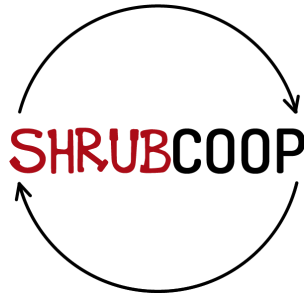


# SHRUB Cooperative CCF Final Report 2018-2020



*All photos used with written or verbal permission at events*

**CCF Number:** 5850

**Organisation Name:** SHRUB Cooperative

**Project Name:** Swapping Normal - SHRUB Changes Gears

**Funding Period (as dates):** 1st April 2018 - 31st March 2020

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**Appropriate Logos as per appropriate Branding & Marketing Guidelines**

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## Starting Point:

Shrub Coop's vision is to help create a world without waste to help mitigate climate change through community empowerment and behavioural change. We tackle consumptive behavioural patterns through our four main projects: the Swapshop, DIY bike workshops at the Wee Spoke Hub, a Food Sharing Hub and a programme of upcycling workshops and sustainability-focused events.

### Our Purpose

1. To provide a welcoming space for rethinking our relationship to waste, reducing consumption and developing effective use of resources
2. To support community empowerment in Edinburgh, learning and sharing skills to make a practical difference to the world we share
3. To deliver innovative waste prevention, creative reuse and repair practices in a living laboratory of Circular Economy

### Our Values

- We value inclusivity and work with others to provide a welcoming community for all
- We act with integrity and strive to be sustainable in everything we do
- We live by co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

Originally, we were the UK's first student-led registered cooperative. In March 2013, we became a not for profit community-based company seeking to address issues of sustainability with wider reach after 3 years of running completely off volunteer support. As of November 2018, we are now registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), meaning we have charitable status and are a community-led organisation.

SHRUB is organised non-hierarchically and governed through consensus decision making. We operate with a working group structure where we have paid staff coordinators. Each working group has a hub of volunteers who help make decisions on how we run the space. A large proportion of our members were originally students, mostly from the University of Edinburgh (UoE) but our membership has become increasingly diverse, incorporating individuals from a range of ages and backgrounds in the local community. We no longer describe ourselves as "student-led", but instead "community-led". As a co-operative, SHRUB operates an open membership policy (anybody above the age of 16 can apply for membership). You can join either by being a paying member or by volunteering. Members are able to join in decision making and to stand for a position as a Trustee. Trustees are elected at the AGM and are legally liable for the Coop.

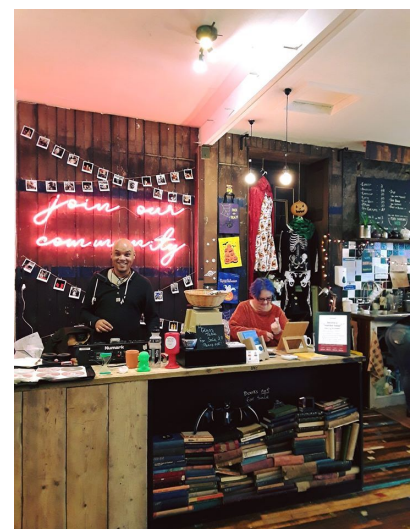
## At the beginning of CCF-5850:

In March 2018, SHRUB was a small, grassroots organisation with great ambitions. We occupied a small premises on a residential street in Edinburgh, within which our 316 members ran a Swapshop, the Wee Spoke Hub basement bike workshop, the food sharing network and a variety of workshops and meetings. We had recently doubled our annual turnover and staffing numbers, having received a 2.5-year Zero Waste Towns grant from Zero Waste Scotland. This project expanded the work of the Food Sharing network and our events programme developed under the previous round of CCF funding. Our Wee Spoke Hub bike workshop, our Swapshop, and our End of Term Collections projects continued to be supported in our CCF 2018-2020 project.

We were feeling the restrictions of our small space. 80.4% of respondents to our community consultation felt that the Swapshop was not visible enough, and we wanted to find a high-street premises to increase our visibility and our reach, expanding our climate literacy work to a new audience, while also increasing our carbon savings. We set an ambitious goal of doubling our shop-based carbon reductions through the new shop premises to develop and expand our swapshop. Wee Spoke Hub also had big plans. 65% of respondents to our Community Consultation Survey were in favour of moving our bike workshop upstairs to take over our existing premises, to make it more accessible and get more people on their bikes, increasing our transport carbon savings.

Straight after the confirmation of the CCF grant in 2018, we proceeded with searching for our new swapshop premises. This took some time; our co-operative model was slower in making decisions than other players in the difficult Edinburgh rental market, and we were not experienced in seeking private rental premises. Additionally, we realised that we should join forces with the Food Sharing team to allow for cross-pollination of ideas and a more appropriate overall budget with Zero Waste Towns and CCF funding. We were lucky to find pro bono assistance which allowed us to secure new high-street premises at 22 Bread Street in July 2018. We closed our old premises for refurbishment once the lease was secured and had to close down most of our operations for July and early August to renovate and prepare the space.

If we had to sum up these last two years in a word it would be expansion. While our organisational capacity was sufficient for a small organisation and continuously developing, we were not fully prepared for the extra challenges that a doubling in size would throw our way; throughout the report it will be clear how we faced those challenges. As an organisation, we have slowly developed policies for organisational oversight, organising practices, and internal communications, as well as legal requirements such as better health and safety practices and HR processes. We have now developed into a much wider



demographic base. We aspired to use our new high-street location to meet the needs of our community expansion and to advocate for a zero waste ethos on a larger scale. This aspiration has now become reality in the last two years and we have seen an immense expansion in our reach and engagement from the wider community.

More information on [our Strategic plan for 2020-2023 can be found here](#) from our 6 community consultation sessions in 2019.

# Headline achievements

With this round of CCF funding 2018-2020, we have been able to tackle climate change on a community level by reducing waste and consumption practices in Edinburgh. Many individuals now know SHRUB as the vibrant and immersive community to talk about and find new innovative ideas to tackle the ecological crisis together.

## We are proud to say in the past two years at SHRUB we have:

- Doubled the amount of staff and projects in our organisation
- Found a new home and community at our thriving Zero Waste Hub which has become an engaging and important space for this community.
- Started the first Rescued Food Supermarket in Scotland (known as the Food Sharing Hub)
- Saved over **600t of Co2e savings** across our projects:
  - 117t of Co2e from Swapshop
  - 941kg Co2e from Wee Spoke Hub
  - 60t of Co2e at the End of Term Collections
  - 3424kg of Co2e from the Food Sharing Hub
  - An additional 427t of Co2e from Food Sharing network (housed in the Zero Waste Hub but funded by Zero Waste Edinburgh)
- Engaged over 341 volunteers on a regular basis in our continuous projects
- Engaged another 214 volunteers in our annual End of Term collections
- Engaged 2,800 students at the University of Edinburgh in circular economy with our annual Freeshop event where we redistributed over 18 tonnes of preloved goods to students.
- Have had a total of 706 active members, including volunteers, paid members and SHRUB staff in our community.
- Ran an extensive list of carbon literacy and educational programmes including 27 sustainable fashion events, 264 bike repair workshops and monthly working group meetings.
- Have had over 647 attendees at our Sustainable Fashion series since its launch in June 2019. We have collaborated with multiple other organisations to create a range of events including Fashion Revolution Scotland, Crofts and Pots in Leith and the Remakery project.
- Have nearly quadrupled our revenue with our new premises for a sustainable social enterprise model. With an average revenue of £13,486pa in March 2018 and an average of £51,141 pa by March 2020.
- Have provided extensive volunteer and staff training and have regular daily conversations with individuals who are changing the behaviours and habits due to the Shrub's projects in the Zero Waste Hub
- Have developed our Carbon accounting software Murakami to allow for complete and succinct carbon accounting figures for our customers, volunteers and reports.

- Achieved charity status and social enterprise status
- Achieved Revolve 'Second-Hand quality standards body' accreditation and featured in newsletter as a model store
- Have hired a Cafe Coordinator for the Zero Waste Hub, our first staff member hired by revenue!
- Developed our financial, HR and HS practices as a larger organisation and developed organisational oversight.
- Achieved accurate regular monthly financial reporting for all areas of SHRUB by creating a new till system and transferring our accounting to Xero.
- Developed our internal and external communication platforms

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

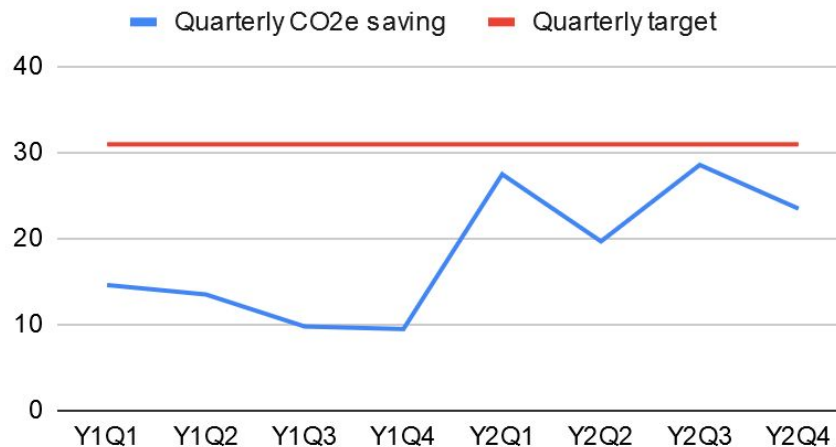
*Increase the Swapshop's carbon reduction targets by 100% to 124 tonnes CO2e per year by relocating to premises with greater footfall and increasing carbon literacy engagement with customers.*

**Outcome: Partially Delivered**



## Co2 outcomes:

### Swapshop Waste CO2 saved



## Key points:

- **The Swapshop has saved over 117 tonnes of Co2 emissions since March 2018.**
- For 3 months since September 2019, the Swapshop has exceeded our target of **saving approx 700kg of textiles and 11tonnes respectively in carbon savings per month.**
- We have seen a substantial increase in carbon savings and revenue with the continuous development of the Swapshop through shop renovations and community engagement in the new space.
- In February 2020, **we saved a record 820kg of clothes from landfill and 11,320kg of carbon savings which was above target.** We aspire to meet this trajectory after COVID-19 outbreak each month. We discuss some of the incentives we have made to increase our carbon savings in this section below.
- The shown drop in carbon savings in Y2Q2 was due to being closed for a 3 week period during end of term collections which was also ran by the Swapshop coordinator and CCF project coordinator.
- We set ourselves a highly ambitious outcome to double our carbon savings in the Swapshop through the High Street premises. This outcome didn't take into account that it would take time to reach those levels within our new home. In the first year we dealt with preparing the shop, finding a new coordinator and getting well known in the community. Therefore there is a slight dip in our carbon savings at this time.
- As well as literal carbon savings in the Swapshop since 2018, we have also focused on a wide-range of indirect educational carbon literacy programmes around textile waste



and tackling the fast-fashion industry. We mention this further in our [carbon literacy](#) section below.

- Our specially tailored carbon accounting software, Murakami, allows us to precisely analyse our carbon savings with each purchase. It is a pivotal help in making sure all carbon savings are recorded from in-shop purchases and donations to our reuse partnerships.

During the early part of the project we originally went down in our Swapshop carbon savings as we closed the shop for renovations in July 2018. Previously in March 2018 to June 2018 before we moved into our new premises, 1722kg of waste was saved through the Swapshop, amounting to 14.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. After moving into the new premises in July, it took us a considerable amount of time to settle into the new space and the new community. However we are now continuously on track to meet our 30 tonnes target per quarter, **therefore we have almost doubled our carbon savings since June 2018**. Also due to there being a gap between Swapshop coordinators in early Jan-March 2019, we did not process our reuse partners carbon savings in our software.

