

22/23

Soil Association

# IMPACT Report





**The Soil Association is the charity that joins forces with nature for a better future.**

**Working with everyone to transform the way we eat, farm, and care for our natural world, we build real solutions from the ground up.**



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## Glossary of terms

**Agroecology:** Nature-friendly farming and food systems that support a fair, sustainable society.

**Agroforestry:** Integrating trees onto farmland, creating healthier soils and increasing crop yields whilst also creating vital homes for wildlife.

**Field labs:** On-farm trials led by groups of farmers and growers who want to test and adapt their farming methods in real time with support from researchers.

**Food for Life (FFL):** Soil Association's programme that makes good food the easy choice for everyone through a 'whole setting approach' and stratified award scheme.

**Food for Life Get Togethers (FFLGT):** Regular community events that connect people of all ages and backgrounds through food.

**Healthy & sustainable food:** Food that is nutritious to eat, grown and distributed in ways that are good for the environment and support communities.

**Innovative Farmers:** A not-for-profit membership network, for all farmers and growers who are running on-farm trials, on their own terms. The programme is managed by the Soil Association.

**Organic:** A certified example of an agroecological system. Governed by legal standards, and regularly and independently inspected, organic systems deliver produce in ways that benefit people, farm animals, wildlife, society and the natural world.

**Regenerative farming:** A conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems.

**Regenerative forestry:** Forests managed in ways that support people and the natural world.

**Sustainable Food Places (SFP):** A programme led by the Soil Association, Food Matters and Sustain, to support local cross-sector food partnerships towards making good food a defining characteristic of the place where they live.





# Letter from Helen Browning

The challenges the world is facing today are immense and very likely to remain so in the years ahead. The issues we tackle – feeding people well from resilient, ethical and nature friendly farming systems, managing forests so that they can provide us with clean air and water, and helping society lessen its impact on the natural world on which we all depend – are fundamental to humanity’s survival. We have over 75 years’ of experience and wisdom to share, a reputation for integrity and innovation. But we cannot solve these challenges alone.

“ It’s a very difficult economic landscape for most people and organisations, including our own, so we are more grateful than ever that people continue to share our vision and trust us to deliver results.

Indeed, our most significant contributions- both this year and over the decades- are those that put organisational ego to one side and work to build collaboration and consensus. Over recent years we have initiated Food for Life, Sustainable Food Places and Innovative Farmers, all amazing partnerships. We also worked hard to establish the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission to provide the ‘big tent’ where many voices can come together to agree the way forward and provide powerful advocacy for that path.

This year we collaborated with the RSPB to build a consensus on next steps for farming and environment policy. This has been supported by a multitude of organisations across diverse fields, and work is ongoing to build this further as political parties start to develop their manifestos for next year’s General Election. Our campaigns on Ultra Processed Food, Poultry and Nitrogen pollution all seek to shine a spotlight on issues that have fallen from view and rally broad support from other organisations and citizens.

Our policy work continues at pace, in the devolved administrations as well as in England we have set the agenda for the debate around integrating trees on farms and crofts in Scotland, working in partnership with Woodland Trust Scotland. We found common ground with National Farmers’ Union Scotland on the need for the post-Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) agricultural support framework to incentivise agroforestry and the creation of on-farm woodland. We also joined a Scottish government delegation to Biofach, the world’s leading trade fair for organic food. In February to learn lessons from our European neighbours on how to move organic from the margins to the mainstream and ensure the SNP-Green government meets its goal of doubling organic land by 2026. In Wales, we have voiced clear support for the Food (Wales) Bill, a food policy governance bill, presented oral evidence to the Welsh Parliament and commissioned legal advice to inform partnership campaigning on the Bill.

Our Food for Life programme continues to grow its footprint in schools and early years settings such as nurseries with two large

new commissions in Lancashire and West Northamptonshire secured this year. Both will work to transform food culture, and pupils’ relationships with food. Sustainable Food Places (SFP) has seen an unprecedented interest in the SFP Awards and member numbers continue to rise, with 86 food partnerships now committed to developing and implementing a local food strategy. Our community food programme, Food for Life Get Togethers, entered its fifth and final year in June 2023 and will see a third cohort of local food change-makers join the programme to form a food leadership learning network.

Our newest initiative, Soil Association Exchange, has made great progress. We piloted our approach to measuring environmental outcomes on 75 farms last year and developed a digital platform to allow farmers to explore their scores and what changes they might make to improve their performance. Again, this is a fabulous collaboration, backed by businesses who want to see agreement on the best way to get accurate data on their farm’s climate, nature and social impacts. This year we are rolling Exchange out to over 450 farms and have developed a free-to-use service for those prepared to collect and input their own data. Exchange has now been established as a separate legal entity within the charitable group.

It’s a very difficult economic landscape for most people and organisations, including our own, so we are more grateful than ever that people continue to share our vision and trust us to deliver results. Your support allows us to continue bringing people together to find solutions that the world needs now. To our members, supporters, partners and donors, we say a heartfelt thank you – for your dedication to our cause and everything you continue to do to make our work possible. Read on for examples of what you have helped us achieve in 2022/23.



Helen Browning  
CEO Soil Association Group



**How the UK is moving towards a future with good health, in balance with nature and a safe climate.**

**Over the last 12 months, where have we seen positive action? Where has progress been made? And where is there still much more to do?**

### **Farming and land use:**



**Continuity in support for organic farming in England**, both through Countryside Stewardship and the Sustainable Farming Incentive. While there is still some uncertainty around timings and implementation, it seems Defra is listening to us as a sector, both through the Soil Association and the English Organic Forum.



