



OLIVE TREE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Annual report and accounts for the year ended
31 August 2024

Registered charity No. 1157386

The Olive Tree Cancer Support Centre, Crawley Hospital,
West Green Drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 7DH



Social media

www.olivetrecancersupport.org.uk/



Contents

Chair's statement.....	3
1. Who we are and what we do	6
1.1 Background and a summary of Charity activities in 2023/2024	6
1.2 Looking forward statement.....	9
2. Our Long-Term Strategy.....	9
2.1 Our Charity Strategy to 2030	9
3. How we operate	11
3.1 Charity information, structure and governance	11
3.2 Charity operations and risk management	13
3.3 Fundraising activities.....	16
3.4 Stakeholder management and communications	20
4. Financial report	21
4.1 The Financial Review 2023/2024	21
4.2 Report of the Independent Examiner	24
4.3 Income and Expenditure Account.....	25

Chair's statement



Trevor Christmas
Chair and Treasurer

The financial year 2023/24 has been a year of progress for Olive Tree Cancer Support Group (also known as Olive Tree), with 375 new service users, up from 322 in 2022/23. However, despite this increase, there remains a considerable waiting list for some of our services.

Fortunately, there has been an upturn in income this year, but there have also been a number of challenges.

Olive Tree has seen a recovery in income to £206,375 from £104,435 in the prior year, although this is partly due to delayed receipts resulting from prior year activities received in the current year. The financial reserves of the Charity have been strengthened, but this level needs to be at least maintained given the volatile nature of the organisation's income streams and the long-term nature of the services provided.

The Charity relies almost entirely on new grants, donations and bequests to fund its activities. We are fortunate to benefit from an annual grant from The National Lottery Community Fund - RC London and South East Region

for £20,000 per year, but this covers less than 10% of our budgeted expenditure. The vast majority has to be raised from scratch every year.

Olive Tree provides a range of services in Crawley and Horsham to people affected by cancer. Easy access is key to our approach. Following a simple, personalised registration process, members can access one to one counselling; individual complementary therapy; lymphatic drainage massage, group yoga classes; social drop-in sessions; specialist support groups; a sharing circle and a variety of workshops. The Charity also offers a wig service which allows members experiencing or anticipating hair loss to choose several wigs and/or head coverings free of charge in a discreet environment.

Olive Tree demonstrates its inclusivity of minority groups through its active participation in various community events. Whether taking part in cultural celebrations, such as joining the Hindu community at BAPs and the LGBTQ+ community at Pride, or hosting information stands at GP practices, shopping malls and community centres, or enjoying purely social occasions such as those at RAM sports, the charity's presence signals that it values the inclusion of all communities and welcomes all to use its services.

Engaging with males is an ongoing priority, with around 25% of current service users being male. We seek opportunities to be present at events where men congregate, such as at Crawley Town Football Club and Horsham Football Club's home matches, which we attended to raise funds. Sponsorship of a Charity Golf Day in aid of Olive Tree by Ifield Golf Club and various events hosted by Ram Sports Club has ensured those communities and their networks are aware of our services, and we have been present at family events such as Horsham Funday and the Hawth Theatre's Pantomime.

Certain services, such as hypnotherapy, seem to particularly appeal to our male users, with an equal number of male and female users accessing the service and we will continue to explore how we can effectively encourage males to contact us and develop our services to ensure our provision is relevant and accessible, including, for example, delivering some services, such as our Prostate Support Group, in the early evening to accommodate workers.

All of this is delivered on-site at our centres in central Crawley and Horsham, and there are additional services online, such as coaching, where this is not possible face to face, and offsite, delivered by organisations which support us.

The success of Olive Tree is due, in no small part, to the support of its many partners - individuals, organisations, businesses and community groups in the local area. They support our work, not only with fundraising, but also raising awareness of our services in the many and varied communities which we serve. Olive Tree depends heavily on their generosity and hard work for its survival, for which we are immensely grateful.

Olive Tree continues to provide an effective referral pathway from the regional hospitals, Macmillan centres, local GPs and other health professionals (including West Sussex Talking Therapies). We have extended our reach further into West Sussex and continue to see referrals from across the county and beyond, demonstrating the demand for services in this part of the country.

The Charity couldn't function without its staff, volunteers and supporters. I, on behalf of The Board, would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication, which have been integral to our continued success, broadening the awareness of the charities work while continuing to meet consistently high standards of service delivery in these challenging times.

Olive Tree is managed on a daily basis by a small team comprising the centre managers and other office roles, but it relies entirely on the volunteers to deliver the services, including counsellors and therapists, and some administrative roles such as front desk. We had hoped to further expand our services, with the recruitment of further volunteers, but the current economic environment has put considerable pressure on both personal and business finances. This has resulted in the loss of some volunteers, who needed to focus on their businesses and personal situations, and has also affected recruitment, with the number of volunteers, excluding trustees, falling slightly to 52 from 53 last year. Further volunteers are continuously sought to expand service delivery.

The Board is under similar pressures, reducing to five members from eight in the prior year for a variety of reasons. Our previous Chair Graham Nicoll sadly passed away following a long battle with cancer, Raj Limbachia resigned to take up a role as an ambassador for the Charity and Louise Cheung resigned due to other commitments. Consequently, The Board is actively seeking new trustees.

All changes to staffing and The Board are detailed in section 3. How we operate.

Graham Nicoll - previous Chair



Graham Nicoll
Chair 2018 - 2022

I would like to pay tribute to Olive Tree's previous chair, Graham Nicoll, who sadly passed away on 1st September 2024. Graham dedicated so much of his time to Olive Tree while fighting his own battle with cancer.

Graham first joined Olive Tree in May 2017 as a service user, having been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in the previous month. At the time, Graham was given a life expectancy of just 18 months. A year later, in May 2018, Graham joined The Board of trustees of Olive Tree and in September of that year became the Chair. Remarkably, Graham continued to be a trustee until his passing in September 2024.

Graham worked tirelessly as Chair, seeing the Charity grow significantly from its base in Crawley hospital, culminating in the Charity being awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in 2021, the highest award given to UK volunteer groups, recognizing exceptional work done in their communities, and the equivalent of an MBE. This was followed in 2022 by the opening of a second centre in Horsham, offering therapies, counselling and other support services.

Graham's contribution to the world of cancer treatment went well beyond Olive Tree. He was engaged in several patient groups and undertook a number of clinical trials, providing a considerable amount of invaluable data for the development of new cancer treatments. While they undoubtedly gave him extra years, the journey as his cancer progressed was far from easy. Despite this and the considerable side effects of the trials, Graham continued to have an active role at Olive Tree for many years.

Those who worked with him described him as caring, generous with his time and even a hero, but what is clear is that he was a man who never gave up.

Graham will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and many more should be immensely grateful for all that he did.

Looking forward

The trustees continue to pursue the strategic plan developed in 2023, with quarterly meetings of the trustees and management to monitor progress and goals, and revise as appropriate.

The primary focuses for the current year are

- fundraising, with the structure and approach under continual review and adaptation;
- recruitment of new volunteers, including trustees;
- increasing awareness of the Charity and its services to both potential service users and supporters; and
- Diversification of income streams to reduce volatility.

It is expected that success in these areas will allow increased service delivery, both in terms of volume and breadth of the therapies, counselling and other services Olive Tree provides.

Further details can be found in section 1.2 - Looking Forward Statement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T Christmas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Trevor Christmas
Chair

1. Who we are and what we do

1.1 Background and a summary of Charity activities in 2023/2024

Charitable object

The charitable object of Olive Tree Cancer Support Group (“the Charity”), as registered with the Charity Commission, is to relieve the physical or emotional distress of persons with cancer and their partners, families, friends and carers through the provision of services.

Olive Tree operates from its support centres in Crawley and Horsham. Olive Tree is open to everyone who is affected by cancer irrespective of whether newly diagnosed or a longer-term patient as well as their families. There continues to be a marked increase in demand for our services. In 2023/24, our Centres welcomed 375 new users, compared with 322 in 2022/23, continuing the growth seen in past years.

Demand for our services will continue to increase. Current estimates suggest that about half of the UK population will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime. Also, due to advances in medical care, more people are being successfully treated and surviving longer, which means we will support our patients, their family members, carers and friends for longer.

The Olive Tree is a welcoming and trusted ‘safe place’ for its cancer patient community and for their loved ones, offering reassurance and relaxation at times of most need. Its empathetic and supportive team provides valued services, help and key understandings that enable and empower patients to meet challenges throughout their cancer journey.

Our services are not restricted to those living within the two town boundaries. Our users come from many local areas including Horley, Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Billingshurst. The closest other cancer support centres to Crawley and Horsham are in Chichester, Guildford, Redhill and Brighton, demonstrating the unique position of Olive Tree to meet the demand for services from an extended region of local communities. As such, it is estimated that we are potentially accessible by a total population approaching 500,000 people.

Support services

The aim of Olive Tree is to provide therapeutic care to cancer patients and those supporting them, enabling them to cope better with their disease and treatment. We are a self-funded charity, and our therapies and services complement the medical support that is given to cancer patients by the NHS. We do not offer any medical treatments or advice.

Olive Tree provides many different types of services to its users. We had 3,341 user visits to our Centres in 2023/2024 (up by 9% on the previous year, at 3,066 visits, reflecting the increasing demand for our services, with an average of 278 per month (2022/23: 256). Complementary therapy continues to be the most popular reason for a visit with 2,002 sessions, followed by counselling with 724.

We ran a series of workshops throughout the year at both centres, including mindfulness, nutritional therapy, skincare and fashion, and art projects. We regularly conduct sessions with Headwrappers, a hair loss advisory service, and with Nicola Jane, which provides a lingerie fitting and retail service for breast surgery patients.

Information support	Library of books, magazines, local and national information, and Macmillan brochures.		
Complementary therapies	Complementary therapies are offered to anyone who visits the Centres, both those with cancer and their supporters. These therapies complement orthodox cancer treatments and improve quality of life by relieving stress and tension. They are based on the holistic principle that healing works on all levels: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical.		
	Acupuncture	Lymphatic Drainage Massage	Reflexology
	Aromatherapy	Massage/Oncology Massage	Reiki
	Hypnotherapy	Meditation and relaxation	Scar Therapy
	Indian Head Massage	NADA protocol ear acupuncture	Thai Head Massage & Crystal Therapy
Counselling & Coaching	Counselling and Coaching offers members alternative approaches to find their own solutions to difficulties, and a way through a crisis and beyond.		
Support groups	Breast cancer group, Secondaries club, Prostate cancer group, Sharing Circle		
Workshops	Various topics - e.g. Mindfulness, Card Making, Headwrappers		
Exercises classes	Yoga		
CAB Welfare/ Benefits	Signposting to bespoke confidential benefits advice		
Drop in	Social afternoons		
Wig service	Selection of wigs, hats, scarves and bandanas with a fitting service		

We continue to receive excellent feedback from our users and volunteers with their testimonials included throughout the report.

