



BRITISH SOCIETY
OF SOIL SCIENCE

Annual Report 2024



www.soils.org.uk

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Introduction from the Chair

Wow, what a year! 2024 has been a transformative year for the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS), as we have significantly raised our profile on both national and international stages. Through the dedication and expertise of our members, we have successfully extended our community of soil scientists and practitioners, driving forward new knowledge and innovation across the many dimensions of soil science. It is with immense pride that I reflect on the impact and influence we have achieved as a Society over the past year, delivering on our mission and vision in ways that continue to shape the future of soil science.

First and foremost, I want to take a moment to spotlight the exceptional work of our Society's executive team, which has continued to grow and strengthen in 2024. We were delighted to welcome Andy Morris in February as our new Executive Director, whose leadership has been instrumental in shaping a brilliant programme of work aligned with our mission. While we bid farewell to Natalie Coles earlier in the year as she pursued an exciting new career opportunity, we also took this moment to expand our executive team with new positions that complement the outstanding efforts of Dom and Christine. Adrienne and Max joined us in August to support business development and membership activities, while Ed came on board later in the year as our policy and public affairs officer. These new roles have significantly enhanced our capacity to engage in policy and partnerships, strengthening the support we offer to our members and reinforcing our commitment to sustainable soils for people and the planet.

A major highlight of the year was our Annual Conference in December, themed 'Sustainable Soils for People and Planet.' The conference was nothing short of extraordinary, showcasing the

breadth of pioneering research undertaken by our members and underscoring the fundamental role of soil in both science and society. One of the most exciting developments was the introduction of the art and culture room, as well as the soils, society, and culture theme, an innovative space where disciplines intersect to foster co-learning and spark new discoveries. Beyond the conference, our other key events including 'Zoom into Soil' webinars, training courses, and regional group meetings provided invaluable opportunities for knowledge exchange, networking, and professional development.

2024 also marked a significant step forward in our engagement activities, with a strong presence at UNFCCC COP29 and UNCCD COP16. Our participation in side events advocating for soil health further expanded our international networks and partnerships, amplifying our influence on global discussions. Soil health continues to gain traction internationally, and it was an honour to provide evidence at the Canadian Senate's inquiry into soil health, where several of our recommendations were included in the final report. Additionally, we maintained active engagement with the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), leading a soil policy session at the Centennial in Florence, while also accelerating public engagement efforts in the UK through events such as the Lincolnshire Show, Groundswell, and the British Science Festival.

Our Society's journals, the European Journal of Soil Science and Soil Use and Management, remain at the forefront of publishing groundbreaking research in the discipline. A notable milestone in 2024 was the celebration of EJSS's 75th anniversary, and we now eagerly anticipate marking 40 years of SUM in 2025. These journals continue to provide an essential platform for advancing soil science and ensuring

that our research has a lasting impact on both policy and practice.

As President, it has been an absolute privilege to represent BSSS and its incredible membership. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the executive team, Past-President Bruce Lascelles, committee members and chairs, journal editors, new members, and all those who have contributed to making this journey so inspiring and rewarding. A special thank you also goes to our Patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, for his invaluable support over the past eight years. In recognition of his contributions, we are excited to announce a new grant in his honour, further strengthening our commitment to soil science and our members.

Looking ahead, I am thrilled to continue as part of the presidential team over the next two years, with a focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) and supporting Early Career Researchers in soil judging among many other exciting initiatives. As I hand over to Paul, I want to express my appreciation for the enthusiasm, support, and dedication of our members. Whether you are serving as a committee chair, volunteering at public engagement events, attending training and conferences, or contributing to our journals, your involvement is vital to the success of our Society.

Thank you for being part of this fantastic community. With gratitude and best wishes,

Jack Hannam

President, British Society of Soil Science
2023-2024

“I want to express my appreciation for the enthusiasm, support, and dedication of our members. Whether you are serving as a committee chair, volunteering at public engagement events, attending training and conferences, or contributing to our journals, your involvement is vital to the success of our Society.”



Introduction from the Executive Director

As we reflect on 2024, my first year as Executive Director, I am immensely proud of what the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) has accomplished. This year has been a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and dedication within our community. We have advanced our mission to promote the discovery and dissemination of soil science knowledge while achieving significant milestones that reinforce our commitment to excellence and impact.

Driving Forward Our Strategic Goals

BSSS has strengthened its role as a leading hub for soil science expertise, welcoming 200 delegates from across four continents to our annual conference in Cardiff. Additionally, for the first time in our history, we extended our advocacy efforts by hosting side events at SB60, COP 29, and COP 16, amplifying the role of soil science in global discussions on climate change, biodiversity, and sustainability.

Our membership continued to expand, welcoming a diverse cohort of soil scientists, practitioners, and early-career professionals. This growth underscores our dedication to fostering an inclusive and vibrant community where knowledge-sharing and mentorship thrive.

Advancing Knowledge and Education

Education and professional development remain at the heart of our mission. In 2024, our grants program supported 12 practitioners and early-career members, enabling them to pursue further training and present their research internationally. Our digital learning initiatives, including the Zoom into Soil programme, reached over 1,065 sector stakeholders and practitioners, providing critical insights into the pressing issues facing soil science.

Practical skills training also saw continued success, with 61 learners participating in our Work with

Soil courses, covering essential topics from soil classification to agricultural land assessment. We are excited to expand our training portfolio in 2025 to further equip professionals with hands-on expertise.

Through our outreach efforts, we engaged over 400 young learners and five community organisations, inspiring the next generation to appreciate and protect soil. Looking forward, we will launch our first podcast, Soil Matters, to make cutting-edge research more accessible and continue designing innovative campaigns to increase public engagement with soil science.

BSSS has also made significant contributions to education policy. As a high-level adviser to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, we have championed the inclusion of soil health in national curricula. Our collaborations with institutions like Durham University and the University of Edinburgh further reinforce our advocacy for soil literacy and experiential learning.

Championing Soil Health

Our commitment to soil health advocacy remained steadfast in 2024. We actively contributed to consultations, supported the publication of the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice, and hosted advocacy events in partnership with the UNFCCC and UNCCD. A major highlight was our President, Professor Jack Hannam, providing testimony to the Canadian Senate, emphasising the need for transdisciplinary research, cohesive soil policy, and tailored support for regenerative agriculture.

Internally, we welcomed our first Policy and Public Affairs Manager, who is leading efforts on a Soil Health Charter, positioning BSSS as a key voice in shaping soil health policies and best practices.

Acknowledging Our Community

This year also brought transitions within our executive team. We bid farewell to Natalie Coles, a valued contributor to our Society's success, while welcoming new team members: Adrienne Golding as Business Development Manager, Ed Hinman as Policy and Public Affairs Manager, and Max Silver as Membership Administration Apprentice. Additionally, we celebrated the promotion of Christine Wangari to Charity and Membership Administrator, marking an exciting phase of growth for our internal team.

In January we also welcomed David Tompkins to our board as the PPDC representative. It is fantastic to have him join our diverse board team, and we look forward to continuing to work with him into 2025 and beyond.

This year saw our long-standing patron His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester step down from his role due to increasing time commitments associated with his position as a senior member of the royal family. In July we met with the Duke of Gloucester to thank him for his dedication and support to the society and explore options to name an award in his honour. This was agreed and approved with the royal names team in Westminster and I am happy to announce 2025 will see the launch of the Duke of Gloucester Overseas Award aimed at funding soil-focused research projects and knowledge transfer activities in low to middle income countries. This grant provides an ideal opportunity to highlight the importance of nurturing our soils and the collaboration across countries for the benefit of human society.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication of our President, Board, Council, Committees, members, partners, and executive team. Their expertise, enthusiasm,

and unwavering support have been the driving force behind our success.

As we look ahead to 2025, I am filled with optimism and determination. We have exciting opportunities to build on our momentum, deepen our impact, and continue shaping a sustainable future for soils and society. Thank you for your commitment to BSSS, here's to another year of progress and partnership!

Andrew Morris

Executive Director



Mission and Vision

*Our **mission** is to support and promote the discovery of new knowledge of soils and their role in global sustainability.*

*Our **vision** is to ensure sustainable soils for people and planet.*

We will achieve our mission and vision by:

- Promoting scientific study and discovery of new knowledge about soil and ensuring it is accessible to a wide audience.
 - Influencing policy and legislation through evidence-based advocacy.
- Supporting our members to develop and continue professional and academic excellence.

The Challenge We Face

To achieve our mission and vision, the Society must address key challenges including:

- Ensuring a sufficient skills base and engagement to deliver sustainable soil management.
- Driving research, evidence collection and professional excellence whilst experiencing the impacts of changes to academic publishing, income and attitudes to work.
- Promoting soil health in the face of geo-political uncertainty, a growing population and changing social attitudes in a world of technological innovation.