Without CCF, it wouldn't have been possible for us to develop the new Swapshop premises in the way that we did as we focused on a zero waste ethos and educational and community-building approach. In renovations and development, we spent time researching environmentally-friendly materials (occasionally unsuccessfully due to higher costs), and involved volunteers in the renovations and in making the new premises retain the community atmosphere of the old shop. We upcycled and reused as much as was possible, keeping the environmental impact and cost low and generally following our organisational values. Within a short period of only a few weeks, we renovated the new premises ready for a soft launch in August 2018 and a more formal launch event of the new premises in September. This meant we were able to bring an affordable and informative hub for zero waste lifestyles into the mainstream. Since we opened our Zero Waste Hub in Sept 2018, we have grown from strength to strength with our carbon savings targets.

### **Recent increases in carbon savings:**

**Reuse partners and circular economy:** We have worked on creating a structured transparent Reuse partnership chain within second-hand shopping. The Swapshop aims to be a leading example for second-hand shopping and circular economy in Edinburgh. Since March 2018, we have developed a system with **quarterly reviews with our 8 local reuse partners** to check they are happy with our donations that we don't sell in shop. We check that they put them to good use and that they themselves avoid any wastage to make sure our supply chains remain transparent. Although this approach requires close monitoring, it has been very successful as we can be assured that our unwanted donations are rehomed and work towards a completely zero-waste and circular economy focused charity shop model. This is quite rare within other donation-based retailers that do not have transparent waste-management chains. We aim to be able to develop guidance for other charity shops in this process in the next round of funding.

**The donations we give to our reuse partners are a part of our carbon savings and contribute to an average of 2,520kg of Co2 per month.**

**Token System and Freerail success:** Our token system is a key part of our success and a unique selling point (USP) at the Swapshop. This allows customers to become a member with us for £1 per month and to bring in donations and receive tokens added onto their account in return. **We give customers 25% of their donation price back in tokens** (e.g. if they bring in a bag which we price as £50 they get 13 tokens (£13) to spend in store). This allows our customers to engage with carbon savings and shop second-hand without being out of pocket. This means we are able to engage people who would otherwise not donate clothes to charity shops with an incentive and also attract them into a wider conversation around sustainability and carbon literacy. With averages Jan 2019-Jan 2020, **we currently distribute an average of 1,200 tokens per month and on average 580 tokens are spent in the Swapshop each month.** Members also have access to our **Freerail** which rotates on a weekly basis with stock rotation. These are items that haven't sold for 2 weeks on the shop floor and are then made free for members. **Our Freerail equates to approximately 800kg of carbon savings per month.** We also have a 'repair rail' in shop for items that are reduced in price and people can learn how to mend at one of our workshops.

**Swapboxes:** Through community consultations we expanded our range to achieve further carbon savings. This includes a new range of 'swap boxes' for bras, socks and tights. These boxes are USPs for the Swapshop and although they don't make us revenue, they engage people in a circular economy. These are items that 68% members expressed in our community consultation they would not necessarily buy second-hand normally but would be interested in developing a free circular economy structure for them. Our Swapboxes have had a **carbon savings amount of approximately 80kg per month in textile weight which equated to approximately 1680kg of carbon savings each month for items that would have otherwise been unused or wasted.**

**Children's range:** We have also expanded with a toys and clothes range for children. **This increased our carbon savings in January and February 2020 by 24kg of textiles and 500kg of carbon savings, we hope this will prove to be a continuous increase and new demographic for the Swapshop.** With the guidance of Revolve, we have followed all health and safety instructions to develop this. It has been very successful with parents and with research it is shown that children's clothes have the highest turnover of any department of clothing due to growth rates. This is a topic that we aspire to raise awareness for and educate customers about in the shop.

**Clothes swaps:** We run monthly direct clothes swaps which are free to attend for members. These have had an average of 18 participants at each clothes swap since Sept 2019. These are volunteer-led and supported by our swapshop coordinator. Each month we have **saved approximately 120kg of clothes and 2520kg of carbon savings at this 2hr event each month.**

They have been a great way to bring the community together and have been highly sought after by our membership base.

**Expanding opening hours:** We hope to achieve even further carbon savings and create more revenue through opening on Tuesdays and then on Sundays by July 2020 depending on when we reopen post COVID-19. **As this will mean 33% more opening hours, we hope this will also equate to this amount in carbon savings after the first six months of development.** This has allowed us to finally expand our opening hours to 5 days / week in March 2020; we planned to move to 6 days / week in April 2020 at the start of our new CCF project, but this has had to be delayed due to the COVID-19-caused lockdown.

**Further renovations helped to increase carbon savings:** In July 2019, we did another large renovation of the Swapshop interior and this increased our available stock on the floor by 150%. This meant we have had 150% more potential for sales-based carbon savings since then. It was part of a continuous development of the shop and the community with training in visual merchandising, displays and branding changes. We also improved our systems and processes in the shop at this time. This included a new stock rotation system and better recording of all the items we reuse, we've kept increasing our monthly carbon savings and we were on track to reach our quarterly goal during this final quarter of the project prior to having to shut down the shop amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

This shows that while we will not have saved double the amount of carbon during each quarter of the project, we are on track to do so in the last quarter and into the future. Due to the disruptions following the move and settling into the space with new staff members, we struggled to find regularity with our carbon accounting methods. However with time we were able to reach the ambitious target numbers - which we will continue for the foreseeable future once we are able to open again after COVID-19.

## Outcome 2

Save approximately 209.43tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e p.a. through end-of-year collections from student halls, increasing the amount of usable materials, from 13.8 tons (2017) to 18 tons of items (every Progress Report).

**Outcome: Partially Delivered**

	Target items	Actual items	Target tCO <sub>2</sub> e diverted	Actual tCO <sub>2</sub> e diverted
Year 1 (2018)	13.8 tonnes	16.9 tonnes	209.43	93.6
Year 2 (2019)	18 tonnes	11.34 tonnes	209.43	110.3
Total	31.8 tonnes	28.24 tonnes	418.86	203.9

### Key points:

- In 2018, we achieved over our target in actual items but did not meet our Carbon savings target due to the type of material we were collecting and changes in reporting.
- In 2019, we achieved a larger amount of carbon savings however we collected less items in total.
- As End of Term Collections have become increasingly popular in the University of Edinburgh, we suggest that we collected less due to students having engaged in a more circular economy approach in recent years and have subsequently left less behind.
- Two key changes led to this carbon outcome only being partially met:
  - Less stuff for collection
  - Varying approaches to weighing items each year



### Collections and Freeshop 2018:

- Collections ran 26th May to 8th June and visited six locations, **collecting a total of 16.9 tons of stuff with 61 volunteers helping out with 871 hours of their time.** Collections

ran smoothly. Some of the items went to the Freshers' Freeshop, some went to Swapshop stock, and some was redistributed to other organisations for reuse. The Freeshop was held on the 10th September 2018. **We redistributed 6.45 tons of preloved goods to incoming students and estimated that 1,435 students attended the event.** The Freeshop was our smoothest running ever and we are pleased with how it went.

#### **Collections and Freeshop 2019:**

- The collections ran over a 2-week period 25th May - 7th June. Ongoing communication with volunteers went well and **we had 131 people signed up**, following an excellent process of reaching out to partner organisations for wider publicity. We had a high turn-out rate and volunteer retention during the course of the collections. We also included a carbon literacy training briefing and debrief for all volunteers before and after the project.
- The project went well but the amount of items saved was considerably less than in the past.
- Most of this, we believe following up from discussion with our partner organisations, is due to increased awareness of reuse making students take more of their items home instead of leaving them behind, which is a hugely positive outcome. However, there was also an issue of flooding in one of the student accommodation blocks, leading to some items being mouldy and not fit for reuse.
- In September, we ran our annual Freeshop, in which we handed out our share of the items collected at the Collections. We re-established our partnership with the Edinburgh University Students' Association to do this, after staff changes on both sides. According to the data gathered **at the Freeshop, we redistributed approximately 1,895.7 kg of items, saving 10.1 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. With a counter we saw there were over 1,600 people outside and we gave everything away to 1,352 individuals.** The event continues to be a success among the student community and there is clearly demand for an even bigger Freeshop as we are having to turn people away each year, which bodes well for the future as we are hoping to dedicate more resources into this.

#### **Challenges in meeting the CO<sub>2</sub> outcomes:**

- **Less items to collect:** In terms of items, over the two years we collected an amount that was close to the target total. However, we saw a very clear drop between the first and the second year. Following discussions with our partner organisations, we are hoping this is because our carbon literacy messaging and education over years has meant that university students leave less items behind overall, instead choosing to reuse the items during multiple years.
- **All items weren't weighed:** It is also likely that some of the items which would normally have come through our project (items which we cannot give back to the student community, such as duvets and bedding, which get reused elsewhere through our

partners) ended up going directly to them rather than going through us. We have no impact on the amount of items brought to us to sort by the University and Bright Green initiatives.

- **Changes in reporting carbon savings:** We also took some varying approaches in reporting the carbon saved. The items we sort are all reused but through different means - some go directly to our volunteers, some are stored by our reuse partners to be brought back for our Freeshop later in the year, some are redistributed by our partners and not used by us. We took a careful approach to not report on the items we did not directly reuse ourselves during the first year, to avoid double-counting and counting as reused items the fate of which we didn't know for certain, which shows up as a lower carbon number for the first year despite the considerable higher number of items. During the second year, after discussions with our CCF Development Officer who assured us we should report on all items we sort including those that are reused through our partners, and with our partners who assured us that all of the items get reused, we recorded a larger amount of the items. Still, due to the extensive logistics, it is likely that many of the items which were reused by volunteers themselves and other charities were not recorded as carbon savings as they did not follow the routes we expected them to. This we believe will explain the great difference between how close we are to our item weight target while simultaneously being at about half of our carbon target.

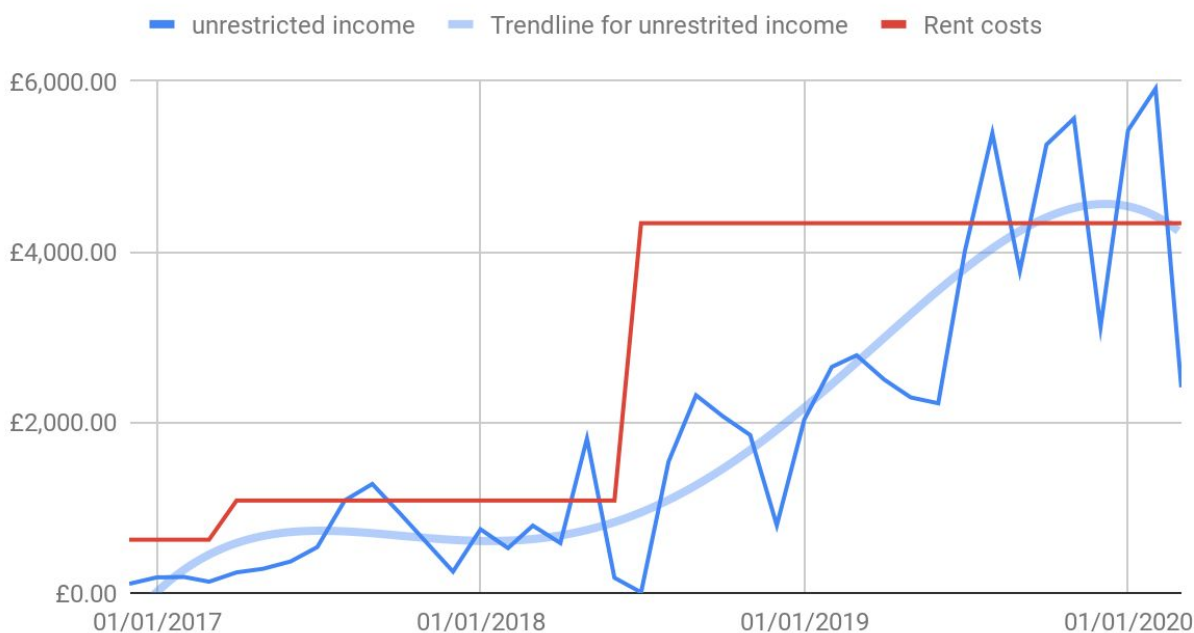
**A project with major reach:** Although our carbon savings did not meet our target, this project is still one of our most successful advocacy and educational events of the year **with over 192 volunteers directly involved in 3 weeks and over 2,800 students in attendance at our freeshops**. Please see the '[Collections Activities](#)' section below on our carbon literacy and impact to the wider community. We look forward to this project developing further with our new events coordinator position who will be hired from our new CCF funding.

