

SUSSED Annual Report 2020-21



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Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sussed_wales/

Pinterest: <http://www.ebay.co.uk/usr/sussedporthcawl>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmIFd3JhZon9p6GhdeW3Rkg>

Summary of SUSSED in 2020 video: <https://youtu.be/-hTGtJu1Cz0>



The Context



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

represent the global goals that governments, civil society organisations, and businesses around the world have agreed to achieve together by 2030.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>



The Welsh Government's...

- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act May 2015**
<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
- **The Environment (Wales) Act 2016** is a commitment to position Wales as a low carbon, green economy, ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Act
<https://gov.wales/environment-wales-act-2016-factsheets>
- **Prosperity For All - the national strategy 2017** <https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-national-strategy>
- **Low Carbon Delivery Plan 2 July 2020** <https://gov.wales/low-carbon-delivery-plan-2-engagement-plan>
- **Successful Futures** - Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) The developing curriculum seeks to give learners at all stages of education an understanding of the impact of their choices on other people, the economy and the environment. To be introduced in schools from **2022** <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/successful-futures-a-summary-of-professor-graham-donaldsons-report.pdf>

SUSSED is a cooperative, we are a progressive, independent, not-for-profit, community membership company. Our aims are to help shoppers respond to the ecological and climate emergency, trade justice, and purchase ethical goods.

The goods on sale – local, green and fairly traded, are selected because they are people and planet-friendly and are a challenge to corporate power via the power of the purse.

www.sussedwales.com.



We also support the charity, Sustainable Wales, our sister organisation with general office and administration costs. The relationship is symbiotic. Both organisations believing that solutions to the unsustainable way society has developed need grassroots, citizen responses at all political levels. Information, campaigning, lobbying, practical projects and retail activism.

Directors' Report

Despite 2020-2021 being an unpredictable year, 32 million people (half of the UK population) supported small and local businesses during the lockdown and with more people working from home and reconnecting with their communities this trend is likely to continue.

SUSSED Directors would like to thank the local community and visitors to Porthcawl for their custom over the year. It is important that our independent shops are supported as they are the backbone of our communities and can be at the forefront of change.

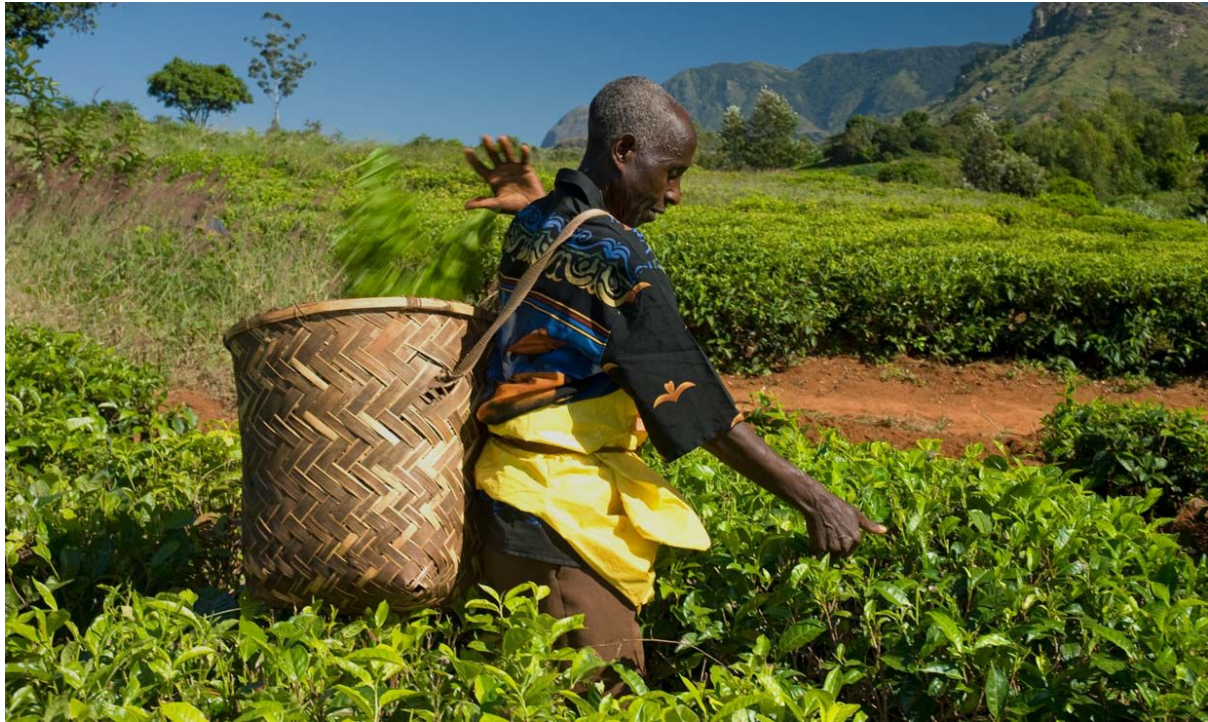
A part-time post was supported with funding across part of this period and ended mid-January 2021. Sustainable Wales funding 50% until the contract closed.

