



Peace Oak Association

(Charity No 117221)

Registered Office: 74 Acre End Street, Eynsham, OX29 4PD

Annual Report 2025

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The Management Committee and Trustees

The Trustees set the strategic direction of the Charity and are elected for three year terms. They are assisted in the day to day management of the Peace Oak by other members of the Association in the Management Committee.

Trustees in 2025

Hywel Edwards

David Knight

Sue Raikes

Phil Snelling

Les Swarbrick (from January 2025)

Other members of the Management Committee

Sarah Couch

Ursula Howard (from January 2025)

Ian Middleton (until November 2025)

Kalani Seymour (from January 2025)

Report from the Board of Trustees

2025 was a busy year for the Peace Oak Orchard and the Trustees and management committee would like to thank everyone who has been involved in making the Peace Oak a key community space in our village. Our members, management committee, volunteers, plot holders, partner organisations and visitors highlight the importance of the Peace Oak Orchard as a space where we can express our commitment to our fellow community members, whether that's a community of place, a community of growers or a community of interest such as willow weavers or wood carvers.

At the heart of this community activity are our monthly field days, held on the second Saturday. Here the maintenance and development tasks that keep the orchard functioning can be carried out, such as weeding, managing the pond and wild flower area or turning the compost heaps.

Such days are a testament to joyful togetherness, usually powered by delicious cake. We are also helped by Duke of Edinburgh students who are seeking their volunteer badge and we thank them for their input. We would love to see more members join our field days to help keep the space a hotspot for nature, a great place to grow food and a peaceful, welcoming spot to hang out.

One of the major tasks throughout the year is to cut the grass around the site and management committee member Ian Middleton has been a committed grass cutter for the past several years. Family commitments means he has stood down from this role. It is such an important task and we thank Ian for his contribution. We are looking for new volunteers to help us with this task in 2026.

We have also been able to borrow the scythes of Eynsham's Nature Recovery Network to cut and rake the grass manually as well. it's so exciting to keep traditional methods such as this alive and for our scythers to get a whole body workout too!

Our field day volunteers also helped us harvest our willow patch earlier in 2025, under the guidance of Charlotte, Paul and Andy from Willow Coppice. Willow withies grown at the Peace Oak orchard have been used for community projects and art installations during the year.

The drought of 2025 meant it was not a good year for our vines but with the help of a keen group of volunteers we kept them pruned and watered throughout the year with hopes of a better harvest in 2026. Many thanks to Ian Middleton for all of his work in this area.

Despite the dry weather, our fruit trees had a bumper year, perhaps helped by the expert pruning workshop Peace Oak members undertook with fruit tree expert Chris Lanczak from Waterperry Gardens who did the apple pruning session. Chris encouraged participants to be bold in their pruning which created much cut apple branches and twigs. In true Peace Oak fashion none of this cut wood was wasted and some was used in Craft Club carving sessions and the rest was great kindling for the fire.

During the year we encourage other groups to use the Peace Oak. The Eynsham Guides were one of our visiting groups and thanks to their efforts our bug hotel was moved into a sunnier spot and refurbished to create five star accommodation for our invertebrate friends.

We also welcomed the staff and volunteers of FarmAbility to a development session where participants carved butter knives from willow sourced at Hill End Outdoor Education Centre. FarmAbility is an Eynsham-based charity that runs a farm-based programme for adult with autism or learning disabilities on working farms and green spaces around Oxfordshire. We hope to welcome FarmAbility's co-farmers to the Peace Oak in 2026.

At the heart of the Peace Oak site are a series of allotment plot spaces and the wide range of fruit, vegetables and flowers our plot holders grow is always inspiring. The management

committee has been splitting plots as they become free so that more people can manage a plot land at the Peace Oak.

The investment in our well several years ago really paid off in a year like 2025, providing plot holders and our fruit trees with water throughout the summer. Our band of active volunteers kept our vines and apple trees watered through the hot dry Spring and Summer and their efforts were rewarded with an amazing apple crop.

The Peace Oak was the venue for a range of events through the year, some for members and others open to the whole community.

In January we held our now traditional wassail, toasting the apple trees with cider and clattering our pots and pans to scare away the spirits that could have hexed our crop. It seemed to be successful, given the boughs heaving with fruit in the autumn. Many thanks to Eynsham Community Choir and Eynsham Morris for their music and song.

In June we held our family picnic and enjoyed making elderflower fritters over the open fire and foraging for ground ivy to make tea. Many thanks to Millie for engaging the children in their hunt for this aromatic plant.

Craft Club ran from May to August, with participants enjoying the warmth and light of long summer evenings. Our tutors put on a fine choice of courses. The demand for Alison Holmans' coiled pots was so high we ran two sold-out sessions. Participants also enjoyed making leaf platters, wet felting, exploring plant and animal fibres, and making willow crown supports and beautiful willow balls.

For our Friday night Craft Club sessions we also encouraged folks to come and enjoy the ambience around the camp fire and perhaps enjoy their own crafting and it was lovely to see folks enjoying the space.

Our plant sale helped to raise important funds for the Peace Oak [bit more detail here]

October we held our biggest event of the year, Apple Day. With a range of activities and stalls well over 200 participants were able to enjoy the Peace Oak Orchard in all of its autumnal glory. Generating apple juice was highly popular but a special thanks is in order to Julie Macken of Neve's Bees who donated all of her sales taking on the day to the Peace Oak. We are very grateful.