### Outcome 3

We will move towards a social enterprise model, covering our overheads by 2020, through raising funds from our Swapshop, WSH, membership, donations and new initiatives (every Progress Report).

**Outcome: Met**

SHRUB Coop income (January 2017 to February 2020)



This chart shows the growth of SHRUB's unrestricted income against rent costs as a representative value for our overheads.

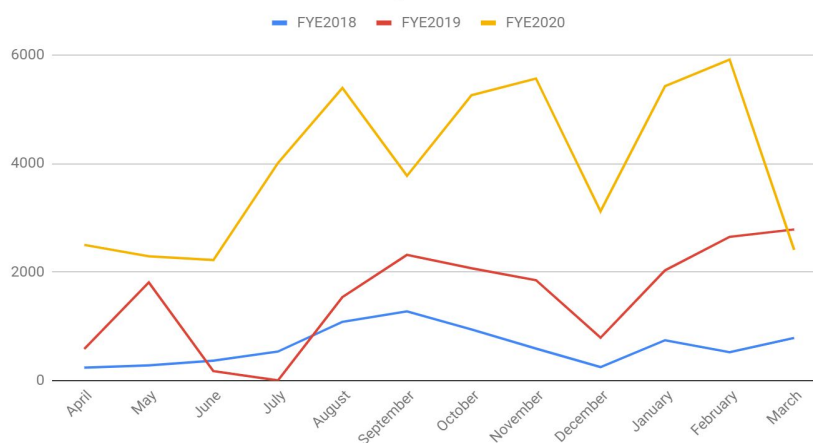
### Table of revenue by working group

Project	Revenue FYE2018	Revenue FYE2020	Projected revenue FYE2021
Swapshop	£7,645	£27,326	£26,546
Foodsharing Hub	£0	£3,656	£4,173
Cafe	£0	£10,913	£19,875
Zero waste products	£0	£1,038	£1,720

<b>Subtotal Zero Waste Hub</b>	-	<b>£42,932</b>	<b>£52,314</b>
<b>WSH</b>	-	£4,943	£2,988
<b>Workshops &amp; Events</b>	-	£879	£1,344
<b>Foodsharing events</b>	-	£648	£1,838
<b>Core</b>	-	£1,739	£2,392
<b>SHRUB total</b>	<b>£13,429</b>	<b>£51,141</b>	<b>£60,876</b>

This table shows the change in our revenue by project against the baseline of the FYE2018, most groups don't have separate data for the FYE2018 as our monitoring was not as specific. The subtotal for Zero Waste Hub is a grouping of the projects in our new premises at 22 Bread Street (the Swapshop, the Food Sharing Hub and the Cafe). Our total revenue has increased by 380% in FYE2020 compared with the baseline of FYE2018.

Month on Month till sales FYE2018, FYE2019 and FYE2020



This chart shows till sales for SHRUB comparing each year by month from FYE2018 to FYE2020.

Sales have continually trended up, with the exceptions of our closure during the Swapshop move in June and July and the current closure due to COVID-19.

Note this is only till sales from our premises and does not represent all revenue.

#### Key points:

- Our annual income from the Swapshop was £27,326 in 2019-20 and we aim to develop this further in the coming year.



- The Swapshop generated a total of £41,896 during this CCF project, comfortably exceeding our target of £35,000 for Swapshop revenue.
- From April 2018-March 2020, we have achieved £66,485 in till sales across the organisation.
  - Our peak sales in FYE2018 was during the tourist season and new student arrivals in September, for £2,317.
  - During the project, since opening the new premises, this peak due to student arrivals and tourism has not been as significant. This demonstrated our broader reach into the communities of central Edinburgh and that our growth trend has dwarfed the peaks that we used to see in August and September.
  - Our peak sales in FYE2020 were in February at £5,911, 255% higher.
- Although we have increased our revenue dramatically, we are now a larger organisation with expanded projects. **This has also increased our overheads**, including an increased premises rent and hiring multiple new members of staff to meet the demand needed to run a new business. This includes a full-time cafe coordinator and a Swapshop part-time coordinator 8hrs per week, which we cover with our revenue generation.
- The majority of our revenue comes from the Swapshop, 54% over the year. With our Cafe also making major revenue gains since we hired a Cafe Coordinator using Swapshop revenue in November 2019.
- We recognise that the Swapshop and the cafe are our main areas to provide revenue and support for the organisation. There may well be room for significant growth in the Wee Spoke Hub, but the Food Sharing Hub will be more difficult without mission drift away from community engagement and accessibility.
- We have consistently worked to improve our social enterprise network and model and have had great results. However COVID-19 forced us to close the Zero Waste Hub in midMarch 2020. This means that we currently have no form of revenue in the organisation.
- The Cafe has been continuously developed and we hope that by continuing to invest in the Cafe in the coming years it will provide around 30% of our revenue. The other areas of SHRUB, the Food Sharing Hub, Wee Spoke Hub and Workshops are making smaller contributions totalling around 20%.
- We have moved our financial accounting and processes to Xero in January 2020 which is making writing the financial sections of this report significantly easier and is part of the continuing trend during this project to improve our monitoring tools.
- More information on [our Strategic plan for 2020-2023](#) can be found [here](#) and [our finance information here](#)



Our revenue income has greatly increased during this project, following our outcome on becoming more financially self sufficient. In FYE2018 revenue and donations accounted for around 8% of our turnover, in the

FYE2020 this almost doubled to 15%, despite significant growth in our overall turnover. We have exceeded our revenue generation goals for the Swapshop. Our membership numbers have increased considerably to an overall 700+ members throughout the project, of which over 300 paid members. Through study visits and speaker fees we have generated over £700 during year two. Finally, our Zero Waste Edinburgh team has, together with dedicated volunteers, created various paid workshops using our space, which has continued to increase our income overall. The Wee Spoke Hub has also grown its revenue, but not to the same extent and starting from a much lower level. We will continue developing the projects over the next two years with external funding.

Alongside this growth in revenue we have also grown the activities we fund ourselves. Particularly in taking on a much bigger and more expensive premises and for the first time hiring staff from our own revenue. This has meant that despite our significant growth in revenue, our initial estimates of our surplus for the year are around £3,000. This is significantly less than in previous years where we've had a surplus of between £10,000 and £20,000. In the coming year we will work to more carefully control our costs using Xero and better budgeting tools while we continue to grow our revenue.

**Swapshop targets:** We have met our Swapshop targets to open the Swapshop on a more visible street for 4 days a week to increase revenue through increased sales and turnover of preloved goods. The Swapshop working group is taking the need to improve our financial security seriously. They've started a system of progressively raising their sales target by 10% each time they reach their target and reviewing this on a monthly basis.

**The Swapshop sales have more than tripled from FYE2018 to FYE2020.** Our till system has increased the speed of transactions and thus also increased revenue. Through increased branding and visual merchandising tools, we have achieved a consistent growth in revenue during the project. With our new location we reach a much wider demographic range. We currently have an 'office wear' and 'vintage' section at the Swapshop, which sells well. The Swapshop move and renovation was a busy period over June and July 2019 where we made no sales, but we opened in time to take advantage of the Fringe in August, which was a welcome boost to the start of the new premises.

#### **Food Sharing Hub Targets:**

It became clear that the FSH should not necessarily focus on revenue, as it's strength is in community engagement. We don't have the necessary control of the food we provide and pricing to make it a strong revenue project. The Food Sharing Hub operates on a donation basis to make it accessible to all. As such, it is unlikely to be financially self-sufficient on its own. As well as support from the Swapshop revenue and funders, there has also been a successful range of paid workshops on how to make zero waste products. These have been sold-out events with an average of 12 participants paying £8-14 per session. We hope the Zero Waste Product range and our sold-out workshop series will help to support the FSH financially.

**Wee Spoke Hub targets:**

The Wee Spoke Hub has also grown its revenue through the project, from £2,783 during FYE2019 to £4,386 in FYE2020. This was not as significant as the growth in the Swapshop, but represents a significantly higher revenue than the Swapshop when it used to occupy the same space. However, this revenue increase has come with significantly higher cost of sales than the Swapshop. We have converted the space where the Swapshop used to operate into a fully equipped community bike workshop. Our regular workshops weekly on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays 5-8pm are now often over full and we struggle to fit everyone in. The success of the conversion has increased membership income, donations and sales of parts and bikes.

We estimated that revenue from selling bikes would total £1,100 a year (calculated at 50% of average sale price of second hand bikes @ £110, selling one bike every 2 weeks = 20 bikes a year). However we only sold 7 bikes this year totalling £785. Our partnership with ELREC (Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council) fell through at the start of Jan 2019 (more on that in the Wee Spoke Hub activities section), meaning that the WSH workshop would not be used for the project. This lost us £1,200 a year, which would have been paid by ELREC to SHRUB (calculated at 50% of 4 hours a week at £15/per hour, 40 weeks a year). The Wee Spoke Hub space, though it has grown, is not fully utilised. With better investment it could provide significantly more benefit for the community, carbon emission reduction and revenue.

**Membership targets:**

We aimed to achieve £8,000 from membership revenue over the two years (£3,000 in year one and £5,000 in year two). In the past two years we have had over 706 active members including 361 free-of-charge volunteer members, 12 free staff memberships and 333 paid memberships. This equates to over £4,329 in membership charges, which does not meet this particular target. We hope to train volunteers in engaging others on membership benefits further in the coming year.

We installed a new membership management database through Murakami, which was immensely helpful. This ensured memberships are easy to add and maintained appropriately to maximise membership revenue and retention. Membership revenue is a difficult stream to grow, it is advised by OSCR that this will never make a significant proportion of your revenue. We have further work to do developing Murakami to auto-renew memberships and allow for online payments, and as the community grows, membership will grow with it. However, pursuing growth in membership revenue directly may not be the best use of resources.

**Mentoring revenue:**

Additional revenue has been generated by sharing our expertise to other organisations in the form of paid mentoring, aiming to generate £500 per year (calculated at 5x £100). This year we exceeded this target with achieving £737.50 in revenue with exchange visits with Northern Corridor and Forward Coupar Angus, and smaller consultations with the University of Edinburgh, 2050 Climate Group and Grass Roots Remedies.

### **Charity status and business rates:**

Over the years, we had discussed the option of applying for **charity status** for our cooperative. This grant, and the following increase in size of the organisation leading to financial constraints, in particular the Non Domestic Rates for the Bread Street building, prompted those discussions again. After significant research we saw that the charity status would not contradict our activities as a cooperative, and the community agreed that the benefits of the new status would far outweigh the requirements it places on us. In summer 2018 we applied for a charitable status following an EGM among our community. We were granted charity status and incorporated as a SCIO in November 2018, **leading to 100% reduction in business rates**, as well as access to and discounts on various services, which we still continue to discover. This conversion has proved to be more beneficial than we anticipated and the problems we feared might arise as a result of the conversion have not come to pass.

### **Cafe potential:**

An unexpected area of activity arose from the premises we settled on at Bread Street; the venue had a cafe counter, which we wanted to develop into a community **cafe**. We were lucky to find several incredibly dedicated volunteers, who with the help of more casual cafe volunteers and various staff members developed initial practices and processes for the cafe. As our revenue from other projects increased, we saw that the cafe could greatly benefit from a staff member that we now could afford; **so in November 2019 we recruited our first revenue-based staff member to be a Cafe Coordinator and develop the space into a Zero Waste Cafe**. This has greatly increased the value of the cafe, bringing in new menu items, extended opening hours and better communications, and we are excited to see where this project will go next. This has brought in new demographics and also encouraged visitors to stay longer in our space and engage with our carbon literacy materials.