**Good news for small abattoirs.** Farming Minister Mark Spencer recently announced a £4 million fund for small abattoirs. These facilities are key to local food systems and play a vital role in reducing stress levels in animals, but their numbers have been drastically declining over recent years – increased support for their survival and development is really welcome.



**Official target for the reduction of agricultural water pollution.** Defra's Environment Improvement Plan, published in January, outlined the aim to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agriculture into our waterways - albeit an unambitious target reduction of 40% by 2038. But farmers need support to move to systems that radically reduce inputs in the first place.



**Farm to fork summit.** In May, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak invited voices from across the food and farming industries to Downing Street for the UK's first Farm to Fork Summit (or 'Food Summit'). This was intended to address some of the agriculture sector's most urgent challenges – from food security to supply chain resilience and inflation. This summit should become a regular event open to a broader range of interests and experts, and the government must recognise that now, more than ever, food security and resilience starts with genuine support for UK farmers and growers.



**Deregulation of GMOs (genetically modified organism).** The Genetic Technologies (Precision Breeding) Bill was passed into law this year, removing the barriers for untested – and unlabelled – gene edited products to be released into the UK's food chain. The Act only applies directly to England but will have serious knock-on effects in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Soil Association is evaluating the details of this legislation and working to influence the development of all possible secondary legislation that will be required to implement the Act. We want it to be implemented in ways that ensures maximum transparency for citizens, particularly around organic food and farming in the UK.



**U-turn on the government horticulture strategy.** Defra had previously committed to producing a 'world-leading horticulture strategy' with the sector, to support the production of British-grown goods such as salad, fruit and vegetables, as part of the government's food strategy. Despite the unprecedented challenges faced by UK growers recently, this pledge was dropped in May. We urgently need cross-departmental support for the industry – for the sake of public health, the economy and the environment.



## Diets and living:



**Public procurement.** Stronger incentives for organic to be served in public settings in England might soon be introduced, following a Defra consultation in which they proposed a minimum 20% threshold for spend on environmentally friendly produce. Though the full revised buying standards are yet to be published, this is a signal of positive intent.



**Ultra-processed foods.** There is encouraging evidence that the UK government is beginning to take the challenge of overconsumption of ultra-processed food seriously, with conversations being convened across departments and the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition now committed to reviewing the evidence on an annual basis.



**School meals.** With caterers struggling to make ends meet in the context of the cost-of-living crisis, and policy inertia within government, it's been a challenging time for those working to improve food in schools. In England, the government has promised to introduce a 'holistic school approach' reporting template, which should help raise the profile of food in schools. We expect this to be introduced in 23/24.



**Food insecurity.** One in four parents have skipped meals in the past year to provide for their children. With unprecedented inflation, and disruption to global supply chains, household food insecurity across the UK has been acutely strained. This could be addressed through a more holistic, cohesive national food strategy.



**Intensive livestock.** Chicken remains the UK's favourite meat, and consumption of intensively reared animal products remains excessively high. The costs continue to stack up in polluted rivers, degraded soils, and an escalating climate emergency. More must be done to encourage the consumption of less but better meat - from high welfare, nature-friendly farms.

The political and physical landscape in the UK is continually developing, and our work is constantly affected by it. Thanks to the work of our dedicated policy team, we are capable of influencing on the main stage and affecting change at a local, national and international level.

## Joining forces for positive change:



**Net zero.** The government's Net Zero plan sets out the foundations for a green economic recovery from the impact of the pandemic, and focuses on decarbonisation, reduction of emissions and ending the UK's domestic contribution to climate change. This shows that the Government is invested in responding to citizens' concerns around public health, nature loss, and climate change.



**Grassroots action.** Community action continues to give the public the power to be changemakers in their local areas. We know that this movement can have an impact on wider societal issues – including promoting diversity. For example, a number of initiatives are currently seeking to create spaces for people of colour in the farm and food sector, such as Rootz into Food Growing.



**Public perception.** More people see the topics of Health and Environment as being two of their three largest concerns (along with the economy). According to The Office for National Statistics, most adults report making some lifestyle changes for environmental reasons. This can be seen in consumer choices, such as those in the energy sector; for example, almost a third of homeowners would definitely consider installing solar panels over the next few years. Despite this desire, sustainable products can be 75%-85% more expensive than conventional products and therefore out of reach for some. More must be done to bridge this gap.



**Social promotion.** As the influence of social media continually grows, more content than ever is promoting environmental messaging, normalising choosing better for the planet and creating networks for like-minded people to share ideas. This is particularly important as research by The Generational Sustainability Survey shows that more than half of Gen Z rely on social media for information about climate change and the environment, rather than more traditional spaces such as schools.



**Public funding cuts.** According to the European Journal of Public Health, public funding cuts in the UK over the last 10 years have negatively impacted the health of the nation severely impacting our healthcare services. This means that regardless of the efforts of NGOs, community groups or other changemakers, there is an innate challenge to influencing people to making healthier and more sustainable choices (particularly if they are already vulnerable). Public funding should be investing in healthy futures.