Peter - Service User

The Olive Tree was recommended by the Urology team after my shock diagnosis of a further primary cancer. It has had a major impact on my health and recovery. The staff are wonderful, universally friendly and empathetic, and actually very knowledgeable about my condition. I know that when I arrive for treatments, I will be in a safe place where I can just let my feelings go. I can do this in a way that I can't in front of other people, where I feel more guarded to protect their feelings as much as anything. Sometimes we pretend that everything is fine, when it really isn't, and I feel that the complementary therapies and interaction with other staff and patients at the Centre is an essential part of my road back to health. I am so glad I took the advice of Crawley Hospital to use the Centre when I really was at a low ebb.

Michelle - Service User

“

“The Olive Tree has been an incredible source of support for myself and my husband throughout this horrible journey. We were offered counselling to help us cope with my diagnosis, and I have been lucky enough to be offered Acupuncture which is really helping me to recover from Chemo.

Everybody is so welcoming and reassuring, The Olive Tree really is an invaluable service and safe space for people like myself going through the hardest time of their lives.

Thank you everyone, you make a huge difference.”

Nicholas - Volunteer Therapist

“

I feel very privileged to volunteer at the Olive Tree. I get to meet and treat amazing people who inspire me with their courage and resilience. I am truly humbled.



Dawn - Service User

“

I live in Southwater, and I would just like to say thank you to the Olive Tree for the support and treatments you offer to cancer patients, I really don't know what I would have done without the counselling and hypnotherapy I was offered; it helped so much. It's nice to be with others that you know are going through the same thing as you are, so thank you again.



Ann - front desk volunteer

“

I was looking for something I could manage following a stroke, to help the local community. I was delighted to be accepted as a volunteer at the Olive Tree having had a family member with cancer. The Olive Tree is so welcoming and friendly!

1.2 Looking forward statement

Our ambition remains to become a well-recognised, inclusive local charity supporting everyone who needs it, as they or their loved ones are undergoing cancer treatment or living with cancer. The increased levels of awareness of cancer and improvements to screening mean that we are seeing a high volume of patients needing support. The pressure on local support services is such that there is a high demand for holistic care, not just for people living with cancer, but also for their families and friends.

In addition, Macmillan Cancer Support are currently undergoing a review of the services they offer, and we are already seeing demand for our counselling services increase as a result.

Consequently, it is inevitable that the demands for our services will continue to increase at a pace.

To meet the increased demand, we have needed to focus on recruitment of further volunteers. It is important that they have the right skills, are motivated and have suitable personalities, in order to maintain our current high standards of delivery and care. We will continue to measure our performance using appropriate assessments, such as user feedback, to ensure that this is the case.

Our established presence in Horsham will hopefully enable new local business partnerships to be formed, and offers a broader audience from which individual supporters and fundraisers can be sought and engaged.

Whilst we have developed a longer-term strategy during the course of the year (further details follow in the next section), as a first priority it is our duty to 'balance our books' and must be sure that we can fully fund what we currently deliver for the foreseeable future. We are very aware that this is a tough ask, but believe that it is achievable, in particular, given the long-term commitment and generosity of our supporters.



Head Wrappers session

2. Our Long-Term Strategy

2.1 Our Charity Strategy to 2030

According to a Macmillan analysis as of September 2021, an estimated 3 million people were living with cancer in the UK. This number is predicted to rise to nearly 3.5 million by 2025, 4 million by 2030, and 5.3 million by 2040. This increase is partly due to the UK's growing and ageing population, but also due to improvements in survival/prolonged lifetime through better cancer diagnosis and treatments. We welcome the development of the 10-year cancer plan by the government for England by 2032. It will support further innovation and improvements to care that should result in 75% of cancer cases by 2028 to be of early-stage diagnosis.

Our long-term strategy demonstrates our determination to reach as many people as possible in our local communities. We shall continue to provide a wide range of supportive services that meet the ever-evolving needs of our users. We pride ourselves in living our values in everything that we do.

Our Values

The Olive Tree **C.A.R.E.S.**

Compassion

Approachability

Reassurance

Empathy

Support

Our Vision

Our long-term aim is to be a well-recognised charity that provides free, accessible, personalised, innovative care and support to those affected by cancer in all local communities in Crawley, Horsham and surrounding areas.

Our strategic goals and objectives

1. Engage with more people affected by cancer in our local communities	2. Optimise range of services with focus on personalised care	3. Increase awareness of what we do	4. Collaborate with other local health and cancer care providers	5. Achieve sustainable financial resources to deliver on our strategy
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During the past year, the trustees, supported by senior personnel from the Charity, have continued to develop our strategy, but have been cautious in short to medium term ambitions given current pressures on our financial income and limited number of personnel. As such, many of our resultant plans (i.e., elements which would require additional funding and/or significant human resources) must understandably now be delayed until a point when there is confidence in a suitably robust ongoing financial foundation on which to build further on. However, we will progress with our goal to improve the awareness and relevance of Olive Tree, initially with the aim to increase our understanding of the patient journey. So, we are now administering a questionnaire to Centre visitors for this purpose and also adding a similar battery of questions for all new Olive Tree members to monitor our progress in this respect.

We will continue to reach out specifically to those within ethnic minority groups and to those in socially deprived areas within the Crawley/Horsham and surrounding area. Through raising awareness of how we can support them, we anticipate a greater adoption of our services going forward. Likewise, we will endeavour to increase the awareness of Olive Tree, and how we support, among males, with the ultimate aim of greater numbers attending our centres, benefitting from the support we offer.