However, a massive thanks must go to our wonderful volunteers who have ridden the storm throughout as we complied with the Covid rules.

Public support increases.



Globescan's research tells us that Fair Trade is still the most selected label. Ensuring no child labour is a key motivator for shoppers, followed by reduced use of pesticides, tackling poverty, and protecting against deforestation – all of which are a core part of Fairtrade's mission and SUSSED's.



Public awareness of sustainability – people and planet friendly behaviours is deepening as consumer understanding of our impact on the earth has increased. SUSSED aims to help and provide people with a chance to respond when shopping, by supporting honest and secure trade relationships with farmers and producers in the developing world, whilst reducing our own environmental impacts.

Younger consumers, especially those between 18 and 24, want to know more about what companies are doing to be socially and environmentally responsible, and less than half agree companies communicate honestly, implying a steep upward trend for a desire for more transparency.

SUSSED Sales increase during the Pandemic.



As the Coronavirus pandemic continued to unfold, SUSSED opening times were curtailed and for periods of time we have been fully closed. Indeed, some of our fairly-traded supply chains have also been disrupted and will have been impacting suppliers and workers on an unprecedented global scale. However, despite this, our community cooperative has thrived as we began selling locally-made, three layered, cotton face-masks, made by Porthcawl's Cwtchable Creations.

Sales boomed as locals heard about the masks, which in turn introduced more people to SUSSED. Increasing sales also, of Cwtch cushions and aprons along with continued foodstuffs in short supply, on supermarket shelves like flour, sanitisers and toilet paper.

Fairly traded, stylish, affordable eco-fashion and accessory sales have also increased, alongside a small range of shirts being sourced for men. The wide variety of bamboo socks for men and women continue in their popularity.



Zero waste options increase.

Aiming to help consumers move to zero waste SUSSED continues to enlarge its selection. This includes provision of plastic-free, reuse and refills of biodegradable cleaning products; accessories, gifts and some clothes. Goods made from recycled materials like leather, bike parts, saris, cottons, and plastics continues to grow.

Activities and Events decrease.

The activities we usually provide in the **Green Room** like talks, workshops, meetings, socials, café etc, have of course, significantly reduced this year. Stalls and support for eco and fairly-traded schools throughout the year evaporated as did joining in local street events and organising any of our own.



However, Saulat Abbasi continues to replant seasonally and maintain the roadside welcoming '**boat garden**', with dedicated planting support from stalwarts Jonathon Thomas and Rhiannon Abbasi, which is sited on the way into Porthcawl, below Danygraig Hill.



Also, with people returning to cooking during the pandemic, we assisted our charity Sustainable Wales, to introduce a series of cookery demonstrations in summer to help people cook with confidence. Ingredients were mainly fairly-traded and organic. Porthcawl's, Mack Jenkins, a young chef, who planned the dishes, donned his apron and gave socially distanced classes a chance to learn new skills, with recipes, tips and techniques and plenty of tasting sessions.

Directors have held their **regular meetings online**. Volunteers have had some opportunity to attend a couple of workshops organised by Fairtrade Wales this way too.

Our thanks, as ever, go to those **volunteers** who managed to maintain the slimmed-down schedule of opening and promoting the shop. New volunteers have also come forward to help and we hope to reinstate some of our activities when the Covid restrictions allow.



Trading

There are many words that have been over-used during the last 12 months or so. However, “pivot” is one that needs to be mentioned because that is exactly what SUSSED has done during 2020-21.

As mentioned above, during April 2020 we entered into an agreement with Cwtchable Creations to make face masks which we duly sold in enormous quantities (7,742 in the first 12 months).

Back in June, the Bank of England forecasted a 14% contraction in the economy, and at least 12 months before the “new normal” really is normal. SUSSED anticipated further volatility with uncertain customer demand patterns, fierce competition in supply chains, international protectionism, and changes to pricing.

However, the BofE forecast of a v shaped recession was countered by the UK economy expanding much slower than expected in May20. Talk centred around a L shaped recession but based on discussions and research I proposed a VL recession. Based on previous scenarios Martin Little, our accounts Director, expected it to end by September 2021. The reason for his suggested VL curve was based upon patterns of pandemics and the global impact of Covid-19 specific “quantitative easing”.

