

THE ESG IMPERATIVE



12.02.25 | ONE AMERICA SQUARE, LONDON

BEYOND COMPLIANCE – BUILDING TOMORROW'S SECTOR TODAY

Register today to explore topics such as:

- Practical pathways to net zero
- Addressing inequity in impact investment
- Debating ethics in donations
- Foundations and the origins of wealth
- The quest for unity in a polarised society

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THE ESG IMPERATIVE



BEYOND COMPLIANCE – BUILDING TOMORROW’S SECTOR TODAY

Now is the time to build sustainable organisations that are fit for the future



Tristan Blythe
editor,
Charity Finance

The challenges facing humanity are immense. As we navigate the ongoing impact of a global pandemic, an escalating climate emergency and an unprecedented cost-of-living crisis, our actions and influence as civil society organisations are more important than ever. There is a growing awareness that organisations of all shapes and sizes have a personal accountability to consider their social and environmental footprint and to behave responsibly. But what does this really look like? How much of the reporting frameworks and strategies being adopted in other sectors are transferable to charities?



Jenni O'Donovan
Events director,
Civil Society Media

From navigating the complex world of responsible investment, through to developing net zero targets and tackling the complexities of reporting and good governance, there is a myriad of practical and ethical decisions facing today's leaders. Our broad range of speakers will offer practical insight and advice, demonstrating the importance and urgency of the ESG agenda, and leaving you better-equipped to take meaningful action.

We hope you will join us for what promises to be an inspiring, practical and thought-leading conference.

Who should attend The ESG Imperative?



Charity
leaders



Finance and
Investment



Chairs and
Trustees



Operations
teams



Sustainability
leads

What do past attendees say?

“An insightful conference that cut through the noise; delivered some key messages that I believe will help inform how we look to work going forward.”

– Quakers

“A really great conference that gave me lots to think about and actions to follow up on. Really valuable time that I got a lot from.”

– Prevent Breast Cancer

“Great opportunity to meet like minded people in the charity sector starting out on their ESG journey.”

– RNIB

“Inspiring conversations to encourage further action on our ESG journey.”

– The Royal College of Pathologists

ESG Imperative is a net positive event

As event organisers, we at Civil Society Media are on our own journey to a sustainable future. We have calculated the carbon footprint of this event and implemented several measures to reduce it, including:

-  **Offering a fully vegetarian menu throughout the day.**
-  **Selecting a venue recognised as a leader in sustainable events, with a zero-landfill policy and accreditation from the City of London's Clean City Awards.**
-  **Going paperless—our event app will provide the programme, presentations, and delegate list, replacing traditional printed materials.**
-  **Using fully recyclable badges—please hand in your badge and lanyard at the end of the day so they can be recycled and reused.**

We are continually working to monitor and reduce our environmental impact. We have offset the remaining emissions of this event by investing in a carbon offset scheme. We have partnered with an ICROA-accredited organisation, ensuring that only certified carbon offsets from internationally recognised registries are used to meet the highest standards of environmental integrity. Civil Society Media staff chose to support the Safe Water Scheme in Rwanda for this event, which maintains water wells and essential infrastructure to provide clean water, reducing the need for inefficient fires to purify water.

