

THE WORD FOREST ORGANISATION

England & Wales · Charity number 1172497

Details

Other names Word Forest

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2017-04-07

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Barnpark
Green Lane
Tipton St. John
Sidmouth
Devon
EX10 0AH

Phone 01297 533 111

Email team@wordforest.org

Website <https://www.wordforest.org/>

Activities

Objects: To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public in countries to be determined by the Trustees by:(a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;(b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

Activities: We plant forests around impoverished communities, encouraging the people who plant them to be true guardians of their woodland. We build classrooms in schools that have inadequate or non-existent places to study creating better environments to learn. We raise awareness about global environmental issues and sustainable living practices that benefit the entire planet through film showings and talks.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Environment/conservation/heritage, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Children/young People, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Kenya
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£67,508	£65,338	-	-
2024-03-31	£76,508	£82,241	-	-
2023-03-31	£101,738	£98,353	-	-
2022-03-31	£81,382	£96,978	-	-
2021-04-05	£76,147	£69,665	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Benjamin Hemington		2025-10-18
Camille Oster		2022-06-02
Eva Dixon		2021-03-06
Mrs Isobel Robertson		2017-04-07
Philip Gamble		2019-04-15
TRACY HOWE		2017-04-07

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Accounts

Annual Report

2024-2025





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About the Charity

This is the Annual Report and Accounts for Word Forest, a charity registered in the United Kingdom by the Charity Commission.

Charity No: 1172497

Registered Address and Contact Details

Barnpark, Green Lane, Tipton St John
Devon EX10 0AH

Tel: 01297 533 111

Email: team@WordForest.org

Website: WordForest.org

Trustees

Mr Simon West (Chair of Trustees)

Ms Rikey Austin

Ms Eva Dixon

Mr Philip Gamble

Ms Camille Oster

Mrs Izzy Robertson

Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Tracey West FRSA

Managing Director

Mr Simon West

Patrons

Clare Nasir and Zena Edwards

Special Advisors

Bill McGuire and Jo Lawrance

Our Constitutional Structure

Word Forest was incorporated as a CIO on 7th April 2017. Our constitution follows the model for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as set out by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and was adopted on 7th April 2017 and revised on 1st February 2021.

Charitable Objects and Public Benefit

To promote sustainable development* for the benefit of the public in countries to be determined by the Trustees by:

- (a) *the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;*
- (b) *the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.*

The positive social impact of our work is considered before we direct our tree-planting communities, and outcomes are directly monitored. This enables the Trustees to be confident that the charity has, through its range of activities, achieved significant public benefit for the community in Kenya, and in countries as determined by the Trustees.

*Sustainable development means "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 in planning our activities.

From the Board



Tracey West: CEO and Fundraiser

They say that as one door closes, another one opens. As I draw my tenure as CEO to a close, Simon West has come bounding through the door holding a bunch of keys for all the new ones he is gatekeeper of!

Along with phenomenal assistance from our Corporate Partner, Oaklin, over the last few years Simon has championed our acquisition of Gold Standard accreditation (do have a read of my last post for more info <https://www.wordforest.org/handing-over-the-torch/>) It has been a very long journey, but one where the attention to detail has become more critical than ever before and quite right too. If you're reading this, I'm quite sure you'll be aware of the bad press selling carbon offsets has had in recent years and for good reason.

When Simon and I co-founded Word Forest back in 2017, along with the support of a great bunch of trustees, we set a high bar for reforestation Kenya from day one. We chose a region that had serious meteorological challenges but handled well, they gave us great opportunities for change too. Also, like many other parts of Kenya, let's just say the women had a great many areas where empowerment, education and humanitarian support would come in really handy.

We exceeded our targets for tree planting, classroom and house building, empowerment and education. We opened many new doors along the way that we didn't realise needed opening.. The distribution of many hundreds of menstrual cups in trade for sapling planting is a great example. They were given to women and girls who struggled to find safe, clean items to help them cope with their periods. These cups have changed countless lives in countless ways! They've enabled the users to live life to the full and rid themselves of the persecution that comes with a natural bodily function.

Simple touches like this have helped Word Forest build the trust and confidence of many communities who through education now understand the connection between trees and climate. Simon's recent initiative offering mental health support to the men in our team, has been received with huge thanks. Yeah, we need women's empowerment but we also need the full buy-in from the men too!

In order to be able to offer businesses the very best carbon credits that come with an incredible bundle of additional benefits, just like the menstrual cups, Simon has led the charity down a very long and winding road. I'm thrilled to reveal, as a result of his dogged determination and tenacity, we are now listed on the Gold Standard's registry. Simon really is the best person to write the next exciting chapter in our history.

Today is my last day. This is my last post as CEO. I couldn't be more proud of the team that has supported my ambitious ideas: Simon, the Trustees, Sue, Jed, Jo, the volunteers, the many dozens of undergraduates from Oxford that I nurtured through their internships - *asante sana* to you all. Unlike many CEOs who think they're at the top of the tree, I've always thought of myself positioned at the bottom of an inverse pyramid. I supported the trustees to make their best decisions, they supported the volunteers and staff to execute their duties, they supported the supporters (that's you, that is) and collectively we all supported our wonderful beneficiaries, who support the trees, who go on to support our planet.

"We exceeded our targets for tree planting, classroom and house building, empowerment and education"



I know Simon feels exactly the same as I do. His job is to support you, whether you're a business with 100 tonnes of CO₂ to offset, or you wish to buy 10 trees to give to a friend as a birthday present. Word Forest can handle it - we managed to get almost 1.5 million trees in the ground under my watch and Simon, along with our incredible team, is poised, ready to supercharge that.

Will I miss the job? Hell, yeah.

Nothing beats waking up at 6am to a bunch of uplifting WhatsApp messages, photos and videos from our colleagues in Kenya who are two or three hours ahead of us!

Thank you all for letting me be a cog in the most incredible wheel that is Word Forest.

Way before I was an environmental columnist in the 90's and long before I went on my first environmental march with my young children, I have always thought of myself as being in service to our planet. That was never more so than when I was CEO of Word Forest. I shall remain sincerely, forever in the service of Mother Nature and our planet.

Kwaheri,

Tracey x





Simon West: Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

In 2024, charities worldwide continued to navigate a challenging economic landscape. Inflationary pressures, shifting donor priorities, and increasing demands on charitable services have made it more difficult than ever to secure funding. Despite this, Word Forest has remained steadfast in our mission, ensuring that every pound we receive makes a tangible difference in Kenya, where trees are planted, communities are strengthened, and futures are shaped.

As you will see in the CEO's report, we are not alone in facing financial pressures. Many charities are competing for limited funding, and we have felt the impact of this reality. However, rather than viewing this as a setback, we see it as an opportunity to adapt, innovate, and grow stronger.

Over the past year, we have taken significant steps to future-proof our work. Our grant applications have been refined to be more compelling than ever. Our progress towards becoming certified carbon offset providers is nearing completion, unlocking new revenue streams and corporate engagement. Our relationships with corporate partners remain strong, and we are actively developing new ways to attract sustainable support from businesses that prioritise Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.

Our efforts to gain Gold Standard registration have, at long last, been rewarded. Just before the end of the financial year, our project gained 'listed' status. This is a major milestone and I believe that it will allow Word Forest to gain considerable new streams of income.



Most importantly, the impact of our work continues to grow. We have increased the number of trees planted, expanded our educational programmes, and strengthened our support for the Resilient Brothers and Mothers of the Forest. The installation of piped water to the Permaculture Teaching Centre in Garashi is almost complete, and our unwavering commitment to ensuring that the majority of our funds directly support beneficiaries remains a core principle.

We are more determined than ever to ensure that 2025 is a year of growth and renewed support. With your help, we will continue to empower communities in Kenya, combat climate change, and inspire action worldwide.

My heartfelt thanks go to all of our donors, corporate partners, volunteers, and employees. Together, we are proving that even in difficult times, resilience, dedication, and a shared vision can create a lasting impact.

Finally, this will be the last Report & Accounts for me as Managing Director and Chair of Trustees. From April 2025 I have taken on the role of Chief Executive Officer, with the Chair of Trustees position now rotating among the five Trustees.

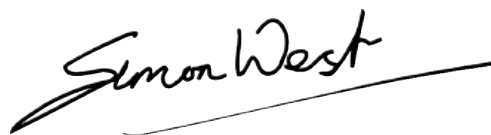
Although Tracey is moving away from the role of CEO, her passion for our mission remains as strong as ever, and she will continue to do all she can for the charity she built with such love and determination.

Everything Word Forest has achieved exists because of Tracey. Her unwavering dedication, tireless efforts, and deep commitment to making the world a greener, fairer place have shaped this organisation in ways too numerous to count. She has made an extraordinary impact-not only through the many trees planted but in the lives changed and communities strengthened, both here and in Kenya.

To say I am proud to take the torch from her is an understatement. It is a privilege to continue this work, to build on the foundations she has laid, and to ensure that Word Forest goes from strength to strength. I will do my utmost to honour Tracey's vision and legacy.

Thank you, Tracey, for everything you have done - and continue to do - for Word Forest and for the planet.

As an indication of our immense gratitude for everything she has done, The Board and I have decided to bestow upon Tracey the title Founder and President Emerita, in recognition of her outstanding leadership and lasting contributions. This title signifies deep respect and appreciation for her service while allowing her to remain connected in an advisory and ambassadorial capacity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon West". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

“Over the past year we have taken significant steps to future-proof our work”

Rikey Austin: Ethics Trustee

This is not the piece I intended to write.

I want to start with a huge and heartfelt thank you to Tracey for the passion and dedication that she has brought to her role. She is, without a doubt, the heart, the light and laughter of the Word Forest, and always, always will be. Simon's achievements are not surprising, considering his unwavering patience and determination. He is the gentlest of pit bulls! It has also been amazing to watch the team overall grow and mature. I am proud to be a very small cog in an organisation that is an ethical dream.

I have, however, been struggling to find something new and interesting to say.

Then, this past weekend, I was told about a young life lost locally in a tragic accident. The grief felt by this small community was unimaginable.

No-one could have seen it coming, no-one could have prevented it, but the loss is huge, bitter and raw. This was a stranger to me, but I was shaken. I was reminded of the countless lives of strangers that are affected or lost every day because of the damage being done to our planet.

I was reminded that if we fail to make the changes needed to stop climate change, to protect key ecosystems and to push back hard against the rising tides of greed and ignorance that we see gaining momentum globally, we all have everything to lose.

This loss is reversible. We can all do something to make a difference. The Word Forest creates opportunities at all levels, as individuals, as organisations and as communities, for us to make that difference. It pools our collective knowledge, skills and resources and allows us to be part of the fix. No matter how big or small our contribution, we are all making a difference that will affect the lives of strangers the whole world over. Whether it's planting a tree to celebrate a birthday, or to mark someone passing, each tree makes a tiny difference, and lots of tiny differences add up to real change.

More than ever, I am deeply grateful to Tracey and Simon for creating this opportunity for us all.

R Austin



Eva Dixon: International Development Trustee

Over the past year, Kenya has faced significant political, economic, and social challenges, each one a testament to the nation's resilience. These include:

- *Severe flooding in early 2024, which led to loss of life and displaced communities.*
- *The Finance Bill 2024, proposing sweeping tax reforms, sparked widespread protests. Demonstrations escalated in June, resulting in clashes with security forces and tragic casualties.*
- *Reports of police brutality during protests have drawn criticism from human rights organisations, with investigations still ongoing.*
- *Intense political debates and alliances, with figures like President William Ruto and opposition leader Raila Odinga shaping the national discourse.*

The broader landscape, including the UK, has also been challenging. Trump's return to the White House and his inward-facing policies have caused further disruption. Pressures on climate change and sustainability initiatives, coupled with funding cuts, are impacting the work of international development agencies and organisations - affecting the communities served by our charity for years to come.

Despite these challenges, Word Forest has continued to deliver meaningful impact in Kenya. This year, we have supported 33 Mothers of the Forest and planted many thousands of trees. My heartfelt thanks to Tracey, Simon, and the rest of the team for their unwavering dedication in the face of adversity.

Wangari Maathai's words remain a source of inspiration for sustainability and environmental stewardship:

"You can make a lot of speeches, but the real thing is when you dig a hole, plant a tree, give it water, and make it survive. That's what makes the difference."



"...Word forest has continued to deliver meaningful impact in Kenya"

Phil Gamble: Horticultural Trustee

My local involvements here in West Dorset, UK, continue to support Word Forest in meaningful and ever-evolving ways

For over four decades, I've shared my passion for the natural world through horticultural talks, lectures, and practical demonstrations. This year, I was delighted to give a talk at Harbour House Residential Home, where I presented a slideshow on wildlife gardening. The residents were thoroughly engaged, asked brilliant questions, and generously donated to Word Forest. Even more heartening, they've asked me to return for more sessions and are exploring how they can support us further by making their own collective group donation. It's a reminder that even small-scale community gatherings can seed real change, and that anyone with knowledge to share can turn it into something impactful for the planet.

The Netherbury Nature Group, based in my home village near Bridport, also continues to be a supportive and enthusiastic ally. They stay closely in touch with our charity's progress and are always eager for updates. Local groups like these may seem far from the tropics, but they are vital to nurturing awareness and action for reforestation and resilience-building abroad.

I'm especially excited by Word Forest's next big step: the launch of our new permaculture training course for Kenyan farmers. This hands-on, practical curriculum will empower growers to maximise yields, restore degraded land, and enhance food security. Even more importantly, it's now being translated into Kiswahili to ensure it's as accessible as possible. This initiative has huge potential and I encourage everyone who can, to spread the word and support it however they can.

Wishing all the crew at Word Forest continued energy and success, especially our new CEO... go Simon!



"...the launch of our new permaculture training course for Kenyan farmers"



Camille Oster: PR Trustee

It's been really inspiring working with the Word Forest team over the past year. Despite numerous hurdles, their relentless energy and creative problem-solving approach to tackling business obstacles or navigating people challenges has been truly impressive.

I've become involved in helping recruit social media volunteers, brainstorming donor acquisition strategies, and contributing to Word Forest's evolving corporate partnership narrative - which has been really interesting and a major learning experience. Each board meeting has been uplifting - purely because seeing so many passionate people, so deeply invested in an organisation's future, is very rare.

One milestone we celebrated was achieving carbon credits certification. I know this accomplishment didn't come easily, and required a lot of effort and detailed documentation, plus persistent follow-through on Simon and Tracey's part, but the entire team recognised the amazing potential this has for Word Forest's future sustainability efforts. I think this certification will unlock lots of new and significant opportunities for Word Forest in the coming year.

The charity's commitment to the four pillars - planting trees, empowering women, building classrooms, and facilitating education - continues to be a big source of inspiration for me. Not many charities combine so many ambitious goals with such continued impact, and Word Forest deserves to be better known for this. The carbon certification gives us an opportunity to spread the word, reach wider audiences, and secure more substantial support for this work. I'm really grateful to play even a small part in it.

Izzy Robertson: Literacy Trustee



I remain incredibly proud of the work that Word Forest does, and honoured to be part of such a wonderful team; not just the staff and volunteers, both here and in Kenya, but our corporate partners and supporters too. Every single one of you makes such a big difference and it's you and your kindness, generosity and energy that get us through the challenges and let us celebrate the good times. Thank you.

The Mothers of the Forest in Garashi and Rusinga Island go from strength to strength – they continue to embrace learning and sharing their knowledge with others. They are a positive force for change and an inspiration to others in their communities. Our Kenyan team works tirelessly to promote tree planting and permaculture, as well as other initiatives in their communities.

We have been celebrating the power of words close to Word Forest HQ, with our monthly spoken word open mic night, which is also a fundraiser. There is a wonderfully supportive and kind atmosphere and it's an absolute delight to hear people share their poems and short stories. The tea and cake never go amiss either!

This year has, like all years, seen changes, difficulties and wonderfully positive projects and outcomes. As we wave it goodbye and welcome the next year in, I am confident and proud that Word Forest continues to be a force for good in this beautiful world.

Asante sana - thank you very much.