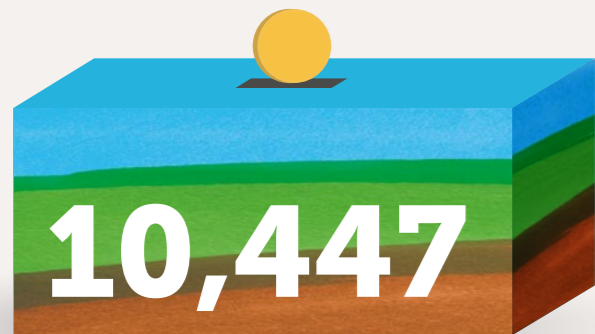


**Challenges to diversity.** Although there are a number of movements focused on supporting diverse communities to access better food, unbiased healthcare and support for the effects of climate change, there is still a significant way to go both in the UK and internationally. Voices from diverse and marginalised communities need to be listened to and acted upon.



# Impact on a page

April 2022 to March 2023

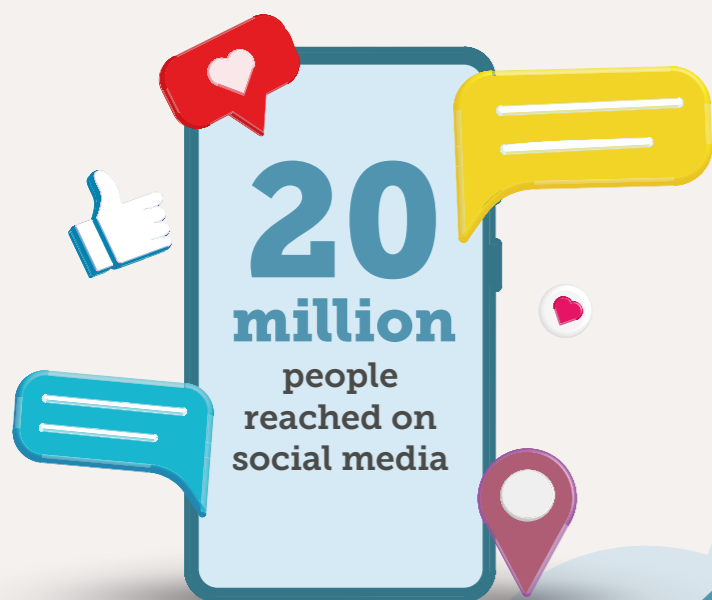


people generously support our charitable work with a regular donation



**10,000**

members in the Innovative Farmers community



future food leaders trained as part of My Food Community



**30,000+**

signatures on our Stop Poison Poultry petition



**50,000**

products certified to our organic standards by Soil Association Certification every year



**145,000**

people reached by Food for Life Get Together across 93% of UK local authorities



**5,225**

schools and nurseries serving Food for Life Served Here meals across England and Scotland





Soil Association

# IMPACT

22/23



## We work for every farmer

**Our aim:** Every farmer has the opportunity to benefit from agroecological methods, bringing trees and nature back into our farmed countryside.

### Why we care about farming

We work with all farmers and growers who are interested in agroecological farming, not just organic because we believe that this is one of the most powerful ways we can tackle environmental crises, and deliver good outcomes for people and planet. We facilitate on-farm research, farm walks and demonstration events because our experience shows that farmers learn best from each other and at first-hand, 'on the ground' events.



Image this page: audience members listen at ORFC, ©High Warwick



**What I didn't understand when we first began is that we need to build fertility without bringing things in from outside...As farmers we need to be thinking more about the microbes in the soil than the inputs – the microbes are free.**

Matthew speaking at Oxford Real Farming Conference (ORFC)

### Innovative farming on the ground

Through Innovative Farmers and our charity work, we help farmers explore agroecology in practice, and guide policy decision makers to support its wide scale adoption.

Over the last 11 years, we've worked with over 750 farmers through the programme on field labs (as well as over 10,000 X/Twitter followers), all who have their own unique interests and situations. This year's Oxford Real Farming Conference (ORFC) provided the opportunity to hear from a number of the Innovative Farmers and to discuss, reflect and build on the vision we share of more sustainable farming across England.

Farmers like Matthew Izod, who farms with his dad on Priory Farm in the Cotswold's. When they couldn't afford to keep adding expensive fertiliser to their fields, they sought out other alternatives and became involved in our 'no-till with living mulches' field lab. This research aimed to investigate the potential for establishing no-till organic/low input arable farming systems using a permanent living mulch understory. Matthew has also expanded cover crops across his farm as part of a field lab with Thames Water.

Meanwhile, Amelia Lake co-founded Real Food Garden in Cornwall in 2016, a two acre market garden with an on-site farm shop and veg box scheme, is a member of the compost management field lab. Her market garden is run in a way that helps to close the fertility loop, as the manure from their rare breed pigs enables the farm to build organic matter in the soil for vegetable cultivation.

Amelia shared at her ORFC session:

**“ We've improved our yields massively by building resilience and what our land is able to give since we started. We use principles of soil care and look at the land holistically – we're working to build organic matter in the soil through plant growth as opposed to just putting compost on it.**

She explained that they are currently locking in 31 tonnes of carbon annually and their soil is sequestering 19 tonnes –

**“ The stats back up why we put our success down to our soil.**



## A Consensus on Food, Farming and Nature

Working jointly with RSPB, we secured a ground-breaking new Consensus on Food, Farming and Nature, signed by farming leaders and CEOs leading the green NGOs. By doing so, we will be an instrumental part of creating the economic and regulatory frameworks that will ensure all food production meets the need of people and the planet.