Our Strategy

1

Seeking to publicise the key issues for the soil science community

By 2025

We will have delivered a clear legacy from the World Congress including a wider range of active stakeholders and increased resources available to members and non-members. We will use our journals and website as mechanisms to deliver this. We will have become a key contact for UK media on soil-related issues and our science and guidance notes will have expanded into valuable resources for members and stakeholders.

By 2030

Our journals will be recognised as two of the leading international journals relating to soil. We will have become a key contact for international media on soil-related issues and we will expand our guidance and science notes to provide context for an international audience. Our website will include greater guidance and information aimed at scientific and non-scientific audiences.

2

Promoting change through knowledge exchange across all aspects of soil science

By 2025

We will be continuing to provide evidence-based information to policymakers at a national level and have become a contact for governments and stakeholders on soil science issues. We will provide dedicated forums for our members to discuss policy and best-practice issues, allowing us to develop recommendations combining academic and practical perspectives.

By 2030

We will be providing evidence-based information to policymakers at an international level and will take a pro-active approach in responding to international consultations. International stakeholders will seek out our dedicated member forums as advisory groups across the breadth of soil activities.

3

Hosting conferences and meetings focused on soils

By 2025

Using the knowledge and experience we develop from delivering the World Congress, we will deliver an international and interdisciplinary activity by 2025. The activity will recur on a cyclical basis and will establish the Society as a key player in the dissemination of soils-based knowledge globally.

By 2030

The international and interdisciplinary activity will be delivered for a second time and have developed in size and reach. The activity will attract a broader, international audience with support from major stakeholders.

4

Supporting and encouraging the education of soil science

By 2025

We will have delivered a clear legacy from the World Congress including a wider range of active stakeholders and increased in-person and digital resources available to members and non-members. This, alongside increased outreach and engagement work, will lead to an increased awareness of the importance of soil amongst a wide range of communities.

By 2030

We will have delivered large-scale outreach programmes, which aim to increase awareness of soil to audiences which can have a demonstrable impact in its care. As a result, the Society will also be recognised by educators and those already engaged in environmental matters, as a reliable source of information.



Our Strategy CONTINUED

5

Inspiring the future generations of soil scientists

By 2025

We will have developed a clear education and training pathway demonstrating the routes into soil science. We will have understood the gaps that exist and developed new courses and content for those within the sector, where the content does not exist. We will continue to work with external bodies to influence the soil science taught at all levels of the curriculum.

We will continue to provide our Early Careers members with the opportunity to network with their peers face-to-face and virtually and provide support to help them make the transition into Full membership.

By 2030

We will continue to promote the education and training pathway to members, students and those interested in working with soil. We will work closely with other professional and external bodies to embed soil content into peripheral qualifications, to ensure anyone who works in any context with soil, has the skills to do so.

We will recruit Early Careers members from a wider range of specialisms to encourage collaboration. This will support our members' career opportunities whilst encouraging interdisciplinary working.

Throughout our 10-year vision, we will encourage Society membership as a mechanism to support training and development at all career stages.

6

Ensuring high standards of professional practice for those working with soils

By 2025

We will require a minimum number of hours of CPD to be provided by Full and Fellow members each year. This will be closely linked to the CSci requirements to encourage more members to obtain CSci status in addition to Society membership. As a result, our members will be well-respected and highly visible as experts in all aspects of soil and its management.

We will update our corporate membership category to allow organisations to demonstrate the value of membership via outcomes aligned to the Society's mission.

By 2030

Our membership and number of CSci registrants will grow and strengthen as our professional standards are seen as a mark of expertise and are in demand from clients. Our clear education and training pathway will have led to an increase in the number of qualified soil experts and with industry clients specifying our members for soils work. Our external-facing activities will have led to an increase in membership across non-practitioner grades and we will have introduced tangible benefits to encourage membership amongst the non-scientific community.

7

Leading on the social and environmental responsibilities of a contemporary society

By 2025

The Society will have a thorough understanding of its environmental impact across all aspects of its operation and have a clear plan in place to reduce and offset its impact. We will continue to encourage inclusion within our membership by providing diverse role models at events and in our case studies.

By 2030

The Society will be a 'carbon positive' organisation, having minimised its environmental impacts and provided practical support to projects which outweigh any negative operational impacts. Our positive approach to diversity and inclusion will have led to a demonstrable increase in diversity across our membership.

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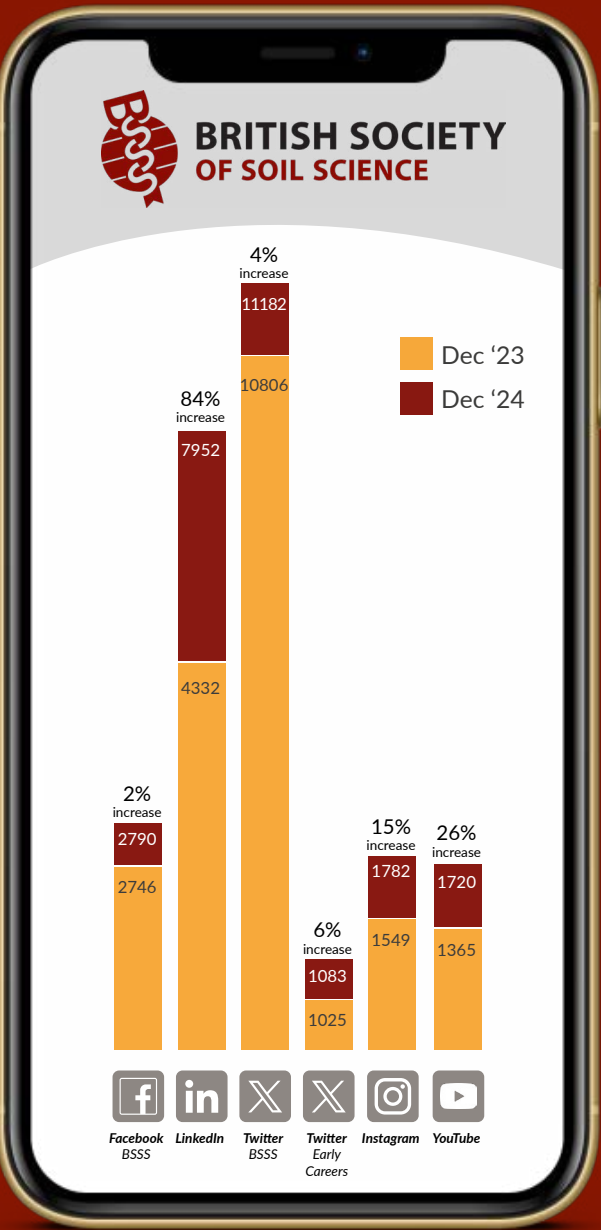
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Our Year in Numbers

Key Numbers



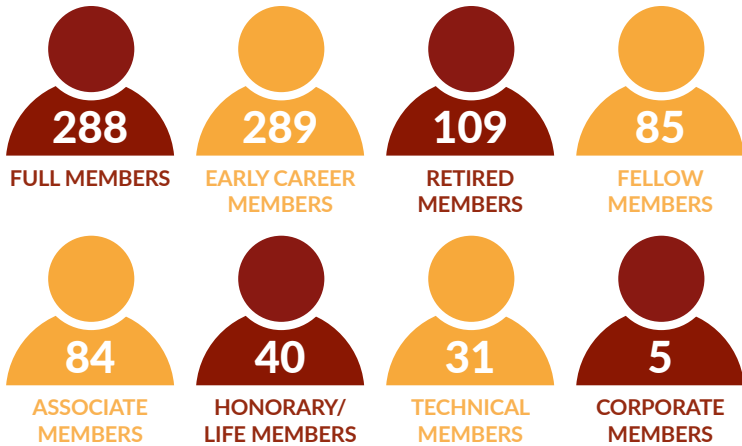
Social media followers



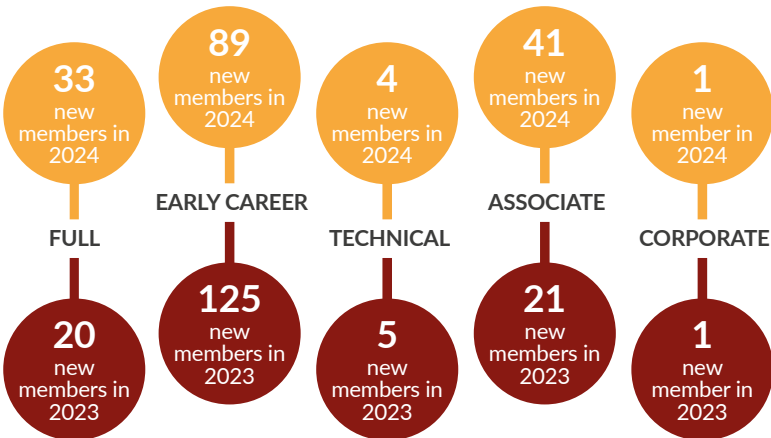
Our Year in Numbers CONTINUED

Members

As of 31 December 2024, the society represented **931** members. This includes 42 Chartered Scientists, and comprised of:



During 2024, BSSS welcomed **168** new members:



BSSS members stretch far and wide across the globe with members in 42 countries.