### **End of Term collections potential:**

We have started to curate resource packs for the End of Term Collections as we are often asked by other universities in Scotland and wider Europe to help them create a similar structure. We are starting to create a 'How-to' guide for end of term collections, which will allow these universities to replicate our structure that we have developed over the last 11 years. **We aspire to sell this to universities for £500 per consultation**. This includes a resource pack and a 4hr consultation. As well as the consultation structure, we are in current conversation with the University of Edinburgh to work out future relationships financially. Currently we provide this collections service to the university for free as they rent us one of their buildings at a discounted rate, however we hope to extend this partnership and enhance our service by similarly increased.

### **External Space Booking:**

SHRUB is a popular venue for cultural events such as open mic nights, poetry slams, social justice film screenings and debating sessions on sustainability. We now have an external events coordinator who manages our space booking rentals since October 2019 out of revenue

for 10 hours per month. This is an area with massive potential for revenue generation. In January 2020, we passed a proposal at our cooperative to implement a pricing structure in place including a sliding scale dependent on time, organisation and whether it was for profit or non-profit. We currently make an average of £170 pm on our events bookings in Jan and February 2020 with an expectation for further expansion. Additionally some of the contacts from the Social Enterprise Networking event from our last report are being invited to use the space to improve the range of products and for us to support other local social enterprises. We aim to generate £1,500 per year from hire of the Swapshop space, however we'll need to restart this project after the COVID-19 outbreak.

**COVID-19 challenges:**

As with many other businesses, COVID-19 forced us to close the Zero Waste Hub and the Wee Spoke Hub as well as our events programme in mid March 2020. This means that we currently have no consistent form of revenue in the organisation. This has caused a huge amount of uncertainty around paying salaries for the roles fully supported by revenue and we expect to have to use some of our reserves, which are already insufficient at less than a quarter of our turnover. We are currently looking into government support for small businesses and charities to combat this problem and to keep our reserves stocked.

## Outcome 4

*Produce more people who are educated and practiced in the SHRUB approach to challenging climate change, who can take their skills forward into the global movement with hand and heart  
(every Progress Report)*

**Outcome: Met or exceeded**



### Community outcome key points:

- Our community has grown hugely during the duration of the project. Our reach has expanded with the new location and we are now a well-known and established space for people to engage in climate change at a grass-root level for customers, members and volunteers. **Please see our Climate literacy and activities section for more information.**
- **In the past two years:**
  - We have engaged over 341 individuals as regular volunteers across our project (volunteering at least once every 21 days).
    - This is the number of individual volunteer members on our membership database; we only started registering volunteers on our new database in September 2018, which means some of the volunteers in early 2018 will not have been recorded in this number.
    - Additionally, this number specifically focuses on long-term volunteers, and does not include project volunteers such as the volunteers helping us at the end-of-term Collections and Freeshops which includes an extra 214 volunteers within these projects
  - **We've had a total of 706 individual members, including volunteers, paid members, and SHRUB staff.**

We have used many methods to assess our impact in educating our community to mitigate climate change and enhance their skills. This has included event feedback forms, regular surveys to our memberships, quarterly reviews to our volunteers and community consultations.

**Our carbon literacy and community impact includes:**

- When asked in an in-hub multiple choice survey for our members in May 2019. 64% of members said they joined to support a worthwhile project to mitigate climate change. 48% of members said they joined due to membership benefits and 65% said that they felt a part of a community
- A workshop evaluation form after 86 events since May 2018 with an average of 70% of attendees stating they had 'learnt a new skill' and 65% would 'talk about this issue in their wider community'.
- A full evaluation and survey session for our End of Term Collections which included 63% of volunteers saying they are more inspired 'to tackle the issue of waste in their wider community'
- Regular quarterly check-ins with carbon literacy questions for our volunteers and trustees to check they are developing the skills and training that they would like and learning about climate change.
- Regular quarterly training in our carbon accounting approach on our till system for all public facing volunteers.
- We sent 4 staff members and 12 of our regular volunteers on a CCF Carbon Literacy course in Glasgow July 2019 and Stirling Dec 2019.
- A bi-annual community consultation with each working group to maximise the impact of addressing climate change within our organisation
- We have a Climate Conversations training planned for Swapshop volunteers in May 2020 which will explore how to have valuable conversations around climate change in the shop setting.
- We offer feedback questionnaires to all volunteers when they move on from our organisation on carbon literacy
- We have had an extensive and impressive approach to carbon literacy engagement which includes:
  - Educational training and briefings for all volunteers in their projects carbon literacy and impact
  - A successful sustainable fashion and carbon impact events programme
  - A climate conversation series to engage with the wider community to start thinking about climate change
  - A 'Food for Thought' group starting to address larger issues around food waste
  - A workshop series in how to create zero waste products
  - An increase in carbon literacy signage and information in the Zero Waste Hub
  - These are all explored more in our [Climate Literacy and activities section](#)

**Engage volunteers:** We originally aimed to engage over 400 volunteers within our project up to 2020 increasing their skill sets. The skills they learn will empower them to engage in a lower-carbon lifestyle and practices with a lasting effect, as ambassadors in their own communities. **With our regular volunteer base of 341 and our collections volunteers adding 214, we have exceeded this target and engaged with 555 volunteers directly in the last 2 years.** You can see more about this impact in our [Volunteer Feedback section](#) below.

**Carbon counter:** Our two-sided carbon counter is visible to the public 24 hours in our high street window, piquing curiosity and keeping CO2 in the mind of passers-by. It documents our carbon savings since 2018 and it is often a conversation starter in shop. The same number is now also displayed on our website. We also let each customer know their carbon saving at point of sale; additionally our signage in the shop reminds everyone browsing our shelves about the benefits of second-hand shopping. We aimed to change attitudes towards consumerism and the linear economy and increase carbon literacy through this. Additionally the new membership database includes a personal carbon counting element for an individual member, with notifications when they have made a new purchase.

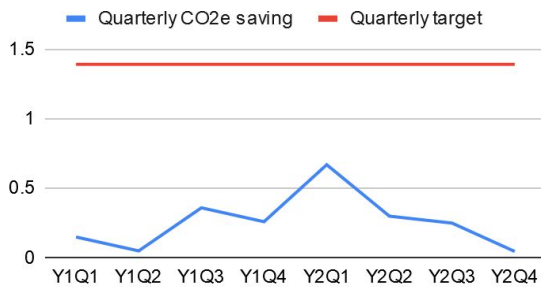


## Outcome 5

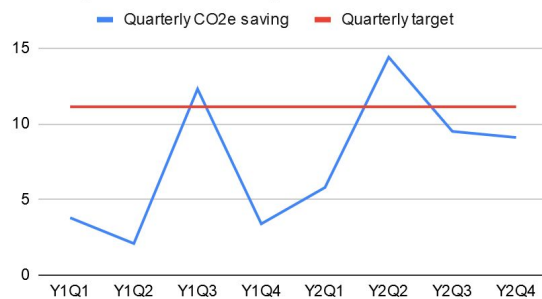
WSH increases carbon savings by 20% to 44.5 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year - getting 600 people on low carbon transport. We will reuse 5.57 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year of metal (every Progress Report).

### Outcome Partially Delivered

Wee Spoke Hub Reuse CO<sub>2</sub> saved



Wee Spoke Hub Transport CO<sub>2</sub> saved



Over the past 2 years, the Wee Spoke Hub has provided our community with a great space and resources that workshop participants and volunteers could use to learn the skills they needed to make more use of their bike, do it safely, and at a low cost.

#### Key points between 2018 and 2020:

- **Wee Spoke Hub had some challenges with collecting travel data. Our collection processes have resulted in a data set which most likely underreports on the successes we've had.** We have also struggled to transfer this data into the new carbon accounting tool. The project we designed for 2020-2021 takes this into account, and has a clearer evaluation and monitoring system ready to go.
- Most of our carbon savings is through our bike repair workshops where it is hard to measure the carbon savings in material
- **Over 60t of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions saved through travel behaviour change since April 2018.**
- **We ran 162 'Fix your own bike' workshops, helping 1,061 participants to learn about bike maintenance and to start or continue cycling.**
- Over 65 donated bicycles have been refurbished, and 7 of them were sold through our social enterprise project.
- In partnership with Crisis Edinburgh, a charity working to end homelessness, we ran 35 workshops, reaching 134 participants.
- 15 of the refurbished bikes were given to Crisis service users, to help them move around the city.
- **We ran 54 volunteer sessions, cumulating over 1,600 volunteers hours along the way.** Volunteers have been the heart of Wee Spoke Hub throughout this project.

#### Past report data:

- **Y2, Q1:** Carbon savings:
  - Behaviour change (travel) - by 31st March 2019 (year 1): 21.6tCO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Metal (waste) - by 24th April 2019: 0.82tCO<sub>2</sub>e (May 2019)
- **Y2,Q2:** Carbon savings:
  - Travel: 27.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to date (5.8tCO<sub>2</sub>e this quarter),
  - Metal (waste): 1.49tCO<sub>2</sub>e to date (0.67kg CO<sub>2</sub>e) (August 2019)
- **Y2 Q3:** Carbon savings:
  - Travel: 41.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to date (14.4CO<sub>2</sub>e this quarter)
  - Waste: 1.78tCO<sub>2</sub>e to date (0.3tCO<sub>2</sub>e this quarter) (November 2019).
- **Y2,Q4:**
  - Travel: 46.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to date (5.4CO<sub>2</sub>e this quarter)
  - Waste: 2.21tCO<sub>2</sub>e to date (0.43tCO<sub>2</sub>e this quarter) March 2020

In each quarter, you can see more about our activities in our [carbon literacy section](#). We ran 30 sessions, including 19 DIY sessions (fix your own bike) and 11 volunteer sessions. We helped a total of 113 people during our DIY sessions. Our volunteers helped us for an approximate 146 hours, a lower number compared to the previous quarter, mostly due to a large part of our volunteer team being away for the summer. We had split the Wee Spoke Hub job roles in two to have a more hands-on Mechanic role and more administrative Low Carbon Transport Coordinator role; however, the extra pressures of the renovations led to high staff turnover during the early parts of the project.

Our material reuse carbon savings have continued to be low; although from early 2019 we have started selling reused bikes that our volunteers have fixed up, which has significantly increased our ability to reuse metal and other bike parts as well as increasing revenue.

## Outcome 6

Save 167.9tCO<sub>2</sub>e by complementing the Swapshop with a Food Sharing Hub, redistributing surplus food from wholesalers, supermarkets and farms, a space for the community to focus on food waste.

**Outcome: Partially delivered**

**Note:** the Food Sharing Network and Food Sharing Hub are Shrub projects with coordinators funded by Zero Waste Towns Edinburgh 2017-2020. These coordinators and outcomes were monitored by the ZWT funding stream alongside CCF's support of Wee Spoke Hub and the Swapshop coordinators.

### The Food Sharing Hub has saved 3424kg of food since July 2019

- Our initial target, of 200kg per day, has not been met and this was based on the capacity potential of the Cargo bike. **It did not reflect the food available or the space and customer capacity at the Hub.**
- Basing our targets on our potential to collect food was also misleading - potentially disguising food that had to be wasted from the hub itself. **Following six months of operation it was decided to switch to reporting food saved as it was sold, while also still maintaining records of how much food was being collected by our volunteers.** This allowed us to present more accurate data on the amounts of food saved, while also giving us better insights into how our operations were working.
- The Food Sharing Hub has a great strength in community engagement however, and is a huge driver of footfall and discussion. In order to support the food sharing hub project Zero Waste Town funded staff built up a range of zero waste products, which have sold well and should begin to make a profit in the coming year. They have also begun a series of workshops, making household essentials and zero waste products. These have been sold-out events with an average of 12 participants paying £8-14 per session.
- It has increased its capacity by collecting surplus food from 17 supermarkets and 13 large businesses in the supply chain, such as wholesalers.
- We also changed our membership rules in September 2019 so that people no longer had to be members to access the food sharing hub. This allowed us to reduce our wastage and reach more people.

