people would not turn up!). Our membership is free and does not commit members to anything beyond supporting our aims and values. Every year, we help many people learn about and take action to become more sustainable, save them money through our cheap events, swaps and free repairs, and increase their enjoyment in life and engagement with the community. Our volunteers and event participants tend to vary widely in terms of background, age, and ethnicity.

13. Finance

We are a small volunteer run community organisation – most of the work we do is done by volunteers and with in kind donations (materials for swaps, cake for the Repair Café, etc). We therefore have limited expenditure (£3,438 in 2025) and income (£4,569 in 2025). Our income is mostly from donations made by happy Repair Café customers and a fee we are paid by Bucks Recycles for our work on recycling, and (small) fees from participants in nature events. We request occasional grants for specific projects and received £1,688 in grants in 2025. Our expenditure is mostly related to administrative costs (running the website and a zoom account) and rental of facilities and (very reasonable and often discounted) fees of expert nature guides. We have a reserves policy of six months core costs. An overview of our accounts for 2025 is below.

1. Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds 31/12/2025
	£	£	£
Donation - unrestricted	698	-	698
Grant Income	-	1,688	1,688
Event Income	1,984	-	1,984
Other Income	200	-	200
Total Income	**2,881**	**1,688**	**4,569**
	-		
Expenditure			
Expenditure on charitable activities:			
Operating costs	(111)	(1,288)	(1,399)
Storage costs	(195)	-	(195)
Venue hire	(400)	(40)	(440)
IT costs	(494)	-	(494)
Marketing & Advertising costs	-	(626)	(626)
Insurance	(264)	-	(264)
Travel & Subsistence	(20)	-	(20)
Total Expenditure	**(1,484)**	**(1,954)**	**(3,438)**
	-		
Net movement in funds	**1,397**	**(266)**	**1,131**
Reconciliation of funds			
Total Funds brought forward	3,077	-	3,077
Total Funds carried forward	**4,474**	**(266)**	**4,208**

2. Statement of Assets and Liabilities	2025	2024
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Fixed Assets	-	-
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	4,208	3,077
Total Assets	4,208	3,077
Liabilities		
Creditors	-	-
Total Liabilities	-	-
Net Assets	4,208	-
The funds of the charity		
Restricted funds	-	-
Unrestricted funds	4,208	3,077
Total Charity Funds	**4,208**	**3,077**

Thanks

We are a community organisation and can only succeed if that community supports us. We would like to thank the individuals and organisations who have contributed, in whatever way, to make our work succeed:

1% for the Planet

Amersham Band

Amersham College

Amersham Community Board

Amersham Hospital Gardens Team

Amersham in Bloom

Amersham Museum

Amersham News

Amersham Owned

Amersham Town Council

Barefoot MS Ltd

The Beech House

Claudia Bernardini

Nick Bowles

Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group

Bucks, Berks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

Buckinghamshire Community Energy

Bucks Free Press

Bucks Fungi Group

Bucks NHS Trust

Bucks Recycles Waste Team

Steve Catanach

Hugh Chamberlain

Central Chilterns Botany Group

Chesham Bois Parish Council

Chiltern Open Air Museum

Chilterns Chalk Streams Project

Chilterns National Landscape

Chiltern Society

Chilterns Walking Festival

Conservation Volunteers

Continuous Data Print (CPD)

Dil Motion Ltd

Field Studies Council (Mop End)

James Ford

Grain Sustainability

Paul Heath (Rough Around the Hedges)

Local Directory

Local News by Email

Karen van Oostrum (All About Plants)

Orca and Bee

Parents for the Future

Prestwood Nature

Round and About Amersham Magazine

Small99 and Krystal Hosting (PPP)

Speak Up For Our Planet

St Mary's School

St Mary's Church

St Michael’s Church

Sustainable Chesham

BJ Taylor

Terracycle

Tesco

Upper Thames Butterfly Conservation

Roy Vickery (Plantlore)

Visit Amersham

Woodland Trust

Working The Future

Your Amersham Magazine

.... and anyone inadvertently left out.