At the end of 2024, 63.9% of our members were male, 34.8% female, 0.3% gender non-conforming, and 0.1% non-binary with 0.6% preferring not to say.

Amongst our Early Career members, 39.4% of were male, 51.2% female, 0.3% gender non-conforming, with 1.03% preferring not to say.

Seeking to publicise the key issues for the soil science community

Our Strategy said:

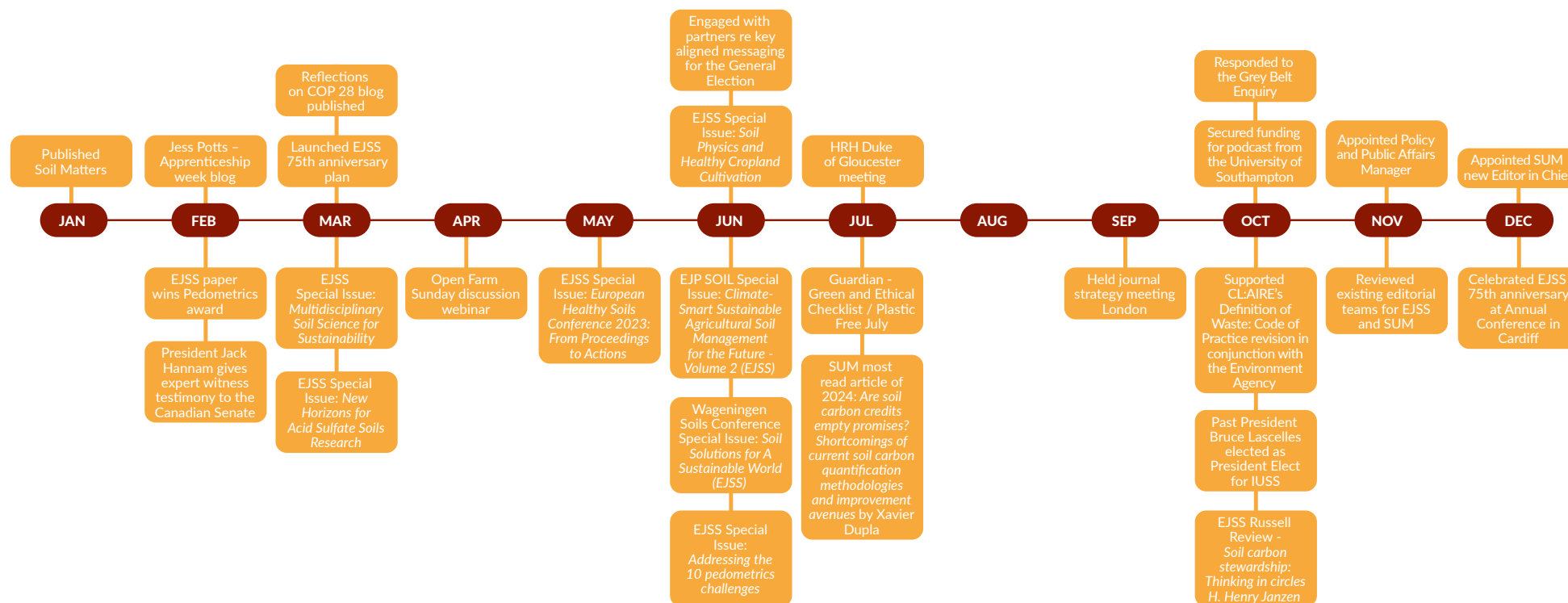
We will raise the profile of the important soil issues via our two prestigious journals, European Journal of Soil Science (EJSS) and Soil Use & Management (SUM), our bi-annual member's newsletter (the Auger), our new website, an enhanced social media presence and by hosting regional, national and international conferences.

We will actively engage with the media by responding quickly to enquiries, providing factsheets and policy notes ensuring we are acknowledged as the UK's leading authority on soil science.

What we set out to achieve:

Re-introduce Soil Matters as an annual print publication to members	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Launch a podcast series to highlight the research in our two journals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conduct a strategic review of both EJSS and SUM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Produce a minimum of one guidance note on a relevant topic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Produce one Science Note on a relevant topic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review and update existing guidance notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respond to relevant UK and international consultations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Our Achievements:



ALL YEAR - Promoted both journals via regular *In Case you Missed it* articles in our members' e-newsletters

ALL YEAR - Continued to promote our grant and award winners with case studies online and in our members e-newsletters

Seeking to publicise the key issues for the soil science community CONTINUED

Our Impact:

- The EJSS Impact Factor was 4 and ranked 13/49. The SUM Impact Factor was 5 and ranked 10/49.
- SUM published 162 articles, including 14 review articles, 1 invited paper and 3 commentaries.
- EJSS published 166 articles, including 7 special issues and a Russell Review on soil carbon stewardship.
- Submissions during 2024 for the European Journal of Soil Science increased by 34% compared to 2023, and by 25% for Soil Use and Management.
- Full text views increased by 14% to 473,800 for EJSS and by 18% to 304,500 for SUM.
- In 2024, the society's social media followers continued to grow. Post impressions on LinkedIn grew by 7.5% to 301,923. Our social channels now provide us with direct access to 25,600 organisations and individuals overall.

In 2025, we will:

- Launch a podcast series to highlight cutting edge research
- Create a Policy sub-committee
- Respond to UK Land Use Framework government consultations
- Produce a Whitepaper on a relevant topic
- Continue to raise the profile of the society journals
- Launch a cross sector working group focused on creating a Soil Health Charter
- Secure a new Patron for the Society

CASE STUDY: SPEAKING AT THE CANADIAN SENATE

On 29 February 2024, Prof. Jack Hannam gave evidence to The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry at the Senate of Canada on their study into soil health. It was fantastic for Jack and the Society to receive an invitation as a witness to provide advice and recommendations into this key study. Jack spoke online alongside Penny Wensley, the former Australian National Soil Advocate, and Don Lobb a Canadian farmer who had been advocating for soil health for many years. It was a very thought-provoking session with the committee keen on hearing testimonies and taking advice on best practice from a wide range of leading experts on the subject.

Jack gave the following recommendations to the committee:

1. *support more transdisciplinary research in soil science*
2. *develop an overarching policy for soil in Canada*
3. *ensure tailored information is available to farmers to enable a transition to regenerative agriculture.*

The Senate is the Upper House in Canada's bicameral parliamentary democracy. It unites a diverse group of accomplished Canadians in service of their country. The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has the mandate to study matters related to agriculture and forestry generally.

This event enabled the Society to contribute to an international study on soil and enhance our reputation as a leading body on this subject. Through this, we took another step to achieving our Vision; to ensure sustainable soils for people and planet. Through evidence-based advocacy and knowledge exchange, we hope to influence policy and keep soils high on the agenda in highlighting their role in global sustainability.



Promoting change through knowledge exchange across all aspects of soil science

Our Strategy said:

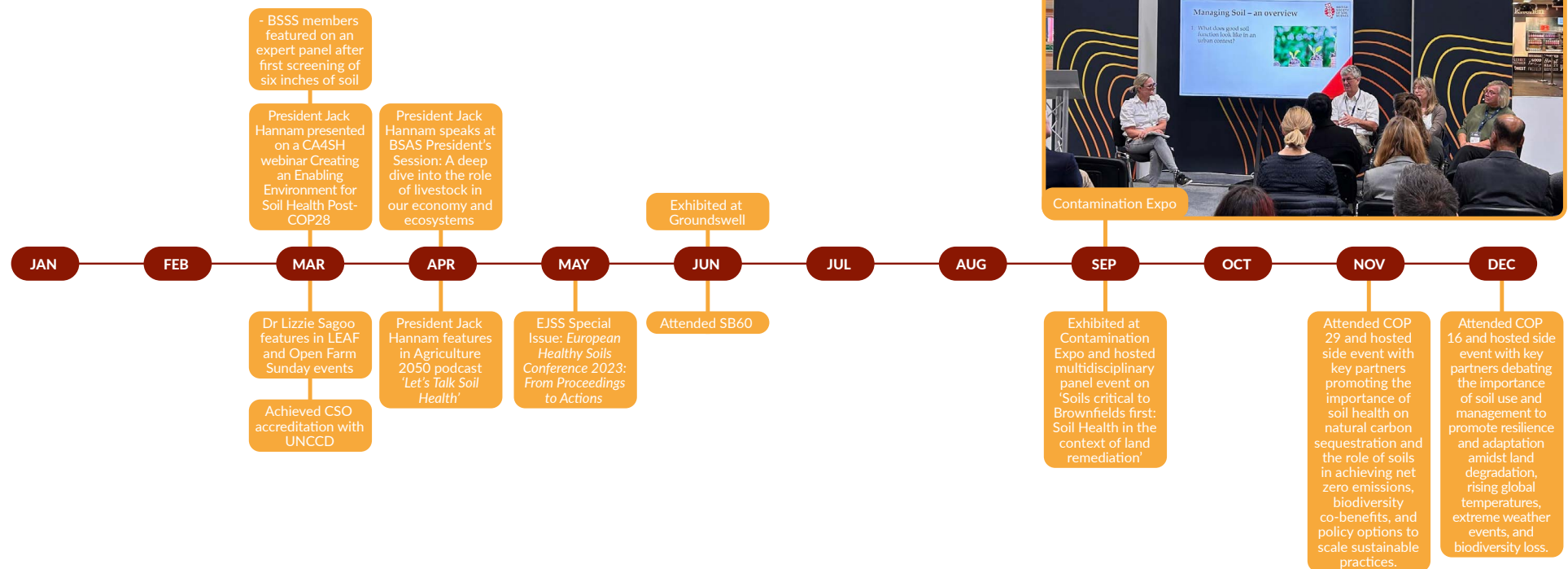
We will seek to support knowledge exchange in soil science through targeted engagement with industry, policy makers, government and educators. We will promote soil science across a range of disciplines using our website, social media and newsletters, with reference to the appropriate scientific research published in our Journals.