To read the full consensus:  
[www.soilassociation.org/media/25407/a-consensus-on-food-farming-and-nature.pdf](http://www.soilassociation.org/media/25407/a-consensus-on-food-farming-and-nature.pdf)

### Enabling the transition in Scotland

Small farms produce diverse foods and offer the potential for job opportunities in the rural communities they are rooted in. Nat and Bryde from Falkland Kitchen Farm started their small farm because:

“ We were both concerned about food security issues and after our very academic degrees just wanted to do something practical, get our boots on the ground...When we started farming we were drawn to organic for primarily environmental reasons. As well as being food producers, farmers also have a vital role to play in protecting our wildlife, encouraging biodiversity and feeding the soil.

But many small-scale farmers, crofters and growers are not currently supported or well-recognised in Scotland. Anyone operating below the three-hectare threshold is not eligible for basic payments, which excludes many market gardeners like Nat and Bryde, who serve 100 customers from just two-hectares - illustrating just how important small producers can be.

In October 2022, Soil Association Scotland rallied outside the Scottish Parliament in support of small farms and crofts, in recognition of the potential power they hold for agroecological farming. With a consultation on the Scottish

Agriculture Bill ongoing at the time, this rally was a perfect opportunity to raise these issues and make the case for a fairer system. A system that recognises the value of small-scale farming and offers support for the public goods they provide (like local food, climate change mitigation, nature restoration and community support).

Since this rally, we have strengthened the calls we made; they are a key part of our response to the new Agricultural Bill in August 2023; by establishing this policy position in conjunction with our campaigning activities, we will ensure that the message is heard in government.

And that's not all. In addition to our campaigning work, this year we have also enabled farmers, crofters and growers across Scotland to come together in six regional groups to share knowledge on agroecological practices. This was part of the Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF) programme 'Agroecology: Enabling the Transition', funded by the Scottish government. In March 2023, the different groups met to share experiences and explore how to support and escalate a transition to agroecology across Scotland. Ariane Burgess, MSP for the Highlands and Islands, hosted the event and said:

“ Knowledge Transfer projects like this help to show the way. We want to know what support is needed by farmers, crofters and growers.



**18**  
partner  
organisations in  
the Agroecology-  
TRANSECT  
programme

### Fact Finding for Agroecology across Europe

In October 2022, we went to Clermont Ferrand in France to meet with 18 partner organisations as part of a new pan-European project which aims to build robust evidence of the benefits of agroecology across the continent. This was a Horizon Europe initiative called Agroecology-TRANSECT, led by INRAE, a French research institute. This was also a great opportunity for us to network, share insights from Innovative Farmers' field labs, and to hear about the benefits of farmers, researchers and other stakeholders coming together to trial new and innovative practices on-farm.

It was immediately clear that there are parallels with Innovative Farmers' recent array of field labs, meaning that our work in the UK is building a knowledge bank that can be useful across the continent and beyond – and has already been used by groups in Switzerland, France, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and Hungary.



# We work for every forest

**Our aim:** Forests, new and old, are managed regeneratively to increase their benefits for the climate, nature and people.

## Why we care about forests

Trees and forests are at the heart of our work to transform the way we eat, farm and care for our natural world. In both the charity and through our Soil Association Certification business we work with farmers, foresters, companies and citizens to ensure forests around the world are protected.

## Researching agroforestry

One possible way to mitigate against the issues farmers face as a result of the climate and biodiversity crises affecting the sector is to practice agroforestry.

Despite this, little research has focused on the impact of one of the key parts of agroforestry, silvopasture, in the UK. Silvopasture is the integration of trees and grazing livestock – and we know that farmers are invested in it. The significant financial commitment associated with turning pasture over to silvopasture means that they are looking for substantial evidence of a potential return on investment before making changes to their farm system.

The Devon Silvopasture Network are undertaking a 12-year trial in which six farms and a research farm are being supported to design and implement the integration of trees into their livestock farms by Innovative Farmers. Now in its second year, the trial has a mixture of cluster planting, regular spacing and shelterbelts being planted. Farm enterprises currently cover a mixture of dairy, beef, sheep and arable. Over 12 years, the farmers will monitor tree establishment and factors that may affect this, such as fencing, wildlife, livestock interactions and the use of decoy rubbing posts and sacrificial willow to distract livestock from protected trees and shrubs.



In 2023, Dr Rob Dunn from Rothamsted Research, who runs the research farm in this field lab spoke about the progress so far:

**We've had a lot of interest in the trial so far, not just from other research groups – it's policy makers, and individual farmers, that have wanted to come and have a look to see what's going on. We've shown a lot of different groups like the Forestry Commission or the Devon Hedge group around. It has been very interesting to see how interested people are in planting of trees within pastures. I think it's because it was so restrictive in the past that if you planted trees within a farm system you were under threat of losing payments. People for a long time have wanted to be involved in planting trees and not been allowed to do it, whereas now they are allowed to do it.**

You can watch more feedback from the participants in 2023 here:

[www.innovativefarmers.org/news/why-farmers-are-researching-silvopasture-design-a-film-series](http://www.innovativefarmers.org/news/why-farmers-are-researching-silvopasture-design-a-film-series)



Image: attendees in Tanzania  
©Marie-Christine Fléchar

## Excellence in Forestry

When managed responsibly, forests can provide a continual supply of forest-based livelihoods, carbon storage, clean water, protected soils, timber and fibre for the world.

