

**Dende Collective**

(A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee)

**Annual Report, Receipts and Payments Accounts, Statement of Assets and Liabilities, and Independent Examiner's Report**

**For the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

**Charity Information**

**Charity Name:** Dende Collective

**Charity Number:** 1107850

**Company Number:** 05250986

**Registered Address:** 9 Abercorn Mansions, 17 Abercorn Place, NW8 9DY

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**Independent Examiner:** Kanti & Co. Ltd

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## Introduction

Dendê Collective is a creative arts organisation dedicated to advancing education and fostering community connection through the arts, particularly theatre and participatory performance. Established in 1999 and registered as a charity in 2005, the organisation has developed a distinctive practice rooted in accessibility, cultural exchange, and long-term engagement with local communities.

The 2024–2025 financial year marked a period of consolidation and growth for Dendê Collective. Building on many years of voluntary and project-funded activity, the organisation delivered a coherent programme of work across Westminster, where it is now based, and beyond—strengthening partnerships and deepening its impact with older residents, families, and intergenerational communities.

At the heart of the year’s activity was *Drama for Elders*, delivered across Church Street and Mayfair Libraries, alongside a large-scale intergenerational project, *The Church Street Masquerade 2024*, and a range of creative wellbeing initiatives developed in partnership with community organisations. Together, these projects created opportunities for creativity, connection, confidence-building, and public celebration, particularly for older adults facing isolation, health challenges, or reduced access to cultural activity.

Throughout the year, Dendê Collective prioritised care-led delivery and consistent communication, maintaining strong relationships with participants through one-to-one phone calls, emails, and WhatsApp updates. This approach ensured participants felt welcomed and supported, enabling engagement at their own pace regardless of prior experience or personal circumstances.

The trustees are grateful for the continued support of funders, partners, libraries, community hubs, and participants, whose collaboration made this work possible. The year under review reaffirmed the value of sustained, place-based creative practice and Dendê Collective’s commitment to delivering high-quality arts projects that place people, wellbeing, and community at their centre.

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## Trustees’ Report

The trustees present this report on the activities of Dendê Collective for the financial year ending 31 March 2025.

During 2024–2025, Dendê Collective delivered a robust and diverse programme of arts activity, with a clear focus on reducing social isolation, supporting wellbeing, and increasing access to creative participation for older adults and local communities. The trustees are pleased to report that all major projects were delivered successfully, on time, and within budget, with strong levels of engagement and positive feedback from participants and partners.

A central focus of the year was the continued development of *Drama for Elders*, delivered across Church Street Library and Mayfair Library. At Church Street, the programme expanded into a full year of activity, combining a highly successful pantomime term with exploratory clowning work and public performances. This programme demonstrated strong participant retention and clear wellbeing outcomes, particularly for older residents managing health challenges or social isolation. The trustees recognise *Drama for Elders* as a cornerstone of the organisation's charitable activity.

The year also saw the delivery of *The Church Street Masquerade 2024*, a four-week intergenerational mask project based at Penfold Community Hub and delivered as part of Westminster City Council's Inside Out Festival, the borough's free annual summer arts and culture programme. The project brought together residents aged 18+ and 60+, culminating in three outdoor performances that reached large public audiences across the Church Street Ward. It strengthened community pride, encouraged cultural exchange, and demonstrated the organisation's capacity to deliver ambitious, large-scale participatory work in public spaces.

Alongside its elder-focused programmes, Dendê Collective broadened its community reach through *Find Your Voice*, a drama-based employability and communication skills workshop, and through creative activity delivered in partnership with Hammersmith Community Gardens Association. Projects such as *Fruits R Us 2025* (for participants aged 50+) and the family-focused *POND LIFE – Arts & Crafts* highlighted the organisation's ability to adapt its artistic practice to different age groups, settings, and community needs while maintaining accessibility and quality.

The trustees confirm that, in carrying out the activities described in this report, they have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, as required under Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011.