We will make the latest knowledge available to a wider community audience and provide a forum for debate and to develop new partnerships. We will also monitor government progress in developing new policies and ensure we feed into this process.

What we set out to achieve:

Add a minimum of two more case studies to the Invest in Soil series	✓
Exhibit at events aimed at professionals, including Contamination Expo	✓
Strengthen relationships with policymakers, allied organisations and interest groups	✓
Seek accreditation with UNCCD	✓
Agree how to engage with SB 60, COP 29 and COP 16	✓

Our Achievements:



ALL YEAR - Retained our membership of and contributed to membership bodies including the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, Science Council and Society Publishers' Coalition (SocPC)

Promoting change through knowledge exchange across all aspects of soil science CONTINUED

Our Impact:

- Hosted a multi-disciplinary panel session at Contamination Expo to in excess of 100 delegates
- Hosted a multi-disciplinary side event at COP29 in Baku with partners spanning five continents, featuring 4 per 1000 initiative, 4 Paws, South Asian Forum for the Environment, Escolhas Institute, Ecological Christian Organization, Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society (ACEPIS)
- Hosted a multi-disciplinary side Event at COP16 in Riyadh with partners IRD, Alliance of Biodiversity International, UNCCD, 4 Paws
- Secured 6 new sponsor relationships for Annual Conference

In 2025, we will:

- Expand the case studies to the Invest in Soil series
- Seek funding to expand the Podcast series
- Exhibit at events aimed at professionals, including EGU, Groundswell, Rhizosphere and Eurosoil
- Strengthen relationships with policymakers, allied organisations and interest groups
- Stand for election as a nominated CSO for UNCCD
- Raise the society's profile at COP 30



CASE STUDY: HOLDING SIDE EVENTS AT UN COP EVENTS

In November 2024, Jack Hannam, and Executive Director, Andy Morris, travelled to Baku for the 29th Conference of the Parties. This was the fourth year BSSS has attended the COP climate summit under our official non-governmental organisation (NGO) observer status.

During the conference, COP29 provided particular focus on the food and agriculture sector — an area often sidelined in climate discussions despite its central role in global livelihoods and its vulnerability to climate change. This sector is both a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and one of the hardest hit by climate impacts like droughts, floods, and heatwaves. A key theme at the conference was highlighting the fundamental role of farmers as key agents of climate action which represents an opportunity to drive concrete climate solutions through agrifood systems. This could be achieved through bold, data-driven climate plans and adequate 'climate funding'.

BSSS were delighted to contribute to these discussions through our own Side Event on 'Invest in Soil Health – fostering the future of climate change mitigation and adaptation'. We welcomed speakers from Africa, South America, India and Europe for a diverse panel discussion around soil health, regenerative and innovative approaches, and how to leverage finance to achieve a just transition whilst championing collaboration for COP29.

The panel discussed the role of soil in different RIO conventions (climate, desertification and biodiversity), and examples of regenerative agriculture in different parts of the world. This included some unintended consequences of adopting some practices such as no till, innovative practices using grow bags and floating platforms, integrating local knowledge systems and private finance.

The expert panel featured:

- Prof. Jacqueline Hannam, BSSS President (Chair)
- Paul Luu, 4p1000 Initiative
- Dr. Dipayan Dey, South Asian Forum for Environment
- Dr. Carolina Nascimento, FOUR PAWS
- Juliana Luiz, Escolhas Institute
- Isaac Kabongo, Ecological Christian Organization
- Salome Owuonda, Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society (ACEPIS)

We continued these conversations in the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Following our Annual Conference, we hosted a Side Event at COP16 on 10 December which brought together speakers from around the world to discuss effective soil use and management to promote resilience and

adaptation in the context of expanding land degradation, rising global temperatures, extreme weather events and large biodiversity loss.

This panel included:

- Prof. Jacqueline Hannam, BSSS (Chair)
- Jean-Luc Chotte, IRD
- Olga Andreeva, UNCCD
- Lusleged Tamene Desta, Alliance of Biodiversity International
- Sophie Aylmer, FOUR PAWS

By fostering interdisciplinary exchange around the complexities of soil governance, this session sought to catalyse action towards building resilient and regenerative soil systems that can support future generations and sustain planetary health.

"Whilst the discussions at both conferences cover the whole spectrum of sectors, it is reassuring to see the more prominent positioning agriculture and food security in the global climate agenda. Through discussions, partnerships and initiatives, we are continuing to highlight the importance of soil in mitigating climate change and will continue to reinforce this message at future conventions. It is essential that we unite voices across the sector and facilitate these positive discussions which will lead to greater action and support. This is essential in securing the future sustainability of the planet and our food source." Andy Morris, BSSS Executive Director

Looking ahead, further work is now being undertaken with a policy position statement being drawn up across the society's convention partners for publication in 2025. Engagement in these events have also enabled new relationships being formed across the UK, EU and South American country pavilions in conjunction with allied organisations such as FAO and World bank, culminating in a plan for deeper engagement and advocacy at COP 30 being held in Brazil, November 2025.



Hosting conferences and meetings focused on soils

Our Strategy said:

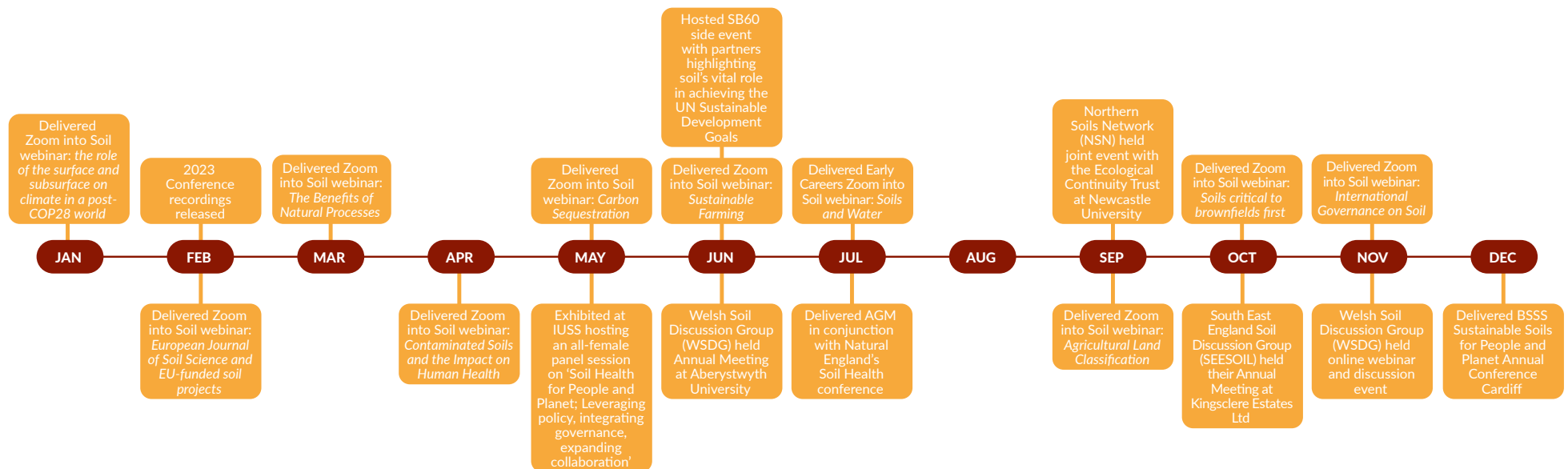
We aim to grow participation in our regional and annual meetings. We will act to develop communication pathways with a wide range of stakeholders and use our meetings to foster debate in the latest scientific and practical issues in soil science.