The Food Sharing Hub has been able to expand their activities and operate as Scotland's first rescued food supermarket, selling surplus food at reduced cost or on a 'pay as you feel' model. We have created a space for the community to focus on food waste and provide food waste awareness and encourage behavior change in volunteers including the Food for thought group.

**Due to the pay-as-you-feel pricing structure and the fluctuating nature of the stock in the Food Sharing Hub, creating a steady income from this project has been problematic.** Initially

we expected to rely on increased memberships, which was required to access the hub, to provide financial support for the food sharing hub. However it soon became apparent that this would not be sufficient. In October we removed the need for people to be members to access the food sharing hub, and instead focused on communicating directly with customers on the need for them to support us. This has supported a steady rise in revenue - with income surpassing £1 per kg in February 2020.

We have successfully helped the delivery of food packages to charities and other community groups and showcased the extent of unnecessary food waste arising in the supply chain, which we believe will lead to attitude and behaviour change from individuals and businesses and provide support for wider change around food waste issues. We collect data on the weights and categories of food that is redirected from landfill/compost, using the CCF carbon tool and our Murakami software to provide up-to-date carbon figures.

# Activities and Climate Literacy



## Activities:

Please see our [Volunteer Feedback section](#) for testimonials from our community

## Swapshop Activities:

### Climate literacy and community engagement:

#### 1) Sustainable Fashion educational series:

Our Swapshop team has been incredibly active in engaging with carbon literacy and, in particular, educating ourselves and others in the environmental impact of the fast fashion industry. This has included a thriving programme of monthly events and meetings focusing on carbon literacy related issues from an angle that is meaningful to the community.

In total, **we have run 27 Carbon literacy events** as a part of the Swapshop climate literacy project, bringing us way above our targets, despite only starting our Swapshop event programme in June 2019. **We have had over 647 attendees at our Sustainable Fashion series since its launch in June 2019.** We are seeing new demographics participate in the educational and practical climate activities of the Swapshop through these events.

#### Some key successes include:

- Due to a strong network of volunteers, our Sustainable Fashion educational programme has included:
  - [Monthly Sustainable Fashion meet-ups](#) which have been very popular with an average of **18 attendees per session**. This group meets to discuss the environmental issues of textiles, particularly looking into the rise of Fast-fashion.

- Monthly Clothes Swaps since July 2019. We had over 250kg of clothes donated and continue to be well attended **with approx 16-25 participants each month.**
- 2 Baby clothes swaps (Aug, Oct 2019) **with an average of 18 attendees.** After the baby clothes swap we donated 14kg of baby clothes to the Pregnancy and Parents centre.
- A Sold-Out Sustainable Fashion Panel Discussion (August 2019) **with 62 attendees.**
- A book swap event during opening hours (Nov 2019). The last book swap had **9 attendees.**
- We collaborated with SHRUB's Zero Waste Town project volunteers, who have been running weekly sewing drop-in sessions since August 2018, to bring a monthly clothing repair session into the store which since September 2019 has had an average of **11 attendees per session.**
- Most recently we've started a fortnightly climate cafe in our new cafe space using the Climate Conversations toolkit to provide discussion spaces for our customers and members. This has an **average of 13 attendees per session since Dec 2019- March 2020.** The aim of these events is to open up a non-judgemental space for people who are new to addressing climate change as an issue and a safe space to explore what their role might be.





- We had an exceptional month of Swapshop Climate Literacy events in January 2020. We had a range of collaborative sustainable fashion events including:
  - a collaboration with TedEx Edinburgh,
  - a well-being and fashion event with Fashion revolution Scotland
  - a Sustainable Fashion panel discussion with SEDA (Scottish Ecological Design Association).
  - Our Sustainable Fashion Meetup group
  - Our Monthly Clothes Swap
  - Our Monthly in-hub sewing session

Our Sustainable Fashion events (the latest ones of which we've conducted online, after the COVID-19 outbreak) have served as our carbon literacy events for the Swapshop, educating our audience further. We have collaborated with multiple other organisations to create a range of events including Fashion Revolution Scotland, Crofts and Pots in Leith and the Remakery project.

## 2) Carbon literacy in the Swapshop:

- **Easily accessible carbon savings data:** Our till system, Murakami, has been the most important part of our carbon accounting journey in the last two years and the ability to grow as an organisation. This system was particularly curated by us to weigh and record carbon from every sale and all items that we give away to reuse partners. This means that every kilogram of carbon can be traced to a specific event. We also share this information with Shrub customers, members and volunteers, allowing people to understand the impact of their personal behaviour choices. We make sure all Swapshop volunteers are trained in explaining the Carbon accounting details to our customers at the end of each purchase and this often sparks a conversation and wider education around the impact of textiles on the environment.
- **Informational and interactive Signage:** One of the key projects has been increasing the carbon literacy signage and education in the shop, building on our unique role as a reuse-focused second-hand store. We designed signs with facts on the impact of different items, allowing our customers and members to get positive environmental experiences by visiting us. We also have signs that change with weekly topical facts,

allowing our volunteers to interact with the carbon literacy messaging and contribute their knowledge.

- Inclusion of carbon literacy signs has increased awareness of shoppers about the carbon footprint of different material. These have been researched by volunteers.
  - We have taken a positive approach, eg. 'you save up to x gallons of water by buying these jeans second hand', and have statistics on the challenges of fast-fashion to encourage circular economies. This has been really effective with education for our volunteers and larger community.
- **Carbon Counter:** Our carbon counter informs passers-by and our customers about our carbon savings. It showcases the savings both in the shop and to passers-by, updating live with every purchase through our custom-built membership database and till system, Murakami.
- **Swapshop sustainability specials:**
  - The Swapshop has expanded to a childrens clothes and toys range. This has been sought after by many customers and will increase our carbon savings as well as gaining a new audience of parents and children to the Swapshop.
  - We have a range of 'swap-boxes' for people to swap items in store such as bras, sheets and socks. This has been a great community builder so far.
  - Our Free Rail is a great success with approximately 75% of the Free Rail being given away each week (average 17kg) and 25% (average 6kg) being given to our reuse partners. This has been useful for accessibility for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and allows us to shift more stock through the shop.

### 3) A circular economy within the Swapshop practices:

- **Sustainable Reuse partnerships:** We have partnered with various new reuse organisations to continue keeping our shop waste-free despite an increase in donations and a focus on stock rotations to maximise sales and appeal.
  - We also made connections with Edinburgh Art School Reuse Hub who need materials for students to make into art. We are able to send them things, which would otherwise be unsellable.
- **Sustainable renovations:** We engaged volunteers to help us research materials etc for refurbishment, which would have lowest environmental impact. We have tried to reuse, reclaim, and upcycle as much as possible. We have also begun compiling an official preferred suppliers database which we will build up over time.
- **Revolve Certification:** Revolve quality standards from Zero Waste Scotland has been a great form of support for the Swapshop staff and volunteer base. In March 2020, we passed our mystery shopper assessment by 83% and passed our audit with 100% to become re-accredited with their organisation as a 'first-choice for second hand shopping'. This allows us access to their resources and training as well as their marketing tools. **We were asked to be a 'model store' for them in the upcoming year so that other second-hand shops can learn from our systems and processes.** Revolve



included an article about SHRUB Swapshop in their monthly Newsletter in November 2019.



## Wee Spoke Hub Activities:

### Wee Spoke Hub workshop series:

- Each quarter:
  - We ran an average of 30 sessions, including 19 DIY sessions (“Fix your own bike”) and 11 volunteer sessions
  - We helped an average of 113 people during our DIY sessions.
  - Our volunteers helped us for approximately 146 hours
  - 113 participants came to our “Fix your own bike” sessions. In the last quarter, 52 of which said they would cycle more (+30 miles/week on average) as a result of attending our sessions. We put up clear laminated signage in the workshop, and cycling-related CO2 information around the hub (February 2020).
- Our regular collaboration with Crisis homelessness charity has been a great success. The project involved Crisis service users fixing up bikes donated to us and at the end taking the bikes with them. We re-started the sessions in early 2019; **the turnout continued to be great with an average of 12 attendees** but unfortunately we had to finish the programme again at the end of June 2019 as it relied on a mechanic from Crisis and after their regular mechanic finished they could not replace the role. We are keen to continue this with more involvement on our part in our next funded project.
- In early 2019 we also worked together with SHRUB’s Zero Waste Towns programme to plan a series of audience-specific workshops. **In particular our women-only workshop with Breeze Rides was a great success and was sold out with 16 attendees.**
- We started our ELREC (Edinburgh and Lothian Regional Equality Council) partnership project in February 2019. The aim was for us to provide space and bikes, which ELREC volunteers could then fix up and sell at reasonable rates to their audience. **However, there was very little uptake from ELREC volunteers and so we decided jointly to finish the project early in summer 2019**
- Due to the increase in demand for second parts after the renovations, we approached the Edinburgh Bike Station to start teaming up, and they were able to supply us with

their overflow of parts and bikes to refurbish, and also provided valuable advice for the running of the Wee Spoke Hub. As a result, since our activities complement each other, we started signposting people to the bike station's workshops and events.

- Our increasing volunteer pool has been enthusiastic and involved; they have supported us in running sessions, sometimes even running them themselves when our Mechanic has been on leave. They have also joined the rest of the SHRUB team at various events, such as the Edinburgh University Festival Sustainability Hub in August 2019 and the SHRUB Welcome Week event in September 2019.
- As a part of our general drive to make our activities more self-sustaining, we devised a series of dedicated bike maintenance classes in autumn 2019. The planning process went smoothly; however, there wasn't much uptake so we had to delay the delivery of the workshops. We are hoping to use the materials and tools prepared for this project at a later date when we have more time to put into the project.

## Collections Activities:

**Our end-of-term collections, the project which initiated our organisation, has continued from success to success with over 192 volunteers directly involved and over 2800 students in attendance at our freeshops over two years.**

### In Collections 2018:

- We worked with our partners University of Edinburgh and Bright Green Environmental Solutions to pick up items from the university halls every day over a two-week period, organise them by material and destination, and store them over the summer.
- Our **61 volunteers gave 871 hours to the project**; the majority (73%) of the volunteers felt that this experience changed their awareness of waste in our society.
- In the Freeshop 2018, we handed away our share of the items collected to new students at our annual new students' Freeshop. **We redistributed 6.45 tons of stuff to incoming students and estimated that 1435 attended the event.**

### In Collections 2019:

- Our 11th collections in May and June 2019 included improved induction materials for staff and volunteers; **we created handbooks for staff and volunteers and ran a pre-event induction.**
- We ran a carbon literacy briefing and debrief for the volunteer network in person **to over 40 volunteers**
- We inducted volunteers on a daily basis at 9am and 1pm during collections on carbon literacy and increased our carbon signage during the event
- **A record number of 131 volunteers** signed up in 2019. This rise in volunteer participation was due to reaching out to partner organisations for wider publicity. **We recorded 816 volunteer hours sorting 11,341.23kg of items during the two weeks.**

- The amount of items was considerably less than we expected (our target was 18 tonnes); follow-up discussions with partners suggested that this could be **because students have heard our messages on reducing the amount of items they leave behind, which is a hugely positive outcome.**
- **In September 2019, our freeshop had a queue of over 1,600 university students hoping to gain access to second-hand goods and the collections circular economy.**
- According to the data gathered at the Freeshop 2019, we redistributed approximately 1895.7 kg of items, saving 10.1tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e **to 1,352 students during these collections in 3 hours.**
- The event continues to be a success among the student community and there is clearly demand for an even bigger Freeshop as we are having to turn people away each year, which bodes well for the future as we are hoping to dedicate more resources to this.