We know that the world's forests are currently under huge pressure - illegal logging, changing climate, unsustainable forest management practices and more. At the Soil Association, we believe that there isn't a single solution to the issues currently facing the forestry industry, but that awareness raising and training in forest governance, responsible forest management practices, along with sustainable supply chains interventions for consumers, are all part of the solution for a sustainable future.

This year, Soil Association Certification delivered a range of regional courses through nine separate workshops, supported by local partners as part of our Excellence for Forests programme. These are designed to support forest managers, responsible forest management professionals, NGOs, government and academia. Through these workshops, we were able to directly support the development of FSC national standards and cover the certification of forest ecosystem services, as well as build

capacity in the communities we work with for responsible forest management. Moreover, the span of these workshops highlight our ability to influence communities internationally, taking place in some of the most important regions for promoting sustainable forestry: Nigeria, Thailand, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Laos, and Vietnam.

Issac Malagu, a previous attendee, highlights the impact of our forestry work.

**The course was very good, it's helped me to understand a better model of responsible forestry management. I would like to thank the Soil Association for organising these courses and I wish for them to continue in the future! Asante sana!**

After completing, he joined the Standard Development Group for Tanzania as the chairperson, before moving to FSC International as Policy Manager in the forestry standards team. Now, he's back in Tanzania working as Director of Environmental Forestry Certification Ltd supporting certification in Tanzania.



# We work for every child

**Our aim:** Every child has at least one healthy and sustainable meal every day, setting the habits of a lifetime.

## Why we care about children's nutrition

Five million households in the UK are food insecure, and this can have a serious effect on children's health, ability to concentrate, and physical and cognitive development. School meals, which for some children could be the only consistent, hot meal they receive in a day, play a crucial role in protecting children's health.

The Food for Life Standards ensure that children have at least one nutritious meal a day; currently 5,225 schools and Early Years settings are serving Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) meals across England and Scotland.

## Fresh is best – West Dunbartonshire

In West Dunbartonshire, Scotland, the Council has held the FFLSH award since 2021.

Donald McInnes is Catering Manager at one of the region's schools, Clydebank High School. Fresh ingredients are one of the things that Donald views as being most important when preparing food for Clydebank's students. Donald said:

“We're now freshly preparing 92% of our food... which is feeding 400–500 kids each day.

By sticking to the guidelines that Food for Life put in across the school network, from nurseries right up to high school in West Dunbartonshire, we know that every child is eating better quality food.

The results show in footfall, with an increase of around 10% in the last academic year.



**900**  
community and  
volunteer groups  
reached

“With the cost of living crisis, more parents are suggesting to their children that they get a school meal. The big reward for me is making sure that West Dunbartonshire Council are doing the best of their ability to make sure that nutritionally we're putting good food on the plate every single day of the week in school.

I'm a great believer that people who join Food for Life are joining because they want better for their own schools and their own children.

Donald McInnes, Catering Manager,  
Clydebank High School

## Sharing food together

Cook and Share Month is a Food for Life Get Togethers campaign that's part of Soil Association's Food for Life programme. It aims to bring the nation together through events, activities, and recipes for all ages and abilities. This year's 'Cook and Share' and the associated 'Plant and Share' campaign reached over 900 community and voluntary groups across the UK – and the Cook and Share resources have been downloaded on 29,207 occasions. The campaign has a mission to bring people together and encourage them to actively engage with one another and the places where they live.

In Central England, Darren is a Community Developer for the network. He describes how for his work across the Midlands he created a multi-sensory event for Cook and Share Month in the run up to Halloween. "I can't believe 22 million pumpkins are thrown away at Halloween, so we made sure we shared lots of ideas on how to not waste anything but still carve a fun lantern!

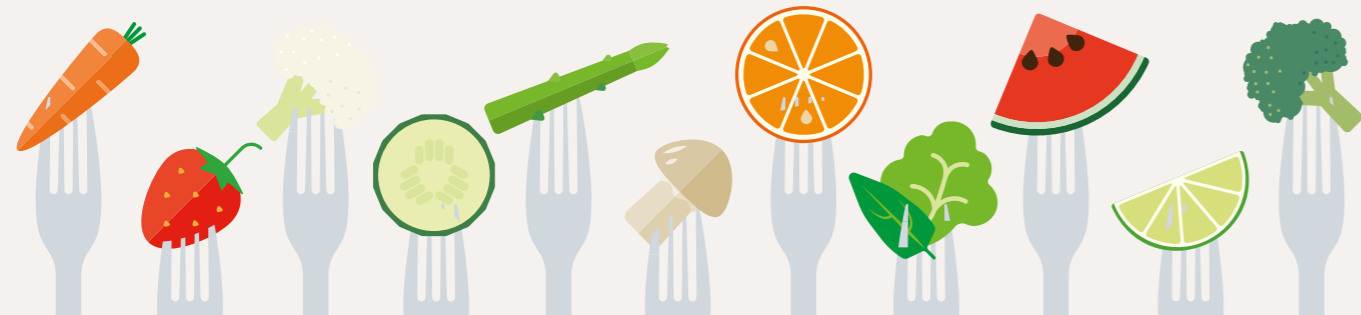
"The Cook and Share Month event was the perfect way of connecting people together and with the Earth, we worked collaboratively with Let's Feed Brum, The Active Wellbeing Society and Living Well Consortium, as well as receiving

support from Incredible Surplus, to put on a fun-packed day all about low-cost food, using things in season and showing how things like pumpkins can be versatile and tasty."