Working with the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) and other international societies, we were committed to delivering the best possible World Congress of Soil Science in Glasgow in 2022 and ensuring this provides a comprehensive legacy for the Society and its members.

What we set out to achieve:

Host face-to-face Regional Group events and meetings	✓
Continue our free-to-attend Zoom into Soil series, partnering with external organisations as relevant	✓
Deliver an in-person Annual General Meeting, partnering with Natural England	✓
Deliver our Annual Conference in Cardiff, alongside a tours and outreach programme	✓
Plan a Soil Judging competition	✓
Deliver sessions at IUSS and SB60	✓
Support the delivery of Eurosoil 2025	✓

Our Achievements:



ONGOING - Supported the delivery of Eurosoil 2025

Hosting conferences and meetings focused on soils CONTINUED

Our Impact:

Across all of our Zoom into Soil webinars, 89% of attendees stated that the content was good or excellent and 71% of attendees said that they would use the knowledge learnt as a result of the sessions in their future work.

- Over 1136 people attended our seven webinars and they have been viewed almost 4,000 times on YouTube
- 70 delegates attended across our 4 regional events for 2024
- 189 delegates from across 4 continents attended our Annual Conference which comprised of:
 - 1 policy session, 2 discussion panel sessions, 2 keynotes, 25 oral presentations across 5 themes, 8 quickfire presentations, 55 posters, 6 parallel sessions, 2 scientific and 1 cultural tour
 - 100% of responders rated the content as Good or Excellent
 - 100% of responders said they gained new knowledge as a result of attending the conference
 - 84% of responders said they will be able to put the new knowledge gained for the conference into practice
 - 100% of responders rated the tour experience as Good or Excellent
 - 94% of responders rated the conference venue as Good or Excellent
- The conference also enjoyed a good mix of member, non-members and early careers in attendance totaling:
 - 30% of attendees were Full/Fellow/Technical members
 - 42% of attendees were Early Career members
 - 3% of attendees were Associate members
 - 25% of attendees were Non-Member delegates

In 2025, we will:

- Host face-to-face Regional Group events and meetings
- Continue our free-to-attend Zoom into Soil series, partnering with external organisations as relevant
- Deliver an in-person Annual General Meeting, partnering with Natural England
- Deliver our Annual Conference in Manchester, alongside a tours and outreach programme
- Deliver sessions at COP 30, Eurosoil, Rhizosphere and EGU

CASE STUDY: ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN CARDIFF



We were delighted to welcome members, sponsors and supporters to a sold-out Annual Conference at Glamorgan Cricket Club in Cardiff at the start of December. It was fantastic to see so many delegates from across the UK and further afield at the event, and participating in the sessions. We hope that the conversations and learnings from the conference will spur further research and development within soil science.

The conference featured a rich programme including: a Policy session, 2 panel sessions, 2 keynotes, 25 oral presentations, 8 quickfire presentations, 55 posters, 6 parallel sessions, an Art and culture exhibition, Venue tours, an Early Career Networking event, Scientific and Cultural Tours, and a talking soil bench.

Keynote Sessions

We were delighted to hear from several expert speakers and panels within soil science and its allied disciplines. Following opening remarks from Naomi Matthiessen, we kicked off the conference with a policy session around land use and planning with representatives from all the devolved nations including DEFRA, Welsh Government, Scottish Government and AFBI (NI). Later on we had a session around soil health and sustainable agriculture, and to close the first day, we had a session around soil health in planning and Environmental Impact Assessment. Day 2 began with our Invited Speaker, Prof. Dave Chadwick from Bangor University who spoke on Soils, Greenhouse Gases and Mitigation. Later in the day, we had our technology keynote about the Signals in the Soil project.

Parallel Sessions

We added to the programme by featuring parallel sessions for delegates to hear from industry experts in interdisciplinary sectors. This included Soil Health Monitoring for Climate Adaptation, PFAS 'Forever Chemicals', The European Journal of Soil Science, Careers Outside of Academia, journal peer review work, and Forest Soils – A Vital Carbon Store.

Oral and Poster Presentations

We were pleased to showcase 55 posters and hear from 25 oral presentations within the themes of: Soil Health, Soils for Net Zero, Nutrient and Water Management, Technology and Innovation, and Soil, Social Science and Culture. Each poster and presentation helped us to explore the wider conference theme of 'Sustainable Soils for People and Planet', and we look forward to hearing developments from this over the coming year.

Art and Culture Room

A new theme that the conference explored was 'Soil, Social Science and Culture' and as part of this, we were delighted to feature an Art and Culture room at the venue for delegates to engage with. This featured paint demos, artworks, films, ceramics and 'Singing Compost'.



Gala Dinner

We held our Conference Gala Dinner at Cardiff Castle. Following a drinks reception in the Library, we were led into the Undercroft where we were treated to a three course meal and fabulous music and singing as part of the Welsh Banquet Experience. The opening remarks were provided by special guest, Prof. Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chairman of Natural Resources Wales. We also presented our Outstanding Society Contribution Award (OSCA) which this year went to Past-President, Dr. Bruce Lascelles.

Tours

The scientific tours took place at Castell Nos and Crymlyn Bog. At Castell Nos, delegates heard about the site's history, the peat resources and restoration, the Lost Peatland Project, and other research activities at the site. At Crymlyn Bog, delegates learnt about the site's soil and peat resources, the ongoing LIFEquake project, and other current initiatives. During the conference, we were also pleased to include a venue tour and presentation at Glamorgan from BSSS member, Alex Vickers, and Head Groundsman, Robin Saxton.

Supporting and encouraging the education of soil science

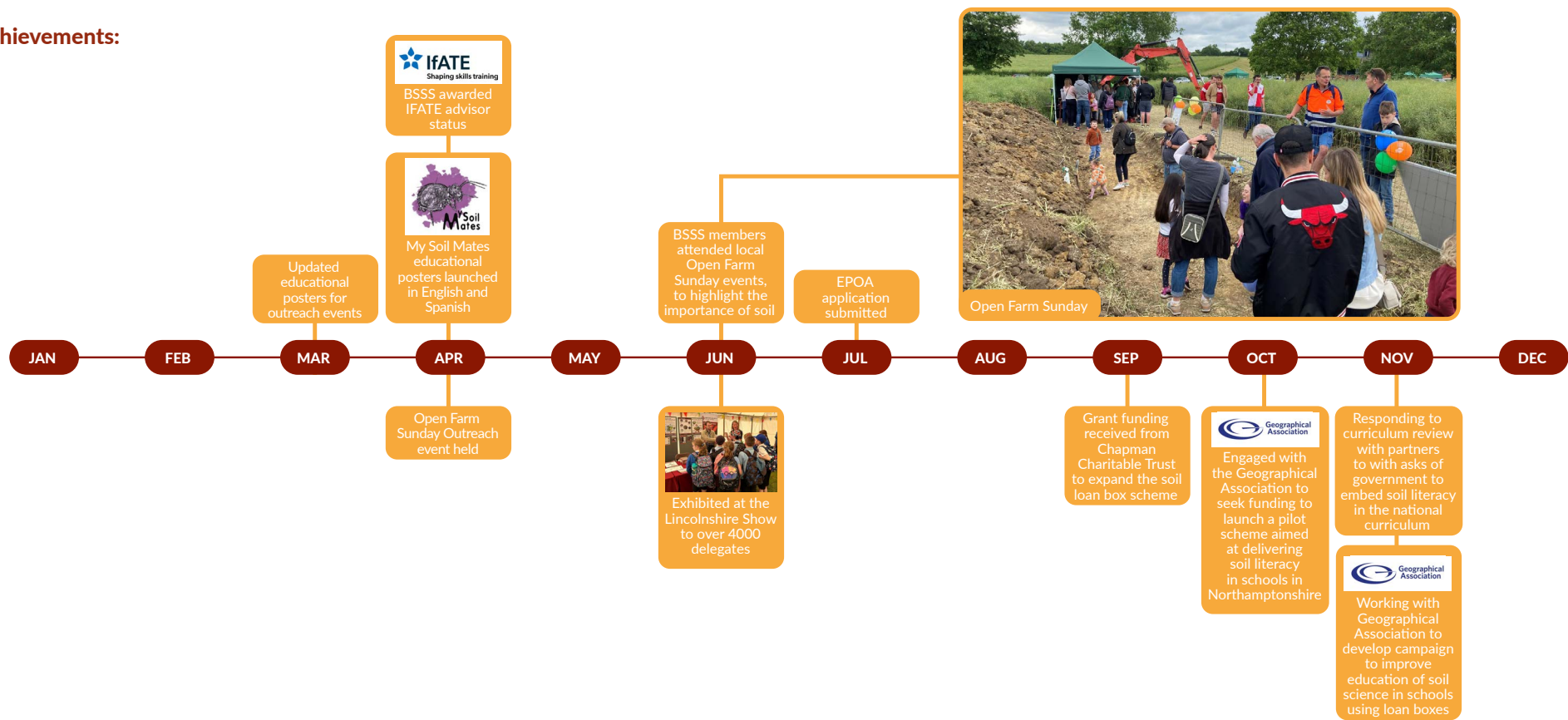
Our Strategy said:

We will support the education of soil science across a wide range of individuals and age groups. We will provide information and resources to teachers, farmers, agronomists, growers, industry and land managers and the public via grants, outreach events, training courses and teaching materials.