This data emphasises that the End of Term collections has an extensive reach and educational factor with carbon literacy. In our feedback survey for volunteers in 2019: **73% of volunteers said they are more inspired ‘to tackle the issue of waste in their wider community’.** We perceive the End of Term collections as a fantastic platform for people to engage with issues around waste and consumption for the first time in an engaging setting when you realise how much is left behind by students each year. Not only do we engage with volunteers with the circular economy but we introduce it to a large number of students entering The University of Edinburgh. Many volunteers from the End of Term collections go on to join us within SHRUB’s regular project programme and become increasingly engaged in efforts to mitigate climate change on a community level. We feel we have exceeded our climate literacy expectations around end of term collections

## Food Sharing Hub Activities:



Community engagement and carbon literacy:

- **The Food Sharing network has 241 volunteers who collect on a regular basis (minimum every 3 weeks)** from businesses all over Edinburgh.
- In the Food Sharing Hub we have educational notices and signage to engage people on issues around food waste
- Food is offered for free near the door to **encourage members of the public** to enter the Hub and engage with our message
- We have a series of zero waste products to encourage an accessible and reasonably priced zero waste ethos in the wider community
- We have just started our Food for Thought group, where people can educate on issues around food waste in Feb 2020.
- We ran 2 foraging workshops with an average of 14 attendees at each session (Sept 2019)
- We moved our successful Sustainable Cooking Workshops into the Zero Waste Hub, which highlight the impact an individual can make with everyday choices
- We coordinated 8 home-crafting workshops alongside the Food Sharing Hub with an **average of 12 attendees at each session.**
- We saw a significant boost in the amount of food saved through the hub from the End of Term collections in June 2019. We ran a three day free shop giving away all the store cupboard food rescued from student halls which saw 678.15kg of food saved. This was a fantastic educational opportunity with us able to create a circular economy for almost all food.

#### **Practical steps to sustainability:**

- When the food sharing hub opened in January 2019 we began collecting from 6 supermarkets - using the cargo bike, a bike and trailer or on foot wherever possible. We were open three days a week from 12 to 4. We have expanded this so that we now open 5 days a week from 12 to 5 and collect from supermarkets.
- Since opening up the Food Sharing Hub to the wider public we have also worked to make the space more appealing to members of the public. Introducing new glass-fronted fridges and using shelves designed for food display gave the area a more familiar and professional feel, making people more comfortable to shop there.
- When travelling and transporting items we try to cycle or use public transport instead of driving. We have a trailer which allows us to transport some things by bike and have made an effort to make using bikes more of a fun community activity. Recently we had a group cycle trip out to the Bonnyrigg storage unit where much of our Swapshop stock and furniture is. Volunteers cycled over to pick out furniture and other items to be transported to the new premises.
- For the Food Sharing Hub we originally planned to crowdfund for a van to transport food from suppliers. We investigated the possibility of getting an electric van. However, after research and consultation with our membership, we decided instead to get two electric cargo bikes. This is a much more environmentally-friendly option. We have managed to crowdfund to cover the cost of one bike.



# Learning & Reflection

## Overall Organisational Learning:

### Expansion and moving premises:

- Our project ran into learning opportunities as we embarked on a search for a **commercially let high-street premises**. The rental market in Edinburgh is difficult to begin with, and we did not have experience or expertise in running negotiations for a lease. Additionally, our consensus-based cooperative model is slow in decision-making, which turned out to be a hindrance in looking for a commercial property. Finally, most commercial landlords are looking for 5 or 10 year lease agreements, which to us was always going to be a big risk with only 2 years of guaranteed funding. In the end we went for a lease that has a tenant-only break clause in years 3 and 6 if we need it - and, assuming the pandemic lock-down will come to an end within a reasonable period of time, it looks like we are well within our means to afford paying for the premises for the foreseeable future from our shop revenue. The let also had several hidden costs (solicitor, surveyor, downpayment of 3 months of rent as deposit, as well as Commercial Rates from Edinburgh Council), which we didn't know to expect. In the end the Commercial Rates pushed us to finally make the decision to register as a charity - a decision that had been considered a few times in the past.
- A key learning has related to our carbon and activity targets not taking into account the **disruption created by moving location and general renovations**, both to the Swapshop and the Wee Spoke Hub. The Swapshop moved during summer 2018 and only in summer 2019 did we start seeing similar carbon reductions and sales figures increase. We were straight into running services for community and didn't give ourselves enough time at the beginning of the project to reflect on learning points, systems and processes to build in better ways of meeting community and project needs (Startup report, May 2018). The Wee Spoke Hub also closed for several months for renovations, which reduced the amount of people we reached and carbon we saved. Closures also affect the retention of members, volunteers and customers, which has affected these numbers. In the future, I would expect a clear drop in activity for organisations which choose to relocate, especially if they expand as drastically as SHRUB did in 2018, or change locality.
- We found it was sometimes challenging to renovate in a sustainable way on a budget. For example, we didn't always manage to find appropriate non-toxic clay paints within our budget and had no choice but to purchase normal paint in some cases. We also had some leftover paints from previous refurbishments and some donations which were normal paint. There are some fittings we also had to purchase when we had exhausted all avenues for trying to find them secondhand or reclaimed (Progress Report, August 2018).

### Organisational expansion:

- Overall, our organisational growth rate over 2016-2018, in particular the change from a small single-location organisation to a multi-location charity, has come with a variety of complications which we've only just worked through. In particular this has affected our key people: **staff and Trustees**. Staff have experienced **high levels of stress** with a large amount of expansion and job descriptions often become blurred and incohesive in a non-hierarchical organisation. We have found it challenging to form a unified approach on social enterprise and realise an overall strategy for SHRUB. We have lots of ideas on how we can move forwards, but struggle to decide which would be most fruitful. We are lacking the business skills to make these decisions. However, we are hoping that the external help we are receiving will help us focus our efforts towards becoming financially sustainable.
- Many of our **Trustees** had traditionally been students from our core audience. However, as the organisation grew it became clear that we would need more experience and expertise among the Trustees. We struggled initially, both with Trustee recruitment and, once we managed to recruit a number of external Trustee candidates, with Trustee retention. At various times we were at the minimum number of Trustees allowed by our governing documents. Some reasons for this were the lack of staff and Trustee collaboration in recruitment and induction of Trustees, and the unclear expectations from Trustees. We learned from these experiences and in our Trustee recruitment for 2019 reached 9 potential Trustees; they were given an in-depth induction by our staff team. All of them continue to be active 4 months later, despite having had to make difficult decisions regarding staffing, our COVID-19 response and funding, which suggests we've set off on a better path. The team hosts a mix of SHRUB volunteers and core members of our community; and people with extensive experience in various relevant areas.
- Our increase in size also caused issues in our **decision making processes** no longer being fit for purpose. We are proud of our cooperative, non-hierarchical, consensus-based model, but gathering our community together to discuss issues in monthly decision-making meetings no longer worked like it did when we were a smaller group of active community members; a lot of decision-making moved to working groups working on specific areas of our activity, and, due to the short-turnaround nature of various decisions, many of them had to be made by staff or Trustees. This led to a level of confusion around the ways people could be involved, and a general lack of engagement. We've not entirely solved this issue yet, but are in the final stages of creating a Steering Group - a body focusing on the overall direction of the Coop, able to make decisions quickly but also in touch with the wider membership - to support our Trustees and staff. This would essentially replace a traditional higher management team, allowing our Trustees to focus specifically on organisational risk, legal requirements and making sure we continue to thrive as a charity.



- Throughout the project we have focused on recording information, and have clarified many processes, policies and procedures during the 2-year project. Some of these are listed in the [activities section](#); we aim to build on these over the upcoming years. This has also supported our staff and Trustee retention and enabled us to provide better handovers overall - we've created a new staff handbook and induction checklist, as well as a Trustee induction pack, over the past year, getting all new SHRUB team members to the same page with the rest of the team in a standardised manner.
- Our recruitment processes, inductions, support and supervision structures, and other **HR policies** were clearly geared towards a small organisation with a handful of staff; this caused at times high staff turnover and overall stress among the team. After the struggles became evident, we started an HR Working Group with the support of an HR professional volunteer and two HR-focused Trustees, which developed our policies and processes to better match a workplace of SHRUB's size. Working on stability, clarity and clearly set systems, as well as building support structures for staff, helped us retain staff during the second year of the project. We had a dissertation placement student help us further look into turnover, and some of her findings pointed us towards further tools towards reducing staff turnover, such as increasing pay understanding, support for skill development, clarifying the organisational mission, and working on a supportive working environment
- Some of the challenges we faced as we grew were around our **monitoring and evaluation** approaches. With multiple different arms to the organisation, which worked increasingly separately, there was a lack of information flow, with everyone recording and reporting different information in different formats. A key issue was also knowledge retention; as some of our key staff and volunteers left, many reporting and recording structures were not handed over as well as the actual activities. This contributes to, for example, the dip in carbon savings recorded from our Swapshop project, and to the low number of carbon savings from the first year of End of Term Collections. As a solution, we've started writing monthly reports from all parts of the organisation, to be presented to the Trustees and the rest of staff; this will showcase what information is collected and what activities are taking place across the organisation. Our membership database and till system, Murakami, has unified our approach for recording shop-based carbon



savings; we've also worked on instilling a culture of extensive handovers when staff leave, to make sure all necessary information gets passed on.

- **Communications and Marketing** - We have struggled to coherently market 22 Bread St as a Zero Waste Hub venue and get people in, particularly for decision making meetings. We've made the decision to get clear signage, which refers to the venue as the Zero Waste Hub, to encompass all of the activities which take place there (Swap Shop, Food Sharing Hub, cafe, events, open meetings). We realised that social media comms is not enough to get the kind of engagement we would like. We have started to do more face to face communication and promotions, making personal connections with other organisations and attending volunteer fairs and other engagement events.

### **Finances and transparency with multiple projects:**

- A major difficulty of the project and the way we run the organisation has been how difficult it is to provide detailed information on the funding streams and budgets for working groups, while still providing space for volunteers to be involved in the bookkeeping. We tried various solutions over the past 2 or more years using our own spreadsheets and VT+, while these were potentially functional, the amount of time required to input data and programme budgets meant they never fully delivered the results we needed.

### **Swapshop Learning:**

- Staff capacity in the demanding Swapshop Coordinator role was an issue. The role requires retail management as well as volunteer coordination, improving processes and admin. With the Zero Waste Hub Coordinator working 4 days a week, the capacity to keep the shop open for more than 4 days has proven a challenge. We trialled volunteer-run Saturdays and finally hired a new Swapshop Coordinator out of revenue for 8hrs per week to help ease the workload. While the shop can be kept open by volunteers we need staff coordinators to be able to catch any shortfall in published hours.
- In the meantime we had reprofiled an extra 5h/week for the Zero Waste Hub Coordinator to relieve stress levels in the very busy time of August.
- With increased popularity, we have witnessed a slight increase in theft. This is an issue we are dealing with through more signage explaining our cause and ethos. This seems to have had an effect on theft levels as there have been much less hangers in the changing room.



- We had to find new reuse partnerships due to small organisations changing plans. We have set up a volunteer research group to work on this in the future.
- In early 2019, we were without a Swapshop Coordinator for a period of time, with the shop covered by freelance coordinators, which led to some confusion and a relaxing of recording items that we send to reuse partners, causing a dip in our carbon savings.
- The Swapshop Coordinator also ran End of Term collections with the CCF project coordinator in May 2019, this meant we had to close the Swapshop for this period of time. It became clear that running the much bigger high-street Swapshop was no longer compatible with also coordinating the large Collections project - we have solved this by allocating the Collections project to a new staff member in our latest project.

## Wee Spoke Hub Learning:

- **Collecting travel data:** Wee Spoke Hub had challenges with collecting travel data. Our collection processes have resulted in a data set which most likely underreports on the successes we've had. We have also struggled to transfer this data into the new carbon accounting tool. The project we designed for 2020-2021 takes this into account, and has a clearer evaluation and monitoring system ready to go.
- **ELREC Wee Spoke Hub social enterprise partnership:** The development of our joint social enterprise project between Wee Spoke Hub and ELREC was slower than anticipated, probably due to the following reasons:
  - When the project started, the Wee Spoke Hub had already started to refurbish and sell bikes, which created an overlap with the partnership
  - ELREC volunteers presence wasn't very high, and it proved difficult to recruit new members
  - The amount of staff time that each project would have to provide to make the partnership work was underestimated in the original bid, and our capacity to work over those hours was limited on both sides.
- Our mechanic did not have enough working hours per week, and not enough working days per month to cover all of our sessions. To cover for holiday and TOIL, our freelancer pool was set up, and this eased the situation. Our 2020-2021 project includes more mechanic hours, and takes into account that a full workshop comprises preparation and clean up.
- The sessions in partnership with Crisis Edinburgh could not continue past June 2019 because although we provided the space, the tools and some volunteer time, we did not have the capacity to organise this after the Crisis bike mechanic and tutor left. This following year, we hope to integrate mechanic time for the Crisis session, so that we are able to provide the entire session to Crisis members.