Pumpkin carving was just one activity at the Eden Project Communities' Cook and Share Month event. There were also apple crumbles, made with surplus apples from Let's Feed Brum in support of For Refugees Charity.

“Food is a great leveller and brings people together. It helps people to start conversations, stories emerge about a dish, or a tip is shared. People share things about their cultures and how it affects the food they eat. Cook and Share Month gave us the opportunity to have those conversations.

"We are definitely making a concerted effort to help communities tackle the cost-of-living crisis, as well as helping individuals to access support. So, the event we put on was created to give feelings of comfort and contentment. At the end of the Halloween event, participants were given surplus food to take home along with seasonal recipes."





# We work for good food in every community

**Our aim:** Local food system leaders are well supported nationally to scale up their impact.

## Why we care about local food systems

We care about local food systems because they are often powered by champions who are putting their own time, effort, and energy into improvements for sustainability, accessibility, and education – and we want to support this movement.

## Supporting good food champions to thrive

My Food Community (MFC) is an accelerated leadership programme offered to community food organisers, run by Soil Association's Food for Life programme. My Food Community focuses on learning and personal development, connecting with others and the wider good food movement.

Having completed the MFC programme in 2022, Jannine was invited to talk at this year's Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) in January. This was an opportunity for her to celebrate and inform others in the industry about her important work on Moss Lane Farm, a family-run farm that's supported by community members and volunteers. The farm is in the heart of Chat Moss in Greater Manchester, an area of moss land with a great source of wildlife and remnants of lowland bog habitat.

As a Soil Association certified organic farm, it is helping to reconnect the community with nature and educate the public on the importance of local produce. Jannine's mission is to protect the soil, preserve nature and grow healthy food that's accessible for all. For instance, she recently held an event on the farm with our seven year old Soil Ambassador, Aneeshwar Kunchala, and pupils at St Joseph the Worker Primary School, who learnt all about the importance of soil.



**The My Food Community Programme has built my confidence in public speaking and helped to shine a spotlight on the farming and community work I am doing. This all helped when I was given the opportunity to deliver a talk at the OFC. It was an amazing experience; I got a little stage fright but the feedback I received made me feel empowered and I must have done much better than I thought!**

Jannine McMahon,  
My Food Community participant



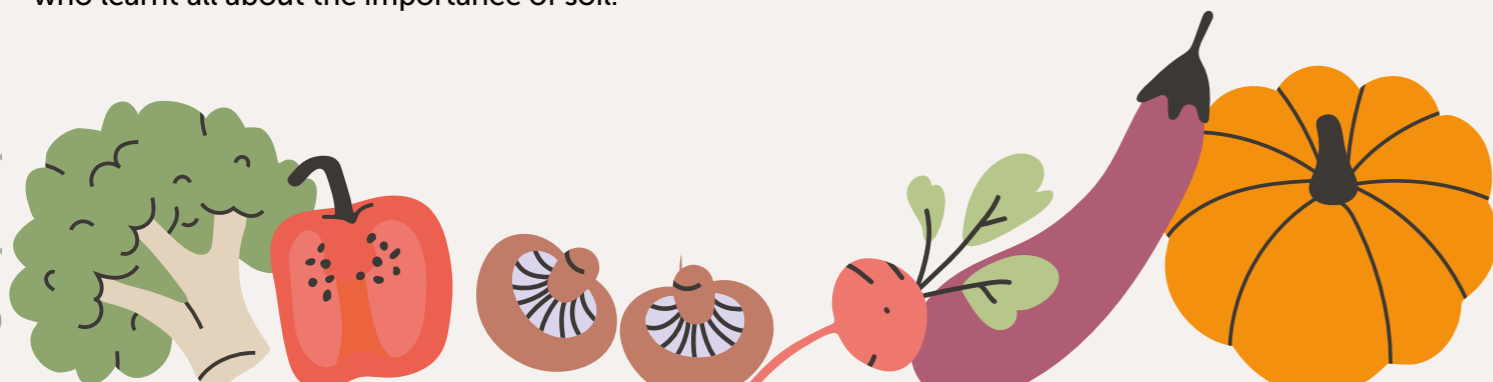
**I want to be at the forefront of changing how food access and food education is delivered in my community. I have an aim to bring people together across a table and do things differently.**

Jade Bradley, My Food Community participant

Another one of our champions is Jade Bradley, from Derry in Northern Ireland. She created her business, Restore Nutrition, after studying at the College of Naturopathic Medicine in London, and through it aims to blend her work with private nutrition clients with her passion for helping and supporting the community she grew up in. As a solo business owner, Jade had been seeking out ways to learn more about the art of community leadership, as well as to meet people with the same aims as her. She found My Food Community, and enrolled in the 2022 cohort.

Jade remarks that "I want to make meaningful change in my community and to do that I need the skills to bring people together, become trusted and listened to. What I love about My Food Community is that it meets you where you are, and you can be from any walk of life or have a different style, in fact good leaders often do have different styles and approaches."

Jade is passionate about community action with a purpose, she believes that the whole system must change and that disparate groups need to come together to create a plan. Now, Jade has joined forces with the local food bank to create a Cook and Share workshop in November at Foyle Food Bank. Jade thinks the diverse mix of people who all have a joint passion for creating good food links locally is the whole reason My Food Community works so well. "I have connected with Diana who is working in Individual and Ecological Health and who loves urban gardening and lives in Scotland, there is just no way our paths would have crossed without MFC. Yet we have linked up through MFC and I already know my work here in Derry is going to be better because of that relationship."





# Plans for the future

We have an exciting year ahead of us.



## For every farm and forest we will:

- ✓ Continue to lever our “Consensus on Food, Farming and Nature” to secure cross-party support in the lead-up to the 2024 General Election.
- ✓ Provide thought leadership on the future of agroecological horticulture and farming in the lead-up to Defra’s Land Use Framework.
- ✓ Pilot our ‘Whole Farm’ approach to carbon codes to support the transparent monitoring of carbon sequestration.
- ✓ Hold the UK’s first ever Agroforestry Show to continue supporting the growing uptake of trees on farms.
- ✓ Run a campaign advocating for government action on nitrogen including intensive poultry units and pollution into the River Wye. To be done in collaboration with Client Earth, the newly formed Nitrogen Collaboration (of which we are a key partner) local stakeholders and our supporters.



## For every child and local food leaders we will:

- ✓ Deliver the fifth and final year of Food For Life Get Togethers, bringing communities together through food.
- ✓ Grow the number of schools and Early Years caterers engaged with Food for Life Served Here, getting more good food onto children’s plates.
- ✓ Deliver Phase 3 of Sustainable Food Places, supporting even more communities to build food networks.
- ✓ Continue to work in Glasgow on a Food for Life Served Here public sector pilot, leading the way for other Scottish public sector organisations and local authorities.
- ✓ Influence the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition Review of ultra-processed food, with support from the Faculty of Public Health and the Obesity Health Alliance.



## For organic for all we will:

The standards we set for organic production are a key part of how we make impact in the world, pushing for more sustainable, climate-friendly food, forestry, textiles and more. We want the benefits of organic to be available to everyone in society but there are barriers that we need to address to make this possible. We will:

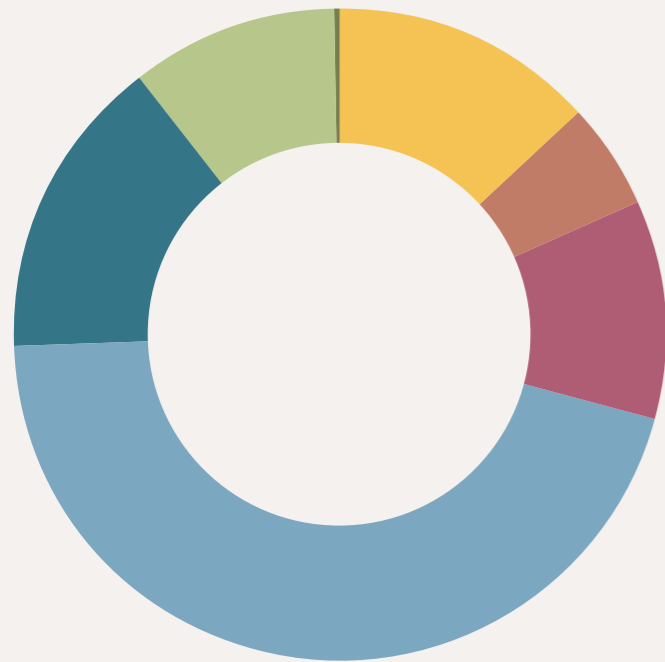
- ✓ Change the conversation with industry stakeholders so that organic products can be made more accessible and be more affordable.
- ✓ Address key areas of our standards where implementation or impact needs to be urgently looked at, such as packaging, poultry, Food for Life Served Here and aquaculture.
- ✓ Influence the direction of UK Organic regulation, and contribute to other new regulations that could impact the communities we work with.
- ✓ Increase our ability to respond to significant challenges in the organic market, which our Partnership with the English, Scottish and Welsh organic forums will support.



# Charity financial performance report

This is a summary of the charity's financial performance taken from the 2022/23 audited statutory accounts of The Soil Association Limited.

Full copies of The Soil Association Charity and Consolidated Group Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 are available at [soilassociation.org/accounts](https://soilassociation.org/accounts).



## Total income

This year, our total incoming resources reached £7,302,000, an increase of over £400,000 on the previous year. This included both restricted funds, for the delivery of specific programmes, and unrestricted funds, which the charity trustees can determine how best to use.

### Donations

**£964,000** (2021/22 £628,000)

Donations from corporate donors, trusts and foundations and individuals supporters.

### Legacies

**£377,000** (2021/22 £328,000)

Legacies are an invaluable source of income for the charity.

### Membership subscriptions

**£791,000** (2021/22 £770,000)

Monthly donations from our 10,447 members.

### Grants

**£3,310,000** (2021/22 £2,853,000)

Restricted grant funding to run key areas of our programmatic work increased by 16%.

### Contract income

**£1,099,000** (2021/22 £1,033,000)

This includes income earned from providing contract and consultancy services, principally associated with our FFL programme commissioned by local authorities and FFL Served Here scheme used by caterers.