08:45	Registration, refreshments, networking and time to visit exhibition	
09:25	Welcome from Tristan Blythe , editor, <i>Charity Finance</i>	
09:30	Opening keynote: The future we want – aligning charity leadership with the UN’s global goals This opening session will consider the significance of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for us as charity leaders. No matter your organisation’s core mission, our sector is fundamentally about addressing inequalities, alleviating suffering, and building more resilient communities – all core elements of the SDGs. Operating in the context of economic instability, social polarisation and an escalating climate crisis, effective leadership today means recognising the interconnectedness of people, prosperity, and the planet. Richard Hawkes draws on an extensive career in charity leadership to reflect on how the dial has changed, and why leading with the SDGs as our guiding compass could offer a fresh and hopeful perspective for global progress. Richard Hawkes , chief executive, British Asian Trust	
10:10	Transit time	
	Stream A – Sustainable finance Chair: Tristan Blythe , editor, <i>Charity Finance</i>	Stream B – People and planet Chair: Jenni O’Donovan , events director, Civil Society Media
10:15	1A. Weaving ESG thinking into the fabric of your organisation Would you accept a grant from an oil producer but exclude them from your investment portfolio, or use a bank that would lend to firm with a poor human rights record? Trustees, beneficiaries and commentators are increasingly focused on ensuring that a charity’s policies align, but it’s easier said than done. Join LGT and CAF Bank as we share our insights and look to explore your views on this evolving topic. Laurence Gagen , partner, head of charities, LGT Wealth Management and Scott Newman , regional director, south, CAF Bank	1B. The ‘S’ in ESG – The quest for unity in a polarised society When we think about ESG, it is often the environmental and governance elements that gain most traction. However, in the wake of last summer’s far right riots, social issues are becoming more critical. We are witnessing growing polarisation in attitudes towards immigration, increasing economic insecurity, and an erosion of trust in politicians, all of which are being exacerbated by the media narrative. In this session we will discuss the opportunities for our sector to use our collective influence to dismantle prejudice and tackle disunity. Bilal Hussain , head of engagement, Runnymede Trust
10:55	Morning coffee and networking	
11:20	2A. Revisiting your ESG foundations – is it time to reevaluate? The face of RI is continuously evolving. While many charities, as society’s change makers, were first movers incorporating ESG considerations into their thinking, are your policies still fit for your objectives? Are you struck, like so many, with hindsight concerns? Are internal changes to your charity’s structure, activities or board encouraging you to reevaluate? This session will delve into the changing influencers in responsible investing today and how charities might incorporate new thinking. Katrina Brown , director of responsible investment and Caroline Gee , head of charity business development, Evelyn Partners	2B. From ambition to action – practical pathways to net zero The Church of England has committed to an ambitious goal to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 across its extensive portfolio of over 32,000 buildings. The nine-year net zero programme is currently in the development phase, which runs until 2025, and the Church is experimenting with diverse approaches to sustainability including funding mechanisms, distributed decision-making and mobilising local communities. Join this session to learn more about the Net Zero Carbon Routemap and gain practical advice on how to transition from ambitious goals to actionable steps to change. Julian Atkins , net zero programme director, Church of England Environment Programme
12:00	Transit time	
12:05	Panel: Why wait for the regulation? The current Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) lacks explicit requirements for environmental impact and sustainability reporting. However, there is a possibility that forthcoming updates to the guidance could include some aspects of ESG reporting for larger charities. In this session, we invite some non-environmental charities that are taking a proactive approach to ESG, EDI and climate action, to explain a little about what they are doing and why, regardless of reporting requirements. Ben Clarkson , chief finance and operating officer, Parkinson’s UK, Mandeep Rupra , director of equity and belonging, Citizens Advice, Shazia Arshad , head of communications, Islamic Relief UK, Sophie Brill , head of ethics, Oxfam GB	
12:50	Lunch and time to visit exhibition	
13:45	3A. Session details to be announced. Speakers from Legal and General Investment Management	3B. Power rewired – addressing inequity in impact investment This session highlights the power imbalances inherent in impact investment relationships, in particular when it comes to the shaping of investment deal terms, legal processes and documents. Drawing on an in-depth consultation and research process, Sung-Hyui Park will share the impetus behind the development of the Equalising Deal Terms (EDT), key principles for investors. She will explain how EDT principles have been designed to level the playing field of impact investment, rebalance the investor-investee dynamic and unlock crucial funding for change-making organisations creating social impact. Sung-Hyui Park , partner, Bates Wells