## Food Sharing Hub Learning:

- A crucial process has been building our partnership with FareShare to get enough food into the Hub; many of the supermarkets have had considerably less produce to offer us than we originally imagined.
- **The revenue generation** of the Food Sharing Hub is a particular concern as the costs for this project are relatively high. Overall revenue generation remains a very small part of our total turnover. Over the whole of the last year, this was approximately 8% or ~£20K.
- Throughout Year 1, the Food Sharing Hub continued to operate 3 days a week (Thursday, Friday and Saturday). Due to low volunteer capacity during this period, it was not practically possible to open the shop on the 4th day in the week. However in November 2019 we did open on Wednesdays but our stock was low. A restructuring in the Zero Waste Towns team staffing the Food Sharing Hub will also make the project more cohesive and increase the chances of unified hours across the different projects in the Hub.
- The Food Sharing Hub has been receiving an over-supply of bread at the Food Sharing Hub, far more than we can redistribute. Our plan to remedy this involves reaching out to more fruit and vegetable wholesalers, factories and farms, to increase the variety.
- **It has been difficult to find reliable stock** for the food sharing hub on a daily basis as we rely on volunteers to bring their collections rather than distributing them to other charities or themselves. This means sometimes our Food Sharing Hub has looked empty, we hope to increase our amount of food sharing pickups to remedy this.
- Our volunteer management database is purpose-built. However getting volunteers to record their volunteering hours has proven to be a challenge, as this requires initiative. Due to this, the numbers of both active volunteers and volunteer hours recorded are likely to be much lower than in reality.

## Collections Learning:

- A key learning for Collections over the two years was to **increase its staff capacity**. Both the project, and our other activities, have grown to a point where having this as an added-on activity as a part of the Swapshop Coordinator's job was no longer sustainable. This is important, for several reasons; the extra stress was causing a strain in staff retention; recruiting a joint Swapshop and Collections Coordinator means that some specialist skills do not get recruited for; and the project itself does not come to full fruition. There is a huge potential in using the Collections and the Freeshop as a carbon literacy event, full of knowledge, outreach, information sharing, education and inspiration for the participants - but this requires a team of dedicated volunteers and staff to take this on. We've rectified this in our next project by specifically tying the

Collections project as a key part of an Events Coordinator job role, being able to focus much more on skills that are required for this kind of project.

- Additionally, we saw in the last round of collections that the **amount of items** we received was considerably smaller than in the past. After discussions with our partners, we feel this is due to more students taking their stuff home rather than leaving it for future students; a very positive outcome, even though it dropped our carbon saving numbers. Due to this, we've updated our targets to reflect that we don't expect the project to keep growing, but rather hope that our expanding communications and engagement will lessen the amount of items left behind.
- During the 2019 Freeshop we had to stop weighing people's items approximately 2/3 through the event, because of the queue becoming unbearable on the way out. In the future we aim to start the event later and weigh items as they come in, and weigh any remaining items when we're done, to get a more accurate measurement and avoid people standing in line for hours.

# **Finance & Administration**

## **Oversight**

- As the organisation has grown, a need for more professional oversight has become clearer. Our Board of Directors, later a board of Trustees as we converted to a SCIO, were originally very hands-on involved in the project. However, as they were mostly students, they did not necessarily have the expertise required to oversee complex issues in a larger charity. We struggled initially in our transition to a more professional (while still connected to our cause) Board, but approached this through better Trustee inductions into SHRUB as a whole, better support from staff to Trustees, and most recently better regular reporting systems in the form of monthly Working Group reports.
- Having a non-hierarchical staff team has meant a difficulty in communication and leadership at times in the organisation as sometimes no one has particular oversight. This is something we have worked on with having dedicated project coordinators.

## **Finance systems**

- We started using a combination of SumUp and our custom system Murakami to manage the tills in November 2018. This made our revenue figures more accessible.
- We switched to Receipt Bank and Xero to manage bookkeeping and accounting in January 2020 after significant research into accounting platforms and accountancy firms. This has massively reduced the amount of work needed to run our bookkeeping and accounting.
- Xero's reporting and read only access has made it very easy and secure for anyone in SHRUB to find information on the financial performance of a particular project or the organisation as a whole.
- We still use Google Sheets to do budget planning, more detailed analysis, grant claims and scenario planning, but now the data in these sheets is almost real time.
- We had a major problem at 10 months through the first CCF funding year as we were £16K underspent. The reasons for this underspend were:
  - Our initial projection for our premises costs was too high. Major factors were VAT being included in rent price when our initial advice was that these would be on top of rent and receiving 100% NDR exemption once we registered as a charity in November 2018
  - The SHRUB community is very good at finding creative ways to get things done without spending money or spending significantly less than a quick fix buy new solution would cost. For example, the refurbishment of both of the CCF premises at the start of the project was completed for less than £500.
  - We didn't have enough HR resources to spend our activities budgets. Our project budget put an unusually small proportion of funds to staff salaries,

roughly 50%. This would usually be between 70%-90%. We also had high staff turnover at the start of the project. This was a common problem across the organisation at the time

- We have had an unclear finance system that made it difficult to delegate budget responsibility and to tell day to day how much money was available. Though we had made a major improvement to the systems, still spreadsheet and VT based at this point, the finances were still not up to date at this point.
- To resolve the problem we invested some of the underspend into staff and freelancer time to make improvements to our premises and systems and catch up on some of the backlog of finance work.
- With the improved systems, particularly the move onto Xero, this underspend situation was not repeated at the end of the second year and we claimed our final expenses before the end of the financial year.
- We had developed a good referencing system before we moved on to Xero. we did worry that this would be lost when we moved systems, but using Xero in conjunction with receipt bank allowed us to continue a rigorous referencing system. This will be especially important as we move into the next financial year, where we will be managing more grants, with more complicated splits in costs across our working groups.
- Our funding processes have been clarified, we created a bid library, updated our funding database on past funding and created a funding process flow.

## **Health and Safety**

- Our Health and Safety systems, while adequate for a small premises, turned out to be inadequate for the new, bigger and more public premises. This caused high levels of stress to Trustees and staff as we had limited expertise in these areas. We resolved this by hiring a contractor to support an overhaul of the Health and Safety processes and procedures, which was an excellent choice as this made sure everything was up to the highest standards and removed pressure from our limited staff resource to try and address an issue very much out of their expertise.

## **Human Resources**

- Around the project start in 2018 we doubled our staff numbers. As a small community organisation with particular focus on volunteers and members, it took us some time to start developing our Human Resources practices to match what had become a community charity with a staff team of up to 12. This became an issue as we had a period of high staff turnover around the end of year 1, which in turn affected many of our other activities, from underspends to delays in project delivery.

- We addressed this issue through a few different changes. We updated all our HR policies to be appropriate for a more formal environment with more staff; we also created processes for those systems to be implemented, for example, adding a freelancer budget to cover for annual and sick leave of shop staff instead of relying on volunteers, which had often meant staff feeling like they can't take holidays or sick leave. We considerably improved our handover processes, with clear handover documents, a staff handbook, and starter checklists, to make sure the transitions are as smooth as possible. Overall we have focused on retention of information and creating systems around regular processes to cut down double-working. This standardisation process has greatly helped the organisation to have more overall stability.
- We have also increased staff and freelancer costs in our budgets at the expense of other expenses, to increase the capacity and reduce stress levels of staff. We were advised that the typical staff portion of overall budgets is 70%-90%; we started this project with the staff costs at around 50% and struggled to find staff capacity to spend money, especially as our community appreciates reuse practices.



# Sustainable Legacy

## Overall Legacy:

### A thriving SHRUB Community Hub:

Our aim has always been to develop the reach of SHRUB in the wider community to help create a world without waste. We recognise that in the UK, consumer behaviour patterns are a large driver in increasing climate change. As we lead resource-intensive lifestyles, the WWF predicts average UK citizens need 3 planets to meet their resources needs. At SHRUB, we aspire to and have achieved a wide legacy of community empowerment and education around consumptive practices through our projects with the help of the CCF fund.

We've come several steps closer to making Edinburgh a waste-free city during this project with a wide reach to many different demographics. We have engaged over 341 individuals as regular volunteers across our projects and have had a total of 1106 individual members, including volunteers, paid members, and SHRUB staff. As well as helping community education, since 2013 we have saved over 1700 tonnes of carbon savings in total. We have provided extensive volunteer and staff training and have regular daily conversations with individuals who are changing the behaviours and habits due to SHRUB's projects. Many individuals know SHRUB as a vibrant and immersive hub to find new innovative ideas to tackle climate change on a community level and our new founded Zero Waste Hub has been an engaging and great space for this community.

Something we don't capture well at the moment is the legacy volunteering at SHRUB has for people in the community. People who volunteer at SHRUB go on to find employment and we're often asked for references. Over the past year, in just the core team, we've provided 18 references for people moving into new or first jobs. We mention this further in our [volunteer testimonials below](#).

Our internal and external communication platforms have been immensely improved at this time. The new website provides information about our activities in a clear and understandable manner, which has increased the number of people finding out about us online, bringing more people into our community and widening our opportunities to support other organisations and individuals as they reach out to us.

We are elated that we have received the next funding cycle of CCF funding from 2020-2022. This means we are able to expand our projects further in the next two years. However our Food Sharing Hub and Wee Spoke Hub are not a part of this new funding stream, so we are



currently searching for funders for these two projects moving forward. We hope to sustain some of these projects through our increased revenue for the time being.

### **Swapshop Legacy:**

- With the new round of CCF funding we are able to increase our opening hours to 6 days per week and hire 2 Swapshop coordinators (one full time and one part time 3 days per week). This will mean a large amount of further carbon savings and reuse partnerships for the next two years
- We've continued to develop the Swapshop and the wider Zero Waste Hub space, which is showing fantastic results in social, environmental and financial sustainability.
- The community is growing and our income generation is increasing drastically, which is helping us be more resilient as a social enterprise. We have invested some of this new income into a new supporting job role for the Swapshop focusing on increasing both the Zero Waste aspect of the Swapshop as well as its income generation, further developing a more financially sustainable project. We have also recruited a Cafe Coordinator to help us develop the cafe space in the Zero Waste Hub, to further increase income and create a coherent zero waste space.
- Our Swapshop has had large renovations including new railings and displays. This has increased our stock turnover by 150% as well as increasing the clarity and appeal of the shop.
- Our wide range of Sustainable Fashion programmes has had a lasting impact within the community with over 647 attendees.
- Our Climate literacy engagement and signage in the Swapshop has led to many fruitful conversations
- 12 Swapshop Volunteers have participated in a Carbon Literacy course which SHRUB has supported financially. They did a feedback session during the Swapshop Working Group, which had great results.

### **Wee Spoke Hub Legacy:**

- The Wee Spoke Hub basement renovation is finished and it is usable as a bike storage space that we can use to support our bike refurbishment activities.
- The Wee Spoke Hub had continued to increase its sales of refurbished bikes, bike accessories and safety equipment. Part of this increase has been to utilise an existing SHRUB event (the Freeshop) to actively promote our services to the student community by running free bike checks at the event, and by selling some of our refurbished bikes. In the future we will aim to increase the amount of outreach and joint events that we take part in .
- We have reviewed and improved our procedures, including a comprehensive Health and Safety review for the Wee Spoke Hub.