Izzy Robertson

Financial Summary

Income

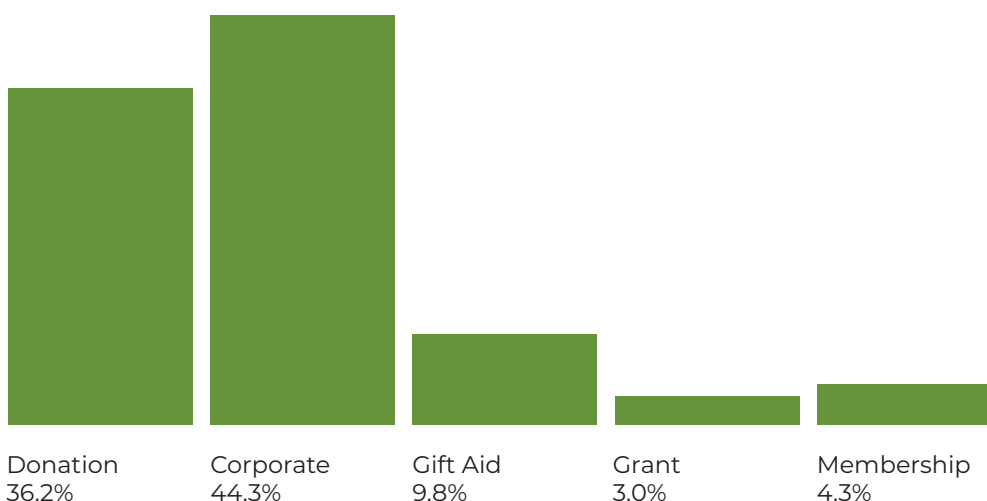
In 2024-2025 (year 8) our income was **£67,507.62**, a decrease of 11.8% over our 2023-2024 income of £76,711.63

Income by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2023-2024	Change
Donation	£24,422.57	36.18%	£38,140.14	-36%
Corporate	£29,897.74	44.29%	£27,015.00	+11%
Gift Aid	£6,626.76	9.82%	£7,733.94	-14%
Grant	£2,000.00	2.96%	£0.00	+100%
Membership	£2,874.00	4.26%	£3,115.00	-8%
Events Income	£1,440.72	2.13%	£363.07	+100%
Sales	£245.83	0.36%	£344.48	-29%
Total	£67,507.62	100.00%	£76,711.63	-12%

Our ring fenced income was **£17,400**, (for salaries, school building and communications equipment in Kenya) and our non ring fenced income was **£50,108**.

Income



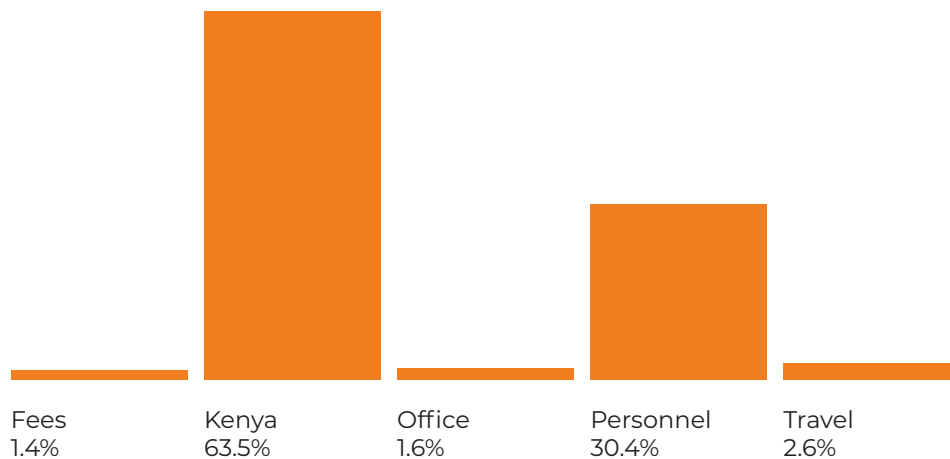
Outgoings

Our total outgoings were **£65,337.97**. **£41,469.30** of this went directly to Kenya. This represents 61.4% of our total income, but **82.8%** of our non ring fenced income. We ended the year with a balance of **£6,746.40** and an average monthly income of **£5,625.64**, compared to £6,363.93 the previous year - a decrease of 11.6%.

Outgoings by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2023-2024	Change
Events	£350.00	0.5%	£56.00	+525%
Fees	£906.04	1.4%	£1,885.65	-52%
Kenya	£41,469.34	63.5%	£58,130.40	-29%
Office	£1,074.00	1.6%	£2,551.09	-58%
Personnel	£19,848.03	30.4%	£17,511.29	+13%
Travel	£1,690.56	2.6%	£2,106.82	-20%
Total	£65,337.97	100.0%	£82,241.25	-21%

Outgoings



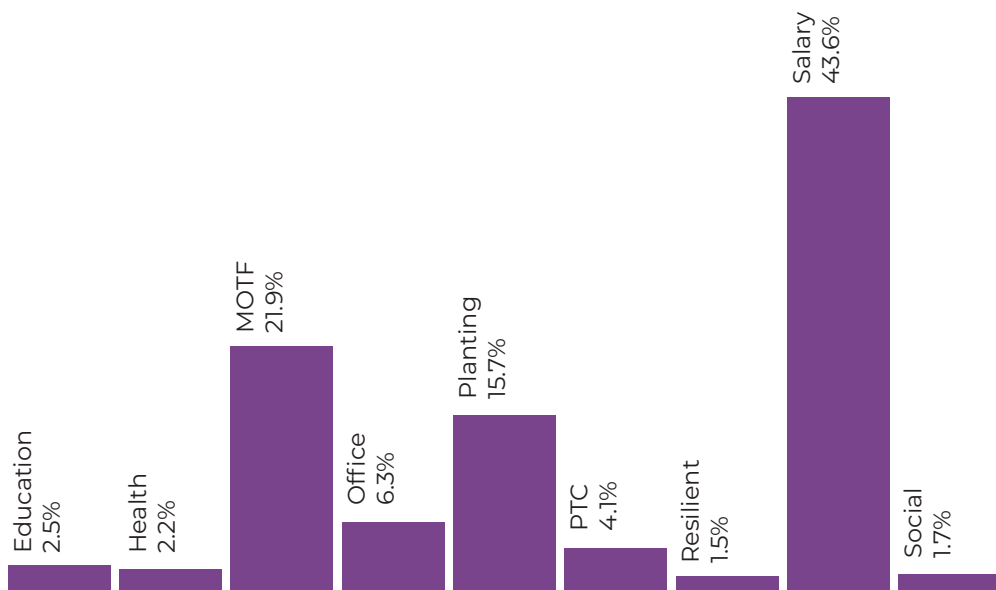
Kenya projects by Category

For 2024-2025 we have again analysed the money sent to projects by category, to better understand what we are funding. Almost all of the funding categories have tree planting associated with them, so where we have paid for a building to be built, there will have been trees planted at a rate of at least one tree for every £2.50 sent over.

Income by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	GBP (Approx)
Carbon Offset	Ksh 2,000	0.1%	£12.22
Education	Ksh 164,762	2.5%	£999.68
Health & Wellbeing	Ksh 149,000	2.2%	£929.41
MOTF	Ksh 1,459,395	21.9%	£8,916.89
Office	Ksh 421,900	6.3%	£2,596.52
Planting	Ksh 1,045,800	15.7%	£5,929.28
PTC	Ksh 271,504	4.1%	£1,713.61
Resilient Brothers	Ksh 96,800	1.5%	£595.32
Salary	Ksh 2,903,771	43.6%	£17,752.35
Social	Ksh 112,200	1.7%	£687.00
Travel	Ksh 33,000	0.5%	£201.79
Total	Ksh 6,660,132	100.0%	£40,334.07

Kenya Projects



Trustees' Statement

As we close our eighth year, the Trustees remain a vital pillar of Word Forest, providing strategic oversight, governance, and invaluable support. Together, we continue to make informed and collaborative decisions to ensure the charity thrives in an ever-evolving landscape.

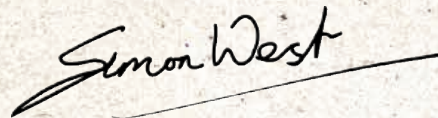
This year marks a transition in leadership, and on behalf of the Trustees, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Tracey West for her unwavering dedication as CEO. Under her leadership, Word Forest has grown in impact and reach, creating lasting change for communities in Kenya and further strengthening our environmental mission. As I step into the role of CEO, I do so with a deep sense of responsibility and commitment to carrying forward the work we have built together.

In keeping with our commitment to good governance and shared leadership, we are also introducing a rotating Chair of the Board. This approach will allow Trustees to bring fresh perspectives while maintaining stability and strategic direction. We look forward to the insights and leadership this model will bring.

The Trustees remain responsible for ensuring the financial sustainability and integrity of Word Forest. As always, we uphold our legal obligations under UK charity law, ensuring that our financial statements provide a true and fair view of the charity's position. We continue to observe the principles of the Charities SORP, maintain rigorous financial oversight, and take all necessary steps to safeguard the charity's assets and mission.

Looking ahead, we are focused on strengthening Word Forest's financial sustainability, expanding our corporate partnerships, and ensuring that our work continues to deliver meaningful impact. With a strong Board, a passionate team, and the unwavering support of our donors and partners, we are excited for the opportunities that lie ahead.

This Report and Accounts was approved by the Trustees on May 17th 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Simon West:
Managing Director and
Chair of Trustees



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Word Forest

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Word Forest, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity Trustees of the CIO 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 CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- *accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or*
- *the accounts do not accord with those records.*

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

The accounts were independently examined and approved on **29th April 2025**.



Hannah Foster
392 Wood Lane, Sheffield,
South Yorkshire S6 6AQ

From Our Team

Clare Nasir: Patron

Empowering Women and Girls in the Face of Climate Crisis: the vital work of Word Forest

A recent **Weather Attribution Study**, a scientific method used to determine how much climate change influences extreme weather events, has revealed alarming findings in South Sudan. Researchers found that the devastating heatwaves scorching the region have been made far more intense and frequent due to human-caused climate change, with women and girls bearing the brunt of the impacts.

The study highlights how extreme heat exacerbates gender inequalities: women, already responsible for fetching water, cooking over open fires and caring for families, face greater health risks and lost economic opportunities. Girls are more likely to be pulled from school to help with household burdens, trapping them in cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

This crisis is not unique to South Sudan - across East Africa, rising temperatures and erratic weather patterns threaten the livelihoods and safety of women and girls.

The most recent Kenya State of the Climate Report, published last year, analysed climate trends across the country and concluded yearly above average temperatures across Kenya, "*extend a dangerous long-term warming trend*".

But while science confirms the growing dangers, the Word Forest is a shining light on how to take action and turn the tide.

Education as a Shield Against Climate Vulnerability

In Kenya, where the Word Forest operates, climate change is disrupting traditional ways of life.

These changes hit hardest in vulnerable communities, where women and girls already shoulder the heaviest burdens of climate disruption.

Education is a lifeline, a proven pathway to resilience. Educated women are better equipped to adapt to environmental changes and advocate their rights, thus securing greater levels of sustainable livelihoods.



Tree Planting: Cooling Communities, Restoring Hope

Word Forest's reforestation efforts directly combat the impacts of extreme heat and poor soil quality. Trees lower ambient air temperatures, enhance soil health and restore water sources, creating safer and more productive environments.

It's a no-brainer that there are numerous co-benefits of supporting women in tree-planting and agroforestry. It is always wonderful to hear news from the Bore Community. My heart is truly warmed when looking at the photos, videos and hearing the stories of the women and their families, working in partnership with Tracey, Simon and the Word Forest.

The Weather Attribution Study is a stark warning: climate change is not a distant threat - it's here and it's hitting the most vulnerable hardest. Word Forest's work educating girls, restoring ecosystems and empowering women, shows that real solutions are possible.

Bill McGuire: Special Scientific Advisor to WordForest

Bill McGuire is Word Forest Special Scientific Advisor and Professor Emeritus of Geophysical & Climate Hazards at UCL. His next book, *The Fate of the World: How our Future is Written in the Past* will be published in 2026.

At a time when we need them more than ever, it seems that there is a war on trees. Here in the UK, it is just two years since a pair of congenial idiots hacked down the iconic Sycamore Gap tree in Northumberland, while only a few weeks back the Toby Carvery chain felled an ancient oak that was causing an inconvenience. Meanwhile, across the world, vast areas of woodland are succumbing to bigger and more devastating wildfires. In 2021 alone, an area of trees equivalent to 16 football pitches was burned every minute. In 2023, forest almost equal to the area of Sri Lanka was obliterated, mainly to clear space for agriculture. There is some good news in that the rate at which trees are being grubbed up has slowed across the Amazon, but even here an area close to 150 times that of New York's Central Park (a staggering 500 square kilometres) was destroyed in the month of May 2024 alone.

Trees should be sucking up carbon, but instead they are pumping it out, either when burned or as they left to rot, contributing towards 2024 being the hottest year on record, and probably in 125,000 years – since the last interglacial. Historically, trees have absorbed more than a quarter of CO₂ emissions arising from human activities, but deforestation and forest degradation now accounts for 11 percent of annual carbon emissions.

Against this grim background, the inspiring work of Word Forest, and like-minded organisations, can be seen as absolutely critical. Instead of obliterating tree-scapes, we need to be protecting and expanding them. A hectare of trees can store up to 400 tonnes of carbon, while restoring forests across the planet equal to the area of the United States, would eventually be capable of storing 205 billion tonnes of carbon (equal to three-quarters of a trillion tonnes of CO₂) – a substantial portion of the amount pumped into the atmosphere since pre-industrial times.

The reality is that we need more trees, lots more, and we need them now. And the best place to plant them is in the tropics, where they grow faster. Managing, protecting and restoring forests here, not only helps to limit climate breakdown, but also protects biodiversity, mitigates flood risk, and provides a livelihood for local populations. This is where Word Forest comes into its own, not only reforesting key areas of Kenya, but also supporting communities to manage the new forests and make damn sure that the trees reach maturity, when their carbon-extracting potential will be at its peak.

Adding to this marvellous work, Word Forest is now in a position to sell carbon credits on the open market, and not just any carbon credits. These are gold standard, so that buyers can be certain that they get what they pay for – trees properly planted and judiciously managed so that their carbon-absorbing potential is maximised – and at the same time help to support the communities that do the job. Having been involved for several years now as Special Scientific Advisor, it is tremendous to see Word Forest going from strength to strength. I am really excited to find out what comes next.



Eva Jefwa: Head of Kenya Operations



Kenya experienced its hottest year on record, with above normal temperatures across most of the country. Rainfall patterns were highly variable, with the western and central highlands seeing above-average rainfall while other areas, particularly northeastern regions and the coast, experienced drier-than-average conditions. This resulted in both flooding and drought conditions in different parts of the country.

These extreme weather events have had significant negative impacts on agriculture, water resources, and the overall economy.

Climate action to mitigate the effects of climate change, creating food security and building resilience are amongst the things we here at the PTC strive to address.

We do that by making sustainable choices that minimize environmental degradation while supporting equitable socio-economic development.

However, there is a need to prioritize climate adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts.

This can only be done by fostering the land management system: permaculture.

By working in harmony with natural systems, permaculture can help increase food production, conserve and restore nature, and build communities that are more resilient to climate change impacts. It is a powerful tool for climate change mitigation and adaptation by promoting sustainable and resilient food systems, enhancing soil health, and fostering community resilience.

Climate Change Adaptation

This past year has been one for absorbing knowledge and doing research on climate change adaptation specifically to create food security and I feel we are ready to start implementing.

Amongst the things that we extensively researched are;

- **Drought-resistant crops**
This involves selecting crops that can tolerate drought and other climate-related stresses.
- **Improving irrigation efficiency**
Efficient irrigation systems can help conserve water resources and improve crop yields in drought-prone areas.
- **Practicing regenerative agriculture**
This involves soil health management techniques that can improve water retention and resilience to drought.
- **Diversifying crops and livestock**
Diversifying agricultural practices can reduce the risk of crop failure due to climate change.
- **Water Management**
Improving water storage and use. This includes building reservoirs, and other water storage facilities, as well as implementing water-efficient technologies.
- **Investing in rainwater harvesting systems**
Rainwater harvesting can provide an additional source of water in drought-prone areas.
- **Promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building**
Sharing knowledge and building capacity among local communities and civil society organizations is crucial for effective adaptation.

Tree Planting

We were able to pot approximately 80,000 saplings of all types of trees. Indigenous, exotic, fruit and non fruit, medicinal and non medicinal trees.

Some were planted in the Tumaini and Wooshi forests here at the PTC while the rest were distributed in schools and in the community.

(More details in the report from Charles Kidhuku on page 23)



Tree planting

I am of the idea that we start sharing vegetable seedlings alongside the saplings. For example, for every five saplings, one gets three vegetable seedlings. These vegetables will bring food much sooner than the trees but the main reason is to design stratas which will mimic a forest like environment for the trees and they will have a higher rate of survival as I learnt in syntropic agroforestry some time back.

Build classrooms and toilets at Kadunguni primary school

I forward this again should there come an opportunity to do so.

It breaks my heart when I pass by and see children sit outside under a tree with barely enough shade for all

Youth climate change club

The youth of today are 'woke'. They are very much aware of the happenings around them. I feel that if we have a youth club, we will be able to create more awareness, impact and attract even more people into living sustainably.

Anything to do with the shamba has always been related to being dirty, tiring and for old people. It is also not easy to teach or convince the older people to change the ways they have known since forever so I propose we start a youth group.

Word Forest is changing lives in so many ways both directly and indirectly and my heart always melts when someone I don't know stops me just to say how his daughter no longer comes to him asking for money for sanitary towels. He continues to say that his wife was the one who dealt with such matters but ever since she passed away, his daughter came to him and he felt awkward but ever since she got a hedhi cup, he no longer needs to worry about that.

No good deed is too small or little to be appreciated and on behalf of the Word Forest staff, the entire Magarini ward and myself, I would like to say a very big **asante sana**.

Resilient Brothers

Mid 2024, this group was founded by Simon specifically to assist men who are dealing with or prone to mental illnesses attributable to the effects of climate change.

Opening up was and still is a challenge to some but having this support group and knowing that nothing anyone is going through is new has helped the brothers and even saved a life.

(More details in the report from Charles on page 23)

Mothers of The Forest

The Mothers of The Forest continue to forge ahead and late last year, they had their first internal examinations and they excelled.

They continue with their literacy and numeracy lessons at the same time learning new sustainable income generating skills.

They are currently learning embroidery with the intention of making customized tote bags.

(More details in the report from Juliet Anyanzwa)

My Thoughts & Plans For The Year 2025-2026

Climate change adaptation

I have always believed that the best way to lead is by example and my community is the type that is ready to follow what they can actually see so there is a need to have a fully functional permaculture system here at the PTC.

Charles Kidhuku:

Chair of Resilient Brothers, Garashi

Mental Health, Community and Environmental Action

The Resilient Brothers group was formed in July 2024 to create a safe space for men to share their experiences and talk openly about life's challenges. It came in response to the rising number of mental health issues reported in Kenya, particularly amongst men.

In many rural communities like ours, men are expected to be strong and to cope without support. This has left many suffering in silence, especially as there are few forums where they can speak freely. Climate change has made matters worse. Unpredictable weather has disrupted farming, our main source of livelihood, causing stress, trauma and hardship for many families.

The mental health effects of this disruption have been serious, contributing to divorce, domestic conflict, substance abuse and even suicide. These issues affect whole families, leading to malnutrition, school dropouts, and poverty.

Currently, the group has four members, most of whom are Word Forest employees, and we meet twice a month.

Our Activities

Our work is divided into the following activity areas:

- *Outdoor Activities*
- *Educational Activities*
- *Social Support Activities*
- *Practical Skills*
- *Eco-Friendly Practices*

To read more about what we do in each of these areas, visit: wordforest.org/founding-resilient-brothers/

“...a safe space for men to share their experiences and talk openly about life's challenges”

Looking Ahead

We recently launched a community demonstration garden at the Chief's compound to share climate-smart agricultural practices with others. Our aim is to support more men in the community and expand the group so we can reach those who are still suffering in silence.

On behalf of the Resilient Brothers, I thank Word Forest for supporting this important initiative. We have seen firsthand how these activities reduce stress and bring hope. With time, we believe this work can strengthen our whole community.



Juliet Anyanzwa:

Mothers of the Forest

Garashi

Over the years, women have carried the biggest burden in society. Apart from being life givers, women are also entrusted with holistic growth not only of the family unit, but the society at large. The hard economic national challenges have seen the weight on them even heavier, and with these diverse challenges women are overwhelmed.

Some of the challenges include:

- *Unfair distribution of resources in African society, men are more often entitled to property and land compared to women.*
- *Discrimination when it comes to making fundamental decisions, many of which directly affect them.*
- *Cultural and traditional practices that mean women are seen but not heard.*
- *Gender inequality when it comes to positions of power. Men are more preferred when it comes to leadership and development positions.*

In the midst of all these challenges, Mothers of the Forest have had great advantages which benefit them financially and socially.

In the last year Mothers of the Forest has given:

- *Access to literacy and numerous classes that help boost their self esteem allowing them to participate in society programs.*
- *Access to life skills and art work which has helped them to knead, make mats, sandal, liquid soap and decorations.*
- *Support to start small scale businesses from table banking savings.*
- *Knowledge and technical know-how in different fields through attending several meetings organised by other stakeholders.*
- *A short course on permaculture for Word forest staff which enlightened them on growing drought resistant crops.*

- *Numeracy and literacy exams, in which they performed extremely well.*
- *Word forest staff and mothers of the forest were given a drip kit irrigation at the end of the year as a present. They created a kitchen garden at their home. This has made their work easier and their families healthier as they get fresh vegetables directly from the farms and saves the cost.*

Going forward, mothers are hoping that:

- *The permaculture teaching center would be open to the larger community to empower and impact the whole community.*
- *They receive more training and external learning programs which will enhance their knowledge and skills.*
- *They can explore more opportunities to help improve their productivity e.g. benchmarking other organisations to see how things are done differently.*
- *Each gets a proper water system to help in watering plants and daily use.*

The Mothers of the Forest and the entire Garashi community are deeply grateful for the life-changing support provided by Word Forest. This work continues to uplift women and children, creating lasting impact throughout the region.



Joy Maseno:

Mothers of the Forest

Rusinga Island



Thanks to your support, we've been empowered through both practical and theoretical learning. The positive impact has been felt in many areas of our lives, and we'd like to share a few highlights below.

Challenges Overcome

Family Life and Self-Reliance

Women in our group have moved from living hand-to-mouth to becoming more self-reliant, especially through small-scale farming and income-generating activities.

Literacy and Life Skills

Many women have gained literacy and a stronger voice in their communities. The literacy classes have improved parenting, with mothers now able to help children with schoolwork and engage confidently with teachers. They've also acquired life skills such as budgeting, saving, decision-making, record keeping, and income management, all of which have boosted confidence and self-esteem.

Kitchen Gardens

Previously, many of us had seasonal gardens dependent on the rains. Now, with training in permaculture and the provision of water barrels, we can maintain thriving kitchen gardens all year round.

Economic Empowerment

Farming

Short-term vegetable and fruit farming is now generating income, helping us to better manage our daily needs.

Soap Making

Our soap-making initiative has been embraced enthusiastically. It supports both household and community needs and serves as a steady income stream.

Table Banking

We've established one of the strongest table banking groups on Rusinga. It has enabled us to purchase simple tools and supplies, such as a sewing machine and soap ingredients, that support our enterprises.

Milestones Achieved

Stipends and Salaries

Regular income has enabled our leaders to coordinate activities more effectively and has helped many families cover school fees and other basic needs. It has also reduced stress around household budgeting.

Technology

The provision of a laptop and phone has made communication, particularly for Joy, far more efficient and reliable, removing the need to queue at the cyber café.

Demonstration Land

Having land for practical training and demonstration has been a key step forward. It's ideally located and supports the sustainability of our work.

Tent and Chairs

Meetings and training sessions are now much more comfortable and organised. Being under one roof has improved communication and protected us from rain and sun.

Gas Cookers (Meko)

Cooking has become easier and faster. Women can now prepare breakfast on time, ensuring children don't go to school hungry. We no longer have to scramble for firewood to meet early appointments.

Radios

Radios have connected us with other agriculture-based groups and keep us informed about local and national issues. They've also been useful for sharing knowledge and spreading awareness.

Future Plans

We're excited about what lies ahead. Some of our key goals include:

***A tree nursery** - to help each family plant five trees a month, contributing to carbon capture, soil improvement, temperature regulation, water conservation, and erosion control.*

***An edible classroom** - a space for community learning, skill sharing, exchange programmes and storage, all rooted in sustainable food systems.*

***Fencing for gardens** - proper fencing will protect our kitchen gardens from animals and pests, reduce wind damage, and help manage the gardens more effectively.*

We're deeply thankful for your continued support. It's helping to create meaningful, lasting change here on Rusinga Island.

Solomon Owiti: Digital Media Specialist

Warm greetings from our beautiful and tranquil island. As we step into 2025, we reflect with gratitude on a year filled with renewed commitments to protect our planet and secure a sustainable future for the generations to come.

Tree Planting and Environmental Restoration

In 2024, the Rusinga Island community planted 14,500 tree seedlings (indigenous, fruit-bearing, and medicinal), through local initiatives and participation in both National and International Tree Planting Days. Every hole dug and seedling planted is a powerful act of hope: a gift to the Earth and to future generations. Trees have brought shade, restored biodiversity, given wildlife safe homes, and helped clean the air. As the effects of climate change intensify, our community understands the urgency to do more, faster, and better.

Permaculture and Syntropic Agroforestry

Our efforts to mainstream permaculture and syntropic agroforestry have grown in strength. As educators and activists, we've spread practical knowledge through diverse community groups, rekindling an ancient mindset of abundance and cooperation. Not only with one another, but with all life on Earth. These teachings are not just about farming, but about regenerating our ecosystems and strengthening social bonds. Inspired by pioneers like Bill Mollison, we challenge each participant to learn by doing and then share their knowledge, creating ripples of change across the island. This journey of transformation would not be possible without your support.

Engaging Youth with Nature

We know that children who connect with nature early are more likely to care for it as adults. Our youth have been deeply involved in sustainable activities like tree planting and caretaking. In doing so, they've learned responsibility, empathy, and the real impact of their actions. Watching them nurture saplings with care has shown us the power of small acts to shape resilient, environmentally conscious citizens of tomorrow. It is our social duty to support these future stewards of the Earth.



Looking Ahead: 2025 and Beyond

Inspired by the successes of 2024, we are ready to take even bolder steps this year:

Expand our 'Nature Shield' Conservation Programme

We aim to safeguard biodiversity, capture carbon, and build ecosystem resilience. Rising seedling costs are a challenge, so we hope to establish our own community nursery to raise seedlings locally and sustainably.

Introduce Innovative Climate Solutions

We plan to roll out renewable energy initiatives, starting with improved 'jikos' (cookstoves) that reduce reliance on firewood. These simple technologies will help preserve our forests (vital carbon sinks) and ease pressure on natural resources.

Deepen Community Engagement in Climate Education

We will continue educational outreach focused on permaculture, syntropic agroforestry, and building climate resilience. These campaigns aim to empower people with the skills and understanding needed to thrive in harmony with the natural world.

Together, we can continue championing sustainability, embracing regenerative practices, and working towards a healthier planet. Every action counts - and your support has helped us turn vision into reality.

Thank you to all the generous donors and supporters of Word Forest who have walked beside us. We remain committed to shared responsibility, impactful action, and building lasting solutions.

Here's to a greener, brighter, and more sustainable 2025.

Jed Robertson: Digital Media Specialist

Social Media and Digital Content Summary

During this financial year, we maintained a cost-effective approach to digital outreach by using affordable or discounted tools for content creation, scheduling, and distribution. As social media has become less reliable for generating donations, we are actively reviewing our tools to reduce costs further while maintaining output quality.

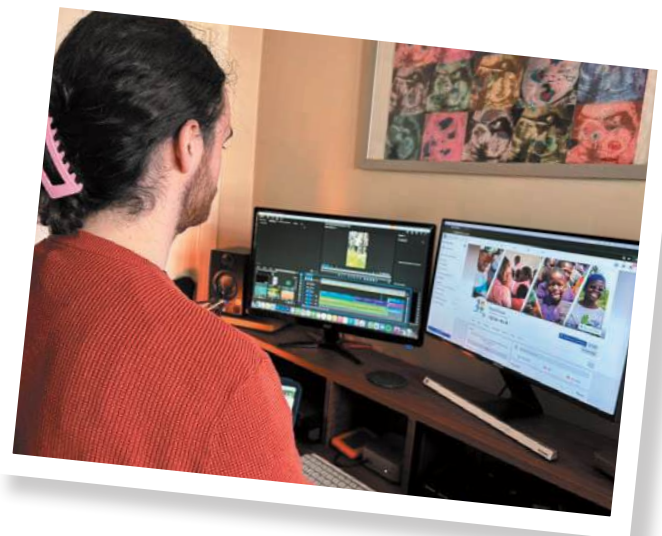
We trialled daily social media posting early in the year, which led to a slight boost in engagement but proved unsustainable due to the time it required. Following pro-bono advice from **Suzi Ballard at Cosmic**, we adopted a revised strategy: fewer posts, tailored to each platform, and with a greater focus on quality. This shift freed up valuable time for other tasks such as video editing, podcast production and copywriting. Although the change in engagement rates has been modest so far, we continue to see figures well above the average for charities, particularly on Instagram and LinkedIn.

We also expanded our podcast output by repurposing audio articles that were originally created for accessibility. In 2024, we released 30 episodes and plan to continue this strategy, publishing regularly to improve reach and relevance.

“...we continue to see figures well above the average for charities”

YouTube remains a versatile platform for us, serving both as a public-facing video library and a storage solution for internal and training materials. With more resources, we believe there is significant potential in increasing the frequency and quality of our video content to raise awareness and support.

Looking ahead, we aim to cut costs further, particularly by exploring alternatives to our current scheduling platform, and to diversify our digital presence. Having left X (formerly Twitter), we are now preparing to establish a presence on Bluesky, which aligns better with our values and content style.



Our joint commitment to address the climate challenge



We are proud to be investing in a joint effort with Word Forest, to create our own Gold Standard certified offsetting programme, an ongoing asset to support and strengthen Word Forest's mission.

This year has been no less challenging in the fight against climate change, and our continued work serves as a constant reminder of the complexity and urgency of the climate challenge.

We are delighted to be working with Word Forest to make our own contribution, combining expertise with purpose to drive lasting impact.



THE WORD FOREST ORGANISATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1172497

Accounts



WORD FOREST

Annual Report 2023-2024

About the Charity

This is the Annual Report and Accounts for The Word Forest Organisation, a charity registered in the United Kingdom by the Charity Commission
Charity No: 1172497

Registered Address and Contact Details

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Website: WordForest.org

Trustees

Mr Simon West FRSA (Chair of Trustees)
Ms Rikey Austin
Ms Eva Dixon
Mr Philip Gamble
Ms Camille Oster
Mrs Izzy Robertson

Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Tracey West FRSA

Managing Director

Mr Simon West FRSA

Patrons

Clare Nasir and Zena Edwards

Special Advisors

Bill McGuire and Jo Lawrance

Our Constitutional Structure

Word Forest was incorporated as a CIO on 7th April 2017.

Our constitution follows the model for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as set out by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and was adopted on 7th April 2017 and revised on 1st February 2021.

Charitable Objects and Public Benefit

To promote sustainable development* for the benefit of the public in countries to be determined by the Trustees by:

- (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
- (b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

*Sustainable development means “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 in planning our activities.

The positive social impact of our work is considered before we direct our tree-planting communities, and outcomes are directly monitored. This enables the Trustees to be confident that the charity has, through its range of activities, achieved significant public benefit for the community in Kenya, and in countries as determined by the Trustees.

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From the Board

Tracey West: CEO and Fundraiser

In 1860, in the book 'The Mill on the Floss' George Eliot penned the enigmatic line: "Do not judge a book by its cover; see it through, and read it carefully before forming an opinion." That's precisely what I'd like you to do with this year's Report and Accounts.



It's an unavoidable fact: we haven't generated as much income as we did last year. However, according to a recent report by Charity Pulse, 45% of UK charities saw parity or a drop in their income too. Increases in the costs of living/trading for individuals/businesses have left deep scars on many a financial landscape. Also, our core admin team is small and I made it even smaller while I fitted in 3 operations to resolve profoundly impaired vision. That said, whilst my visual acuity was negatively affected, my creative brain was as active as ever! I have now made a solid recovery and I'm back in the EV with my pedal to the metal.

Interestingly, my short-term disability and great frustration from being unable to read, bore a silver lining. I instigated the overhaul of our website and great improvements were made to accessibility (who knew black and yellow worked so well together?) We now have a small group of fabulous volunteers who record our twice-weekly articles and describe the images. They're currently working their way through our archives and in due course, we aim to have a 'Click to Listen' button on every page.

We remain steadfast and a-buzz as we forge pioneering new plans for ambitious fundraising initiatives. The one we launched in December 2023, the Word Forest Bring & Share Vegan Lunch, is doing very well indeed, moreover, the future for scaling it up looks bright. Take a look at WordForest.org/lunch for our Step by Step Guide to hosting one and helping us combat the climate emergency one dinner plate at a time.

Another prospect-filled boost to our income stream - our Carbon Offset Programme - is just about to reveal itself in an official capacity. The development of it has been spearheaded by Simon West and it has taken well over a year to bring to fruition. The complex process of gaining accreditation to be an offset provider has been eased by a welcome armful of blood from our Corporate Partners, Oaklin Consulting, to whom we remain extremely grateful.

Our entry into this market is on target to begin in the second quarter and suffice to say it has been a supremely arduous project to nail to the wall. The application process with Gold Standard has been painstaking and highly detailed. Some preliminary work was completed by Sue Jueno and Jo Smith some time back to assess its viability and since then, Simon has led the international development and the application process itself. I cannot thank him enough for his tenacity and patience.

Why are we entering this field at all, some of you may be asking? Put simply, whilst we realise this is a topic has been spotlighted in the press and is shrouded by varying degrees of contention because of the opportunities for businesses to do a bit of 'greenwashing', if we stand any chance of expanding our income significantly in order to stop global heating from getting significantly worse, it'll only happen in a compelling way if we are accredited carbon offset providers.