Looking ahead, the trustees remain committed to sustaining and developing Dendê Collective's core programmes, strengthening partnerships, and securing funding that supports long-term, high-quality delivery. The year under review demonstrated the value of consistent, locally rooted creative practice and its positive impact on individuals and communities.

The trustees confirm their continued commitment to the charity's objects and to the responsible stewardship of its activities and resources.

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## Public Benefit Statement

Dendê Collective's work is guided by its charitable objects, which are to advance education for the public benefit by promoting the arts, particularly but not exclusively the art of drama.

In meeting these objects, the trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

The charity's activities, which include community-led arts projects, workshops, performances, and educational programmes, are designed to provide the following public benefits:

- Encouraging lifelong learning by teaching new skills in the arts.
- Reducing isolation and strengthening social connection for older adults and other vulnerable groups.
- Promoting inclusion, creativity, and cultural participation within local communities, with a primary focus on London.

All Dendê Collective programmes are accessible regardless of background. The charity seeks to remove barriers to participation and to offer inclusive, welcoming opportunities that foster connection, confidence, and personal growth.

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### **Transforming Lives: The Impact of Our Work on Elders**

For over nine years, Dendê Collective has delivered sustained creative programmes for older adults, particularly in the Church Street area, recognising creativity as a vital contributor to wellbeing, confidence, and social connection in later life. In 2024–2025, this commitment deepened through a year of regular delivery, public performances, and long-term engagement across Westminster, with the programme expanding into a second ward through work at Mayfair Library.

Elders participating in Dendê Collective's programmes consistently reported improvements in mood, confidence, communication, and sense of connection. Weekly sessions offered more than creative activity: they provided a trusted social space where participants could feel welcomed, valued, and supported. For many—particularly those living alone or managing long-term health conditions—the sessions became an important anchor within their week.

The work adopted a holistic approach to engagement. Sessions combined gentle physical activity, imagination, laughter, and reflection, supporting both mental and physical wellbeing. Participants were encouraged to work at their own pace, with no pressure to perform, while being supported to take creative risks when ready. This balance proved particularly effective for elders who had not engaged in arts activity for many years.

Public sharings and performances played a significant role in the year's impact. Whether appearing in a pantomime, clowning pieces, or outdoor masquerade events, elders experienced the pride and visibility that comes from being witnessed by their community. These moments challenged assumptions about ageing, highlighting

creativity, humour, and resilience, and reinforcing participants' sense of contribution and relevance.

Importantly, the work also continued to develop local audiences and demonstrated impact beyond the immediate participant group. Community performances at Church Street Library attracted families and children, while sharings at Penfold Community Hub welcomed older residents, including audience members living with dementia. This confirmed the wider appeal and social significance of the work, showing that elder-led creative practice can engage diverse audiences and foster meaningful intergenerational and community connection.

A defining feature of Dendê Collective's approach is its imaginative, long-term model of creative engagement. Programmes such as *Panto for Elders*, *Clowning for Elders*, and *Fruits R Us*—which invites participants to explore playful alter-ego characters inspired by fruit—offer experiences that are both accessible and artistically ambitious. These themed approaches encourage curiosity, skill development, collaboration, and the formation of new creative identities later in life.

Crucially, the programme's regularity and continuity—often sustained even during periods of limited funding—have enabled the growth of a stable and welcoming community. Participants return week after week to familiar spaces, reconnect with people they know, and build trust through shared creative endeavour. Drama-making is inherently collaborative, requiring listening, teamwork, and mutual support; through devising plays, pantomimes, and sharings together, participants forge new relationships and a renewed sense of belonging.

Alongside live work, the programme places value on documenting creative journeys through photography and filmed material, captured by artists of a high professional standard. These recordings create lasting memories that participants can revisit, reinforcing a sense of achievement, purpose, and pride in meaningful creative experiences.