- We now have a solid procedure to enable volunteers to refurbish bicycles and to safely make these available for sale.
- We collated all our workshop procedures in a 'Wee Spoke Hub How to' booklet, which lets volunteers and future staff know how to practically run Wee Spoke Hub day to day.
- For 2020-2021, we have built a more comprehensive active travel project and applied for funding to make better use of our renovated space, and to expand our range of activities. In addition to our regular sessions, we aim to run led rides, a bike maintenance and volunteer programme for Crisis members, and open 3 days a week as a social enterprise bike workshops and an active travel hub for central Edinburgh.
- We hope to find more funding to support the growth of the Wee Spoke Hub past June 2020

### **Food Sharing Hub Legacy:**

- The Food Sharing Hub has continued to develop its space with new fridges, freezers and cabinets
- It has a new cargo bike to make deliveries and food waste management as eco-friendly as possible
- We have a thriving network of volunteers and facilitators who have been trained to coordinate food collections.
- We have a growing network of food waste carbon literacy workshops and signage in shop
- The network has grown and developed increasingly in the last two years, however we are worried about funding moving forward as this project is not currently funded past June 2020. We hope that the Food Sharing Hub will be able to be supported by both revenue and funding in the foreseeable future.

### **Collections Legacy**

- We have hired a new Events Coordinator who will be responsible for running End of Term collections, the Freeshop and further Marchmont collections and events in the coming two years 2020-2022. This will mean we can develop this project further and have preliminary workshops to educate the student and wider community on waste issues and circular economy.
- End of Term collections have an extensive reach and educational factor with carbon literacy. In our feedback survey for volunteers in 2019: **73% of volunteers said they are more inspired 'to tackle the issue of waste in their wider community'**.
- We perceive the End of Term collections as a fantastic platform for people to engage with issues around waste and consumption for the first time in an emotive setting when you realise how much is left behind by students each year. Many volunteers from the End of Term collections go on to join us within SHRUB's regular project programme and

become increasingly engaged in efforts to mitigate climate change on a community level. In general we have exceeded most expectations around End of Term collections

## **Organisational legacy:**

During the project we have **solidified various volunteer processes and project guidelines** at SHRUB, both making things run smoother in the organisation and allowing us to share our expertise - something we hope to continue to explore as a social enterprise. We have put together, among others, the following resources:

- A Volunteer Coordination Handbook
- A Welcome Pack for new volunteers
- Various volunteer training resources for the Swapshop, Wee Spoke Hub, finance and communications volunteers, including, for example, pricing guidelines, a bookkeeping training programme, and social media and marketing strategies
- A staff handbook and standard induction process
- A postgraduate dissertation review into staff turnover
- Appropriate health and safety and HR processes
- Updates to our decision-making processes following our growth in size
- Handbooks for our end-of-term collections and Freeshop, for both staff and volunteers
- A how-to leaflet for applying for grant funding
- Policy documents and Health and safety procedures
- We have moved most of our accounting software to Xero

**We have learnt how to build a more financially sustainable model in the last two years:** A key part of this has been working on the development of our social enterprise activity and looking into a more sustainable funding structure. We've focused on increasing our revenue-based income in various ways throughout this project. The Swapshop has been an exceptional example of this, multiplying its monthly takings and being able to cover a reasonable amount of its expenses by the end of the project. We've also started a Zero Waste Cafe in the Zero Waste Hub, which we will aim to bring a reasonable contribution to the organisation's core expenses once it matures. All of our other projects have also explored income generation; Wee Spoke Hub trialled paid workshops, and while that was not a successful endeavour due to lack of audience, these resources are now available; and we've trialled different ways of getting a financial contribution from the Collections and the Freeshop. Our spacebooking and mentoring activities are still relatively new but are building up knowledge. During this project, the overall atmosphere in the organisation has shifted to acknowledge the costs of running the organisation, and the benefit of doing this without pressures from having to rely entirely on external funding. Additionally, we've engaged the community in search for sustainable funding sources. We've inducted a team of volunteers into writing funding applications and looking for appropriate pots of funding, and we've made it

clear to our teams that we should be continuously looking for funding for new projects - hopefully creating a more sustainable funding structure.

**We have worked on our organisational resilience and security:**

During this project we've improved our organisational systems and retention of knowledge. Between an overhaul of our Health and Safety processes, accessible and up to date finance systems, a clarification of our Human Resources policies, and standardisation of our volunteer journey, funding flow and other key activities, we've created a much more resilient organisation, more able to respond to changes in situation and staffing. During this period SHRUB staff and volunteers have engaged in a large amount of different trainings and networking opportunities, building capacity in the community. One staff member attended HR for Cooperatives Training in Manchester on 3rd April with Co-operatives UK; three team members, having been at a Volunteer Management Training with Volunteer Scotland, delivered a half-day training session for the rest of staff on 23rd April; a team consisting of a volunteer, a Trustee and a staff member participated in CRNS's Funding & Finance seminar on 25th April; CRNS visited SHRUB and met with two staff members on 21st May; most staff were Health and Safety trained by our H&S consultant mid-June; the staff and Trustees took part in an externally facilitated away day on 15th June; two staff members hosted a group from Northern Corridor Community Volunteers on 17th June, and three of the CCF staff took part in the CCF Carbon Literacy Training on 19th-20th June.

We've improved the spaces, equipment and tools we have available for our community. Between the Swapshop and Wee Spoke Hub renovations, we created two fit-for-purpose spaces for our community to engage with, and while changes in funding might change our ability to provide activities in those spaces, we hope the community will expand over the upcoming months once the pandemic lockdown is over.

We would like to thank CCF for helping us create these community-led projects to help create a world without waste. We have grown so much as an organisation due to your support. Best wishes, the Shrub Team

# Supporting information

[Final Shrub Carbon Reporter](#)

[Activity Grid](#)

[Carbon graphs](#)

[Shrub Monthly newsletters since December 2018](#)

[The Shrub AGM presentation November 2018](#)

## **SHRUB Online Active Community Groups:**

[Shrub Coop Facebook](#)

[Shrub members group](#)

[Make and mend group](#)

[Sustainable Fashion working group](#)

## **SHRUB Surveys:**

Most of our surveys are Google Docs such as:

- [Workshop questionnaire](#)
- [Quarterly membership survey](#)
- [End of term collections survey](#)
- [Our community consultation report](#)

## **SHRUB news:**

- <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/revolve/stores>
- <https://foodanddrink.scotsman.com/food/scotlands-first-rescued-food-shop-to-open-in-edinburgh/>
- <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/students/student-volunteering/societies-and-coops>
- <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/news/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/shrub-swapshop-grows-into-new-premises>

## Volunteer feedback:

“It was a hugely welcoming and very creative space, the signs were handmade and painted on the windows. The service was amazing, and I really really enjoyed visiting.”

“There was nothing the team members could have done to make this section [on customer service] even better than it already was.”

-Quotes from a recent mystery shopper report, conducted by Revolve

“Being a member of SHRUB and volunteering in the Swapshop these past 7 months has been a thoroughly rewarding and and empowering experience, both in terms of my own personal development, and my ability to promote awareness of climate change issues and the practical ways that people, as individuals, can make a tangible difference.

My knowledge and awareness of climate change issues, particularly relating to fashion and food waste, have increased tremendously since becoming a member of Shrub. I now feel empowered and confident enough to discuss such matters from a position of relative authority rather than merely sitting on the sidelines armed merely with my own personal opinion. I have also noticed a manifest change in my personal consumer behaviour since I started accessing the Swapshop and Food Sharing in the Zero Waste Hub; this is beginning to influence my immediate family and friends too. I feel actively engaged and invested in protecting the planet for future generations through my ability to promote a zero waste circular economy, and by being able to exemplify these in my own choices as a consumer.

I had been unemployed for several years owing to mental health difficulties and caring for an elderly relative, before I began volunteering in the Swapshop. Thus, one of the primary reasons behind my decision to volunteer was to improve my self-confidence, and to rediscover and exemplify the requisite workplace skills I needed to apply for a job. The Swapshop has provided a safe and welcoming space within which restore my confidence levels and improve my self-esteem at my own pace. Having no prior experience of working neither in the retail industry nor the voluntary sector, I have been able to gain new knowledge and to unearth and explore previously unknown talents and skills. I have also had the opportunity for further training and development and recently attended a day of project management training organised by Shrub. Consequent to all this, I now feel confident enough to be currently in the process of looking for paid part-time employment. And I fully intend to continue my volunteer commitments with the Shrub even once I have secured a job.”

-Siobhan, Swapshop Volunteer

“The SHRUB Co-op has been an amazing source of community for me as an exchange student. With the limitations of one semester, many students from overseas find it hard

to gain any grounding in the city they're studying. SHRUB changed that. After joining as a volunteer during my second week of school, I was given opportunities to give back to the city that had offered me so much already. From the fantastic coordinators to my fellow volunteers, I encountered so many unique and lovely people that I would otherwise have missed. I learned how to invest in recyclable fashion and be a better thrifter, and to do my part in conserving the environment. I learned how to work in a volunteer setting and helped run the shop on my working days. I took ownership of my contribution to the shop, empowering me to join other volunteer groups in the future. I hope that many other students will wander past this Hub and be inspired to serve and be served by this wonderful community.”

- Emma, International Student, Swapshop Volunteer

“Been coming for over 2 months to the bike group. I find it relaxed, no one judging people, everyone gets treated with respect and the 3 people that help us are so understanding and easy to talk to about anything. I love coming here every Tuesday, thanks for all the help, coffee and respect.”

- Peter, Crisis bike workshop participant

“I’ll always come here if something is up with my bike or I just want to learn more about it. Very open, knowledgeable, helpful and friendly atmosphere! It’s great to be able to learn bike things in such a great place. Warm love from ESHC. Co-operation between co-ops! (Thank you for letting me paint my frame here!!)”

- Silver, Wee Spoke Hub workshop participant

“Cosy, chill and helpful. I went to fix my old fashion bike to Wee Spoke Hub, barely knowing if it was possible and how to do it. After a few sessions with Dimo and Euan to teach me how to do it, I feel like I know much more how to take care of my bike. It also pushes me to want to know even more and help other people to fix their bike. Now I can ride everywhere, thanks so much!”

-Angelique, Wee Spoke Hub workshop participant and SHRUB volunteer

“I gained professional skills that I might not have learnt at university. I was able to lead a project and organise events, I was able to facilitate workshops and teach skills that I had learnt. My time at SHRUB has been invaluable and I don't think I would be as confident as I am now if I hadn't been part of it. SHRUB also allowed me to meet people with the same attitudes as me and same point of views, it made me feel less alone and excited to be part of the community.”

- Lucy, Events and Project Management volunteer

“Volunteering at SHRUB meant that I could engage in meaningful work outside of my studies and gave me time out during the week to talk to and work with people outside of my day to day uni life. It also pushed me outside my comfort zone to get involved, meet some like-minded people and along the way learn about something completely new.

My time volunteering at SHRUB was a great help when it came to looking for work after studying. The freedom I was given to get stuck into projects helped me to realise the skills I had, the work I enjoyed, and gave me the confidence and support to find meaningful work in the charity sector.”

-Katy - Monitoring and Evaluation team.

“Firstly it is experience that I needed before the first move to a new job. It helped me with an update of my CV, so I looked more professional when applying for a new job and I also gained confidence to start a new job. Use of spreadsheets is still essential to organise my work. This skill I learned when working at SHRUB and it is useful when working from home during lockdown where you can use some ideas to organise work from your previous job. I enjoyed working with a team where we supported and helped one another, improving the system of processing invoices to be easier and understandable. It was great to be part of a responsible role where I supported SHRUB for a couple of hours a week.”

-Marek - Finance team

“Volunteering at SHRUB has been really enjoyable and has helped build my confidence in a new area. Everyone at SHRUB is so warm and welcoming, it has been great to work in such a friendly and inclusive environment. As well as enhancing my own personal development it has also been really rewarding to support a social enterprise that is doing such vital work in waste reduction and raising awareness of the small changes we can all make to help make a big difference to sustainability and the environment.” Shankur - Finance team



SHRUB social media insights

Facebook @shrubcoop and instagram follower demographics:

