

Why was your charity set up?

The impetus for the initiation of Sustainable Pettinain was to form a charitable body that was able to receive funding for the running of our local South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) owned village hall - that otherwise would have been closed due to budget cuts, resulting in the loss of an important recreational and leisure facility. However, we realized that actions important to sustaining a healthy community can go further than keeping a village hall open, and so we expanded our reach to allow us to support the development of better environmental sustainability and biodiversity.

Who does your charity help?

Our charity has been set-up to help the residents of Pettinain parish. Pettinain is a rural hamlet in South Lanarkshire. It consists of approximately 170 houses, with one main village and isolated dwellings around the village. There are no amenities in the village other than the community hall (no shop or bar, and only 2 buses per day). Our activities are for the parishioners of Pettinain, and their relatives and friends. It also supports visitors to the parish and those thinking of moving into the area.

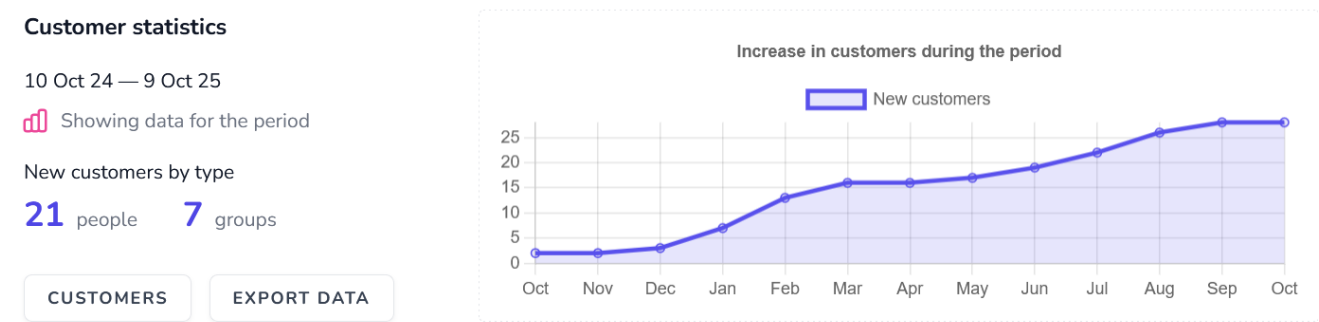
What was done? (outputs)

In our first year we have:

- Set up a Board of Trustees for Sustainable Pettinain and publicised our existence and aims through introductory articles (and thereafter updates) in the local Community Council newsletter, social media and the local newspaper.
- Set up a business bank account for the management of Sustainable Pettinain finances, to receive funding competitively awarded from South Lanarkshire Council Renewable Energy Fund to support the annual costs of running the hall, and for our own fund-raising.
- Taken ownership of the hall under a Community Asset Transfer Lite, with a contract from 7th Nov. 2024 to 6th Nov. 2025 (renews on a rolling basis), and put in place all necessary management processes e.g., buildings insurance, utility contracts, risk assessments for hall Trustee hall management
- Set up new IT systems for simple user-access to book the hall for functions and for Trustees to run events, as well as providing internet access in the hall for the first time. The booking system also provides summary information on usage we can probe to understand changes in community engagement (see below).
- Surveyed the local community to find out more about their priorities such that we can align with the purposes of Sustainable Pettinain.
- All this has been done by a wholly voluntary Board of Trustees. This includes professional accountant and IT expertise, and considerable Health & Safety experience.

What was achieved? (outcomes)

Our primary focus has been ensuring the hall is accessible and safe, and this has been achieved, with increasing use of the hall with time (see the following snapshot generated by our booking system).



This is consistent with our aim of “providing facilities for recreation and other leisure time activity available to the public at large with a view to improving their conditions of life”.

In addition, we have improved the environmental footprint of the hall use through energy saving initiatives such as the installation of LED lighting and the cladding of water pipes, and being more conservative in use of heat and water when the hall is not in use. We have also engaged with Business Energy Scotland to assess if there are other ways we can make the hall more energy efficient. Whilst their report has been useful, it has limited reach currently as we do not own the hall and are therefore limited in the changes we can make. However, these actions are part of our commitment to our aim of the “advancement of environmental protection or improvement by promoting sustainability and biodiversity”.

The reinvigoration of the hall as a recreational resource for our community, and lowering its environmental footprint, have been key and time-consuming year 1 activities. However, we have been contributing to the ‘Nature on your doorstep’ articles that have been published in the Community Council newsletter - small ‘nudge’ activities to help parish residents understand and value better environmental sustainability and biodiversity.

What difference was made? (impact)

The hall had largely been inaccessible to the community during and since COVID – due to COVID restrictions and thereafter as SLC made very difficult to book due (we surmise) to the impact of increasing resource limitations within the Council on both staff time and capacity to pay a hall-keeper. Thus, the biggest impact to date is the availability of a much-loved recreational space, accessed very easily, and with flexibility to book at short notice. The community has come together more frequently than has been possible over the past few years, and accessed a wider range of activities than has been available previously. Whilst we charge for hall use, it is at a non-commercial rate, subsidised by our fund-raising activity.

Notable activities include:

- an introduction to archery from a six-times Scottish archery champion (resident in Pettinain);
- Pop-up comedy nights with comedians of national and international standing (attended by 120 villagers);
- frequent individual family or group bookings for exercise-based activity such as badminton, tennis and yoga;
- the hosting of a coffee morning raising £971 for Macmillan coffee morning;
- hosting the local MP’s surgery and the hall functioning as a polling station.



Community archery night



Pop-up comedy



Macmillan coffee morning

The results of the community survey have helped identify what new activities the residents of Pettinain would like to use the hall for and the Trustees will support residents in their organisation. The survey also revealed the strong community desire for a defibrillator, and so we are working with community members to find funding for this.

The overall impact of facilitating such activity is a healthier community, who by spending time together develop stronger social cohesion, and have better mental and physical health, and in turn care more about their community and environs.