### Income from trading subsidiaries

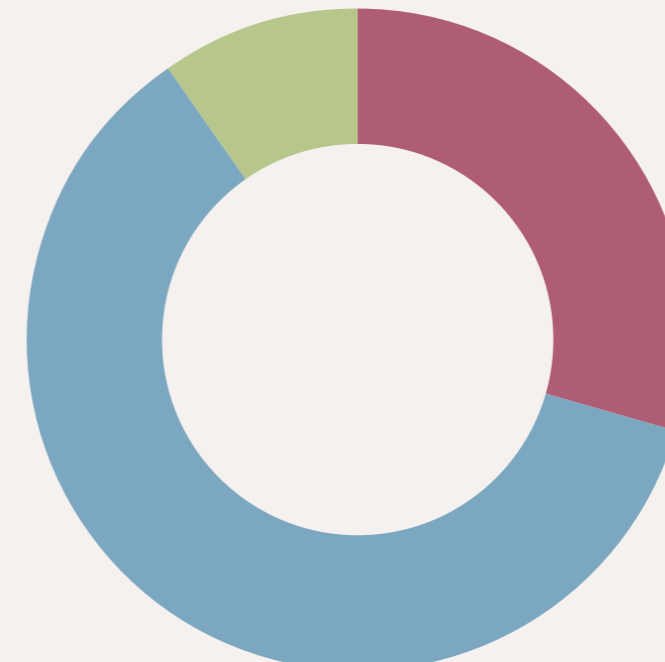
**£741,000** (2021/22 £1,619,000)

The trading profits donated to the Charity by Soil Association Certification and SA Sales and Services were significantly reduced. This was anticipated after an exceptional level of profit in SA Certification as it emerged from the pandemic which was not expected to be repeated.

### Other

**£20,000** (2021/22 £33,000)

E.g. royalty income, rental income, bank interest dividends.



## Total expenditure

This year, our total expenditure was £9,242,000 which was higher than the previous year. Planned investments were made using the funds brought forward from 2021-22 to increase the long term impact of the charity.

### Farming and land use transition

**£2,723,000** (2021/22 £2,420,000)

Our largest farming programmes in the year were Innovative Farmers and FAB Farmers (funded by Interreg) while we also launched several new Horizon Europe funded programmes.

### Healthy and sustainable diets

**£5,622,000** (2021/22 £5,426,000)

Continuation of significant multi-year programmes including Sustainable Food Places, Food For Life (FFL) Get Togethers and FFL Scotland, while we also continued to run a portfolio of local authority FFL Commissions.

### Raising funds

**£897,000** (2021/22 £737,000)

The cost of raising funds increased from the prior year as we invested in developing sustainable income streams for the future.

The Group 'free' reserves reduced from £1,754k last year end to £993k at 31st March 2023, which is within the targeted range of free reserves set by the Trustees. Our reserves are generated by and held for the benefit of the Soil Association Charity and its trading subsidiaries, Soil Association Certification and SA Sales and Services.



# Thank You

The work we do has never been more important and we're so grateful to have the support of our generous members, supporters and partners. Together, we're able to continue transforming the food and farming landscape, making the planet a better place for wildlife and ourselves.

From everyone at the charity and everyone we work with - in the fields, in school kitchens, in forests and beyond – our thanks go out to all of our members, supporters and partners, including:

- |                                   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| B and J Lloyd Charitable Trust    | Pulse Brands                               | The Oglesby Charitable Trust                           |
| Baillie Gifford & Co              | Samworth Foundation                        | The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund                  |
| The Blue Diamond Group            | The Aurora Trust                           | The Savitri Waney Charitable Trust                     |
| Brownswood Trust                  | The Aurum Charitable Trust                 | The Stella Symons Charitable Trust                     |
| Caledonian Organics               | The Blair Foundation                       | The Swire Charitable Trust                             |
| Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust | The Duke Of Cornwall's Benevolent Fund     | The Tisbury Telegraph Trust                            |
| Deloitte LLP                      | The Eagle Charity Trust                    | The Westmorland Family                                 |
| Esmée Fairbairn Foundation        | The Earthsong Foundation                   | The William Dean Countryside And Educational Trust     |
| Ethical Shop                      | The Iliffe Family Charitable Trust         | Toby & Regina Wyles Charitable Trust                   |
| Garfield Weston Foundation        | The John and Mary Ann Foundation           | Triodos Bank   |
| John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust  | The Joseph and Annie Cattle Trust          | Vintage Roots  |
| LanciaConsult                     | The Joseph Nickerson Charitable Foundation | Whitley Animal Protection Trust                        |
| Lund Trust                        | The Leslie Mary Carter Charitable Trust    | Yeo Valley Organic                                     |
| Ocado Retail Ltd.                 | The Mill Garden Trust                      | and all of our supporters who wish to remain anonymous |
| P F Charitable Trust              | The National Lottery Community Fund        |  |
| Pilkington Charities' Fund        |  |  |
| Ptarmigan Trust                   |  |  |
| Pukka Herbs                       |  |  |

## Trustees

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Martin Nye           | Steven Lizars        |
| Andrew Burgess       | Caroline Missen      |
| Isabel Oliver        | Sabine Vandenbroucke |
| Rosemary Radcliffe   | Dr. Tony Ballance    |
| Jonathan Spencer MBE | Lauren Branston      |
| Phil Fearnley        | Richard Allan        |







Image: The Community Farm. ©Claire Bishop, Rewild The Frame

To find out more visit:

**[www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)**

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Registered charity no. SC039168

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