3. How we operate

3.1 Charity information, structure and governance

Charity registration

Olive Tree Cancer Support Group is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (“CIO”) registered on 9 June 2014. Olive Tree is governed by its CIO Constitution dated 29 May 2014, which sets out the Charity’s powers and authorities. The constitution was amended by the trustees and approved by the members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 24 February 2021 to facilitate AGMs being held virtually in addition to in-person meetings.

It is regulated by the Charity Commission of England and Wales. Registration number 1157386.

Address: Wentworth House, Crawley Hospital, West Green Drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 7DH

Trustee information

The Board provides independent control and has legal responsibility for the management and administration of the Charity. The Board is also responsible for the strategic direction of the Charity and the authority delegated to Management. The trustees are elected by the members of the Charity at the AGM and, subject to re-election or early retirement, serve for a maximum of three, three-year terms, after which they must stand down for at least twelve months.

Volunteers, employees, professionals, cancer patients, their carers and others are entitled to become members of Olive Tree and are entitled to attend its AGM and vote on important decisions affecting the Charity.

The Board now consists of five trustees (ethnicity ratio - Asian 20%, White 80%). They all give their time to Olive Tree on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. We are currently fortunate to have a team of trustees that cover skills and experience from a broad range of backgrounds (industries, functions and cultures), including business leadership, accountancy, marketing, fundraising, volunteer and relationship management and consultancy.



Trevor Christmas^{1,6}



Yulia Baynham⁷



Ian Lineham⁵



Raj
Limbachia^{1,4}



Siobhan Hogan⁵



Ricky Ng⁵
(Sai Yeung Ng)



Graham Nicoll²



Louise Cheung³

When assessing potential new trustee applicants, any relevant or distinct skills and experience are considered in our selection. Where pertinent, for any area where our experience and/or knowledge are less strong, input is sought from relevant contacts in each of our networks. Trustees are encouraged to directly experience Olive Tree in action and to engage staff, volunteer and patient feedback, as appropriate, in decision-making processes.

In accordance with section 13 of the CIO Constitution

- 1 Raj Limbachia and Trevor Christmas retired by rotation at the Annual General Meeting held on 4th September 2024 (the “AGM”) and were re-elected for a further 3-year term.
- 2 Graham Nicoll left The Board following his death on 1 September 2024.
- 3 Louise Cheung retired at the AGM and did not seek re-election.
- 4 Raj Limbachia resigned as a trustee on 8 January 2025 and was subsequently appointed as an ambassador. He will be representing the Charity in the community.
- 5 Ian Lineham, Ricky Ng and Siobhan Hogan were elected as trustees at the AGM following their appointment by the trustees since the prior AGM.
- 6 The Charity trustees may appoint one of their number to chair their meetings and may at any time revoke such appointment. At the date of this report, Trevor Christmas was the appointed Chair.
- 7 The trustees created the new post of Vice Chair of Strategy and Yulia Baynham was appointed.

The trustees would like to thank Graham, Louise and Raj for their support and dedication to Olive Tree since joining The Board, and pass on their condolences to Graham’s family.

Governance

Trustee meetings take place monthly, every first Wednesday, in person or remotely. The Olive Tree centre managers, fundraising and other staff, as appropriate, also attend the meetings to report on their activities. The objective of the sessions is to ensure good governance, provide oversight of Charity management and fundraising, ensure robust financial control and identify any improvements to user experience. All meetings have agenda, papers and reports, and minutes are prepared and reviewed.

Trustees undergo regular training from external organisations. Most recent training covered governance, GDPR, safeguarding, fundraising, impact assessment, fraud policy, digital operations, social media and annual reporting.

In addition to mandatory training courses, workshops designed to improve knowledge, skills and behaviours on topics such as safeguarding, EDI, reporting and governance are attended as appropriate.

The trustees, in exercising their powers and authorities, confirm that they complied with their duty under the Charities Act 2011 and have had due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. In preparing this report and accounts the trustees have complied with the requirements, set out in the guidance, to report on the significant activities and achievements of the Charity in 2023-2024.

The Charity has taken out an insurance policy that provides professional indemnity insurance cover for the trustees.

3.2 Charity operations and risk management

Our employees and volunteers are an essential part of Olive Tree Cancer Support Group and without them we could not operate.

Management and Staff

The Charity currently has a staff of five, all of whom are directly employed by Olive Tree Cancer Support Group.



Terrie Stephens
Crawley Centre
Manager



Sheri Werner
Horsham Centre
Manager
May 2023 - April 2025



Sophia Rapley
Head of Fundraising
and Communications
April - October 2024



Kerry Cameron
Administrator
(Crawley)



Wendy Vane
Administrator
(Crawley)



Tjoe Bosman
Administrator
(Horsham)



Charlotte Hawkins
Communications
Administrator

Jackie Nunn left Olive Tree in April 2024, and was replaced by Wendy Vane, who joined in May. Following the increase of activity at the Horsham centre, Tjoe Bosman joined as Administrator, based in Horsham in September 2024.

The trustees would like to thank Terrie, Charlotte, Kerry, Wendy and Tjoe for their hard work and commitment in running the day-to-day operations of the Centres, while at the same time giving empathy, compassion and support to everyone who visits Olive Tree.

The trustees would also like to thank Sheri, who left Olive Tree in April 2025, for the amazing work she has done. Not only did she further develop the Horsham Centre, but also took on the management of fundraising and social media activities.

We also said farewell to Sophia, who left Olive Tree in October 2024, and thank her for her achievements while she was with Olive Tree.

The Charity has now adopted a new approach to fundraising, with individuals specialising in specific areas including trusts and foundations, corporate partnerships and community, and reporting to the centre managers. It is expected that this will produce a more targeted approach.

