



## **Dorset CAN Annual Report for August 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 – December 31st 2024**

**Charity registration number: 1204328**

Dorset CAN became a registered charitable incorporated organisation in August 2023 and this is its first report in line with the Charity Commission's guidelines. The accounts presented alongside this report cover the period 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023 to December 31st 2024.

**Dorset CAN's charitable objects are:**

- A) To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment by working with others to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote biological diversity and restoration of nature.
- B) To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in Dorset.

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to build and sustain an open, accessible and flexible network and alliance which puts climate and ecological awareness at the heart of all decision-making. We provide a voice for all who care about these issues; inform, educate and support people throughout the county; and serve as a hub for information, engagement and action. We act as a positive partner and critical friend to local community groups, town and parish councils and Dorset and BCP Councils.

### **How we plan to deliver our mission**

Dorset CAN has a three year strategy and a business plan which guide how we allocate resources. The strategy and its aims are reviewed annually.

### **Organisational Structure and human resources**

The charity currently has ten Charity Trustees, supported by a paid, part time self employed coordinator. The Charity Trustees have delegated much of the decision making on day to day matters to the Action Team which meets regularly, and the project coordinators where applicable. The Great Big Dorset Hedge project also involves two further paid part-time contractors . No trustees were paid during the relevant period. One trustee stood down and then undertook a small amount of paid, contractual work for Dorset CAN.

At the year end Dorset CAN had 1069 individual members and 84 organisations which are members.

Total Number of active volunteers 269 (excluding trustees).

### **How our work delivers public benefit**

The Great Big Dorset Hedge is a good example of the delivery of public benefit both directly – in terms of volunteer engagement and to farmers and landowners – and in the promotion of hedge restoration (which boosts biodiversity and carbon sequestration). Through its networking and facilitation work, community groups across Dorset looking to share resources, information, knowledge and skills can act more effectively. The charity is also influential in articulating the case for conservation and taking urgent action on climate change, and allowing an outlet for those frustrated by a lack of action elsewhere through its advocacy and educational roles. The updates on various areas of work below highlight how the organisation delivers its charitable purposes and public benefit.

**The Great Big Dorset Hedge** is a long term campaign to facilitate the restoration and extension of hedgerows across all of Dorset, helping support biodiversity and protect against the effects of climate change. During 2024 the project blossomed and grew in both number of participants and geographical reach. This is an ambitious project which has attracted support in terms of funding, volunteers and public interest. During the year it benefitted from the support of over 200 volunteer hedge surveyors who logged over 3000 hours of volunteer time and surveyed over 450 kms of hedgerows. On average each half-day survey covered 1.8 km of hedges. The project supported 80 farmers and landowners with those surveys and we witnessed the start of the hedge planting aspect of the project in just three of those farms at this stage. A large area of Dorset has been reached to the extent that farmland in over 50 parishes has been included in our surveys so far.

**Dorset Greener Homes (DGH)** aims to tackle the 22% of Dorset's carbon emissions which come from people's homes. Making technology accessible to homeowners requires trustworthy sources and opportunities to discuss doubts and benefits. DGH ran two open homes events in September 2023 and 2024; in each case around 200 visitors were able to visit 40 homes across Dorset, particularly concentrated around Lyme Regis, Bridport, Wareham, Weymouth and Shaftesbury. 25 of these homes are open by appointment all year round. These visits allow people considering an eco-project to visit homes where the owners made significant green changes to their lifestyle, electricity generation and storage, and ways they heat their homes. Heat pumps and batteries are of particular interest to our visitors.

In addition to the work delivered directly Dorset CAN is working alongside Dorset Community Energy and Wessex Community Assets on a retrofitting project. Emphasis is on training of builders as retrofit assessors and designers, producing template solutions to different types of houses in Dorset, and eventually setting up one-stop-shops across Dorset to provide assessments, plans and installers to do the work.

We have also been involved in a Community Energy Project in Loders, West Dorset, which proposes a network of solar panels, batteries, charging and possible wind turbines, possibly alongside a community heating system.

**Carbon Literacy training** for town and parish councils and community group leaders in Dorset was added to the educational and community outreach work carried out by the charity in January 2024.

Carbon Literacy is defined as:

“An awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.”

Dorset CAN is currently focusing on the Carbon Literacy toolkit which equips town and parish clerks, staff, councillors and community group leaders with the understanding of their roles and of their influence in relation to the need to reduce carbon impact locally. This fulfils the conditions of the Carbon Literacy Community Pot funding award, which enables Dorset CAN - whose experienced facilitators are unpaid - to charge affordable fees for the two half-day workshops and offer reduced or free training to be fully accessible for those seeking practical, peer-led and interactive learning and accreditation as Carbon Literate. The online workshops and resource packs provide the information they need to communicate the significance of climate change and the changes needed to address the climate emergency.