The Apple Day indicated the importance of two other community groups in the village who are very important to the work of the Peace Oak. Members of Green TEA organised a wonderful plant-based food competition and Eynsham's Nature Recovery Network had an amazing interactive stall. We are proud to be in their company as community-based organisation championing the environment.

At the end of November management committee member set up shop at the Peace Oak shed to give away a bare rooted trees donated by the International Tree Foundation as part of the Big Garden Tree Giveaway. Folks came from across the County to pick up their trees and with several Eynsham residents visiting the Peace Oak for the first time it was a valuable event for raising our profile. We were able to use the left-over trees at our next field day to thicken the hedges at the Peace Oak too.

Our final event of the year was an informal gathering for the Winter Solstice, with mulled wine, mince pies and roasted chestnuts. We celebrated the solstice with winter torches. The hardy souls who braved the winter weather enjoyed the event which may become a fixture in our calendar.

Throughout the year Management Committee members have been moving forward with our plan to replace the current shed on site with a new building that is more flexible for our needs. After a successful community workshop in 2024 we worked with Trevor Taw of TawFitzwilliam architects in the village to draw up a pre-planning application, which we submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council to iron out any possible concerns before a full application is submitted.

One major decision for the Committee was the type of toilet that we should have on site. Our loo sub-committee put in many hours investigating options from sites across the County, including the new compost loo at the Eynsham allotments, the new septic tank loo at Bridewell Organic Gardens and possible connections to the mains sewer system. This was a big decision to make and we have decided to go with a modern compost loo design that will be part of the main structure of the property.

After feedback from Council planning officers we have revised our draft plans for the shed and these are now being drawn up into a formal planning application by colleagues at TawFitzwilliam. It is our intention to consult on the draft planning application with our site neighbours, members and the Parish Council early in 2026 before the planning application is formally submitted. If we are successful in our application then a significant amount of effort will be expended in fund-raising for the new shed and considering the construction process.

The Trustees and Management Committee

The Peace Oak Association has trustees who are formally responsible for the governance of the charity but run the Peace Oak Orchard with a larger management committee who take on key roles to help things run smoothly.

Sue Raikes and Hywel Edwards will step down as trustees as we enter the New Year. Sue was a founding trustee for the Peace Oak Association from March 2017 and in recent years has been the Chair of trustees. She has provided sensitive and thoughtful leadership to the management committee over several years and her network of contacts in the community has been of immense help in guiding the success of our events and activities.

Hywel joined as a trustee in June 2018 and has been an exemplary treasurer of the Charity as well as leading on field days and mentoring Duke of Edinburgh students. Hywel has helped secure the sound financial position of our charity and his galvanising of volunteer effort on site to make our Community Orchard as welcoming and pleasant as it is has been crucial to our success as a green oasis at the heart of Eynsham.

The Management Committee has been pleased to welcome Ursula Howard and Kalani Seymour as members. Both have immediately thrown themselves into the work of the charity and taken the lead in key areas.

Finances

Our expenditure exceeded our income by £1478 this year as we spent some of the donations received last year to take forward the shed project.

Core income comes from membership and plot fees. Other income included further donations towards the shed project as well as sales and net income from Craft Club activities after tutors fees were paid.. Membership grew again from 120 to 127 total meters including individual and family members.

Our expenditure of £5785 was higher than last year as it included further shed fees and important safety work on the trees on site, an activity that happens every couple of years following a comprehensive tree safety survey. Mowing fees were higher than last year. Our general reserves stand at £3,341, our Project Shed reserves £3,174 and our Contingency fund unchanged from last year at £1,750.

Peace Oak Association Management Committee , December 2026

	From To	1 Jan 2025 31 Dec 2025	1 Jan 2024 31 Dec 2024
Income			
Donations		238	203
Donations for Shed		1,220	5,000
Sales/Events		300	810
Net receipts Craft Club		301	245
Subscriptions (ending 2024)		-	1,543
Subscriptions (ending 2025)		1,605	110
Subscriptions (ending 2026)		95	-
Allotment Plots		86	78
CAG Grant		-	580
Gift Aid		462	1,662
Total		4,307	10,231
Expenditure			
Construction		24	-
Equipment		-	-
Plants/Tree work		3,194	-
Material		65	-
Mowing		414	268
Planking		-	-
Room hire/Meeting expenses		-	-
Fencing		-	-
Events		29	142
Miscellaneous		51	-
Shed		1,746	3,331
Insurance		262	306
Total		5,785	4,047
Surplus		(1,478)	6,184
Surplus brought forward		9,743	3,559
Surplus carried forward		8,265	9,743
Balance sheet			
Cash		54	257
Bank		8,211	9,486
Total reserves		8,265	9,743
General reserves		3,341	4,594
Shed reserves (see below)		3,174	3,399
Contingency reserves		1,750	1,750
Shed Reserves			
<i>B/f</i>		3,399	
<i>Donations</i>		1,220	5,000
<i>Grant from CAG</i>			480

<i>Gift Aid</i>		1,250
<i>Transfer from general reserves</i>	301	
<i>Expenditure</i>	<u>(1,746)</u>	<u>(3,331)</u>
	3,174	3,399