By embedding creative activity within familiar community spaces such as libraries and community hubs, Dendê Collective has created environments where older adults can reconnect with themselves and others. The impact extends beyond individual sessions, with participants forming friendships, supporting one another outside the programme, and continuing their creative journeys within the wider Dendê Elders project.

The work delivered in 2024–2025 reaffirmed Dendê Collective's belief that older adults deserve ambitious, high-quality creative opportunities—not as short-term interventions, but as a sustained and meaningful part of community life.

## Project Highlights

### 1. **Drama for Elders – Church Street Library (Pantomime & Clowning) - September 2024 – March 2025**

Drama for Elders at Church Street Library remained the cornerstone of Dendê Collective's work with older residents, delivering a year of weekly creative activity that reduced social isolation while nurturing confidence, joy, and strong social bonds. Funded by the City of Westminster Charitable Trust Community Contribution Fund, with additional support from Westminster City Council Libraries, the programme combined accessibility with high artistic ambition.

The autumn term focused on **A Pantomime Adventure**, in which participants collaboratively devised and performed *Cinderella – An Improvised Panto for Elders*. Across ten weekly sessions and five intensive rehearsals, elders explored character, storytelling, improvisation, and ensemble work. The term culminated in two public performances at Church Street Library and Penfold Community Hub, welcoming audiences that included friends, family members, and people living with dementia. These performances were joyful, inclusive events that brought visibility and pride to the group.

In the spring term, the programme shifted to **Clowning**, inviting participants to explore playfulness, physical comedy, listening, and presence. While more challenging for some, this strand supported deeper personal growth, encouraging elders to take creative risks and discover new forms of expression through non-verbal communication and physical storytelling.

Attendance remained strong throughout both terms, with an average of over 16 participants during the pantomime term and high levels of repeat engagement across the year. Many participants described the sessions as a vital routine and a source of emotional and social support.

*"This was a lifeline for me. I now have my drama family."*

Together, the pantomime and clowning strands demonstrated the power of combining accessible formats with exploratory practice, creating a space where older adults could reconnect with creativity, build meaningful relationships, and feel seen and celebrated within their community.

### 2. **The Church Street Masquerade 2024 - August 2024**

The Church Street Masquerade 2024 was a four-week intergenerational mask project that transformed Church Street into a vibrant site of creativity, encounter, and celebration. Based at Penfold Community Hub, the project brought together residents aged 18+ and elders aged 60+, with a strong focus on communities living in and around Church Street.

Participants took part in free, drop-in sessions exploring mask making, costume creation, and mask acting. Each person created a papier-mâché half mask, developed a character, and learned how to perform with masks drawn from different cultural traditions. Alongside self-made masks, the project introduced participants to **Commedia dell'Arte** masks from Italy and **Larval Masks** from Switzerland, expanding cultural awareness and theatrical vocabulary.

The project culminated in three public performances during the final week: two static performances in local green and public spaces, followed by a large-scale walkabout through Church Street Market. These events animated the neighbourhood and attracted an estimated audience of over 1,000 people, generating visible excitement, pride, and curiosity among residents, traders, and passers-by. The final walkabout concluded with a celebratory party at Penfold Community Hub.

In total, 40 participants took part, with an average of 19 people attending each session. Engagement was exceptionally strong, with the vast majority completing their masks and choosing to perform. Older participants in particular reported reduced isolation, increased wellbeing, and a renewed sense of purpose through sustained creative engagement alongside younger participants.

*“I felt the happiness of being part of this community event — it became familiar, joyful, and deeply meaningful.”*

The Church Street Masquerade exemplified Dendê Collective’s approach to community-led theatre: ambitious in scale, generous in access, and rooted in cultural exchange.

### 3. **Drama for Elders – Mayfair Library - May – July 2024**

In summer 2024, Dendê Collective delivered a short-term Drama for Elders programme at Mayfair Library, expanding access to creative activity for older residents in a welcoming central Westminster setting. Commissioned by Westminster City Council Library Services, the programme offered a gentle, restorative introduction to drama for participants aged 60+, many of whom were new to Dendê’s work.