What we set out to achieve:

Support the development of the Natural History GCSE, T Level in Agriculture, Land Management and Production and work with relevant apprenticeship groups to ensure soil is considered as part of the syllabus	✓
Attend external outreach events including Open Farm Sunday	✓
Engage with British Science Week	✓
Host a session at the British Science Festival	✓
Become and accredited adviser to IFATE	✓

Our Achievements:



ALL YEAR - Promoted the scientific work of our members across our social media channels, alongside soil-focused articles and documentaries aimed at the general public

Supporting and encouraging the education of soil science CONTINUED

Our Impact:

- 6 Physical loan boxes were hired, reaching over 390 people
- 3 soil science loan boxes were donated to Crymlyn Bog Peat Site, Castell Nos Site and Christ the King Primary School as part of our Annual Conference legacy
- Received a £3000 grant from the Chapman Charitable Trust to further advance our outreach efforts and create more loan boxes
- Delivered a CPD session in collaboration with LEAF at the Lincolnshire Show
- Engaged with schools and members of the public at the Lincolnshire Show in the 'Super Soils' education marquee
- Delivered an outreach activity using the loan box to a class at Christ the King Primary School in Cardiff as part of the Annual Conference

In 2025, we will:

- Attend external outreach events including Open Farm Sunday and regional shows
- Engage with British Science Week
- Host a session at the British Science Festival
- Expand our soil loan boxes
- Engage with a school's pilot delivering soil loan boxes in inner city areas
- Develop relationships and secure MOUs with End Point Assessment Organisations
- Scope course accreditation offering to UK education partners

CASE STUDY: HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF SOIL AT THE BRITISH SCIENCE FESTIVAL

On 12 September 2024, volunteers of the Society headed to the Docklands Campus at the University of East London for the British Science Festival. The society hosted a drop-in session titled 'Digging Deeper into Soil' which formed a series of experiments for attendees to discover the land we stand on and how we can preserve this important sub-surface world.

The festival is Europe's longest standing science festival and aims to connect people with scientists, engineers, technologists and social scientists. The programme featured free events for the public including: talks, workshops and drop-in events.

We were pleased to engage with lots of school groups and members of the public to educate them on the importance of soil and inspire them with the work that we do. We also used the resources from one of our loan boxes which included the soil texturing, super sponges and the jam jar experiment. The most popular aspect of our stand was the microscope which was connected to a big screen so attendees could see soil and all the organisms up close.

Engaging with the box helps to address the lack of mainstream education in soil science, which is a result of soils not being

covered by the national curricula, limiting public recognition of the importance of soils. Through our community engagement via events we have seen a demonstrated appetite for educational materials relating to soil science from educators and related organisations.

Dr Lizzie Sagoo, President Elect at the British Society of Soil Science who exhibited at the British Science Festival said:

"The soil science loan boxes are a fantastic way to cultivate a curiosity in our natural world and hopefully inspire the next generation of soil scientists! I have used the loan boxes with years 3-5 at a four different primary schools over the last year. The boxes include all the material needed to deliver a practical session on soil science to children. They come with different types of soil and material needed for the jam jar experiment and the super sponges experiment where children can compare how much water different types of soils can store. The children enjoy looking at the different types of soil and doing the experiments. You don't need to be a soil scientist to use the loan boxes! The information sheets provide everything you need to run a session. As well as schools, they could also be used with other community groups such as Cubs or Brownies, or events like Open Farm Sunday."



Inspiring the future generations of soil scientists

Our Strategy said:

We will continue to support the development of early career (EC) members working in soil science. We will fund a biennial conference dedicated to ECs and give them prominence at our Society Annual meeting. Through our education committee, we will support teachers and engage in community projects to inspire the next generation of soil scientists.

What we set out to achieve:

Provide a minimum of one PhD placement opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publish a minimum of three interviews with soil scientists at various stages of their career	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Host an Employer Networking Session for Early Career members at our Annual Conference in Cardiff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Our Achievements:



Gareth Jenkins



Spotlighted the career progression of Lucy Gilbert, Agricultural Land and Soil Lead for HS2



Spotlighted the career progression of Marta Cattin, Soil Protection Advisor for the Environment Agency

Commenced planning for 2025 Soil Judging Early Careers event

Duke of Gloucester Overseas Collaboration Award for low to middle income countries ratified

Gareth Jenkins from Wiley holds a journal peer review workshop at Annual Conference

Brian Chambers soil fund allocated to support soil judging entries

Dedicated Early Career networking and drinks reception held

Marta Cattin holds careers workshop at Annual Conference

Early Career member grade review to offer more extensive benefits

Zoom into Soil webinar on Soils and Water led by Early Career members, Lisa Donovan and James Dowers



BSSS presents award at Cranfield graduation



JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

ALL YEAR - Published six issues of the Early Career members' newsletter, Eye to the Horizon

Inspiring the future generations of soil scientists CONTINUED

Our Impact:

2024 saw continued engagement with our Early Career members which included our training provision equipping our Early Career members with future fit skills, extensive engagement at our Annual Conference and spotlighting their work through oral and poster presentations. The engagement across these outputs totaled:

- 20 Early Career members attended Working with Soil courses
- 62 Early Career members attended the Annual conference
- 17 oral presenters from the Early Career member grade presented at the conference
- 7 Early Career members chaired sessions at the Annual Conference
- Average open rate of 57% and average click rate of 17% for Eye to the Horizon

In 2025, we will:

- Launch unearth your potential Early Careers CPD webinar series
- Launch new Duke of Gloucester Overseas Collaboration Award
- Deliver Soil Judging Event
- Host the bi-annual EC Conference
- Publish a minimum of three interviews with soil scientists at various stages of their career
- Develop a Public Affairs strategy

CASE STUDY: EARLY CAREER ENGAGEMENT IN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Last December's conference was a huge success, especially with so many Early Career presenters involved covering an impressive 17 out of 25 oral presentations and a wide range of topics.

We also hosted an Early Careers specific networking evening, giving our members a great chance to explore future opportunities from those in the industry, as well as catch up with fellow EC members.

62 Early Career members attended the Annual Conference with circa 30 presenting research posters to a diverse audience. We also had 7 Early Career Committee members chairing the oral presentation sessions.

During the conference, we held dedicated sessions for Early Career members around career progression and how to effectively engage with the peer review process for academic journals. It was fantastic to see that a large percentage of the delegates were early career members, and the growth in early career presenters who were featured on the main stage, side events and poster sessions.

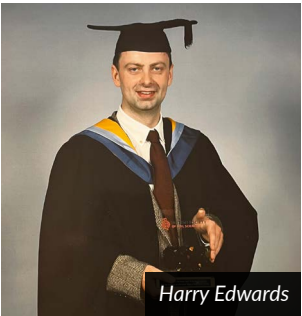
In 2024 we continued to refresh the committee where we welcome 5 new members.



Award Winners

BSSS is proud to sponsor a prize and trophy for a number of awards within academic institutions, which are presented to students based on criteria set with each one. The 2024 award winners each received two years' Society membership as part of their prize:

- **Harry Edwards** - Best undergraduate final year dissertation on a soil related subject at Harper Adams
- **Joel Andrews** - Best postgraduate final year dissertation on a soil related subject at Harper Adams
- **Charlotte Griffiths** - Best student in Soil Science at Royal Agricultural University
- **Julia Stephanie Scope, Rawan Alsehli** - MSc Dissertation Award at University of Reading
- **Alex Waterer** - Undergraduate Award at Lancaster University
- **Arjun Babu** - Most Promising Soil Scientist at Cranfield University
- **Victoria Murray, Jessica Bush** - Outstanding performance in a soil science-based MSc project at University of Aberdeen
- **Rosa Emilia Saari** - Outstanding performance in a soil science-based Honours or MSci project at University of Aberdeen
- **Flora Reid** - Outstanding Performance in a Soil Science Based MSc Project at SRUC
- **Andrew Butler** - Outstanding Performance in a Soil Science related project at University of Nottingham



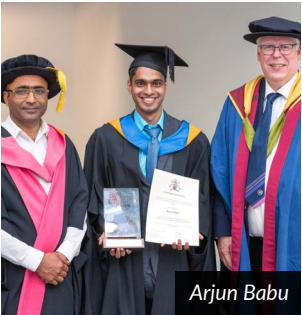
Harry Edwards



Joel Andrews



Charlotte Griffiths



Arjun Babu



Flora Reid



Andrew Butler

Grant recipients

The following grants were awarded in 2024, supporting members and organisations to develop soil science skills. Case studies from grants given are regularly published on our website. Find out more about the activities we have been supporting at: www.soils.org.uk/education/case-studies/

NAME	GRANT	AMOUNT
Rahul Yadav	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Munisath Khandoker	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Urmi Ghosh	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Shachi Pandey	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Mahboobeh Fallah	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Christina Van Midden	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Luke Ramsay	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Julija Fediajevaite	Early Career Conference Grant	£490.00
Joseph Jones	Brian Chambers Soil Fund	£250.00
Ernest Afriyie	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Luigi Marfella	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Francesca Darvill	Early Career Conference Grant	£500.00
Beth Wallace	Brian Chambers Soil Fund	£2,500.00
Shreyansh Singh	Brian Chambers Soil Fund	£500.00

Ensuring high standards of professional practice for those working with soils

Our Strategy said:

We will provide dedicated training courses such as our Working with Soils series, as well as industry focused events in support of Continued Professional Development, providing high professional standards and assisting with maintaining Chartered Scientist registration.

