

French  
**SEH**  
Construction

CSR Report  
2023-2024



Responsibility built in

“ Responsibility  
is the price of  
greatness. ”

WINSTON CHURCHILL

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“ Our people are  
the heart of our  
success. ”

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# Foreword

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SEH French present our 2023-2024 CSR Report, outlining our highlights and successes as well as our priorities as we move forwards.

We know that our people are the individuals who make the difference in successful delivery of our CSR responsibilities.

As part of One Group Construction, one of Suffolk's largest privately owned companies, we're renowned for our exceptional customer service, highly skilled craftsmen and all round professionalism across every single project. CSR forms an important part of this services.

We have always understood that both quality and good relationships are key to a successful project and CSR is integral to this process. By engaging in a constant dialogue with all stakeholders (including a hands on directorial approach), the results of hundreds of compliments speak for themselves. As a business we hold ISO accreditations, further demonstrating our commitment to quality assurance including CSR.

Our corporate responsibility is to provide long-term prosperity to our stakeholders by balancing the social, economic and environmental choices that we make. We actively promote safe, ethical, and sustainable working practices as the key to our continuing success.

## Responsibility Built In

Today the business employs over 40 people, achieving turnover of over £20m. With further growth planned over the next five years, we are fully committed to ensuring that our approach to corporate social responsibility improves the lives of our people, delivers benefits to the communities that we serve, better the performance and reputation of our marketplace and protects the natural environment that surrounds us.

The following report highlights some of the approaches and outcomes we have achieved in our pursuit of having responsibility built in.



Simon Girling and Paul Rodwell  
Directors

POWERED BY



“

‘Responsibility  
built’ in is our  
commitment to  
delivering social  
good across our  
business activity.

”

**SIMON GIRLING. DIRECTOR**

# Our Vision

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To continuously deliver value by delivering construction projects and services that satisfy the needs of our stakeholders, constantly achieving operational excellence, conducting our business in a safe, environmentally sustainable and economically optimum manner and continuing to employ a team motivated to deliver excellence.

# Our Values

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## Integrity

Stakeholders and suppliers who work with SEH French know they can expect fair treatment no matter where they are: honesty; transparency and a company that always aims to do what's right.

## Respect

SEH French respects insights at all levels and expects our diverse workforce to be embraced with respect and dignity and all views to be recognised.

## Trust

SEH French trusts that all SEH people operate with the highest professional standards and in the best interests of the company at all times.

## Simplicity

SEH French keeps things simple by focussing on the essential core of any business opportunity, challenge, issue or problem to achieve continued success.

## Shared risk

SEH French encourages well reasoned, prudent, risk-taking in an environment where challenges are discussed openly. Everyone works as part of a team, sharing responsibility for the outcomes of individual risks and decisions.

# Our Commitments

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## Our Workplace

- Provide a safe, healthy and rewarding working environment for our personnel.
- Continue to invest in the development of systems and procedures which help them carry out their work and allow them to develop and reach their full potential.
- Follow best practice standards and improve them wherever possible.
- Operate with integrity and rigorously observe applicable legislation and regulations.
- Promote innovation and develop sustainable construction techniques

## Our Environment

- Protect and enhance the environment for the benefit of future generations.
- Understand our carbon footprint and take the responsible steps to its progressive and ongoing reduction. Targeting net zero 2030 in scopes 1&2.
- Use natural resources efficiently, reduce consumption and minimise waste.
- Procure materials and products from legal and sustainable sources, which have been produced without exploitation of the workforce.

## Our Community

- Work closely with those affected by our activities, understand and respect their concerns, and contribute positively to the local community
- Provide a level of care that satisfies our customer needs and wherever possible exceeds their expectations.
- Help build a prosperous Ipswich through active participation in community interest groups.
- Increase access to opportunities and employment
- Maintain and increase our levels of charitable, corporate and employee fundraising donations

## Our Marketplace

- Conduct our business honestly, scrupulously and free of deceptions and fraud
- Support our suppliers to help us build a sustainable value supply chain.
- Contribute to industry
- Set levels of excellence
- Promote industry

# Our People

Our employees are at the heart of our success and everything that we do. They inspire each other to be the best they can be and by providing a great place to work for everyone no matter what role they do in our business we strive to achieve excellence in everything we do.

How they feel within their workplace affects how they approach their working day. We provide an open door policy within SEH French, which enables everyone across all disciplines to engage and give feedback or discuss anything we can do as a business to improve their environment, completion of tasks or help others.