Across seven weekly sessions, supported by three additional sessions in early July, participants took part in relaxed, drop-in workshops prioritising wellbeing, connection, and enjoyment. Sessions combined shared check-ins, seated physical warm-ups, playful games, and simple drama techniques such as mime, character, and improvisation. Tea and biscuits formed an integral part of the sessions, encouraging informal social connection.

The programme was deliberately flexible and non-pressurised, allowing participants to work at their own pace with adaptations offered to suit different access needs. Attendance remained steady, with 15 individual participants engaging and an average of just under six people per session.



*“It was such a warm, welcoming space — I always left feeling calmer and more connected.”*

Delivered in the elegant setting of Mayfair Library overlooking Mount Street Gardens, the project demonstrated the value of embedding creative activity within library spaces as a gateway to wellbeing in later life.

## **Other Community and Skills Projects**

Alongside its core elder-focused programmes, Dendê Collective delivered a small number of targeted community and skills-based projects during the year, extending the organisation’s reach while maintaining its participatory ethos.

### **4. Find Your Voice: Interactive Role-Playing for Interviews & Workplace Communication - October – December 2024**

Find Your Voice was a short-term communication and confidence-building programme delivered at Church Street Library, using drama-based techniques to support adults navigating interviews, workplace communication, and public speaking. Through role-play, improvisation, and guided feedback, participants developed practical tools in a supportive, non-judgemental environment. Several participants reported increased confidence and success in interview settings following the course.

### **5. Fruits R Us 2025 - January – February 2025**

Fruits R Us 2025 was a two-month creative wellbeing project delivered at Penfold Community Hub as part of the three-year *Grow Green – Grow Well* partnership with Hammersmith Community Gardens Association. Inspired by the playful world of fruits, participants created alter-ego characters through drama, arts and crafts, costume-making, and filmed improvisation. Sessions prioritised play, imagination, and social connection, with strong and consistent attendance throughout.

*“It was joyful, playful, and made me feel part of something — I looked forward to every week.”*

### **6. POND LIFE – Arts & Crafts @ Ravenscourt Park - February 2025**

POND LIFE was a family-focused arts and crafts project delivered during the February half-term holidays at Ravenscourt Park. Commissioned by Hammersmith Community Gardens Association, the project invited children and families to create masks inspired by pond creatures and local wildlife. Across two days, more than 50 children took part, contributing to a lively and inclusive half-term programme in a green, public setting.

## Trustees and Governance

Dendê Collective is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee (registered in England No. 05250986). As a company limited by guarantee, the organisation does not have shareholders; instead, its members agree to contribute a nominal amount in the event of the company being wound up.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees, who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006. The trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation, overseeing its financial management, and ensuring compliance with charity and company law.

The trustees meet regularly to review financial performance, assess programme delivery and impact, and plan for the organisation's future development. In carrying out their duties, trustees act in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Dendê Collective is committed to maintaining high standards of governance and operates in accordance with the principles of the Charity Governance Code. The charity has a *Conflict of Interest* policy in place to support transparent decision-making and ensure that trustees act in the best interests of the organisation at all times.

### Trustee Details

The trustees who served during the 2024–2025 financial year were:

- Robert Fish (Chair)
- Jonathan Peter Dewey (Trustee)
- Steffanny George (Trustee)
- Carlos Eduardo Ratto Padilha (Trustee)

This report was reviewed and approved on behalf of the Board by Carlos Eduardo Ratto Padilha, acting as the signatory for the trustees.

## Partners and Support

Dendê Collective's work during 2024–2025 was made possible through the support and collaboration of a range of funders, partners, and venues.

The trustees would like to thank:

- **Westminster City Council**, for funding through the Healthy Communities Fund, Inside Out Programme, and Library Services.
- **City of Westminster Charitable Trust**, for continued support of the *Drama for Elders* programme.

