

2023 Ashden Awards reveal UK climate champions transforming energy, housing and agriculture

3 years ago



The eight winners of the 2023 Ashden Awards were announced at the presentation ceremony in London last night.

Three trailblazers from the UK and five from the Global South are driving radical progress in tackling the biggest climate challenges around the globe. Winning organisations range from businesses to non-profits and local authorities. A key focus of the awards is the importance of jobs and training in helping communities respond to the climate crisis.

The winning UK organisations include the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT), which is tackling the financing challenge of energy efficiency in UK social housing. Through this unique initiative, businesses and other organisations that want to meet their own climate commitments can buy credits equivalent to their emissions, and those credits fund energy efficiency upgrades to social housing. This means people can benefit from extra insulation, replacements for draughty doors and windows, and modern heating technology.

Another of last night's winning entries, FarmEd in the Cotswolds, is helping shape the future of the UK's agricultural sector by raising awareness of regenerative farming through a series of nature friendly techniques that enrich the soil while removing CO2 from the atmosphere. FarmED takes a conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems. Their training and regenerative agriculture techniques have the potential to radically lower emissions linked to agriculture, protect and replenish biodiversity and restore the health of our soil and landscape.

In North London, Enfield Council and environmental charity Thames21 protect communities from extreme weather by bringing new life to neglected waterways. Local volunteers are at the heart of the action, restoring rivers and creating new woods and wetlands. This approach means that as well as dealing with flood dangers and pollution, the scheme brings residents better health and access to nature.

Other Ashden Award winners were from India, Cameroon, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya. All were showcased in a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society in London last night. Winners receive grants, global publicity, and connection to funders, investors and partners that can help them create even more impact.

“Brilliant solutions need backing”

By taking on the need to make 21m UK homes more energy efficient, and to transform British farming, the UK winners are at the forefront of transformative low-carbon solutions and a vital demonstration of what can be done as we approach COP28.

Ashden CEO Dr Ashok Sinha said: “Our winners prove people are passionate about creating practical solutions to the climate emergency – whether giving their time to restore rivers in the UK, or using clean energy to power up a thriving business in Uganda. And just look what happens as a result: higher incomes, better health, stronger communities and the creation of new jobs.

“But these brilliant solutions need serious backing from policymakers and investors. For example, this year’s winners include innovation that could unlock millions of pounds to create warm, energy efficient homes across the UK – surely that’s a scheme worth supporting?”

Dr Sinha emphasised that climate solutions such as these – that are in operation, replicable and scalable – are what are needed urgently as we increasingly face with the impacts of climate change. These examples provide not just hope but the practical examples for others to follow.

The 2023 Ashden Award winners and runners up include:

UK Winners

[Ashden Award for Energy Innovation](#) – *accelerating the UK’s net zero journey*

Supported by Impax Asset Management

WINNER – [The Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust](#)

The Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust is originating carbon credits to unlock funds to support UK homes in need of retrofitting.

Runner up – [tepeo](#), Berkshire

[Ashden Award for Local Nature Recoverers](#) – *celebrating inclusive, community-focused adaptation initiatives*

Supported by the Lund Trust, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin

WINNER – [Thames 21/Enfield Council](#)

Working with local residents, this collaboration has restored rivers and created new ponds, woods and wetlands to build climate resilience in north London.

Runner up - [Liverpool City Council](#)'s URBAN GreenUP project

[Ashden Award for Future Farmers](#) - developing skills and training for sustainable land management

Supported by Garfield Weston Foundation

WINNER - [FarmED](#)

FarmED is a Cotswolds not for profit showing regenerative agriculture in action, and working to transform attitudes to food and farming.

Runner up - [Black Mountains College](#), Wales

Winners from the Global South include: [Burasolutions Solar Academy](#) in Nigeria, [Power for All](#) in Uganda, [USAFI Green Energy](#) in Kenya, [Collectives for Integrated Livelihoods Initiatives \(CINI\)](#) in India, [CERAF-NORD](#) in Cameroon, and [Husk Power](#) Systems, which won the Ashden Award for Outstanding Achievement.

[Full list of 2023 Ashden Award winners and runners up](#)

Call for green schools in the UK

Speakers at the awards ceremony included Solitaire Townsend, a renowned sustainability expert who works with some of the world's most influential organisations to activate social justice and environmental restoration. She was joined in conversation by youth climate justice organizer Tori Tsui.

The event also highlighted key Ashden initiatives beyond its annual awards. These included the fast-growing [Let's Go Zero campaign](#), supporting UK schools to become zero carbon by 2030.

[2024 applications open 15 November](#)

Applications for the 2024 Ashden Awards will open online on November 15. Returning award categories include powering refugees and displaced people, powering futures in clean energy, UK energy innovation, and natural climate solutions in the UK and Global South.

Next year's categories will also include a Global South energy innovation award, and a new people's energy award - celebrating community-focused initiatives in the UK. Next year's winners will be announced in June.