What we set out to achieve:

Survey the membership to help identify the current position of training and qualifications in soil science and propose how any gaps could be filled	✓
Finalise the End Point Assessment Organisation application for the Level 7 Soil Scientist Apprenticeship	✓
Deliver a number of Working with Soil training courses	✓

Our Achievements:

Working With Soil Courses

- April – *A Practical Introduction to Soils in Great Britain* Course at Shuttleworth College
- August – *A Practical Introduction to Soils in Great Britain* Course delivered in conjunction with the National Trust to Fenland Soil employees at Welney Wetland Centre
- September - *A Practical Introduction to Soils in Great Britain* Course at Harper Adams University
- November – *Introduction to Agricultural Land Classification* Course at Cranfield University

Future Skills

- May - Developed relationships and partnership with other bodies such as NFU, IES, LI CIEEM.
- July - Finalised application to become EPAO
- September – Scoped future CPD provision including podcast ideation and unearth your potential CPD series
- October – Scoped two new work with soil courses 'Soil and Flood Catchment' and 'Soil Habitat Relocation and Biodiversity Net Gain'

Membership Body

- March – Launched member survey to understand areas of work, levels of education in the member base, salary bands, skills gaps and appetite to gain chartered status
- September – Completed the strategic review of the EC member grades to offer essential CPD to early career members and a fellow mentoring scheme
- October - Approved six new Society Fellows;
 - Gill Shaw
 - Nicholas Willenbrock
 - Paul Newell Price
 - Paul Williams
 - Richard McDowell
 - Shiveshwar Pratap Singh

Professional Registration

- December - Reviewed 168 new membership applications during 2024 and 2 new Chartered Scientist registrations



Ensuring high standards of professional practice for those working with soils CONTINUED

Our Impact:

In 2024 we enjoyed an increase of 65% in new full members joining the society.

In 2024 we enjoyed an increase of 92% in new associate members joining the society.

100% of delegates rated the technical content of our Working with Soil courses as good or excellent.

In 2025, we will:

- Deliver a number of Working with Soil training courses
- Launch Continued Professional Development (CPD) recording mechanisms
- Scope steps for the society to become a chartered body
- Design two new Work with Soil courses
- Complete member segmentation project

CASE STUDY: WORKING WITH SOIL COURSES

We delivered four training courses in 2024 as part of our Working with Soil programme. We held three *Practical Introduction to Soils in Great Britain* courses at Shuttleworth College, Welney Wetland Centre and Harper Adams University, and one *Introduction to Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)* course at Cranfield University. 61 people in total attended the courses that were held between April and November.

Two key aspects of our long-term strategy are supporting and encouraging the education of soil science, and ensuring high standards of professional practice for those working with soils. We are pleased to be fulfilling this strategy and continuing to provide soils training and education to BSSS members and partners in the industry.

We welcome several new tutors to the team who will help us continue to provide the necessary training for our members and planning for the future.

In 2024, two of our tutors, Dick Thompson and John Hollis, delivered a bespoke practical course to 11 Fenland Soil delegates at Welney Wetland Centre. This was a fantastic opportunity for the Society to collaborate with one of our partners and deliver bespoke training to provide up to date knowledge and enable them to take this learning into their work.



Leading on the social and environmental responsibilities of a contemporary society

Our Strategy said:

We will provide leadership in the areas concerning the socio-economic responsibilities of a modern Society. We will ensure all members have equality of opportunity, irrespective of age, race, disability, sex, religion or other protected characteristics. We will ensure our activities are planned with issues of equality, inclusion and diversity at the forefront of all decision making and that we act environmental responsible and achieve carbon neutrality where possible.

What we set out to achieve:

Review our Society vision and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure they remain fit for purpose	✓
Ensure we have up to date Terms of Reference and policies	✓
Establish an ED&I working group	✓

Our Achievements:

ED&I

- March – Celebrated international women's day by spotlighting a diverse cohort of early career members:
 - Danielle Roche
 - Christina Van Midden
 - Jessica Brook
 - Kirsty Charles
 - Izzy Lloyd
 - Jess Potts
 - Liv Hoyland
 - Jaylie Ryan
 - Catriona Willoughby
 - Tanya Trott
 - Okelani Aworabhi
 - Sophia Bahddou
 - Rosy Scholes
 - Megha Kaviraj
 - Annette Raffan
 - Marta Cattin
 - Samantha Kehoe
- November – ED&I committee champions confirmed
- December – ED&I working group established

Strategy & Investment

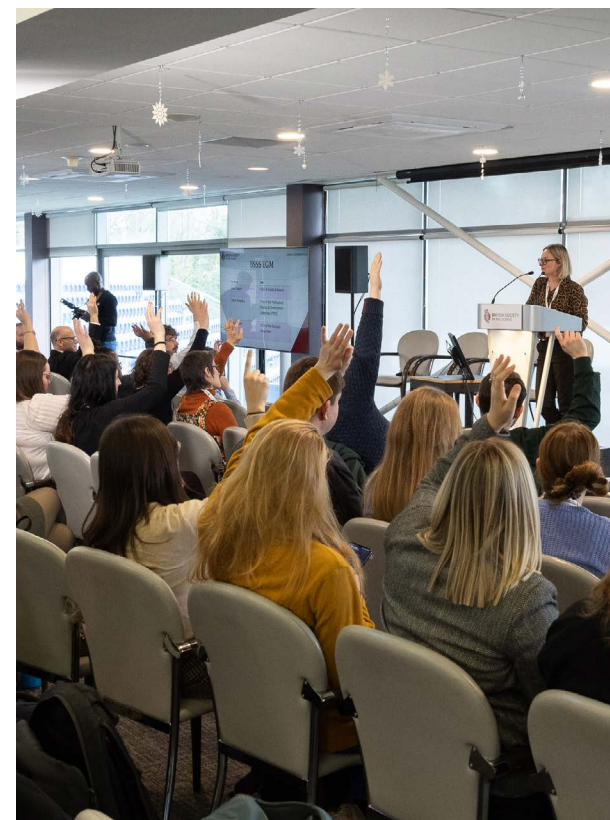
- April – Promoted part time Administrator and Bookkeeper to Charity and Membership Administrator
- May - Updated vision and strategy and created a two-year work plan
- July – Held board strategy day to consider future challenges and priorities for the society
- August – Recruited Business Development Manager and Membership Administration Apprentice
- September – Began drafting strategic member comms plan
- September – Established strategic work plan for 2025/26
- November - Reviewed society's ethical investment strategy and appointed a third sector expert Independent Financial adviser

Membership

- September - Reviewed Society Terms of Reference and policies
- October – Refreshed and recruited new committee members bringing all committees to head count
- December – Held EGM to ratify new committee chairs election,
- December - Presented our Outstanding Society Contribution Award (OSCA) to Past-President, Dr. Bruce Lascelles, for all his work and dedication to the Society and the sector
- December – welcomed the youngest member in the society's history, ahead of the 2025 membership year

Legacy

- December – Featured the UK's first talking soil bench at the BSSS Annual Conference and installed this at Cardiff's Bute Park for two months
- December – Donated 3 loan boxes to Castell Nos and Crymlyn Bog peatland project and Christ the King Catholic Primary School



Leading on the social and environmental responsibilities of a contemporary society CONTINUED

Our Impact:

Zoom into Soil

- 9 Female Presenters
- 11 Male Presenters
- 2 Female Chairs
- 4 Male Chairs

Annual Conference

- 10 Female Presenters
- 13 Male Presenters
- 7 Female Chairs
- 4 Male Chairs
- 18 female oral presenters
- 14 male oral presenters

In 2025, we will:

- Review ways of working for all our committees
- Appoint ED&I representatives across all committees and board
- Complete ED&I audit and detail areas of improvement and next steps
- Launch ED&I Working group
- Implement ethical investing plan

CASE STUDY: UK'S FIRST TALKING BENCH

Last year, Dr Dan Evans, Lecturer in Soil Science at Cranfield University, introduced the UK's first 'Talking Soil Benches.' These benches, which feature an integrated speaker system, are designed to share a sequence of informative audio tracks. Commonly placed at sites of public interest or along nature trails, Talking Benches offer visitors an engaging way to learn about the local environment. In this case, listeners embark on an intriguing journey to discover the fascinating soils beneath their feet.