If you're a long term fan of Word Forest, you'll know we set up our Education Learning Platform some time back to encourage people to be better all round environmentalists. One of the motivators behind it was to try and stamp out greenwashing by offering solutions to educate employees. May I restate there is an urgent need for the business world to refocus its lens on what it actually means to put profit before planet. There is

no business to be done on a broken planet. To that end, our Ethics Trustee, Rikey Austin, has always been on hand to advise us on such matters and if you need any additional assistance on that front, she will be delighted to help.

If you know Word Forest of old, you'll know that our standards are high, transparency is something we pride ourselves on and we have always brought so much more to the table than mere tree planting. I hope you devour this year's Report and Accounts and agree with me that we are so much more than our bottom line. We will continue to strengthen the tree planting communities we're so lucky to work with by being a trustworthy conduit between your money and their mission to mitigate global warming for us all.

Simon West: Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

In 2023, all charities encountered a multitude of challenges that tested their resilience and adaptability. Inflationary pressures and supply chain disruptions posed challenges to businesses, consumers and charities alike. The rising costs of goods and services, coupled with stagnant wage growth, strained household budgets and contributed to inflationary concerns. This led to reduced donor contributions and increased demand for charitable services, creating a delicate balancing act for all organisations already operating on tight budgets.



Political instability and social unrest in various parts of the world further complicated matters, and the evolving landscape of technology also presented challenges, as charities struggled to keep pace with digital advancements while ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all beneficiaries.

As you will see in the CEO's report, we are not alone in finding it difficult to maintain our income, with more and more charities seeking smaller and smaller pots of funding.

We have come to the end of this year with a solid resolve to keep going and to do better. Our grant applications are better and more compelling than ever before. Our strategy to finally become certified Carbon Offset providers is close to being complete. Our relationships with corporate partners remain strong and we continue to seek new and better ways to attract further support from businesses. We will not "go gentle into that good night", but will diligently work to make our eighth year, our best ever.

The work completed in Kenya and the number of trees, beneficiaries and educational programmes have all increased. We have almost completed the installation of piped water to the Permaculture Teaching Centre in Garashi and the 87.4% of non-ring fenced income which went to our beneficiaries is something that should make us all proud.

My heartfelt thanks go to all of our donors, corporate partners, volunteers and employees. Together, we have continued to bring hope to a group of people 5,000 miles away, that they can make a better future for themselves and help reduce planetary climate chaos.

Rikey Austin: Ethics Trustee

My name is Rikey Austin and I've been Word Forest's Ethics Trustee since the charity started back in 2017. I also self-funded a trip to Kenya to accompany Tracey and Simon for a week to help them perform monitoring and evaluation duties in 2019.



For me, that week was life changing. Meeting the Mothers of the Forest was such a privilege and with assistance from another volunteer, Yvonne, I ran a few workshops on jewellery beadwork and crafting, designed to help them create an income stream.

When you're working with the incredible people who live on the frontline of the climate crisis, it is truly humbling. Experiencing, even for a short while, the life and death effects of a changing planet on people you have come to care for deeply, is sobering. There is a real risk of being swept away by the urgency and gravity of their situation and of developing tunnel vision and either focusing on it, or turning away.

I think some have chosen to turn a blind eye to what's going on because the reality is just too horrific to consider. Could the problems Kenyans are facing right now - drought, extreme precipitation, floods, displacement - spread around the world and pay them a visit? In short, yes they could, they are.

Our team at Word Forest recognise this and we sympathise. It is almost unthinkable and the window of opportunity for reforesting Kenya is slowly closing, so it's driving our activities and our passion to be the best environmental charity we can be.

Together, we've created an organisation that has a strong ethical foundation and it touches on every aspect of our work, from fundraising events to the drinks and refreshments we serve in the office and the paper we print on, if ever we have to.

Trees are the key to lessening the impact of our climate crisis but the planet which that key opens a door to, needs to be a world that is healthy, safe, equitable and peaceful.

With this in mind, I'm sure you'll take comfort knowing we constantly monitor the peripheral effects and consequences of our actions to ensure that our vision remains inclusive, supportive and driven by the needs of our beneficiaries. This is a journey that we are all on together for the greater good of our planet, its people, wildlife, biodiversity and more. Done right, it's a total #WinWin.

Here are some examples of our ethics outside of our tree planting and classroom building work. You can find more by taking a look at our Moral Compass on our website.

We support ongoing learning for our staff in the UK and our teams in Kenya. Empowering and educating the women who are the very heart of Word Forest, is paramount.

We only serve plant-based food and refreshments at events and in our office because this is a shared planet and it helps us leave the lightest footprint possible.

We use 100% recycled paper and print cautiously because what's the point of planting trees if we're going to be responsible for chopping them down again?

We have a fully accessible office because everyone has the right to be part of the change.

All of our fundraising merchandise comes from organisations with strong ethical and environmental policies for their staff and the products they make. Our fundraising apparel is gorgeous, 100% organic cotton and vegan friendly. When you support us by wearing it for Word Forest, you're supporting other ethical thinkers who share our values and want to create a better world.

Thank you for joining us and supporting us on this vital journey. Be assured that we are doing our level best, in every aspect of our work, to protect and heal the home we all share by supporting the phenomenal tree planting communities of Kenya.

Izzy Robertson: Literacy Trustee

This year comes to a close with some wonderful progress made. It's been a delight to see how the Mothers of the Forest groups in Garashi and Rusinga Island have gone from strength to strength, embracing all opportunities offered for education and continuing to champion permaculture techniques and the planting of trees. The wider communities have also been involved in tree planting projects, and the Permaculture Teaching Centre at Garashi now hosts a tree nursery as well as courses and the Mothers' group meetings.



We've tried to keep our newsfeed updated with the projects happening in Kenya as well as a range of other informative articles, which we really hope that people have enjoyed and found useful.

As a trustee, I'd like to extend my thanks to all our supporters, volunteers, donors and corporate partners because we really, really could not do this without you. Our teams in Kenya and the UK are real forces of nature. And special thanks go to our phenomenal CEO and MD, Tracey and Simon West, two walking human miracles who continue to pull rabbits out of hats even in the most challenging of circumstances.

When the need we see around us is so great, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and that nothing we do will ever be enough to make a difference. I'd like to end this piece with a thought about bluebells. One on its own is beautiful – together, they completely transform the landscape. When you act in a positive way, it's important – it does matter. And if we keep acting together and supporting each other, we really can transform the world.

Asante sana – thank you.

Financial Summary

Income

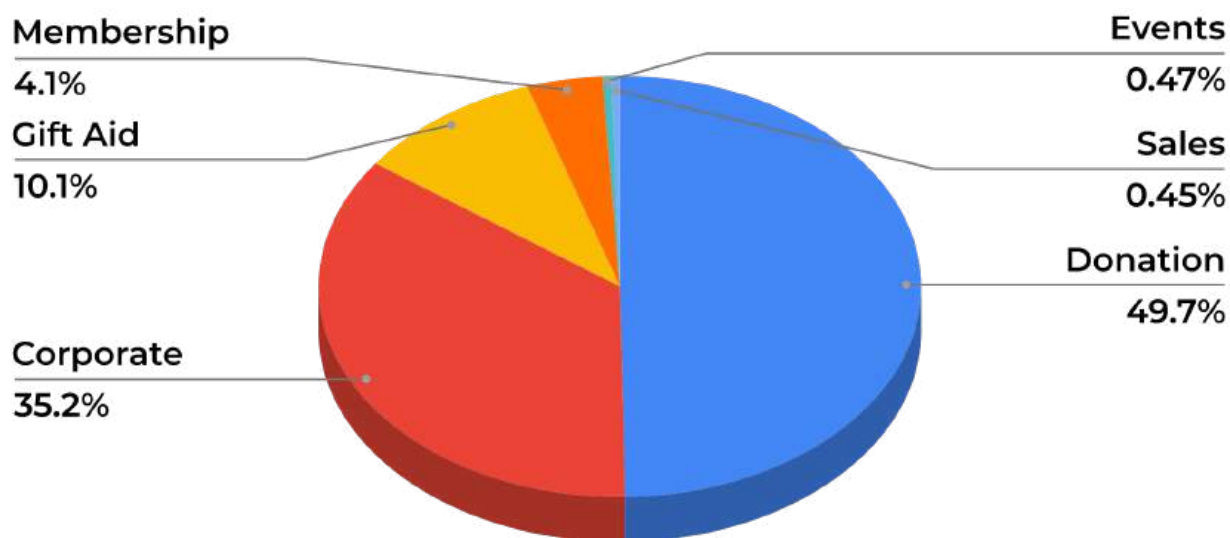
In 2023-2024 (year 7) our income was **£76,508**, a decrease of 24.8% over our 2022-2023 income of £101,738.00.

Income by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2022-2023	Change
Donation	£38,007.65	49.72%	£53,096.45	-28.4%
Corporate	£27,015.00	35.22%	£23,235.00	+16.3%
Gift Aid	£7,733.94	10.08%	£10,949.99	-29.4%
Grant	£0.00	0.00%	£9,948.60	-100.0%
Membership	£3,044.34	4.06%	£3,564.00	-14.6%
Events Income	£363.07	0.47%	£516.30	-29.7%
Sales	£344.00	0.45%	£427.66	-19.6%
Total	£76,508.00	100.00%	£101,738.00	-24.8%

Our ring fenced income was **£8,000**, (all for salaries) and our non-ring fenced income was **£68,508**.

Income



Outgoings

Our total outgoings were **£82,555.66**. **£58,130.40** of this went directly to Kenya. This represents 75.7% of our total income, but **87.4%** of our non-ring fenced income.

For 2024 we have increased our rate of pay for people we employ in Kenya by 10%, to 242 Kenyan Shillings per hour, or **505,296 KES** per year full time equivalent, which is the same as a senior high school teacher or middle manager.

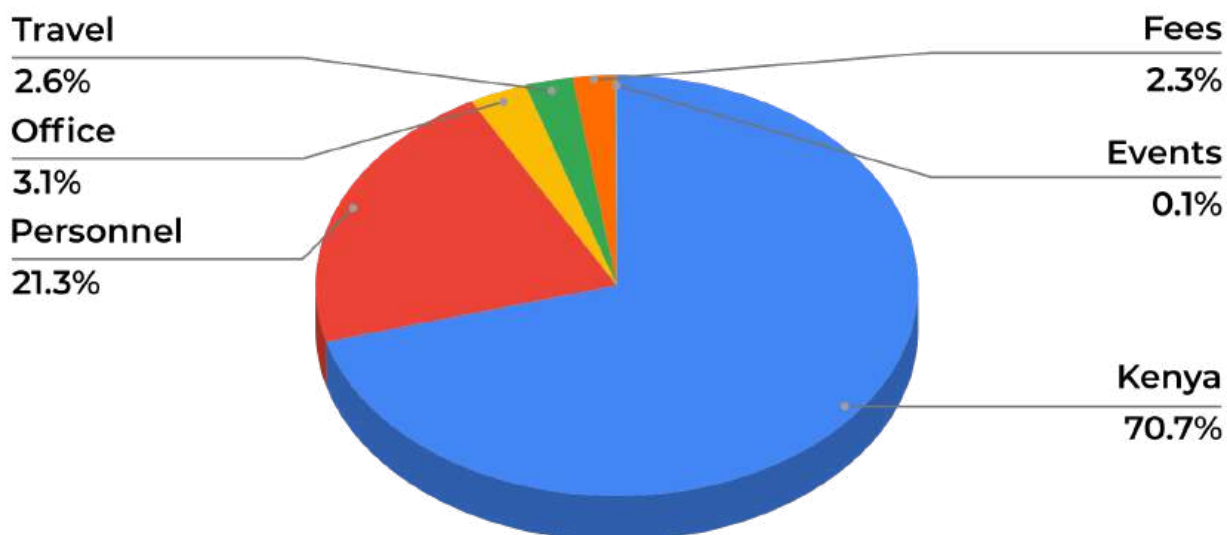
From January 2024 we increased our UK salary rate to £12.00 per hour in line with The Living Wage Foundation recommendation (see livingwage.org.uk)

We ended the year with a balance of **£3,635.23** and an average monthly income of **£6,363.93**, compared to £8,478.17 the previous year - a decrease of 25%.

Outgoings by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2021-2022	Change
Kenya	£58,130.40	70.7%	£65,442.48	-11%
Personnel	£17,511.29	21.3%	£17,004.47	+3%
Office	£2,551.09	3.1%	£1,049.03	+143%
Travel	£2,106.82	2.6%	£11,702.55	-82%
Fees	£1,885.65	2.3%	£2,657.70	-29%
Events	£56.00	0.1%	£496.90	-89%
Total	£82,241.25	100.0%	£98,353.13	-16%

Outgoings

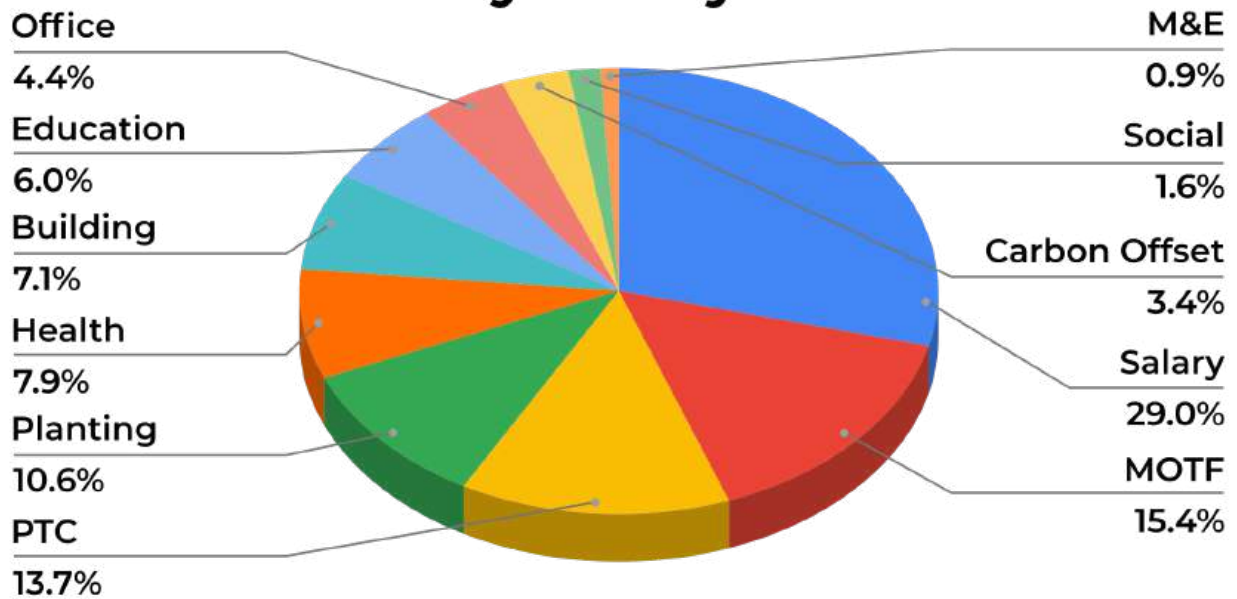


Kenya projects by Category

For 2022-2023 we have analysed the money sent to projects by category to better understand what we are funding. Almost all of the funding categories have tree planting associated with them, so where we have paid for a building to be built, there will have been trees planted at a rate of at least one tree for every £2.50 sent over.

Category	Amount	Percent	GBP (Approx)
Salary	Ksh 2,998,343	29.0%	£16,936.97
MOTF	Ksh 1,599,139	15.4%	£8,839.70
PTC	Ksh 1,413,521	13.7%	£8,068.79
Planting	Ksh 1,093,351	10.6%	£6,345.77
Health & Wellbeing	Ksh 821,175	7.9%	£4,256.47
Building	Ksh 735,670	7.1%	£4,079.79
Education	Ksh 622,180	6.0%	£3,521.37
Office	Ksh 453,010	4.4%	£2,574.53
Carbon Offset	Ksh 353,040	3.4%	£2,000.82
Social	Ksh 165,920	1.6%	£958.76
M&E	Ksh 97,000	0.9%	£547.43
Total	Ksh 10,352,349	100.0%	£58,130.40

Kenya Projects



Trustees' Statement

As we close our seventh year, our Trustees remain a very important part of the charity, offering invaluable support and guidance. Together, we make every important decision through open discussions and collaboration, ensuring that we steer the charity in the right direction.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website.

This Report and Accounts was approved by the trustees on 15th April 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon West". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Simon West FRSA
Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Word Forest

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Word Forest, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), for the year ended 30th March 2024.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity Trustees of the CIO 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 CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

The accounts were independently examined and approved on 23rd April 2024.