- **Derwent London**, for part-funding *The Church Street Masquerade 2024* and for awarding multi-year support for core organisational costs commencing in the 2025–2026 financial year.
- **Church Street Library**, for providing space, recruitment support, marketing support, and for securing funding to deliver *Drama for Elders* sessions.
- **Mayfair Library**, for providing space, recruitment and marketing support, and funding to expand *Drama for Elders* to a central Westminster setting.
- **Penfold Community Hub**, for hosting multiple projects and offering a welcoming and flexible creative space.
- **Hammersmith Community Gardens Association (HCGA)**, for partnership on a three-year creative wellbeing initiative integrating nature-inspired arts practice.
- **London Borough of Wandsworth**, for funding *The Wandsworth Masquerade*, to be delivered in the next financial year.
- **Participants**, whose commitment, generosity, and enthusiasm remain at the heart of Dendê Collective's work.

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## Financial Summary

The financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and on a receipts-and-payments basis, appropriate for charities with income under £40,054.

Total income for the year was £40,054.19, all of which was restricted and applied to specific charitable activities. The increase in income compared with the previous year reflects a higher volume of programme delivery, including *The Church Street Masquerade 2024*, expanded *Drama for Elders* provision, and partnership projects delivered with external organisations. It also reflects the receipt of some forward-funded income for projects to be delivered in the following financial year, including *The Wandsworth Masquerade*. This increase represents expanded delivery activity rather than an expansion of core operating costs.

Total expenditure for the year was £40,873.00, resulting in a small deficit of £819.00. This variance arose from timing differences between restricted income and expenditure across multiple projects and is considered manageable and in line with the charity's reserves policy.

## Receipts and Payments Accounts

Category	Restricted (£)	Unrestricted (£)	Total (£)
<b>Income</b>			
Grants and donations	40,054.19		40,054.19
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>40,054.19</b>		<b>40,054.19</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
The Church Street Masquerade 2024	17,191.78	-	17,191.78
Drama for Elders	1,200.00	-	1,200.00
Find Your Voice	2,124.02	-	2,124.02
Drama for Elders at Church Street Library T1 PANTO & T2 CLOWNING	7,788.36		7,788.36
Fruits R US 2025	4,340.30		4,340.30
The Wandsworth Masquerade 2025	57.77		57.77
POND LIFE Arts & Crafts @ Ravenscourt Park	1,126.31		1,126.31
Overheads & operational costs	7,044.46		7,044.46
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>40,873.00</b>		<b>40,873.00</b>
Surplus/Deficit	<b>(819.00)</b>		<b>(819.00)</b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Category	£
<b>Assets</b>	
Cash at bank and in hand	19,557.00
Debtors (if any)	0.00
Other assets (e.g., equipment)	0.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>19,557.00</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Creditors (Accruals)	900.00
Other liabilities (if any)	0.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Surplus/Deficit funds during the year	(819.00)
<b>Total Reserve</b>	<b>19,476.00</b>
Unrestricted funds (BFW)	
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>19,557.00</b>

## Financial Notes

### 1. Restricted Income

All income received during the 2024–2025 financial year was restricted and applied to specific projects and activities. A proportion of income received relates to forward-funded projects to be delivered in the following financial year, including *The Wandsworth Masquerade 2025* and *Drama for Elders* activity at Mayfair Library. These funds are held securely and will be applied strictly in accordance with funding agreements.

### 2. Charitable Activities

*The Church Street Masquerade 2024* was funded through £10,000 from Westminster City Council’s Inside Out Programme and £7,861.55 from Derwent London. Total project expenditure was £17,191.78, resulting in a small project surplus. The project’s scale and ambition, including three public performances, were delivered entirely within restricted funding, with no unrestricted reserves required to support delivery.

During the year, *Drama for Elders* transitioned from partially voluntary provision to funded delivery across multiple venues, reflecting programme maturity, strong community engagement, and increased sustainability.