The trustees would also like to thank Jackie for her dedication to Olive Tree for more than seven years, having joined in January 2017.

Volunteers



The Centres have 52 volunteers (excluding trustees) including 12 counsellors, 29 therapists and 11 who help with general administrative duties (Front desk, Drop-in organisers).

Our aim is to have volunteers who are happy, engaged in shaping our services and eager to continually support Olive Tree.

Our engagement efforts are ongoing through volunteer lifecycle and we ensure consistent communication and recognition.

Training

Olive Tree believes that training is key to the effective and efficient delivery of high-quality support to all those who chose to take advantage of the wide range of support services available. Our aim is to have well-trained and well-informed employees and volunteers. The Olive Tree remains committed to providing all necessary support to enable employees and volunteers to complete the tasks required.

The centre managers adopt an organised and rigorous approach to the recruitment and training of volunteers to ensure that they are appropriate in terms of skills, qualifications and their alignment with Olive Tree values. Regular contact is maintained to ensure that the services that they deliver are of the appropriate standard, and they themselves have job satisfaction.

We encourage volunteers to attend training sessions that include Listening and Responding, First Aid, and Health and Safety. They are also urged to complete safeguarding and infection control courses available online. Volunteers can access training provided locally for free specifically to support their wellbeing. In addition to this, Olive Tree funds additional training in Oncology Massage and Lymphatic Drainage Reflexology.



First Aid Training

We have maintained our link to the “Reward Gateway”, a scheme that provides staff and volunteers with a range of discounts, well-being tools and a new improved method of Charity communication.

Risk Management

The Trustees of Olive Tree Cancer Support Group are responsible for the oversight and effective management of risks across the charity. Risk management is embedded into governance and



operations, with clear accountability at Board level and day-to-day risk management delegated to Centre Managers.

Risks are identified, monitored, and reviewed throughout the year, with mitigation plans developed to reduce their impact. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to escalate potential risks, ensuring a culture of transparency and continuous improvement. A full review and update of operational policies is underway to ensure continued alignment with legal, regulatory, and sector-specific best practice.

Trustees also oversee an annual planning and budgeting cycle, supported by regular monitoring of financial and performance indicators, with reporting at monthly Trustee meetings.

Key risks and mitigation strategies are summarised below:

Governance & Compliance Risks	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic and financial objectives not met due to governance and management oversight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustee skills audit completed to identify training needs. Ongoing upskilling to ensure full understanding of governance, legal and financial duties. Trustee indemnity insurance maintained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees do not keep up to date with changes to legislation and regulations, and policies fail to reflect Charity Commission reporting requirements and compliance with Charities Act. Policies and procedures do not reflect current legislation or Charity Commission guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full review of operational policies, procedures and compliance requirements to be completed in 2025 to ensure up-to-date adherence to the Charities Act, GDPR, and reporting requirements.
People, Operations & Reputation	Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient staff and volunteer levels adversely impact service quality, morale and management capability. Reliance on small number of highly experienced staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive remuneration, inclusive organisational culture, knowledge-sharing practices, documented processes, and robust staff/volunteer recruitment with DBS checks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of awareness of Olive Tree amongst local health providers. Failure to reach underserved communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened relationships with local healthcare providers. Ongoing community outreach strategy and annual patient journey surveys to enhance engagement and reach.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak IT compliance and data security increases risk of cyber attacks and prospect of a data breach harming Olive Tree's integrity, operation and reputation. IT system cannot support new record and appointment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of IT infrastructure and cyber security protocols with plan to provide annual cyber security training for staff and volunteers. Reviewing compliance with data protection and GDPR rules with training for Trustees, staff and volunteers. Working towards National Cyber Security Centre Cyber Essentials Framework. Developing a new, secure and GDPR compliant appointment and record database.

Financial	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on limited funding streams and non-recurring income. • Cost of living crisis, national economic policies and disaster appeals impact charitable giving. • Exposure to fraudulent use of charity funds and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated fundraising strategy and reserves policy to diversify funding sources and build resilience to external financial pressures. • Revising funding priorities to target income opportunities and promote financial security. 5-year strategic plan in place. • Anti-fraud policy update and fraud awareness refresher training planned for staff and volunteers in 2025.

Financial control

Olive Tree operates a robust internal financial controls framework to ensure responsible and transparent financial management. Key controls include:

- Protection of charitable assets and maximising resource use.
- Trustee compliance with charity law and financial regulations appropriate to the size and income of the organisation.
- Transparent monthly and annual financial reporting.
- Procedures to prevent and manage conflict of interest, loss, bribery, theft, or fraud (being reviewed).
- Assurance that contractual and funder obligations are consistently met.

3.3 Fundraising activities

Key donations and grants received in 2023/2024

The provision of our services is primarily dependent upon funding made through charitable donations and grants.

Olive Tree's promise to the general public, our community and to our valued supporters, staff and volunteers, is that our fundraising is, in all its forms, legal, open, honest, and respectful. We take every reasonable step necessary to comply with the law and are fully responsible for our actions, ensuring that our fundraising is carried out in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice. We make sure that all of those who fundraise on our behalf do likewise and, as such, do not cause detriment to the Charity's reputation. We also verify that all such fundraising activities are in-line with both our ethical standards and legal requirements.



Sophia Rapley
Head of Fundraising
and Communications
(April - October 2024)

Olive Tree, in deciding whether to accept a donation or gift, considers the Charity's best overall interest, and will refuse donations from donors whose activities appear to be in direct conflict with any of our charitable aims or objectives.