Using SUSSED monthly turn-over we can see that “pivoting” the business completely redrew this assumption. This was apparent from the first sales of masks when we kept the shop open but under restricted times. This is testament to our standing as a FairTrade shop & the service we provided to the local community during the pandemic.

All markets are depressed. However, growth is expected to return in 2021 but at 2016 levels. SUSSED figures for current Vs previous years are rather different. Our turnover for y.e. 06/16 was £41k compared to £55k for the reportable period. The market as a whole is experiencing what we have faced. Supply chain disruption & labour shortage. However, it is clear that SUSSED has been resilient to these sorts of issues.

However, our gratitude and thanks must also go to the Small Business Rate Relief fund of £10,000, which came from the Welsh Assembly. There has been no rent reduction from the landlord.



Point of Sale system

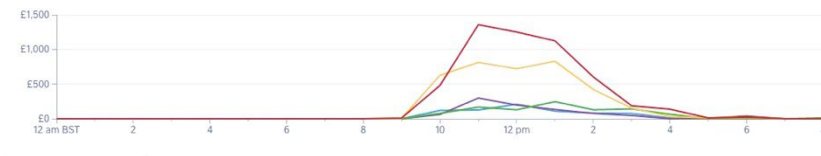
A Square Point of Sale system (POS) was purchased via a BAVO Comic Relief grant in September 2020. This system replaced an aging Casio till with the latest POS based around an iPad and stand with card reader. The POS can be made mobile for use at events and stalls using a mobile phone and a portable reader. Square POS is cheaper per card transaction than our previous provider and takes all forms of contactless payments from the usual banks and Apple Pay, Google Pay etc. also, there is no rental of the equipment which is owned by SUSSED.

Detailed tracking of sales is possible with the system and sales reports are updated in real time. SUSSED has about 500 lines of stock on the POS.

Oct. 1, 2020–Apr. 1, 2021

Top 5 Items: Gross Sales

● Custom Amount E5,191.71 ● Mask E3,636.85 ● Cwtch Cushions E974.25 ● Books E864.65 ● Socks E756.80



Communication and social media

The SUSSED [website](#) had increased traffic over the period, peaking in July 2020. Year on year unique visits were c. 2.7k, an increase of 67% year on year. Page views were up 58% year on year at 4.8k. Visits are 52% from desktop, 42% from mobile devices and the remainder tablets, the desktop figure is surprisingly high, perhaps a reflection of differing activity during lockdowns. The top operating system used by visitors is iOS (iPhone/iPad) followed by Windows. Through the lockdown the site carried information on new lines and opening times.

Messages increased emphasis in 2020 on topics such as sustainable living, plastic-free, home baking, Bio-D refills and reducing waste.

Flour was promoted at a point when SUSSED had supplies and the local supermarkets did not!



Instagram and facebook remained busy with increased engagement and noticeable growth on [Instagram](#) which is becoming the most active channel we use. Our Instagram account grew to over 400 followers, videos were particularly popular as well as updates on when SUSSED was open with new supplies of masks and flours etc. Posts to Instagram are automatically shared across [facebook](#) (c.700 followers, 74% women) and [twitter](#) (c.380 followers).

YouTube: In October we posted a special short video highlighting what SUSSED had done so far in 2020, during the pandemic (hosted on the Sustainable Wales' channel) <https://youtu.be/-hTGtJu1Cz0> please subscribe to the channel if you haven't already.

Partners

The cooperative continues to collaborate with charity [Sustainable Wales](#), Fairtrade Wales, Porthcawl Chamber of Trade, Porthcawl Wilderness Allotments Association, Bridgend Association of Voluntary groups, WCVA and Renew Wales.

Sustainable Wales
Cymru Gynaliadwy



the future is here
y dyfodol sydd yma

SUSSED was a drop-off point for Porthcawl 'Tools for Self-Reliance' and the volunteers help explain this project to customers who ask for information. (However, this collection was still suspended because of Covid-19).

Membership

Membership continued in a low keyway during lockdown, with the online service being used to handle new sign ups. There is now a sign-up page at <http://www.sussedwales.com/join> on the website. There remains an opportunity to promote membership in the coming year.

Sustainable Development Policy Statement



SUSSED operates an environmental and ethical management policy: keeping final waste disposal and energy use to a minimum, using recycled paper products, reducing and reusing, purchasing renewable energy (we are powered by Good Energy), local goods and services when possible, banking with the Cooperative Bank at the local Post Office and also selecting fairtrade and biodegradable products. We are pleased also that the wholesalers we use are adopting responsible packaging strategies.

We aim to give the same rigour to our social and environmental impact as financial returns. The policy and practice is reviewed and updated regularly.

Directors

Peter Morgan, Martin Little, Luke Evans, Margaret Minhinnick, Robert Minhinnick, Melanie Johnson.