Hannah Foster
392 Wood Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 6AQ

From Our Team

Clare Nasir: Patron

Projects that remove CO₂ and slow down global heating are essential for our planet's future. Urgency is paramount. Every day that passes exacerbates the challenges we face to survive this crisis. We need to act swiftly and decisively.

Yet carbon offsetting is still offered up in many guises. Far greater clarity and transparency are needed if business leaders are expected to plot a course to a world where decarbonisation is more than a buzz word and our planet is meteorologically more stable and sustainable.

Over the past 40 years, a lot of deep thinking has occurred and innovation has come a long way. Startling technological advancements have been made and some purport to be the silver bullet required to solve our climate emergency. Despite their efforts, the sum of these parts has completely fallen short of the whole - a well balanced Earth. The silver bullet remains elusive and the climate emergency trajectory continues to spiral.

Where are we with carbon offsetting right now? It is almost 30 years since COP1 in Berlin and a decade since the celebrated Paris Agreement where Article 6 created a framework for countries to cooperate on carbon offsetting projects.

Word Forest is just about to release a fascinating report on carbon drawdown technologies - if you'd like to receive a free copy, email_team@wordforest.org. It is worth noting that, upon closer inspection, some of the solutions they investigated are relatively embryonic options. Some have substantial implementational issues which could inhibit the rapid progress that is needed.

They may render some of these credible technological solutions contributorily useful but fatally handicapped in terms of efficacy and expeditiousness. That said, they undoubtedly have a collective role to play in the multi-disciplined, urgent solutions the Earth desperately needs.

With varying degrees of speed and success, I suspect they will all help decarbonise the atmosphere to some degree. However, what's needed immediately right now is a viable, affordable and swiftly executable plan: enter Word Forest.

Which CO₂ reduction method is able to provide the rapid, consistent, reliable assistance our planet requires today? Our report examines well-understood, traditional solutions, along with newer, more complex alternatives for CO₂ removal from the Earth's atmosphere. The methods explored have the capability to draw down and lock in this shockingly abundant greenhouse gas which sits at the root of our climate crisis.

One of the strongest conclusions of our report is that the most affordable and easily implementable solution is planting trees in Kenya, whilst providing a multi-faceted level of care to the amazing people who plant and tend them.

Trees in Kenya, like other tropical regions around the world, grow at an astonishing rate. In some cases, up to 10 times faster than in temperate and tundra latitudes. They have the ability to lock in ¼ of a tonne of CO₂ in 5-7 years, which is astonishing.



Consider the additional benefits to Kenyans from the production of fruit, nuts, food, medicine and other commodities. One is easily able to grasp the dent they could make in hunger, malnutrition and poverty: what a phenomenal bonus.

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, frequently advocates for immediate climate action. He refers to our precarious situation as: *'The era of global boiling'*, which rather renders the 1970's term 'global warming' obsolete.

Until transparency across the entire value chain of the carbon offset marketplace has been addressed and clarified, the credibility of all schemes will continue to be threatened by issues surrounding their efficacy. It is highly likely it will take time to resolve and in truth, our planet simply doesn't have the time to waste.

Whilst technological solutions continue to establish their rightful positions in the pecking order, may I be so bold as to suggest you employ Occam's razor and boost Word Forest's remarkable endeavours to reforest Kenya?

Bill McGuire: Special Scientific Advisor to Word Forest

Professor Emeritus of Geophysical & Climate Hazards at UCL. His latest book, Hothouse Earth: an Inhabitant's Guide, is published by Icon Books.



Despatches from the climate front rarely – if ever – bring good news, but the latest carries a truly terrifying message: the Amazon Rainforest, a critical element in the planet's respiratory system, is in far deeper trouble than we thought. The Amazon region has been under colossal pressure for many decades, primarily via destructive logging on an industrial scale. But more recently, climate breakdown has begun to take an ever greater toll. Severe drought conditions have become far more frequent, in turn spawning immense wildfires that have destroyed vast areas of the forest. As a consequence, the Amazon has switched from a carbon sink, which sucks up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, to a carbon source.

Climate models reveal that the Amazon ecosystem makes up one of the planet's key potential tipping points. If conditions become too hot and dry, the forest will enter a period of permanent terminal decline, and will be replaced by grassland. The latest research suggests that we may already be closing in on this transition, which would be devastating for the planet and a huge defeat in the fight to stop climate breakdown becoming catastrophic. Before a stable system tips, it often undergoes something called critical slowdown, which means that it recovers increasingly sluggishly in response to external shocks, and this seems to be what we are seeing in the Amazon. In the past, the forest has recovered quickly from drought conditions, but four once a century very dry episodes in the space of 20 years has the forest reeling. Almost 40 percent of the forest is struggling to recover, leading researchers to speculate that this might be an early indicator of large-scale ecosystem collapse.

As the heat ramps up globally, more drought is undoubtedly waiting in the wings, but there is good news to be had. Those parts of the Amazon managed by indigenous peoples are bucking the trend to an extraordinary degree. While the areas under their care take up 340 million tonnes of carbon a year, the rest of the forest now pumps out 270 million tonnes – about equal to the annual emissions of France – over the same period. There is a huge lesson to be had here, which is that local people know what is best for the environment they occupy, and this is invariably good for the environment and the climate too.

This is why the work of Word Forest in Kenya is so critical. It sets an example, not only in terms of caring for existing forest, but also for planting new fast-growing trees that can suck up even more carbon. This is absolutely vital if we are to limit the global temperature rise sufficiently to prevent the tipping of critical biological and physical systems, such as the Amazon Rainforest, the Greenland Ice Sheet, and the Gulf Stream, which would translate inevitable dangerous climate breakdown into a climate cataclysm.

Trees are the key in so many ways, not only because together they make up such a huge carbon repository, but also because they support so many other species that are suffering as human activities continue to pump up the heat and extreme weather. They are – quite literally – our future. If we want our children and their children to inherit any sort of world worth living in, then we have no choice but to keep managing and keep planting.

Eva Jefwa: Head of Kenya Operations

The end and beginning of Word Forest's financial year is always a significant time for reflection and gratitude. It's when I, along with the Kenya team, express our heartfelt thanks to the entire Word Forest family—donors, corporate partners, and volunteers—for their continued support in Garashi and Rusinga Island. Over the years, I've learned that making the earth a better place requires more than just planting trees. Any contribution, whether in time or money, helps fund our reforestation efforts in Kenya.



This past year, we've undertaken several important projects, most notably the construction of the Edible Classroom at our Permaculture Training Centre (PTC). Completed between April and June 2023, the classroom was built by the Mothers of the Forest, who made the bricks themselves. This empowering process transformed the classroom into a space not only for learning but also for emotional respite. In the Giriama culture, a woman often loses her identity after marriage. However, in the Edible Classroom, we use our first names, creating an environment where age is just a number, and women can simply be themselves, even if only for a while.

The Edible Classroom offers numerous workshops and lessons, from literacy and numeracy to food and nutrition, mat making, and permaculture. Its white roof helps keep the space cool, and when not in use by the Mothers, it serves as a workspace and dining hall for the staff. Meals are now shared together as a team, highlighting the power of community.

Throughout the year, the Mothers of the Forest have also participated in various in-house workshops focused on creating sustainable income streams. Thanks to Tracey's report, *Mitigating the Climate Crisis Through Education*, we are now expanding our lessons to bring education into the broader community. Mental health is another key priority, and our Health and Wellbeing sessions have created a unique space where we openly discuss our challenges and support one another.

The numbers speak volumes about the impact of these programs. In Garashi, the Mothers have participated in 224 hours of learning and care, including literacy, numeracy, permaculture, and rest. The Rusinga Island Mothers have accumulated 334 hours, covering similar subjects with additional time dedicated to social activities.

In Garashi, the Mothers have also opened a small shop, primarily selling clothes but also surplus produce from their farms. This venture has boosted their confidence and social skills, as they now engage in discussions, ask questions, and contribute more actively than before. One of our core permaculture principles is producing zero waste, and in line with this, we installed guttering on two buildings to collect rainwater, filling a 10,000-litre reservoir. This initiative has not only conserved water but also reduced our costs.

Another milestone was expanding our tree nursery. Initially designed to hold 10,000 saplings, it has since been upgraded to accommodate 100,000 saplings, including fruit, nut, ornamental, and medicinal trees, both exotic and indigenous. This diversity helps balance the ecosystem and promotes drought tolerance. Recently, we constructed a steel framework over the nursery, covered with shade and insect netting, creating a locust-proof, water-saving structure that will significantly enhance our operations.

Tree planting remains at the heart of our work. While construction at the PTC slowed our tree-planting efforts in Garashi, where we planted 10,000 trees, we planted 34,070 trees on Rusinga Island, totaling 44,070 trees for 2023-2024. With our improved nursery, we expect even greater success in the coming year.

Finally, as a Christmas tradition, the entire Word Forest team in Kenya, including the Mothers of the Forest, received practical gifts—this year, each was given two sturdy chairs. For many of the Mothers, who lack basic furniture, these chairs provided a much-needed place to rest, highlighting the importance of small, meaningful gestures. In conclusion, it has been a year of growth, learning, and resilience. We look forward to continuing our efforts to combat climate change, empower communities, and restore the earth, one tree at a time.

Juliet Anyanzwa: Mothers of the Forest Garashi

Behind every great woman in Kenya, there is another great woman!

Women are generally known for their innate qualities of endurance, empathy, creativity, tolerance, dignity, gentleness and their integrity, among many others.

We, as Mothers of the Forest, regularly combine our efforts and come together to share our unique perspectives on knowledge about trees and saplings, life in general, the environment and much more. We also support each other to learn new skills.

Over the years, Word Forest has played an important role in transforming our lives for the positive, through many different routes.



for

Women's Empowerment

At our Permaculture Training Centre (PTC) of which, I am proud to remind you, we crafted the building blocks with our own hands, we have an Edible Classroom. In this learning space, we participate in literacy and numeracy lessons, cooking classes, social life skills, we embrace education about climate change, tree planting; other lessons take place here too.

In our literacy and numeracy classes, the Mothers are taught how to read and write both in English and Swahili. The Mothers are also taught much needed numeracy skills. These two lessons are enabling them to be able to respond to familiar and unfamiliar situations. They do this by deploying their mathematics and reading skills, which help them make better informed decisions and make problem solving more efficient too.

During these lessons, the Mothers are always happy and excited. Kabibi is among the Mothers who feels very grateful and lucky to get this opportunity for learning as an adult woman. She is always the first to settle down in class and she waits patiently for the teacher and other women to arrive.

She tells me: *"Sikujua naeza jua kusoma na kuandika katika umri huu wangu lakini sasa naeza saidia wanangu kufanya kazi ya ziada nashukuru sana"*. In English, this means *"I never knew if I would ever learn how to read and write. Now I can help my children with their homework."*

Kadzo added: *"Naeza andika jina langu vizuri jambo ambalo hapo awali sikueza kuandika hii ni furaha ilioje"*. Translated, this means: *"I can write my name without any difficulties, what a wonderful privilege."*

Through coming and working together, we've been able to achieve a lot. Most of our lives have changed for the better. We've shared our weaknesses and strengths which has helped to shed more light on our previous caged life.

The Mothers of the Forest have table banking, where we saved money for a whole year. After acquiring the knowledge and understanding of how to run a business, we came up with the idea to open a shop with the money we had saved from this 'merry go round'. Mothers are now running a shop which is doing well due to the knowledge and skills we have acquired during our business lessons.

Nuru said: *"Mbeleni nilikuwa nafanya biashara lakini sikua na ujuzi wa kuendelea vyema, lakini kupitia mafundisho naeza endelesha biashara yangu vizuri"*. This means: *"Back then I had a business and I didn't have enough knowledge on how to run a business but now through learning I can run my business well."*

"Since we started learning about cooking methods, it has become a key which unlocked our happiness, peace and love in my family. Most of the time my husband and I used to differ

on how I used to cook and present food to the table. I never did it with passion and love and now I am a superhero”, Nyevu added.

“Mimi nilidhani kusoma na kuandika ndiyo mwisho wa Kila kitu lakini kumbe sivyo. Tunaeza jifunza kazi za mikono kama vile kutengeneza sabuni, matofali,viatu vya shanga, mikufu, kushona mikeka ili kujikimu kimaisha”, comments Sidi Alisema. That is: *“I thought reading and writing was the end of everything, but it's not. We teach handicrafts such as making soap, bricks, beaded shoes, necklaces and sewing mats to make a living.”*

Kafedha aliongezea said: *“Ninalipia mwanangu karo ya shule Kwa kuuza sabuni na kushona viatu vya shanga.Sasa nimempunguzia mume wangu mzigo wa kulipia watoto karo ya shule”.* Translated, it means: *“I do pay my children's school fees by selling liquid soap and sandals that have helped to ease my husband's burden.”*

Tree Planting

Trees play a great role when it comes to climate change. We, Mothers of the Forest, plant trees and take good care. We've learnt different ways to conserve our forest in order to restore and curb the long term problem which has resulted in climate crises.

Every mother has planted at least 50 trees at home. The target is to plant 100 each at our homes by the end of this year.

Dama explains: *“The trees I planted at home make my home cool and attractive. Trees are a habitat to many species. Early in the morning, the weather is always cool and one can hear sweet wake up songs from birds. I encourage mothers to plant more trees.”*

Sidi adds: *“We have learnt a lot about tree planting and we need to implement it in our homes. We will have cool and fresh air like Dama, and our community will not be affected by climate change. Also, we will be able to plant food crops and harvest good yields.”*

At the PTC the mothers have an acre of land where they plant maize, beans, green grams and vegetables; we share the harvests amongst ourselves and also sell the extra.

For half an hour in our meetings we sit and just be. We take this time to share experiences and challenges and best of all, just be there for each other.

Neema asked Rehema: *“How can I ensure that my husband stays focused and caring?”*

“I do this by cooking well and showing my love for him and our family,” Rehema answered.

Rehema is aged 39 and a mother of 5 children. She encouraged us all by giving us a piece of advice and hope. She went ahead and narrated how she was stigmatised because of her health condition. Through counselling and guidance she absorbed it and moved on.

Rehema advised us not to allow setbacks in life to stop us from facing each new day with determination.

Rehema added: *“Through the encouragement I receive from my mentor, I am able to rise beyond my problems and my struggles and I always have a positive attitude about life”.*

I hope you'll see from this snapshot discussion with the Mothers of the Forest that this really is a wonderful experience; the Mothers show how their lives have turned over a new leaf. We will continue to express our feelings in our meetings because it helps us greatly to cope with our ever changing lives.

Thank you for all you do to help us do the activities we do. You are making lots of memories here as you make wonderful things happen for us all.

Sue Jueno: Special Projects & Fundraising

In April 2019, UK barrister and ecocide visionary Polly Higgins lost life to cancer. She'd spent her last decade making ecocide globally recognised as a crime against humanity. After she died, Word Forest was approached to see if we would help create a heart-shaped Legacy Forest in Polly's name. A campaign was set and contributors from all over the world donated to make the forest a reality.



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up,

Legacy forests can take time to arrange, so in summer 2020 after discussions with our charity partners, Awaken Love For Africa, Polly's 3,000 trees were planted. It was adjacent to their project, The Gideons, an orphanage that looks after almost 1,000 youngsters.

Three years on in summer 2023, we are delighted that the heart shaped forest has been extremely well cared for, grown beautifully and is now identifiable on Google Earth. Since planting the 3,000 trees have drawn down around 750 tonnes of CO2 and other pollutants. They've cleaned the air we breathe all over the planet, created precious new habitats for wildlife and shade for anything that needs it. A lush and verdant living reminder of the life of the amazing environmentalist, Polly Higgins.

Grants

Since COVID 19 gaining funding from grants has become increasingly difficult. Trusts and foundations are drowning in the volume of applications from charities. Unfortunately they just do not have enough funding to go around. Although this can create an air of despondency, we have tried to increase the quality and volume of our bids, and look at our projects from a different angle - hopefully opening up a new sector of funding that we can apply for.

Apparel

During 2023 our fundraising clothing store was updated to become gender neutral. The 16 main designs are now offered as t-shirts - in crew neck, scoop neck, relaxed fit and v neck, and long sleeves - in long sleeve t-shirt, regular hoodie, crew neck sweater and relaxed fit hoodie. These, as well as our Phat, Kenyan Botany, Recycled, Celebri-Tee and Kids Collections are all 100% organic cotton. These products can also be returned and remade into new garments again and again and again.

Our most successful design is our Celebri-Tee collaboration with Mr Benn, who 'realised, as if by magic, that trees are the key' (Actor Richard Coyle shown modelling the t-shirt, stage right!)

Sue Jueno, Special Projects & Fundraising

Jed Robertson: Digital Media Specialist

This financial year, Word Forest's digital media output has focused on both the creation of new content and how we can use existing content to tell new stories or to bring our message to new audiences.