Supporters who wish to donate to a specific area of Olive Tree's work can do so by providing written instruction to this effect with their donation. Olive Tree will always respect this. If Olive Tree is unable to accept such a request, then the donation is refused or refunded if the donor does not wish the money to be used for a suitable alternative purpose.

Fundraising Performance

Following the departure of Sophia Rapley in October 2024, the trustees have taken the opportunity to adopt a new fundraising approach by engaging two individuals to specialise in specific areas of fundraising including trusts and foundations, and corporate partnerships and community.

We are grateful for the work of Sophia Rapley and Helena Taylor during their time at Olive Tree and wish them both good luck in their future endeavours. We would like to thank The Henry Smith Charity for their continued support of the fundraising position again this year.

We greatly appreciate the efforts and generosity of all who have contributed to our funds over the past year. Our overall income in 2023/24 from all sources (excluding investment income) was £198,637 (2022/23: £99,239).

We were grateful to receive grants from The National Lottery Community Fund - RC London and South East, Gatwick Airport Community Trust, Longley Trust, Albert Hunt, The Hendy Foundation, Horsham District Council and Woodroffe Benton Foundation, the Louis Nicholas Residuary Trust, Ludlow Trust, and Stockwell Cliffe Charitable Trust. We would also like to thank Crawley Borough Council, The High Sheriff of West Sussex, Red River, Legal & General, RSA, Aspen Place Care Home, RSM, Southwater Parish and Marsh Charitable Trust for their financial support, and express our gratitude for the kind and generous donations in memory received in the year; in these toughest of times - every contribution we receive makes a significant difference. We would also like to thank The Coot, the Red Deer, Bohunt School, The Hawth Theatre, HSBC, RAM Club, Cottessmore Golf Club and Horsham and Three Bridges Football Clubs for their support.

Olive Tree in the Community

Many of our volunteers and supporters have continued to raise money through their own initiatives. We are extremely proud of them and sincerely grateful for their exceptional efforts.

Yard Games

Bluecoat Sports Health and Fitness Club, a long-standing supporter, held a unique challenge event during May to raise funds for Olive Tree. Sheri our Horsham centre manager attended to raise awareness about our Charity, and provided moral support for the event participants, faced with various strength, endurance and metabolic exercises.

Christmas Bazaar

We held our first Christmas Bazaar in November, which was a great success. Age UK kindly loaned us their community café area for the afternoon, which became a hub of festive activity. We had many generous raffle donations from members, independent retailers and local businesses alike. Attendees enjoyed browsing a variety of stalls, including hand crafted items, jewellery, skin care, and a selection of delicious samosas and traditional Indian snacks. The Olive Tree team sang Christmas carols acapella style, to add to the festive atmosphere, and were delighted that some members and stall holders joined our impromptu choir.



March into March

A first of its kind for Olive Tree. This event saw many of our members, and other members of the public, March into March, by walking 31 miles during the month to raise funds for the Charity. The feedback we received was extremely positive. One member going through treatment at the time said, "It's the best thing I've ever done."

Horsham Rotary Funday

One of our yearly highlights is attending Horsham Rotary Funday, in Horsham Park. Despite the torrential rain this year, a good time was still had by all. Charlotte our Communications Administrator offered glitter tattoos for donations, beautifully modelled by two Funday attendees, and Sheri chatted with members of the public, sharing information about our services. We were also proud to see two of our volunteers singing with The Rock choir in the afternoon.



Goff's Park

On the 4th of August we attended Goffs Park Platinum Picnic, a vibrant annual community event in Crawley. Terrie, our Crawley centre manager, alongside Emma Maxwell & Kerry Duval represented Olive Tree on the day. Massage treatments were offered in exchange for donations.

Crawley Pride

Abundant with colour, fun and diversity! Crawley Pride 2024 didn't disappoint. There were famous LGBTQIA+ acts, amazing local artists, businesses and charities, giving us the opportunity to raise awareness about what we do within the Crawley LGBTQ community. On the day we were supported by one of our volunteers, Karen plus Sally, Tesco's CFC Community Lead, who created some fabulous glitter tattoo designs for festival goers.



RAM Club Quiz

The RAM Club is one of Olive Tree's longest supporters.

Special thanks to Katie Drury & Raj Limbachia for organising multiple quizzes throughout the year, hosted at Ram Sports, Crawley. There were many generous donors (see photo) who dramatically helped boost the fundraising. All tickets were sold, making the evenings a huge success. The food was delicious too!

BAPS 10K Walk

In August, Sophia, our Head of Fundraising and Communications at the time, attended the BAP's Annual Charity Challenge and Family Fun Day at Hazelwick School, Crawley. Participants took on the challenge of a 10K walk, in support of Olive Tree. More than 100 people from toddlers through to senior citizens came together to participate. Not only do Community groups, such as BAPS help boost our fundraising, they also provide us the opportunity to reach and support more people within ethnic minority groups.



“BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha is a spiritual, volunteer-driven fellowship dedicated to improving society through individual growth by fostering the Hindu values of faith, service and global harmony.”
BAPS 2024.



Nathan Jones, pictured left having just completed the Brighton half marathon.

Nathan was the top fundraiser on Just Giving for Olive Tree in the year.

All the income received has proved vital in our ongoing provision of services, continuing to help improve the lives of our many users affected by cancer, and has helped us build a necessary financial buffer to secure the delivery of our services for the foreseeable future.

Engagement with our donors

Our donors are critical to the ongoing success of Olive Tree. As well as being a source of funding, they are also often the most enthusiastic supporters and promoters of our goals and mission. Funders require tailored information and ongoing communication by way of monitoring and end of funding reports, and we are committed to collecting and providing the most useful data so that they can continue to trust in our delivery of services. For individual and corporate donors, we have created a fundraising pack that ensures each donor is supported and recognised at each stage of their fundraising journey in a consistent way.