So far 26 clerks, staff, councillors and community volunteers have been accredited as Carbon Literate, having undertaken two half day workshops and successfully submitted one individual and one group pledge to reduce carbon impact.

Online workshops are offered every month and bespoke training in person is available on request.

Carbon Literacy training delivers Dorset CAN's charitable objects by providing practical tips, ideas and toolkits on reducing carbon emissions for participants to share with their fellow councils, community groups and with the general public. By sharing case studies and examples from similar organisations and by facilitating discussions between participants about projects or awareness campaigns they could introduce themselves, Carbon Literacy training inspires new ideas and enables participants to deliver both cultural change and practical proposals in their wider communities.

Furthermore, the 'Train the Trainer' peer-led approach facilitates the roll-out of further training, sharing of best practice, proven techniques and ways of talking to the public about climate change once participants gain accreditation.

**Dorset Deserves Better** is a campaign to try to persuade Dorset Council to rethink their Draft Local Plan and make it consistent with the county's Climate and Ecological Strategy. Dorset CAN has built an alliance of 66 member organisations and town/parish councils representing over 30% of the population of Dorset. The Local Plan was kicked into the long grass by the previous administration while the new administration (elected in May) needed to wait until the new government was in place (elected in July). Today the plan process has stabilised but punishing new targets have been set. On the one hand we are concerned about their impact on the environment and carbon reduction targets; on the other they do not contain targets or sufficient support for the real housing problem in Dorset - lack of social and low-cost rental housing. Dorset Deserves Better, continues to ask questions in Dorset Council meetings trying to stimulate an open discussion about these difficult issues and also to keep the consortium of organisations informed about the complex changes. In 2025, we will need to refocus the work of DDB and rebuild our mandate and support base.

**Dorset COP** is a networking event jointly organised with Sustainable Dorset and Zero Carbon Dorset enabling local communities to have their say on the climate and ecological crises. 300 people attended the annual event in November at Bournemouth University to discuss the power that lies in communities to bring about change. Its aims were to take positive actions to build community resilience across Dorset and to help create, design, share and develop ways to implement solutions in local communities. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Jessica Toale (MP for Bournemouth West) said, "I was really pleased to open this inspirational event. There is no more profound a challenge or driver of global instability than climate change. While the annual climate COPs are really important international conferences, we cannot tackle climate change without local, community-level action". Concrete plans are in place for our third annual event in Sturminster Newton (North Dorset) in November 2025.

## **Networking and facilitating action by others:**

### **Food Resilience**

In partnership with #helpandkindness, Dorset CAN hosted 4 Food Resilience public online events, with a variety of national and local speakers, preparing the ground for Dorset County to become a Sustainable Food Place. The events attracted over 150 participants in total.

In June 2024, application to become a Sustainable Food Place was successful, creating the countywide 'Feeding Dorset Partnership.' Dorset CAN is currently a partner in the Food Strategy and Governance Team.

Discussions have started with #helpandkindness and Bridport Food Matters on the next steps, including a possible focus on local procurement for the public sector and moving towards shorter food supply chains. Dorset CAN will continue to host networking events to take this initiative forward.

Other online events have included: Battery Storage, Greenwashing, Energy Team update, Land Ownership and Food Transformation.

Community climate engagement events organised by parish councils were supported and facilitated by Dorset CAN volunteers in two small rural parishes with over 60 residents attending to discuss, shape and contribute to proposed community climate action plans. We do not currently have the volunteer capacity to advertise this service, which also links into our Carbon Literacy training for town and parish councils and community groups, but will respond to requests for guidance and support where we can.

Dorset CAN was also represented at 30 in-person events during the year, raising the profile of the urgent need for action.

**External Communications:** Dorset CAN maintained a lively and interactive website <https://www.dorsetcan.org/>. Dorset CAN also maintained a healthy social media presence with regular topical updates. It also enjoyed media coverage on various topics including a number of interviews with regional radio stations, and also featured in news outlets online and in print across Dorset covering Dorset Greener Homes and the Great Big Dorset Hedge projects.

## **Achieving our objectives**

While we celebrate our achievements we are still seeking a longer term, funding base to support our work, and particularly the role of paid coordinator. We identified this as a priority in our Strategy and aspire to multi year funding which would provide confidence in our plans going forward. We are hampered by being a relatively new registered charity and not having published accounts on the Charity Commission website (a situation now remedied).