14:25	Transit time	
14:30	4A. Sustainable Private Assets: Accessing strong returns with positive impact We are seeing an increasing number of our charity clients looking to incorporate impact investments whether as a separate ‘carve out’ or as a direction of travel for the whole portfolio to align their investments with positive societal and environmental outcomes. Many of the most exciting companies that have the ability to transform our economies are only accessible through private (unlisted) markets. It is therefore no surprise that the private impact market has grown 63% since 2019 (Global Impact Investing Network) and the UK market is set to double over the next five years (Impact Investing Institute). Access is now improving for long-term investors and this session will cover the why, what, who and how of investing in sustainable private assets. Speakers from Cazenove Capital	4B. Understanding your foundation’s past: A journey toward greater impact This session invites you to explore how examining the origins of foundation wealth, with particular refence to exploitation of people and planet, can transform relationships with communities and deepen social impact. Learn about foundations that have undertaken this journey, discovering how confronting connections to historical exploitation, such as enslavement of people, has strengthened their mission and enhanced their effectiveness. Rowena Estwick brings first-hand foundation experience and Catherine Seymour developed the Association of Charitable Foundations’ practical toolkit for addressing wealth origins. Together they will share insights and strategies that can help your foundation build trust through transparency and take meaningful steps toward justice. Rowena Estwick , co-chief executive, Ten Years’ Time and Catherine Seymour , director of policy, practice and research, Association of Charitable Foundations
15:10	Afternoon coffee and networking	
15:30	5A. Shaping your investment portfolio today for a net zero tomorrow What does a truly sustainable, net zero portfolio look like, and how can charities get there? With many organisations committing to be net zero from their operations by 2030 and from their investment portfolios by 2040 or 2050, the clock is ticking. While these targets may seem far off, the actions we take in portfolios today are the key to meeting these ambitious goals. In this session, we’ll dive into the critical frameworks for creating a net zero portfolio and explore the latest tools for assessing companies and strategies for effective engagement. Christophe Borysiewicz , investment director, Rathbones	5B. How AI is shaping the future of ESG reporting ESG factors are widely acknowledged as being critical to the long-term risk management of portfolios. However, with little to no regulatory requirements or standardised tools, it is difficult for charities to assess the ESG performance of their portfolio. This session will explain how the latest developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are revolutionising the speed and accuracy of ESG reports, driving efficiencies and increasing transparency. Join to learn more about how charities could leverage this technology to gain a deeper understanding of their investment portfolio, benchmarking and tracking ESG performance, and actively managing risk in order to ensure their investments align with their mission. Gordon Tveito-Duncan , chief executive and co-founder, Gaia Lens
16:10	Transit time	
16:15	Closing Panel: The good, the bad and the benefactor – debating ethics in donations and corproate partnerships The Charity Commission’s latest guidance for trustees asserts that their default position should be to accept donations offered to their organisations, ensuring personal biases don’t cloud decision-making. However, trustees also have the discretion to refuse or return donations when it’s in the charity’s best interest. This creates a complex grey area: while corporate partnerships and philanthropy are vital funding sources, they often come with ethical dilemmas and reputational risks. Join us to explore the moral, practical, and reputational challenges facing charities navigating the complexities of corporate giving. Should trustees prioritise financial sustainability, or does the integrity of their cause demand a stricter ethical stance? Let’s discuss where the line should be drawn – and who should decide. Stephanie Hensen Dittmer , development director, Royal Shakespeare Company, Chris Sherwood , chief executive designate, NSPCC, Emily Thomas , global associate director of philanthropy, ClientEarth, Michael Terwey , chair of the ethics committee, Museums Association, Speaker TBC , Charity Commission	
17:00	Chair’s closing remarks	
17:10	Networking drinks reception	

QUICK REGISTRATION

Early-bird tickets (before 17 January)		Final release tickets (after 17 January)
Charity Finance subscriber rate	£79 (exc VAT)	£149 (exc VAT)
Charity delegate	£99 (exc VAT)	£169 (exc VAT)
Charity team ticket (up to four places) **Limited quantity available**	£249 (exc VAT)	£460 (exc VAT)

Delegate name (inc title)	Position	Email	Your sessions (write letter A-B) in box provided				
1.			10:15 ☐	11:20 ☐	13:45 ☐	14:30 ☐	
2.			10:15 ☐	11:20 ☐	13:45 ☐	14:30 ☐	
3.			10:15 ☐	11:20 ☐	13:45 ☐	14:30 ☐	
4.			10:15 ☐	11:20 ☐	13:45 ☐	14:30 ☐	

Amount to be paid (+ VAT @ 20%)

£

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