We undertook another wonderful collaboration with Editors4Impact to condense our documentary, #TreesAreTheKey, into a ten minute short for corporate audiences. At a quarter of original length, capturing the essence of the full work in a way that would entice new corporate partners but still display the depth of our work posed an exciting challenge. With the help of Thomas Winward, the editor we were paired with, I believe we have produced a wonderful new asset that exhibits our mission and accomplishments in a package that is digestible by those who may not have the time to watch a forty minute documentary. It also came at no additional cost to us, which shows the power of charities working together and sharing skills.

This year also saw the completion of the Permaculture Teaching Centre build in Garashi. Thanks to the purchase of a new tablet for Eva, the quality of the onsite videos from our colleagues in Kenya has massively improved and allowed me to produce a video that sits more inline with the expectations of European and Western audiences. This upgrade has allowed us to create more captivating content that is less likely to be skipped over by potential donors and shows the details of the work where previously it wasn't possible.

Another piece of content to highlight is the song commissioned by Eva, composed by Kenyan songwriter and producer Manu Bayaz and performed entirely by Kenyan musicians. This wonderful surprise has allowed me to progress towards another personal goal of mine which was to use as much media created by Kenyan artists as possible. Manu kindly also provided me with an instrumental version and the vocal recordings, allowing me to create bespoke versions for future projects. Combining this with recordings of songs taken during our monitoring trips to Kenya will create many new exciting possibilities for our video content going forward into the next year.



use

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Our joint commitment to address the climate challenge



We are proud to be investing in a joint effort with Word Forest to create our own Gold Standard offsetting programme, as an ongoing asset to Word Forest's mission.

Our work in business makes clear the scale of challenge that lies ahead in addressing climate change.

We are delighted to be working with Word Forest to make our own contribution to addressing the challenge.



THE WORD FOREST ORGANISATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1172497

Accounts



WORD FOREST

Annual Report 2022-2023

About the Charity

This is the Annual Report and Accounts for The Word Forest Organisation, a charity registered in the United Kingdom by the Charity Commission
Charity No: 1172497

Registered Address and Contact Details

Barnpark
Green Lane
Tipton St John
Devon
EX10 0AH

Tel: 01297 533 111

Email: team@WordForest.org

Website: WordForest.org

Trustees

Mr Simon West FRSA (Chair of Trustees)

Ms Rikey Austin

Ms Eva Dixon

Mr Philip Gamble

Ms Camille Oster

Mrs Izzy Robertson

Mrs Helen Roberts retired as a Trustee on 9th May 2022.

Ms Camille Oster was appointed as Trustee on 2nd June 2022.

Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Tracey West FRSA

Managing Director

Mr Simon West FRSA

Patrons

Clare Nasir and Zena Edwards

Special Advisors

Bill McGuire and Jo Lawrance

Our Constitutional Structure

Word Forest was incorporated as a CIO on 7th April 2017.

Our constitution follows the model for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as set out by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and was adopted on 7th April 2017 and revised on 1st February 2021.

Charitable Objects and Public Benefit

To promote sustainable development* for the benefit of the public in countries to be determined by the Trustees by:

- (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
- (b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

*Sustainable development means “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 in planning our activities.

The positive social impact of our work is considered before we direct our tree-planting communities, and outcomes are directly monitored. This enables the Trustees to be confident that the charity has, through its range of activities, achieved significant public benefit for the community in Kenya, and in countries as determined by the Trustees.

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From the Board

Tracey West: CEO and Fundraiser

If you're new to Word Forest, thanks for popping by to dive into this year's Report and Accounts.

If you're familiar with this kind of Report and you're already preparing to yawn, I promise you, ours is unlike anything you'll have seen before.

We're about to give you a deeply informative experience, demonstrating the positive impact Word Forest is having across Kenya and to the planet, without you having to get up from your chair.

Sure, we've got numbers to present to you. Yes, we've got information gathered by our colleagues showing our physical achievements over the past 12 months, i.e. another classroom built here, some more trees planted there, and so on.



I'm confident that by the time you get to the end of this document, you'll feel better informed but I hope you'll also feel mentally and spiritually uplifted, more environmentally engaged, more empowered to make changes at home and inspired to carry those ideas into your workplace.

I also hope you feel less eco-anxious than you felt before, because we've shone a light on how easy it is to make a difference to our world.

I must be honest, once you've digested the facts laid out by our Patron, Met Office Meteorologist Clare Nasir and our Special Scientific Advisor, Professor Bill McGuire, you'll realise how important your engagement is.

Above all, I hope you'll be able to take another look at what your understanding is of the incredible work we've been doing across Kenya for the last 7 years. I want you to know precisely what your donations and partnerships have enabled us to do.

You are the drivers. We are the conduit that moves your energy (be it volunteer hours, financial donations or pro bono offers) from one place to another, for the betterment of our planet and every living breathing thing on it.



The Third Sector has witnessed more adversity in respect of fundraising and continuity of service in recent years, than it has done since the second World War.

Thanks to your support, Word Forest has been able to pull metaphorical rabbits out of hats and cats out of bags.

We're full of gratitude and we're happy to pause a while to celebrate

what we've achieved together - thank you!



As we say in our documentary narrated by Kate Winslet, #TreesAreTheKey to doing so much more than mitigating our climate emergency. In case you haven't seen it yet, [click here and pop it on your watch list!](#)

It might be a few years old but you'll certainly get a great feel for who we work with, what we do and why we do it. Above all, I'm confident you'll get that feel good factor that I get every time I watch it too.

So, it's time to fasten your seat belt and dive into the rest of our report. Believe me, it would have been bulging with additional articles and interviews if I'd had my way, but that would have made it more of a book than a report! We've decided to pop the extra features into our news feed instead.

If you're a fan of positive environmental articles and you're keen to learn more about how you can make more sustainable living choices at home and at work, [click here to subscribe to our news feed](#) and you'll be among the first to know

Word Forest has hit some major milestones recently and we are doing well - as Eva says, "We're getting there pole, pole" (that's Kiswahili for slowly). I would be kidding myself if I said the future was all plain sailing, it isn't. We've set ourselves some high bars to leap over in the year ahead, particularly with our ambition to enter the carbon offset market. Our activities during the first quarter of 2023 show that we are on the right track and we have a terrific guide to get us through the challenges.

Our Corporate Partners, Oaklin Consulting are with us every step of the way. They know the quality of the environmental, educational and humanitarian services we've been providing our donors, partners and beneficiaries with, from day one. We're going to offer permaculture lessons at our PTC (Permaculture Teaching Centre) in Garashi. That knowledge has the power to strengthen the resilience of the tree planting communities, exponentially, because they'll know how to diversify what they're growing and eating too.

I'm going to have to cut myself off here, or I'm going to end up going down another exciting rabbit hole and telling you all about the great updates we've got planned for our news feed.

If you'll excuse me, it's time to hand the baton on to the rest of our phenomenal team.

Simon West: Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

Our sixth year brought forth a new set of challenges, from the war in Ukraine, to massive inflation and soaring fuel prices. Once again, I would not have been surprised if our income had decreased compared to 2021-22. The number of people volunteering for us dropped significantly as they returned to work or sought paying jobs to avoid the ravages of the global economic woes.

Despite the bleak outlook, the truth was quite astounding. Each month exceeded the performance of the same month from the previous year. By the time March 31st arrived, our income had grown by just under 25%, crossing the £100,000 threshold for the first time.

Faced with fewer volunteers and an increased workload, I believed that we needed to work smarter, not harder. Towards the end of the year, I began an in-depth audit of our processes and procedures, alongside the establishment of a budget for 2023-2024. As the year drew to a close, our new business plan was well underway.

Throughout 2022-2023, a substantial amount of time was dedicated to formulating a plan to become a certified issuer of legitimate carbon credits. We carefully considered the positive and negative implications; we are all steadfast in our belief that these credits must not sustain 'business as usual.' Recognising our environmental impact in all our actions, we see them as a means to counterbalance negative actions with positive ones. After careful consideration, we chose Gold Standard as our intended certification body. Their stringent requirements should instil confidence in purchasers of carbon offset units, assuring them that their investments genuinely contribute to CO2 removal from the atmosphere. We aim to complete our registration by the close of 2023.

We also completed our branding review, with a new logo, colours and fonts. It is always an ongoing process to find and replace old logos, but as this financial year comes to a close we think it is complete almost everywhere. We really hope our supporters like our fresh, new look and that the new logo conveys much better the four pillars of our charity.

Our extended monitoring and evaluation visit, spanning December 2022, bolstered our commitment to planting trees, constructing classrooms, and disseminating education as extensively as possible. The tourist industry in the once-thriving Coast Province town of Malindi has scarcely recovered since 2020. Our projects offer valuable employment opportunities and educational experiences in food production, benefiting the local inhabitants. The establishment of the Permaculture Teaching Centre depleted a significant portion of our resources, but it now wields a substantial impact on the local community, providing employment, serving as a hub for the Mothers of the Forest, and offering diverse and valuable education.

Our plans for 2023-2024 encompass finalising Carbon Credits registration and embarking wholeheartedly on our planting initiative for that project. We also aspire to expand our roster of corporate partners. To this end, we have been collaborating with Oaklin, our esteemed and trusted corporate partner since 2021, on a fresh business strategy document. This will guide our efforts towards endeavours that maximise benefits for both the charity and the planet. Our corporate partners contribute in numerous ways, with a substantial portion of our funding stemming from them, alongside considerable "benefit in kind" support, which, while not reflected in our financial accounts, holds a value worth many thousands of pounds.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to all our employees, volunteers, the dedicated individuals in Kenya striving to realise our vision, and all our donors. Without them, everything we undertake would remain an unrealised dream.

Izzy Robertson: Literacy Trustee

This is just a big thank you!

Looking back over the past year, I am, in equal measure, astounded by and grateful for the generosity of all those that support the work of Word Forest in their many different ways – with money, with time, with expertise and with sheer hard graft. In a year which has been challenging on many fronts, every one of you that has followed us, read our blog, told your friends about us, donated to us or given us your time, has been instrumental in helping us develop and expand our work in Kenya. As Eva's report above shows, this is making a real difference, and a lasting one at that. Not only are there more trees in the ground but the community is flourishing too.

It's an honour to be a Trustee for Word Forest – we have a small but dedicated team of employees and volunteers and an extraordinary band of corporate partners, supporters and donors. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all. We simply couldn't do it without you!

Phil Gamble: Horticultural Trustee

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Kenya: 2022

I'm a retired horticulturist and permaculture tutor. I've been involved in horticulture, permaculture and nature photography since 1976. I spent many years lecturing on some of these topics at Kingston Maurward. I've always had a passion and deep appreciation for understanding the natural world and the way it works.

I have been the Horticultural Trustee of Word Forest since 2017 and I was deeply involved with it during the preceding year, leading up to when the charity was formalised. My experience, though extensive and broad, has largely been circled around UK flora and fauna. Over the years, it has been a joy to extend my education to include Kenyan trees, plants and wildlife, too.

Opportunity Knocked, I'm Glad I Answered

When the golden opportunity arose for me to offer permaculture training and organic gardening tips to the Mothers of the Forest and others in Kenya, I felt it couldn't be missed. I self-funded my trip, and whilst it was a very demanding month physically, mentally and spiritually, it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Our growing network of women's empowerment groups - fondly known as Mothers of the Forest - are astonishingly impressive to see first hand. The first branch was set up in Garashi and is led by Eva Jefwa and Esther Kadzo. Despite the language barrier, as my Kiswahili was slightly more limited than Simon and Tracey's, it was clear that they were super keen to add new growing and permaculture design skills to their existing remit.

From the Mothers in Coast Province in the far east of Kenya, to those on Rusinga Island in the far west on Lake Victoria, the collective keenness to learn was overwhelming. These amazing women have been successfully rearing saplings and growing trees and sharing their knowledge in great abundance. Despite the challenges of the ever increasing climate emergency and Africa's ongoing drought, they've also been growing a wide range of food crops too, in what are ostensibly jolly hostile climatic conditions. They work tirelessly to feed their families, even if it is only one meal a day.

It was an honour to create bespoke courses for them that built on their existing knowledge and experience. By consulting with Eva and our extensive network of contacts in Kenya, I devised a programme that I thought would be the most effective.

Where We Plant and Why

Although Word Forest plants a few trees here in the UK, I know they'd say they really are just a token amount, designed to start conversations about the global value of trees. Tracey and Simon's energies remain focused on planting them in the tropics where they grow up to 10 times faster than they do here in Dorset in the UK.

As trees contribute so strongly to alleviating the climate crisis we're all experiencing, our tree planting efforts in the tropics must clearly remain our primary remit. However, in order for those trees to be well planted and cared for in their early days, the people who are tending them have to be well nourished, fit and able to carry out those duties. Therefore, knowledge of small scale food production is critical to the mix, if the Word Forest trees are to grow to maturity.

Generously enabled by your kind donations I ran courses which - with remarkable translation skills from our Kenyan team - were seemingly a great success. I found the Mothers were incredibly keen to learn, they were very attentive and they enjoyed bringing their experiences and good humour to the table; I openly confess, I learned so much from the Mothers too!

It's remarkable that we have so many common threads that flow through the way we grow in our respective countries, yet, how astonishingly varied the different species are. I recognised many of them, although there were several I didn't. Most notably, I was amazed just how quickly everything grows in Kenya!

Any Questions?

At the end of our tutoring sessions, I posed the question, was there anything else the Mothers wanted to know? They gave a collective response: "When are you coming back to Kenya to teach us more about permaculture?" To address that, we have been working on creating a set of videos that the students can learn from, without me setting foot on an aeroplane.

The courses I ran in December were designed to be interactive and a lot of fun - it is the best way to learn after all - and they showed me how hard the Mothers want to develop and hone their skills at food growing and tree planting too. They want everything they grow to be successful.

Once I had a better understanding of what they needed individually (each topic I ran a course on had its own quirks) I worked with the students to design companion planting schemes using plants that were relatively easy to grow. Permaculture design ethics and principles will enable them to manage their shambas to the best of their abilities and to much better effect.

The course I ran at L'magiro in eastern Kenya was wonderful. This teaching centre is run by Sylvia Pirelli. She established a verdant permaculture food forest in the 1970's. It was a delight to teach there because there were many well established plants and trees and Sylvia uses countless nature-friendly techniques, which were all easy to see and learn from.

New Tools New Skills

The Mothers all showed determination to practise their newly learned propagation skills with the knives and other tools I'd brought over from the UK. We do know it's better to spend money in Kenya to keep it flowing through the local economy, however, I already knew these specialist items were difficult to source there, hence a heavy payload in my well-packed suitcase. With their new tools, they soon became experts in mapping, plot design, using overlays and colour coding, planting methods, composting

and mulching too. With such a vast subject area to cover, one might have thought it would be overwhelming, on the contrary - they couldn't learn fast enough!

I remain impressed to this day with the tenacious spirit of the Mothers. Their attitude to learning was all embracing and they took time to help each other find different ways to convey their thoughts and agree on the best translations to pose questions. They clearly have a strong framework of support for each other, yet none of them have an easy life, by any stretch of the imagination.

I recall Benina, a wonderful woman of very diminutive stature and the most enormous smile. She had suffered with hearing difficulties all her life and she needed additional translation from my English into Kiswahili and then into her native language, Luo. She was overjoyed to have mastered how to take cuttings and propagate, even with our tri-language difference. Those successes have gone on to make enormous positive waves on the ground in Kenya, as Benina and the other Mothers share the skills they learned with their respective communities.

Permaculture Has the Answers

Permaculture is such an enormous topic and the subjects I covered in those few days of intensive learning with them ran the risk of being a drop in the ocean. In reality, it represented the fantastic creation of real "ground truth" as I like to call it. Perhaps for the first time in my career, I was honest to goodness changing lives and fighting for the planet. It was a privilege. Overall, I believe it was a great success and I am incredibly proud to be part of their learning journey through Word Forest.

As an English gardener who hadn't previously travelled outside of Europe, I'd say a particularly memorable element of the teaching experience in Kenya, was coping with the heat and goodness me, how different it was from one side of the country to the other. During December in Dorset, I'm grateful for any degrees above zero, so 32 degrees in the shade was very challenging indeed. That said, the hospitality our UK team was given was nothing short of amazing and incredibly gracious. The Mothers will always be stars in my eyes and my word, they do such phenomenal growing in a place that's not far off of being a volatile sauna.

One final thing, I have never taught so many lessons with young children and babies present in the room. The children were all so well behaved and quiet. In fact, I'd say they were fascinated with what was being done. I remember pausing for a moment and wondering whether these youngsters would remember back to the day the very hot mzungu (non pejorative term for a white English speaking person) taught their mum about plants and trees? I hope so. I hope they carry their thirst for knowledge about permaculture and growing long into adulthood and that they pass on their skills to as many people as I have, as years go by.

The Best Investment

In the UK, it's often said that permaculture is 'hobbyist'. In Kenya, knowledge of this kind is the stuff that can save lives - it is the difference between life and death.