Despite the funding situation the organisation maintained the role of paid coordinator, which is fundamental to the delivery of our aims.

## **Funding**

We are grateful to the following for grants and donations:

Our members

The Raby Trust

Dorset Community Energy

Dorset Council

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

National Highways Agency

Dorset National Landscape

Clipper Teas

Donations from individuals and payments from businesses (including 19 different farms)

## **Plans and Policies**

The Strategy was reviewed in October and will remain in place for another year.

The Trustees have ensured that all relevant policies (in line with Charity Commission guidance and including a safeguarding policy) are in place and will keep these under review. A checklist is attached at Appendix 1.

## **Risk Plan**

The Trustees have led a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk plan is in place to manage risks and is reviewed annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. The projects involving on the ground activities – like the Great Big Dorset Hedge and Open Homes – have their own health and safety assessments and risk plans in place. These are kept under more regular review. The biggest risk to the organisation remains a lack of reliable funding. There have been no serious incidents to report.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### Financial Position

On 31st December 2024, the charity held £17,069 in net current assets, of which £10,223 was held in restricted funds, leaving £6,846 available for core funding. Total turnover was £53,736 for the period 11 August 2023 to 31 December 2024, and continues to increase. For fuller details of the 2024 accounts, see Appendix 2.

### Reserves

DCAN splits all income and expenditure between:

- that received and disbursed in respect of other organisations
- that which is restricted (where it is designated for a particular purpose or project) and
- that which is unrestricted, all of which is designated for the Charity's future core funding.

The split between restricted and unrestricted funds is shown in the Funds section of the accounts in Appendix 2. There are no endowment funds. Total monies held on behalf of other organisations as an exchequer service at the year-end totalled £592.02.

There were no zero reserves, no funds materially in deficit, and the charity is continuing as a going concern.

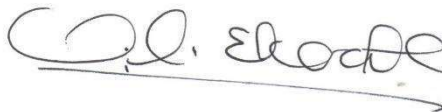
#### Independent Examination

The charity's independent examiner has reported a clean bill of health following his examination of the Trust's accounts completed on 2nd January 2025.

#### **Declarations**

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.**

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Elcoate', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

**Victoria Elcoate**

**Chair of Trustees, Dorset CAN 2024**

**January 9th 2025**

## Appendix 1 – Policies and Procedures

Reference	Title
POL001	Conflict of Interest Policy
POL002	Delegation by Trustees Policy
POL003	Environmental Policy
POL004	Equality and Diversity Policy
POL005	Ethical Sponsorship Policy
POL006	External Communications Policy
POL007	Financial Procedures Policy
POL008	Financial Reserves Policy
POL009	Grievance and Complaints Policy
POL010	Health and Safety Policy
POL011	Privacy and GDPR Policy
POL012	Safeguarding Policy
POL013	Volunteer Policy
PRO001	Risk Assessment Procedures

## Appendix 2 - Accounts

### DORSET CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

#### CHARITY NUMBER 1204328

#### ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD 11.8.23 TO 31.12.24

£

Bank interest		418.91
Carbon Literacy courses		780.00
Ceilidh income		559.42
Donations		1512.00
Great Big Dorset Hedge	Restricted	37495.37
Grants received		11000.00
Website donations		1970.57

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53736.27

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#### EXPENDITURE

Carbon Literacy expenses		595.22
Ceilidh costs		365.00
Great Big Dorset Hedge	Restricted	28091.09
Greener Homes	Restricted	2908.57
Hall and pitch hire		140.00
Insurance		132.52
Lyme Regis TC grant	Restricted	195.45
Paid coordinator		12268.59
Publicity		479.77
Training		700.00
Website & software		399.52

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46275.73

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Net surplus for the period		7460.54
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**BALANCE SHEET @ 31.12.24**

£

**CURRENT ASSETS**

Bank current account	17654.99
Less held in trust for others	-592.02
Cash in hand	6.65
Debtors	0.00
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	17069.62

**CURRENT LIABILITIES**

Creditors	0.00
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**NET EQUITY**

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17069.62

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**FUNDS STATEMENT @ 31.12.24**

## STATUS

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Great Big Dorset Hedge	Restricted	10134.30
Open Greener Homes	Restricted	89.01
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Total restricted funds		10223.31
Unrestricted funds		6846.31
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<b>NET EQUITY</b>		17069.62

The accounts are compiled on a receipts and payments basis.

Note that as this is the Charity's first period of operation there are no comparative figures for previous periods.

H Lovegrove

Treasurer

1.1.25