### 3. Core Costs and Reserves Policy

Dendê Collective operates with minimal core costs, supported by remote working and project-based staffing. The charity maintains a reserves policy of £3,000–£5,000 to ensure stability and flexibility in responding to unforeseen challenges.

At year end, total cash balances stood at £19,476.00, the majority of which are restricted or forward-allocated for future projects. Unrestricted reserves remain within the trustees’ target range.

### 4. Sustainability and Future Funding

The charity remains largely reliant on project funding, with some organisational and development work undertaken voluntarily. Three-year core support from Derwent London will commence in the following financial year, contributing £600 per month for ten months per year towards administrative and project management costs. While modest relative to delivery volume, this support represents an important step towards strengthening organisational sustainability and capacity.

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### Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Dendê Collective

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 11 to 13.

#### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. The trustees consider that the audit requirement of section 144(2) of the Act does not apply, and that an independent examination is needed.

## Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- The accounts do not accord with those records.

Signed by:  
  
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Signed: Yadu Aryal

Kanti & Co. Ltd, Chartered Certified Accountant,  
 27 Kingston Road, South Wimbledon, London. SW19 1JX

Date: 1/10/2026

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## Looking Ahead

Funding secured during the 2024–2025 financial year places Dendê Collective in a strong position to consolidate its work and move confidently into a more coherent, long-term phase of delivery.

A key development is the formal shaping of *The Dendê Elders Programme* — an ongoing, place-based programme of creative activity for older adults that brings together weekly drama sessions, themed creative projects, public performances, and intergenerational encounters. This programme-led approach reflects the organisation's commitment to continuity, relationship-building, and sustained impact, rather than short-term interventions. It is this clarity of vision and consistency of practice that enabled Dendê Collective to secure multi-year core support from Derwent London.

Income received during this period will enable the organisation to extend its intergenerational masquerade work across London, including the delivery of *The Wandsworth Masquerade* in the next financial year. Building on experience delivering masquerade projects both within and beyond Westminster, Dendê Collective will continue to develop this work artistically, including the introduction of larger-scale masks and new visual approaches, while retaining its strong community-led ethos.

The trustees also welcome City of Westminster Charitable Trust's commitment to a further year of *Drama for Elders at Church Street Library*, ensuring continuity for a programme that has become a vital source of creativity, social connection, and wellbeing for older residents. This regularity allows participants to build long-term relationships, develop skills over time, and experience a strong sense of belonging.

The success of *Cinderella – An Improvised Panto for Elders*, performed at Church Street Library and Penfold Community Hub in December 2024, opened up new possibilities for elder-led performance. The strength of participant commitment and the enthusiastic response from local audiences led to the decision to make this strand a recurring

feature of the programme. Funding is already in place for a further pantomime in 2025, and The Cockpit Theatre has offered performance dates through to December 2027, providing a professional platform for this work to grow while remaining rooted in its community origins.

Alongside this, Dendê Collective will complete the final instalment of its three-year partnership with Hammersmith Community Gardens Association through Veggies R Us, continuing to explore imaginative, wellbeing-led creative frameworks that support participation, play, and connection in later life.

Looking forward, the trustees' priority is to strengthen *The Dendê Elders Programme* as a sustainable, recognisable model; deepen cross-borough partnerships; and continue advocating for ambitious, accessible creative opportunities for older adults and local communities. With a combination of secured project funding and emerging core support in place, Dendê Collective is well positioned to deliver long-term, people-centred work with stability, care, and artistic integrity.

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## Approval and Declaration

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011. The financial accounts have been independently examined to ensure compliance with applicable legal and accounting requirements.

The trustees confirm that the report is accurate to the best of their knowledge.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees of **Dendê Collective**, a registered charity (Charity No. **1107850**) and a company limited by guarantee (Registered in England No. **05250986**), and signed on its behalf.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Signed by:  
  
 1E2471E63885449...

**Carlos Eduardo Ratto Padilha**

Trustee, Dendê Collective

Date: 1/8/2026