In December 2024, one of the two Talking Soil Benches currently installed on the Cranfield University campus went on location to Cardiff. Its first stop was the Glamorgan Cricket Club, to greet delegates arriving for the British Society of Soil Science Annual Conference. As well as a celebration of World Soil Day, users

were able to listen to an eco-acoustic recording of an earthworm, provided by Soil Acoustics Limited, a new venture launched by Baker Consultants Ltd.

After the BSSS Annual Conference, the Talking Soil Bench was transferred to Bute Park, close to Cardiff Castle, providing the public with a unique opportunity to learn about soils, as well as some of the activities that took place at the conference. Over its period at Bute Park, the Talking Soil Bench was used by over 150 users. That brings the total number of listens since the launch of the Talking Soil Bench to just under 1,000 since September 2024.

Looking ahead to 2025, plans are in place for the Talking Benches to embark on a mini tour across the UK.



Our People

Our Trustees

Jack Hannam
President 2023/24

Bruce Lascelles
Past President (*until 31 December 2024*)

Paul Hallett
Incoming President

David Tompkins
Professional Practice & Development Committee Trustee

Anirban Sarkar
Finance Trustee

Dan Lambeth
Marketing, Communications and Policymaking Trustee

Our Executive Office

Andrew Morris
Executive Director (*from 5 February 2024*)

Natalie Coles
Operations & Business Development Manager
(*until 26th April 2024*)

Dominic Simms
Communications, Marketing and Events Coordinator

Christine Wangari
Charity and Membership Administrator

Max Silver
Membership Administration Apprentice (*from 27th August 2024*)

Adrienne Golding
Business Development Manager (*from 27th August 2024*)

Ed Hinman
Policy and Public Affairs Manager (*from 4th November 2024*)

Our Council

Jack Hannam (President and Chair)

Nikki Baggaley (Scottish Soil Discussion Group Chair)

Chris Cattle (Northern Soils Network)

Lynda Deeks (South West Soil Discussion Group Chair)

Jenni Dungait (Editor, European Journal of Soil Science)

Marcelo Galdos (South East England Soil Discussion Group Chair)
from 27 February 2023

Eleanor Reed (Professional Practice & Development Committee Chair)

Andrew Morris (Executive Director) - *from 5th February 2024*

Iain Gould (Midlands Soil Discussion Group Chair) - *until 6th September 2024*

Paul Hallett (President Elect)

Deyi Hou (Editor, Soil Use and Management) - *until 31st December 2024*

Bruce Lascelles (Past President and Grants & Awards Chair)

Kara Marsden (Welsh Soils Discussion Group Chair)

Mark Nason (Ordinary Council Member)

Lois Phillippis (Outreach Committee Chair)

Danielle Roche (Early Careers Chair)

Ashish Malik (Ordinary Council Member)

Our Committees

Our committees are led and managed by our volunteers who deliver the strategy of the Society through the groups. Thank you to all of our volunteers who give their time to our various committees in 2023.

The Chair of each Committee is also a member of the Society Council.

Early Careers Committee
Chair: Danielle Roche

Professional Practice and Development Committee
Chair: Eleanor Reed

Outreach Committee
Chair: Lois Phillippis

Publications Committee
Chair: Paul Hallett

Grants and Awards Committee
Chair: Bruce Lascelles

Our Regional Groups

We operate six Regional Groups to meet the needs of our members in different parts of the country. Each of the Regional Group Chairs is also a member of the BSSS Council and implements the Society's strategy, regionally.

Midlands Soil Discussion Group
Chair: Iain Gould

Northern Soil Network
Chair: Chris Cattle

Scottish Soil Discussion Group
Chair: Nikki Baggaley

South East England Regional Group (SEESOIL)
Chair: Marcelo Galdos

South West Soils Discussion Group (SWSDG)
Chair: Lynda Deeks

Welsh Soil Discussion Group
Chair: Kara Marsden

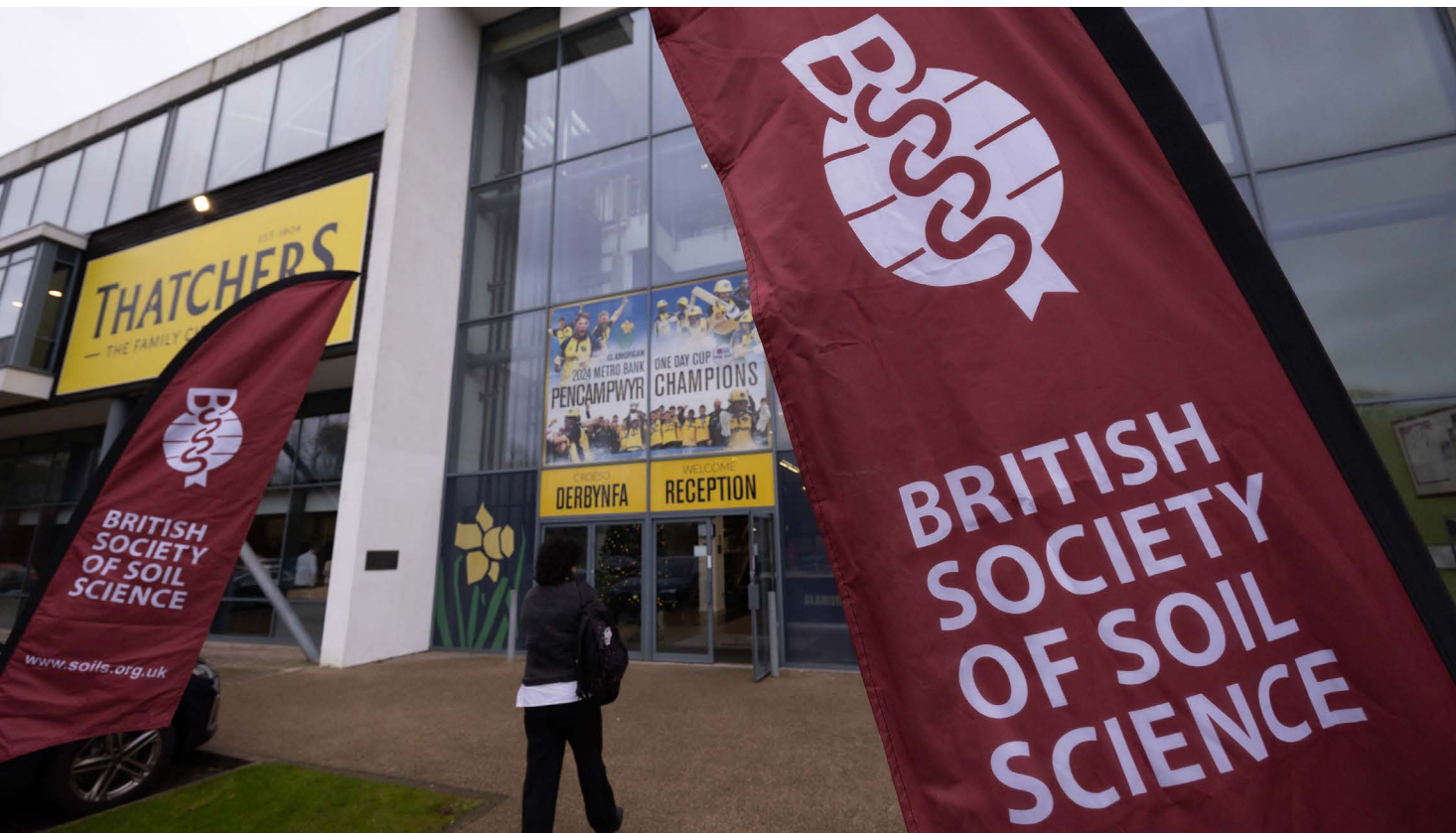
About Us

The British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) was founded in 1947 and is an established international membership organisation and charity committed to the study of soil in its widest aspects. The society brings together those working within academia, practitioners implementing soil science in industry and all those working with, or with an interest in soils.

Research on soils and enhanced understanding and engagement with soils is essential for agricultural, landscaping, construction, remediation, conservation and archaeological projects, as well as policy direction on critical topics such as climate change. We promote research and education, both academically and in practice, and build collaborative partnerships to help safeguard our soil for the future.

Anyone with an interest in soil is welcome to become a member and attend our conferences and webinars, receive complimentary access to our two scientific journals, the European Journal of Soil Science and Soil Use and Management and a host of other benefits.

Thank you to our Corporate Members and Donors



Contact Us

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