We provide an employee assistance programme which is available 24 hours per day to cover every aspect of modern life with counselling and support services. We understand that happier, healthier people are more motivated, more productive and higher performing.

We understand that the work environment can impact on people in a number of ways. We aim to create a healthy and safe work environment, We actively promote the health and well-being of our people. We consulted with our employees and created a new in-house multi-use social space to allow them somewhere to socialise as a team, playing darts, table tennis or improving their fitness.

We believe firmly in rewarding people appropriately and our pay rates are competitive - we are a living wage employer.

Training  
**£2,427**



per employee per year

Workplace  
**£121,236**



Employment  
terms  
**£212,236**



Over and above

Social  
**£66,000**



Sport Events  
**£7,000**







**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®**  
We invest in people Silver



“ Our people are the heart of our success.”



# Our Community

Construction has an incredible opportunity to impact the community. Not only do the buildings and infrastructure we build shape how we live and improve our lives, but as with our business, we are very much inset within our local community - and we feel strongly that the success of our business comes from having a successful community around us.

However, communities across the UK are facing many social challenges, placing the charities who support them under pressure in turn. We believe, that as a core member of our community, support for local charity is our duty.

Our main focus of community has been through volunteering, allowing our people to take time out of work to support community groups they have an interest in - a commitment which was worth £33,000 and 33 man-days in 2023 and increased in line with a growing workforce.

Balancing proactive leadership of new events - such as our key role in the inaugural Alan Brown 10k Runs and 18 mile walk for the Alzheimer's Society - with support for established events, we see similar fundraising in each area. Sponsorship and direct donations ensure we can be spontaneous and supportive as good causes present.

Fundraising  
**£4,950**



Volunteering  
**£33,000**



Charity  
donation  
**£6,900**



Community  
**£10,140**





# Charity and Volunteering

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As part of our One Group ethos, SEH French understand the importance of being involved with community activities and charitable causes, giving something back.

Individuals are encouraged to take part in Foundation Days, where they can take a day out of work to take part in a fundraising event or volunteering.

We have been involved with raising money for various charities.

- 12 members of staff planned an 18 mile walk around the Suffolk heritage coastline, raising £2,680 in aid of the Alzheimer's Society.
- We have collected toys of around £500 to support 'Spread Some Joy, Donate a Toy' - an initiative led by one local mum to donate toys to the seriously ill children in Great Ormand Street at Christmas, both individually, and to enrich the shared spaces.
- We donated two person days to collect 44 Christmas trees in aid of EACH Children's Hospice - an initiative which raised almost £8000 in Suffolk alone.
- We maintain a close partnership with the St Elizabeth's hospice, most recently sponsoring and volunteering at The Garden Trail and Daisy Days events - a contribution of around £7,580.
- The Green Bike Project supports Genesis Mencap - collecting old bikes and restoring them to provide training and work opportunities to those who find it hard to enter mainstream employment. Once restored, the bikes then raise funds for the charity. We have supported them in 2023 by building a new facility at cost.
- Ongoing volunteering includes coaching local football teams, a role as Community Amenities Champion for a local village, work with the Halesworth Dementia Carer's Fund and reading with children in a local primary school.
- In support of increased opportunities, we have sponsored four sports teams in 2023 and maintain this commitment.



# Our Marketplace

As a key enabler to society, the economy and the environment, a better performing marketplace is better for all.

However, we can't escape the fact that the industry currently has a poor image and is failing to attract the best talent to meet, not only today's, but the future challenges of our sector. We are still seen as an industry which works with manual skills and trades and is being overlooked by a generation of people with vital skills in STEM, creative and digital subjects.

The industry is also suffering from its levels of productivity and overall performance in relation to cost, quality and delivery time scales.

We have been working hard over the last two years to address these issues through both industry level leadership and careers development, and have invested £54,127 in driving this agenda.

Most notably, our director, Simon Girling, has held the position of Chair of the National Federation of builders. During this time he steered the development of a number of successful CITB funded skills and training programmes aimed at improving digital construction capability and capacity across the sector.

Career development

£54,127



Apprentice and trainees

12.5% of workforce



Careers days

2



Work experience

5



“ Be the best  
you can be. ”

# Careers Development

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SEH French as a company attend various careers events across the year, these are held within primary, secondary, and further education establishments. We attend the Suffolk Skills Show, and support events in school, providing information on the roles within the construction industry.

Members of the team are STEM and CITB ambassadors, attending events and become mentors as part of school industry days, providing guidance and advice during various organised tasks.

Our own director is involved with the 'learning week at work', where students submit applications for a prospective job and go through the interview process. Practical feedback sessions are attended providing invaluable advice to young people considering entering construction.