Looking Forward

With new members registering to use our services month on month, and with a focus on developing our services to ensure that they are as wide-reaching and inclusive as possible, whilst engaging and training our volunteers, our fundraising challenge will become greater. To date, this has proved to be very challenging. There is greater competition for grants and community funds available to us. We are exploring ways to diversify our income streams so that we tap into the community spirit present in the areas in which we work, strengthening our connections with local businesses, creating more fundraising activities in our Centres and engaging more effectively and consistently with individual fundraisers.

3.4 Stakeholder management and communications

Engagement with our stakeholders remains a high priority for Olive Tree and is a means of advising us of the impacts of our decisions and enabling us to better respond to their needs. The development and building of strong relationships with each of them is an important, ongoing part of our Charity operations and governance. Our key stakeholders are below:



All trustees and management are committed to being open and transparent with the charity regulators and to meeting all of the small charity compliance requirements. A thorough and up-to-date understanding of legislation affecting Olive Tree such as Charity Commission regulatory reporting (changes to SORP, best practice guides, new trustee information) and forums for trustees and staff is core to ensuring that all decisions conform to the relevant guidance and constraints.

Ongoing provision of feedback and testimonials from the users of Olive Tree are integral to the continuous shaping and improvement of services. [As a minimum, we conduct a service user satisfaction survey every three years and issue a new user satisfaction survey on an annual basis

We actively use a range of communication channels in order to keep our service users informed. For example, we issue a monthly update newsletter from the Centre management team, we extend an invitation to attend the AGM, and we circulate our Annual Report to members. We aim to further increase our usage of social media platforms, which allow us to freely engage with our supporters and those interested in our work by publishing our latest news, details of our fundraising events and campaigns, and up to date information regarding our service provision.

We are extremely grateful to our donors because, as a self-funded charity, without them Olive Tree would struggle to survive. We engage with each of these on an individual and tailored basis, and ensure that their required funding reports, both interim and at the end of funding, are submitted in a complete and timely manner.

Engagement with the local community (such as Crawley Local Community Network and Local Cancer Network), the general public and media through various community fundraising events, other Centres (Horizon in Brighton, Age UK in Horsham and Horsham District Council Wellbeing Centre), and meetings with local GP practices promoting Olive Tree, remain a priority.

4. Financial report

4.1 The Financial Review 2023/2024

Treasurer's report

The Charity has experienced a better fundraising year in the 2023/24 year, partly due to grants expected in the previous year being received at the start of this year without which there would have been a small deficit in the year. Looking back over the years, the volatility is self-evident, illustrating one of the Charity's primary risks - a very low proportion of recurring income, which means that more than 70% of the income to cover expense needs to be raised from scratch each year.

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Income excluding interest	£198,637	£99,239	£182,762 ¹	£113,485 ¹

¹ Includes bequests of £81,955 in 2022 and £12,000 in 2021

This is largely a consequence of the nature of the Charity's funding, comprising primarily donations, grants, legacies and other non-recurring income, resulting in a less predictable income stream than many other similar organisations. Thankfully, the strong financial position at the end of the year means the Charity remains well placed to continue delivering its services in the near term.

The surplus for the year of £25,925 follows a deficit of £(81,621) in the prior year. That surplus is a result of a combination of income received this year that was expected in the prior year and certain budgeted expenditure either being deferred or not incurred. Details of expenses can be found in the Income and Expenditure Account at section 4.3. Our reserves take account of the long-term nature of our operations and the needs of our service users. We plan to keep them at the level required in the Reserves Policy, fully taking account of the wide range of risks to which the Charity is exposed. The self-funding nature of the Charity presents significant reliance on income received, with inherent volatility. Outgoings, by contrast, comprise items such as staff costs, premises, IT, therapy and volunteer expenses which are stable and, in many cases, unrelated to activity levels.

Income

The primary sources of income are donations, fundraising activities and legacies, together with certain grants, including those listed in "Large Donations, Grants and Bequests" section later in this report. Income received in the year was £206,375 (inclusive of interest), significantly up from £104,435 in the prior year, details of which are in section 4.3 Income and Expenditure Account. Part of the increase is due to certain grants where payments were delayed from the previous financial year and so are included in this year.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year was £180,420, slightly down from £186,056 in the prior year. The decrease of £5,636 was as a result of a £19,140 increase in staff costs, offset by expense reductions in equipment and maintenance and drop-in and therapy expenses. The equipment expense has been deferred rather than saved and will be incurred in 2024 / 25.

Financial Impact

Activity levels in the Crawley and Horsham centres have continued to grow during the year. We currently have a significant waiting list for our services and a shortage of volunteer therapists. We continue with the drive to recruit additional volunteer therapists and counsellors, as well as receptionists, to enable us to address that list which will, of course, further increase the drop-in and therapy expenses.

Financial Outlook

There are a number of areas which will give rise to increased expenses in the coming year. The increase in activity has necessitated the recruitment of a part time office administrator, and there will also be a new Fundraising and Communications structure in place. The fact that less than 25% of the annual expense budget is covered by ongoing grants also presents a very considerable fundraising challenge in the coming year.

While the level of reserves held at the start of 2024/2025 are slightly up on the start of the previous year, they are considerably down on the year before. Nonetheless, reserves still provide a financial buffer, giving the trustees a high level of confidence that sufficient funds can be raised to continue delivering services for the foreseeable future.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds comprise amounts received for a specific purpose. Such funds are monitored to ensure they are only applied for the purpose specified, and any balance of such funds is recorded separately.