I hope you are able to continue to pop the odd pound or two into Word Forest's bucket because I can tell you, every penny is being so wonderfully well spent. Our work is locking down untold tonnes of CO2, reducing stresses and human/wildlife conflict, improving relationships and reducing domestic violence and more, all by putting more food on the table and creating luscious canopy cover.

It simply doesn't get any better than that.

Phil Gamble

Financial Summary

Income

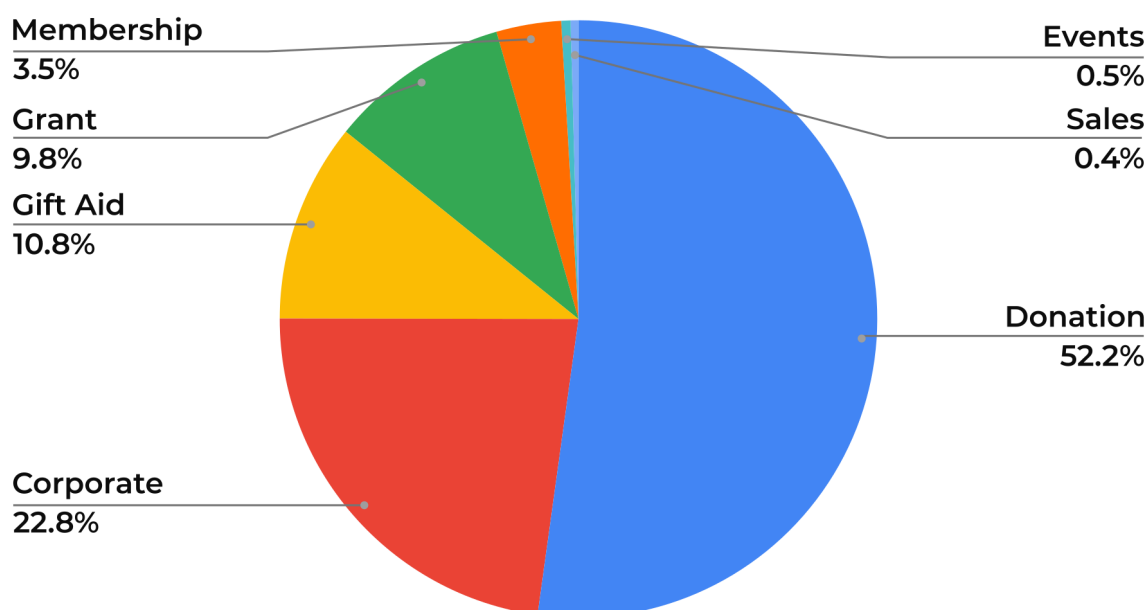
In 2022-2023 (year 6) our income was **£101,738.00**, an increase of 25% over our 2021-2022 income of £81,381.85.

Income by Category

Category	Amount (GBP)	Percent	2021-2022 (GBP)	Change
Donation	£53,096.45	52.19%	£45,035.57	+18%
Corporate	£23,235.00	22.84%	£17,950.88	+29%
Gift Aid	£10,949.99	10.76%	£7,484.82	+46%
Grant	£9,948.60	9.78%	£5,200.00	+91%
Membership	£3,564.00	3.50%	£4,341.35	-18%
Events Income	£516.30	0.51%	£0.00	+100%
Sales	£427.66	0.42%	£1,369.23	-69%
Total	£101,738.00	100.00%	£81,381.85	+25%

Our ring fenced income was **£19,625.00**, (37% for salaries, 53% for our M&E visit) and our non-ring fenced income was **£81,063.97**.

Income



Outgoings

Our total outgoings were **£98,353.13**. **£65,442.48** of this went directly to Kenya. This represents 66.5% of our total income, but **80.73%** of our non-ring fenced income.

For 2023 we have increased our rate of pay for people we employ in Kenya to 220 Kenyan Shillings per hour, or **459,360 KES** per year full time equivalent, which is the same as a senior high school teacher or middle manager.

From January 2023 we increased our UK salary rate to £10.90 per hour in line with The Living Wage Foundation recommendation (see livingwage.org.uk)

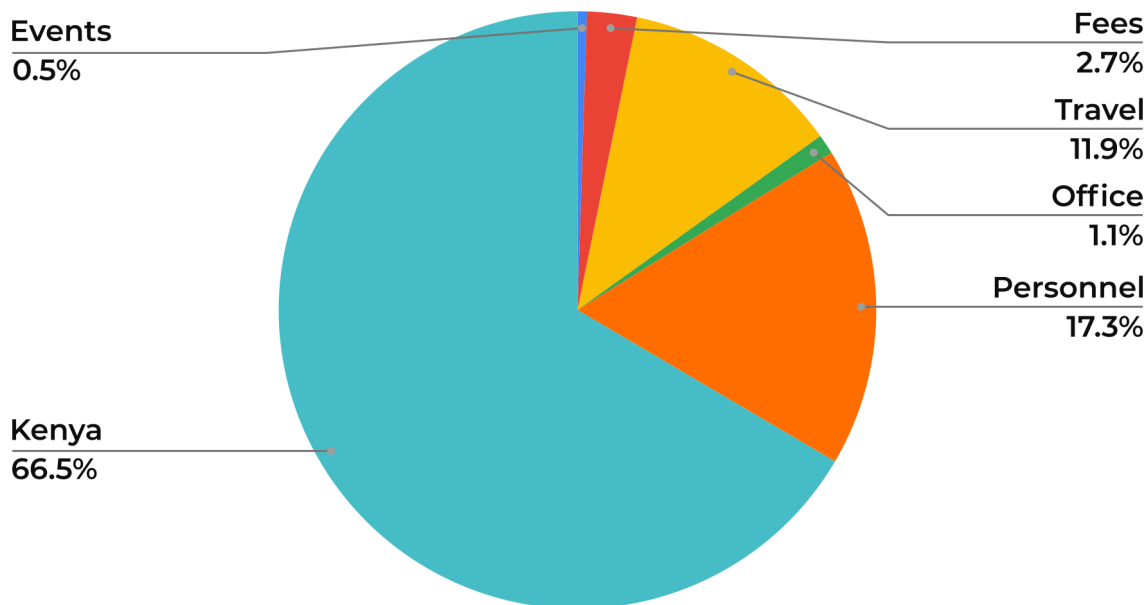
We raised £10,500 for our M&E visit (December 3rd 2022 - January 3rd 2023)

We ended the year with a balance of **£9,682.89** and an average monthly income of **£8,478.17**, compared to £6,781.82 the previous year - an increase of 25%.

Outgoings by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2021-2022	Change
Events	£496.90	0.5%	£775.00	-36%
Fees	£2,657.70	2.7%	£3,513.23	-24%
Travel	£11,702.55	11.9%	£6,609.21	+77%
Office	£1,049.03	1.1%	£11,308.50	-91%
Personnel	£17,004.47	17.3%	£24,821.81	-31%
Kenya	£65,442.48	66.5%	£49,950.52	+31%
Total	£98,353.13	100.0%	£69,665.15	+41%

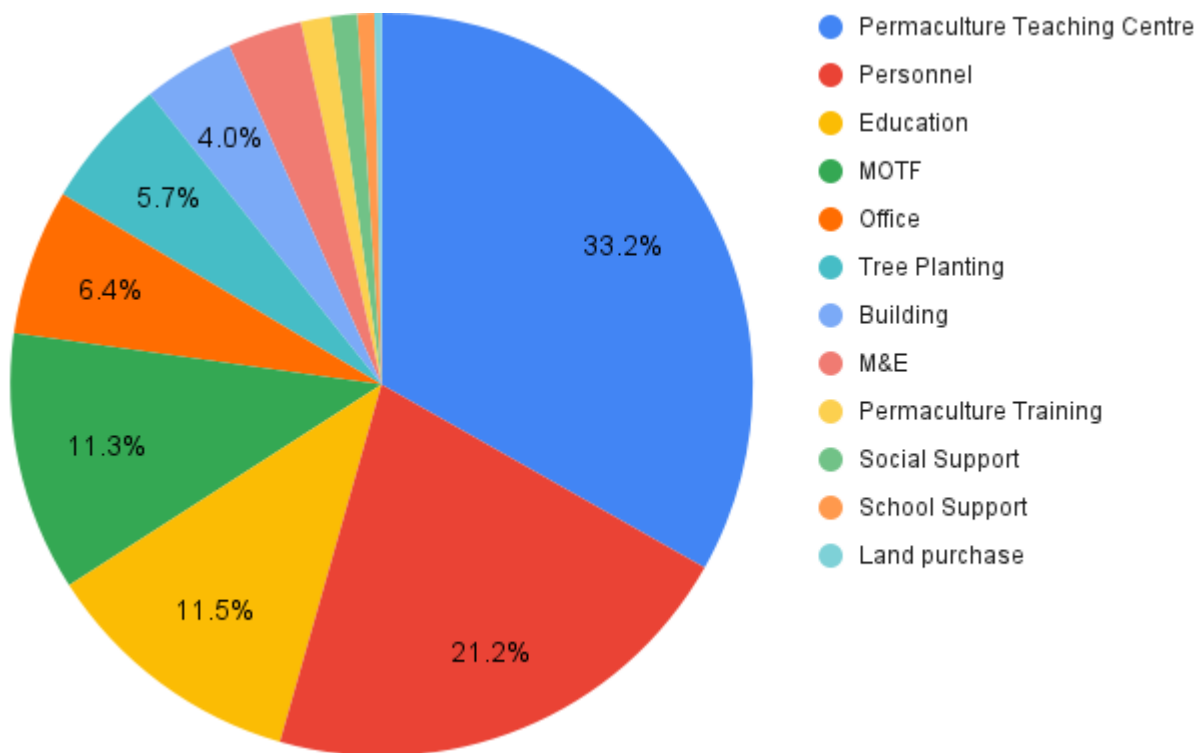
Outgoings



Kenya projects by Category

For 2022-2023 we have analysed the money sent to projects by category to better understand what we are funding. Almost all of the funding categories have tree planting associated with them, so where we have paid for a building to be built, there will have been trees planted at a rate of at least one tree for every £2.50 sent over.

Category	Amount (KES)	Percent	GBP (Approx)
PTC	2,599,122	33.2%	£21,729.62
Personnel	1,660,161	21.2%	£13,879.56
Education	900,328	11.5%	£7,527.08
MOTF	884,600	11.3%	£7,395.58
Office	497,080	6.4%	£4,155.77
Tree Planting	446,800	5.7%	£3,735.41
Building	312,671	4.0%	£2,614.05
M&E	252,684	3.2%	£2,112.53
Permaculture Training	101,750	1.3%	£850.67
Social Support	90,050	1.2%	£752.85
School Support	57,455	0.7%	£480.35
Land purchase	25,000	0.3%	£209.01
Total	7,827,701	100.0%	£65,442.48



Trustees' Statement

For our 6th year, our Trustees continue to support and advise the charity and oversee its operations. Every major decision was taken in full consultation with the Trustees and they take a very active role in determining the best course of action for the charity.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

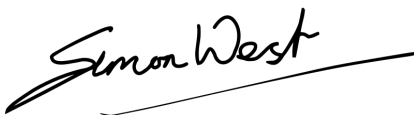
The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website.

This Report and Accounts was approved by the trustees on 15th April 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon West". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Simon West FRSA
Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Word Forest

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Word Forest, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), for the year ended 30th March 2023.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity Trustees of the CIO 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 CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

The accounts were independently examined and approved on 9th May 2023.



Hannah Foster
392 Wood Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 6AQ

From our Team

Clare Nasir: Patron

Heed the Climate Science

I believe we are in the early years of what will inevitably be noted by historians as *'the most crucial decade for ensuring human survival on planet Earth'*.

The one where internationally gathered data and great science was woven into a globally adhered-to policy that had the power to move the planet's trajectory away from erasing life on earth for humans and wildlife. It might take a while for it to gain governmental consensus but on the back of what meteorologists are seeing and predicting today, I remain optimistic it *will* happen.

A Phoenix will Rise

Death tolls from active forest fires raging across the globe are increasing and species decline of everything from miniscule insects to gargantuan whales, is at an all time high. This is a bone-chilling fact, not conjecture or speculation.

Our outlook is horrifically bleak, there's no doubt about it and yet the voices of incredibly knowledgeable climate scientists are only just beginning to rise above those filled with rhetoric and inexcusable excuses for not guiding our planet towards Net Zero.

Word Forest's Solution

While Rome quite literally burns, my gratitude is offered up to Word Forest for the ambitious, multi-faceted mission they've undertaken to combat our climate emergency by reforesting Kenya.

Trees there have the ability to grow incredibly fast, up to 10 times quicker than elsewhere and in a country that has around 10% canopy cover, that leaves a huge amount of space to green up, drawdown and lock in CO2.

I accepted the responsibility to be Word Forest's Patron in December 2020 because I believed they had the right blueprint for *all* life on Earth. By combining tree planting, environmental education and critically, a raft of women's empowerment initiatives, they have the ability to get the job done, regardless of who walks the political corridors.

The Power of Partnerships

With the right finance streams unlocked - which I'm confident will happen, as they enter the carbon offset market with assistance from Oaklin and other Corporate Partners - Word Forest will at last be able to scale up their operation. Everything is aligning for them to become the multi-million pound NGO they deserve to be.

Word Forest will be able to engage more Mothers of the Forest across Kenya. They in turn will be able to mitigate hunger, malnutrition and starvation because they'll understand the solutions that lie in organic growing, permaculture and syntropic agroforestry. They'll be able to put a dent in poverty too because they'll be armed with solutions for income generation and they'll be able to work with whatever Mother Nature throws at them. The Mothers will ensure their communities are more self-sufficient and Kenya will become a trailblazing country that inspires other African nations to follow their lead.

Green Fingers

We folks in the northern latitudes will do well to pay attention to the actions of the Mothers. Regardless of whatever jobs we *think* we do, we will benefit from learning how to grow a few comestibles for our dining tables. Let's also do more to understand *how* food arrives on our plates. Learn what eating seasonally really means and comprehend the consequences of excessive road miles. Let's supplement our dinner plates with fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs and more from our gardens, allotments and window boxes.

Let's be Mothers and Fathers of all the world's forests by implementing Word Forest's pioneering initiatives in our home countries. As Kate Winslet said, #TreesAreTheKey to mitigating climate chaos and so much more.

Add Pests to the Mix

I often think about the biblical 'plague' of locusts that annihilated thousands of hectares of farmland across the Horn of Africa in 2019. It was one of two waves, the first destroying 70,000ha of farmland in Somalia and Ethiopia, and 240,000ha of pastureland in Kenya. A second wave hit Uganda and South Sudan. It was the worst outbreak in decades.

Naturally, Word Forest responded immediately to the news of the swarms by declaring that all future food growing plots were to be covered in insect and shading nets. This has given them extra costs which they've taken on the chin. However, it is far better to anticipate the next inevitable swarm and to protect the food in situ, than to have to rely on emergency aid, which can take a very long time to deliver.

There are ways of stopping such extreme outbreaks and it starts by identifying breeding grounds. This is where satellite data is so important.

Ground Zero

Endeavours can be made to prevent extreme outbreaks from starting in the first place. Satellite data is a vital tool for identifying locust breeding grounds, as are early warning systems that use algorithms, mapping and ground information. Remote sensing from space provides weather, climate and environmental observations, such as vegetation indices and humidity values. It's the bigger picture that's needed, along with past and present imagery.

The EUMETSAT provides 16 megabits of data per second via its EUMETCast system to African meteorological services, climate researchers and other institutions. The satellite in geostationary orbit has had a continuous view of the continent for 40 years.

Meteorological Matters

Erratic rainfall patterns across Africa also continue to bring a whole host of other life threatening risks and impacts to agriculture, food and water security. It's not only severe storms, droughts and floods, but their frequency and intensity are also on the increase and that can potentially cause major population shifts. Accurate weather forecasts and warnings of severe weather are *essential* to enable African countries to deal with and adapt to, the impacts of the changing climate.

Shiny New Satellite

Meteorological satellites have a key role to play too. In December 2022, a new payload of instruments was launched into space, including the first ever satellite instrument

continuously detecting lightning over Europe and Africa. This promises a breakthrough for the detection and prediction of severe storms and this wasn't the *only* satellite launched that year: it's worthy of note that near space is actually getting very crowded.

Our Fragile Space

Recently, I had the privilege of interviewing astronomer and photographer Max Alexander at the Blue Dot Festival in Jodrell Bank, Cheshire. Max's latest exhibition, Our Fragile Space, is part of a proactive initiative led by the UK and European Parliament to manage and regulate the exponential increase in human launched space debris.

The festival wanted a discussion on how we can learn from the mistakes, ignorance, policy weaknesses and general laissez-faire attitude when dealing with the global climate crisis here on Earth. So what's the problem? Of the current 33,000 tracked objects in near space only 7,700 are functioning satellites. In addition to the current 100,000 satellite licences granted, there are another million pending approval.