As a company we host school age work experience pupils from local schools. They work within head office, giving them opportunities to explore construction-wide roles from contracts management, through quantity surveying, buying, estimating, design coordination and other roles. This experience helps them understand technical activities within the company and help make their decisions for their chosen career path.

These opportunities lead to a wealth of apprenticeship opportunities. We are members of the 5% Club, in fact, over 12.5% of our directly employed staff are apprentices. Each is mentored internally, attending college on day release, and provided with a permanent job on completion. As these apprentices qualify, new opportunities are provided.

We understand the need for a variety of paths to enter or re-enter work. To this end, we have maintained and extended our relationships with local colleges and third sector organisations.

- Work with the Princes Trust to provide work experience opportunities.
- Signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant
- Working with EELGA to offer experience and employment opportunities to displaced adults.
- Working with local schools to develop opportunities for T-Level placements.
- Engaged with Hollesley Bay to support the rehabilitation of ex-offenders.







# Client Satisfaction

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Throughout the project, both during the design stages and the construction phase, communicate with our clients and consultants to update the status of our activities. We make sure they are happy with the progress and ask where we can make any improvements to our approach.

Upon completion as part of our ongoing client satisfaction, we issue questionnaires for our internal use to look back and take on board 'lessons learned' for future projects and as part of external accreditation. Our current average evaluation feedback is 4.55/5.

Notably we pride ourselves on repeat business and our continual inclusion within strategic frameworks.

The happiness of our clients is our future. We believe the testimonials demonstrate our client's happiness.

“

Very professional and well organised company. I hope to work with you again.

- **Milton Lodge**

”



“

We are so pleased that we chose SEH French for this challenging high-profile project.

- **Ridley House**

”

“

Work was to an extremely high standard, the project was run with great care and attention. Both SEH French and their sub-contractors were a pleasure to work with.”

**- Ipswich School  
Music Block**

”



“

SEH French approached the project in a professional manner, were proactive and a pleasure to work with.

**Princes Street**

”

“

I am very pleased  
to have worked with  
your brilliant team on the  
project and grateful for  
all their exceptional work.

**- Newmarket  
Academy**

”



“

Very good quality  
workmanship, timely  
responses to issues and  
queries

**Dick White Referrals**

”

“

‘I have spoken to the couple who viewed the bungalows at the weekend. They thought the finish was the best they have seen on a new build.’

- **Cockfield New Homes**

”



“

The site manager has been proactive in engaging with the college, ensuring that staff and students have gained new experiences.

- **Chelmsford College**

”

“ Every £1 spent  
with SEH French,  
provides £2.55  
worth of  
economic benefit  
to local  
communities. ”

**SIMON GIRLING. DIRECTOR**

# Our Environment

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We appreciate that the UK construction sector has made valuable steps forward in the last 25 years in improving its overall environmental performance through the development of sustainable building standards and low carbon driven legislation but that it is more important than ever to maintain progress and work together in the drive to achieve net zero.

In 2021 we undertook our Carbon Reduction Plan, which has structured and informed our approach as we work towards net zero carbon across scopes 1 and 2 in 2030. We demonstrate a reduction of 66.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>e between 2021 and 2023.

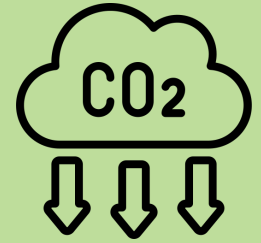
We are now working hard to create behavioural change among our people and we have been taking steps to encourage a low carbon transport policy, including electric vehicles across the company car policy, charging points at head office, car sharing to site and a cycle to work scheme.



We are accredited to  
ISO 14001: Environmental  
Management  
Accreditation

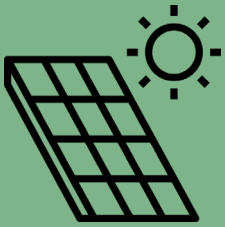


## Carbon Reduction Plan



in place, delivering net  
zero in scopes 1 & 2 in 2030

Over 160 solar  
panels installed  
at head office  
- to provide  
50,000kwh of  
electric per year



# Over 96%



waste diverted from  
landfill

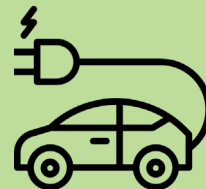
**4010** trees planted

**16** tCO<sub>2</sub>e removed

**116** m<sup>2</sup>  
habitat  
restored



Electric  
vehicle  
policy



# 5

Low  
carbon  
projects



French **SEH**  
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