	£
Funds b/fwd	1,478
Income Received	39,000
Expenses Paid	(38,429)
Funds c/fwd	£ 2,049

Horsham Services. A five-year grant totalling £100,000 was awarded by The National Lottery Community Fund - RC London and South East Region in 2023. Of that, £20,000 was received in the year of which £15,283 was expended in the year. At the date this report was approved, that amount was fully expended.

Horsham Services. A grant of £10,000 from the Sussex Community Foundation in respect of Horsham Centre costs was received and has been fully expended.

Fundraising Officer. A grant was received from the Henry Smith Charity in the amount of £6,600 to support the role of Fundraising Officer. The grant received has been fully expended in the year, with no amounts being held over.

Counselling. A grant of £500 was received from Little Magic Grants for counselling, which was fully expended in the year.

Reserves held

Unrestricted reserves, comprising that part of a Charity's unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Charity's purposes, were £234,597, increasing from £213,389 for the prior year, are in line with the reserving policy (below) and follow the surplus of income over expenditure detailed on page 25, adjusted for the movement in restricted funds. Details of funds invested are included on page 26.

Risk management and reserves

The trustees undertake regular assessments and, where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces. These inform the trustees' consideration of an appropriate target range for reserves.

Reserves targets are calculated by reference to the forward financial outlook and the risks facing the Charity, with the aim of ensuring that key services are sustainable, and that early action can be taken to deal with matters as they arise.

Reserves Policy

The trustees set, publish, implement and monitor the Reserves Policy in line with the guidance provided by the Charity Commission in England and Wales, “Charity Reserves and Building Resilience” (CC19) to ensure compliance with their legal duties to:

- a. act in the interests of their charity and its beneficiaries
- b. protect and safeguard the assets of their charity
- c. act with reasonable care and skill
- d. ensure their charity is accountable.

The trustees have reviewed the financial risks facing the organisation (see Risk Management section) and quantified both the probability and magnitude of those risks. The trustees have resolved as a policy to set both an upper and a lower limit of unrestricted reserves to be maintained for such purposes, and to act to increase or decrease expenditure if the reserves fall outside those limits.

At the date of the approval of this report by the trustees, the target range of reserves was £206,000 to £310,000 (2023: £196,000) to £295,000), slightly up on the previous year. This is due to reduction in precontracted income at the time of the review, which increases the dependence of in-year fundraising to meet costs.

Actual unrestricted reserves at £238,743 (2023: £213,389) are within the target range.

Large Donations, Grants and Bequests

Significant amounts (£2,000+) were received from:

Estate of June Aird (Final)	5,091
Henry Smith	6,600
ICB Grant	27,797
Legal and General matching Claire Wilde swim	3,737
Louis Nicholas	5,000
Mayor's Office Crawley BC	2,949
OptiGene Foundation	10,000
RAM Social Club (Giftaid to follow)	2,000
RSM Golf Day RSM UK Foundation	2,906
T.C.R. International NV (€3,000)	2,522
The National Lottery Community Fund - RC London and South East Region*	20,000
The Sussex Community Foundation	10,000

* part of a 5-year grant totalling £100,000 over the term of the grant.

Fundraising donations via JustGiving were £28,105.

Independent Examiner

Sue Edwards has been appointed as independent examiner to Olive Tree Cancer Support Group during the year following the resignation of Ian Lineham from that role.

Approved by the trustees on 21 May 2025 and signed on their behalf by



Trevor Chrismas
Chair and Treasurer

4.2 Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Olive Tree Cancer Support Group, registered charity 1157386

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Olive Tree Cancer Support Group ("the Charity") for the year ended 31 August 2024 set out on pages 25 to 26.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

S. m. Edwards
Sue Edwards
Chartered Certified Accountant
74 Anderida Road
Lower Willingdon
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 0PZ

Date 23 May 2025

4.3 Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 August 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Income		
Fundraising and Donations	80,163	54,633
Grants	85,092	30,950
Bequests	5,413	-
Drop-in and Therapy Donations	13,775	9,959
Events	14,194	3,697
Total Operating Income	198,637	99,239
Interest	7,738	5,196
Total Income	206,375	104,435
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	130,212	110,049
Drop-in and Therapy expenses	10,259	17,950
Cleaning and Laundry	5,063	5,164
IT and Telecoms	5,240	6,332
Equipment and Maintenance	2,310	14,177
Premises	21,500	24,551
Fund Raising	1,115	2,584
General Expenses	4,751	4,748
Training	-	501
Total Expenditure	180,450	186,056
Excess of Income over Expenditure	25,925	(81,621)
Opening Funds	214,867	296,488
Closing Funds	240,792	214,867
Reserves		
At 31 August		
Cash at Bank	240,792	214,867
Restricted Funds	(2,049)	(1,478)
Unrestricted Reserves	238,743	213,389

Notes to the Financial Statements

The Charity had funds at 31 August 2024 of £240,792 (2023: £214,867) which were invested as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
CAF Cash Account (current account)	11,281	12,701
CAF Cash No 2 (current account)	1,796	
CAF Gold Account (immediately available)	17,900	24,000
CAF Gold (Direct Donations, immediately available)	597	1,100
Cambridge and Counties (95 days' notice)	80,300	80,283
Redwood Bank (95 days' notice)	58,918	56,783
Saffron Building Society (immediately available)	70,000	40,000
	<u>£240,792</u>	<u>£214,867</u>



OLIVE TREE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP CONTACT DETAILS

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