Critical Kit

As a meteorologist, my day begins by studying the latest set of satellite pictures. The swirls of clouds, in every hue from white to grey to black, reveal a plethora of information for the day's forecasting analysis. This, and so much more, is ingested into computer models to deliver short term output and longer term climate trends. My colleagues and I take this information for granted; it's an integral tool that we live and breathe by.

The images in Max's exhibition map the positives and negatives of using near space. I could write an essay on the uses, from monitoring retreating ice sheets, to understanding the level of heat absorbed by oceans and seas, the extent of wildfires, hints of reforestation, decline of lakes, the list is endless and essential. Instead I will close with some positive words from Max and then Word Forest.

Lessons for a Better Future

When it comes to near space, we still have time. Many lessons *have* been learned from our environmental successes and failures. However, it will take a mindful, concerted effort from all parties around the world to bring order and regulation to the future shared use of space.

Meanwhile, back at grassroots here on Earth, I'd like to hand the final words in my address to Tracey West, Word Forest's CEO.

"If we get on the right side of Mother Nature and treat our host planet with a little more respect, instead of squeezing it for every drop of natural resource (water and oil), it has great potential to heal itself. If we reach back and unlock pots of indigenous knowledge and combine that with modern day science and education, we'll have a workable solution for reducing unnecessary death and destruction. Unfortunately, it relies on a bit of degrowth and an urgent reframing of the measurement of GDP: surely GDH (health/ happiness) is a far better metric?"

"If the simple logic behind #TreesAreTheKey sat at the heart of local, regional, national and international decision making and governance, we could depart the Anthropocene and enter the restorative period - the Regeneracene, if you will - that humankind is going to end up in, at some point in the future. I'd rather that be sooner than later. How about you?"

Bill McGuire: Special Scientific Advisor to Word Forest

*Professor Emeritus of Geophysical & Climate Hazards at UCL. His latest book, *Hothouse Earth: an Inhabitant's Guide*, is published by Icon Books.*

The news isn't good. Since the Industrial Revolution, a couple of centuries back, human activities have added 2.4 trillion tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, pushing up concentrations of the gas by 50 percent. The global average temperature rise, as a result, is now at 1.27°C (averaged over the last five years). In order to stay this side of the dangerous climate change guardrail - equated with a temperature rise of 1.5°C - global emissions need to be halved by 2030. The chances of this happening are now vanishingly small, so we must accept the fact that we can no longer dodge deadly, all-pervasive, climate breakdown that will insinuate itself into every aspect of our lives and livelihoods.

But this doesn't mean it is too late to act. On the contrary, action becomes even more critical. Every tonne of carbon we stop being emitted, and every 0.1°C rise in global temperature we prevent, can help stop dangerous becoming cataclysmic, and increase the chances of leaving a liveable planet to our children and their children.

One positive thing we can do is plant trees - lots of them. A 2019 study reckoned that foresting an area the size of the United States could potentially pull 205 billion tonnes of carbon out of the atmosphere - equivalent to two-thirds of the carbon that humans have pumped out through their activities. The true number could be smaller, but still big enough to significantly draw down atmospheric carbon levels.

Where trees are planted makes a big difference, and for maximum effect the tropics are best. Here, they can reach their maximum size and optimal carbon-absorbing potential more rapidly, leading to carbon sequestration rates that can be as much as 10 times greater than for trees planted at higher latitudes. At the same time, reforestation programmes can also improve the lives and livelihoods of those living in majority world countries through building agroforestry infrastructure.

And this is exactly what marvellous Word Forest is doing in Kenya, where it has just planted its one millionth tree. As our world continues to heat up, however, it is inevitable that extreme weather, arising from a failing climate, is going to make things harder for both the trees and the people who plant and care for them. While Kenya is unlikely to face the lethal humid heat waves capable of killing in six hours, which will plague other parts of the world, increasingly extreme temperatures will still make working outside a real ordeal. On top of this drought and flood are both set to become more common, bringing additional threats to both newly forested areas and communities.

Most worryingly, food supply and security is looking as if it could become a colossal problem. One projection envisages our world needing 50 percent more food by 2050, by which time crop yields could be down by as much as 30 percent. If this worst case is realised, it would mean - on average - a halving of the amount of available food per person - a recipe for widespread civil unrest and societal collapse. African nations, in particular - where food security has long been an issue - will be hit especially hard, and famine is likely to become common-place. An inability to grow and find food is likely, more than any other factor, to drive migration, which is predicted to occur on a scale never seen before, with hundreds of millions - possibly billions - on the move. This, in turn, will promote conflict as those nations on the receiving end will fight to hold onto what they have, and fortify their borders.

But if anything can help alleviate the situation - at least to some extent - it is trees. Research has shown that reforestation increases both evapotranspiration (the total movement of water into the atmosphere from plants, soils and water bodies) and

rainfall. Not only can this limit the intensity of dry conditions or drought, thereby giving crops a better chance of survival, but it also reduces the chances of extremely dry months. And as they pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere at the same time, it is a win-win situation.

Dangerous climate breakdown is now inevitable, and with a new El Niño set to bring hotter weather globally, it is possible - perhaps even likely - that the global average temperature rise (since pre-industrial times) will touch 1.5°C next year for the first time. We all need to face the fact that adaptation to living on a hotter planet, as individuals, communities and societies, is now vital, and one of the best ways of doing this - whether in Kenya or the UK - is to plant more trees. As Word Forest never tires of pointing out - trees are the key.

Eva Jefwa: Head of Kenya Operations and Juliet Anyanzwa, Assistant

2022 was a year to be grateful for. After the pandemic and post-pandemic struggles, it was nice to have a much calmer year than the previous one.

I can confidently say that we started our financial year on the right foot. In April last year, we purchased 4 acres of land. Something that we here in Kenya had been looking forward to for a long time. Having a space of our own was very important because with rented space, one can only do so much. We now have an office, a toilet, and a gatehouse for our security guard. We have grown from 2 to 5 permanent employees, which is amazing because jobs are hard to come by. Erick is the Plantsman, and Juliet is my assistant.

We named our space the PTC, which stands for Permaculture Training Centre. Permaculture is a form of agriculture that draws inspiration from nature to develop synergistic farming systems based on crop diversity, resilience, natural productivity, and sustainability. We named it PTC because we want to share the knowledge with the community, and we would like the PTC to be a place where people can come to see how to establish sustainable ecosystems.

Kenya as a whole experienced and is continuing to experience land degradation due to poor land practices and deforestation. Irregular and unpredictable rainfall, increasing temperatures, and rising fuel costs have taken a devastating toll on livelihoods, increasing people's vulnerability and seriously impacting their ability to recover, which in turn affects their ability to cope with future shocks and stresses. However, the Mothers of the Forest forged on. Thanks to Word Forest, the mothers continued to learn skills that are aiding them in their journey to resilience. Beadwork, crocheting, moringa & neem powder processing, growing of herbs, upcycling, and soap making are some of the skills that have kept the mothers afloat.

We also established a six-thousand mini-tree nursery that consists of fruit, medicinal, indigenous, and exotic trees. Diversity is key to balancing the ecosystem.

The twice-monthly meetings for the Mothers continue to be an exercise they look forward to. The meetings are the only space they have where they do not need to be anything other than who they are. Nourishment, as is tradition, is always provided.

The mothers meet to learn and share best practices of tree growing, forest conservation, and how to care for the environment, and, best of all, how to share this knowledge with our neighbours, friends, and relatives. We learned the hard way that talking about it wouldn't get us to where we wanted as fast as we wanted. So we reassembled and came up with a new tactic. We decided we would make being a mother of the forest a lifestyle. We started at home, making sure the people we lived with understood the meaning of taking care of our environment. Simple things like no littering in the homestead, and if you cannot repurpose it, put it in a sack, and when the

sack is full, I will collect it and take it to Malindi to a recycling farm. The mothers can put something in the sack today, and after a few days, they find something useful to do with it.

Another very important thing is water. A lot of water is wasted daily in the homesteads. For example, in the morning while washing one's face, that can be done in a basin or directly on a sapling. This felt like a struggle in the beginning, but once the people we lived with were in sync, it was worth it.

Zosi, whose husband is a wine tapper, told his wife one day, "The coconut tree that I planted last year is now about 3 ft tall, and I don't struggle with fetching water for the tree. Thanks to you, Zosi, I just rinse my tapping containers at the bottom of the tree, and that's it. Two birds with one stone."

We also had a brick-making workshop, and now the mothers are making a minimum of 40 bricks a day, depending on the turnout. These bricks are going to be used in the building of different structures at the PTC. Word has spread about the mothers making bricks, and this is attracting lots of people, mostly those who would like to join the Mothers of the Forest group.

When the UK team came for the annual Monitoring and Evaluation, the mothers were given a gift: a solar kit that contained a small panel, three bulbs, and an in-built radio on the battery, which also had a torch on one side and a floodlight on the other. Their partners were also given watches. On top of that, the mothers got an even better gift: we call them Hedhi (menstrual) cups. These are life-changers for all of us. There was a time when the mothers made reusable sanitary towels, and that was good, but this is simply AMAZING. There is no maintenance cost whatsoever. All one needs is just a handful of water to clean it after draining.

It broke our hearts when we learned that the UK team would not make it to the PTC, but it was better to be safe than sorry. So, since the team couldn't come to Garashi, the mothers went to Malindi to meet them. We had a wonderful two-day training about propagating through cuttings and plant management by Phil Gamble, our horticulture Trustee, at a place known as LMagiro in Malindi.

Mitigating climate chaos while creating resilience is our goal, and now that we have a space of our own and a proper office, we look forward to being able to plant lots of trees, especially fruit trees, so that we can create food security as we combat climate chaos.

Getting together and working towards a common goal is amazing. But what is truly and utterly awesome is what is being achieved on the way. There are things that cannot be quantified yet they play the biggest role. The mothers are not what they were some years back. They are stronger mentally, emotionally, and socially too. All this is thanks to the mothers getting together to find solutions to matters affecting them as an individual and as a whole. Most of the married mothers speak about how their marriages have changed for the better. They can better communicate with their husbands. Before, it used to be a yes or no answer, but now they can reason with them through respect and love.

Unlike many organisations that go to a place and just give relief food and leave, Word Forest is actually creating resilience by establishing sustainable systems that will be in place for generations to come. I speak for the mothers, my community, and myself when I say no word in the Oxford dictionary can truly describe how grateful we all are for having come this far. It would never have been possible if it were not for this remarkable organisation.

Personally, I am extremely blessed and proud to be part of the team that is making a difference.

Joy Masseno: Mothers of the Forest Rusinga Island

Our Wonderful Team

My name is Joy Masseno and along with priceless assistance from Eunice Majuma, I am the facilitator of the Mothers of the Forest branch of Word Forest in the far west of Kenya on Rusinga Island. Our group was formed in March 2022. I was proud to have the task of recruiting a number of women from humble backgrounds to become the first members.

I did this with help from my good friend Solomon Owiti, who is well known on the island for his work teaching permaculture. Through the support of Tracey and Simon and the entire Word Forest Organisation, we selected 10 women and a cook also. This was done through door-to-door visits and below are the criteria I used for selection:

- They had to be very small scale farmers who had some growing knowledge
- We wanted them to be team players who were happy to form a group
- They needed to be considered vulnerable members of our community who had no major source of income
- They needed to be willing to plant 50 trees or more each year in the name of Word Forest

We all meet at least twice a month for our usual discussions and we do many things. Centrally, we concentrate on learning and sharing knowledge about saplings and tree growing. We also come together to learn how to start up small farming programmes using the permaculture way, in order to help reduce global warming but also to be more self-sufficient.

The good work we Mothers do ensures that no woman is just seated but at least can do something to make her living and feed her family. Our activities are also exciting to do. We empower each other and thankfully also other vulnerable people in our community, especially the very elderly but also children and young girls particularly.

Our Members

Here is a little background information about four of our members, so you can feel more closely connected to their everyday lives. These are not their true names, so as to protect their identity:

- Amelia is 70 years old and has been widowed for 20 years. She had five children who are sadly all dead too. She is a survivor of death trauma but it haunts her very badly. She does have three grandchildren and they all survive with the money they make from small-scale farming on her shamba (homestead). Her house is a mud hut unfortunately in very bad shape. If she could raise the capital, Amelia would like to learn how to grow more food.
- Carol is 40 years old and was widowed at a tender young age. It is now 16 years since her husband's demise and she is left with four children. She has a heavy burden with education and school fees and her mud thatched house is in very bad shape. She is a very hard-working woman and wants to learn more about permaculture and would love to learn some tailoring in the future.
- Mercy is 24 and a very hardworking woman in a polygamous marriage. The second wife left her with four children, adding to her three children. She now parents seven children, three boys and four girls. She has many problems paying school fees, plus one of the boys suffers from sickle-cell anaemia.

- Patricia is 36 years old and married with four children. She dropped out of school in class 8 (aged 13) due to lack of school fees and because she had an early marriage. She had a small kiosk shop that collapsed because her husband is an alcoholic. Her house is not in good shape, health-wise she's also not feeling very well and she really needs the support from our group so her children can go to school. Her hobbies are dancing and singing and she loves working with the children.
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Achievements Within Our Group

Here are a few of the goals we've managed to score during our first year:

We have:

1. All created kitchen gardens at our homes with vegetables we've never grown before and some we know
2. Planted more than 50 different trees on our shambas
3. Planted more than 300 trees at our Permaculture Teaching Centre (PTC),*
4. Been running our own table banking system*
5. Been running a successful Siri Ya Jikoni system*
6. Received ongoing good education on tree grafting, sapling care, tree growing, permaculture principles and ethics from Solomon
7. Had great training about syntropic agroforestry from Solomon's son, Daniel
8. Received comprehensive training on plant propagation, all aspects of permaculture and tree planting and care, from our UK teacher, Phil Gamble*
9. Planted many different fruits and vegetables at our homes and the PTC
10. Become much stronger as individuals and we help each other in times of need and personal crises. This has helped our mental health a lot.

* More Info

The PTC: This is currently a 2 acre site which we've fenced in to protect the food from marauding animals. It has been very kindly donated to Word Forest by our dear tree planting friend, Solomon Owiti and his wife, Florence. It is their homestead and family land. This is where the Mothers come together for their twice monthly meetings. When it is raining or scorching hot, the Mothers are graciously able to learn and eat in the Owiti's small living room, which protects them from the elements. In due course, we want to build a proper stone constructed Edible Classroom at our PTC, as has been done in Garashi.

Table Banking: As per their sister group in Garashi, the Mothers are paid to plant trees when they come to their meetings. Of their own free will, the Mothers have chosen to put some of that money into a kitty, from which they can take small loans and pay a small amount of interest back. At the end of the year, the money from the pot is shared out amongst the Mothers. It helps them out during times of hardship and everybody wins.

Siri Ya Jikoni: This quite literally means 'Secret Kitchen'. Just think along the lines of the UK office-based Secret Santa gifts at Christmas. Each Mother brings a low value but essential food or everyday item like soap. The bundle of useful items is given to one of the Mothers of the Forest and the recipient changes at each meeting. The Mothers also share the abundance of the crops they are growing. This means many of them are now

able to put food on their table every day. Some are even able to have three meals a day, not just one!

Phil Gamble: Word Forest's Horticultural Trustee has been a member of the Board since its foundation in 2017. Phil is an expert in his field. He was also a lecturer at Kingston Maurward. He accompanied Tracey and Simon on their Monitoring and Evaluation visit in December 2022. Phil shared critical knowledge on organic growing, composting, propagation and more, across the length and breadth of Kenya during their month-long stay.

What We're Growing

Thanks to Word Forest support, the Rusinga Island Mothers are now planting food crops that were new to them and others they knew well. In no particular order these include herbs, trees, fruits, nuts and vegetables, such as:

Ochuoga, pedo, ochol, moringa, aloe vera, arubaini and tee grass, thorn melon, pawpaw, passion fruits, lemon, water pear, avocado, mango, orange, guava, açai palm, acacia, eucalyptus, pine, bamboo, oak, jacaranda, mast tree, tamarind, banana, croton megalocarpus, lucena, glacidia, fountain tree, ferna, tibician, waterpear, maize, kunde/cowpeas (black eyed peas), sukuma wiki (kale), cassava, beans (black, cannellini, mung, red, soya, pinto), susa (pumpkin), apoth (jute), saga (spider plant), kandhira (brassica), osuga (black nightshade), spinach, tomatoes, onions (round and leaves), sweet potatoes, arrowroot, sugar cane and napier grass croton

A Humble Start

When we started coming together as a group, it was from a humble beginning and with much hope. We did not know each other, most of us were meeting for the very first time. We did not have any real knowledge on farming other than what our families had handed to us, nor did we have any business skills.

Most of us were just housewives or single/widowed women. We survived on one meal a day and we had the mentality that it was men who go to work and bring home the food for our families.

We've come to learn that we women are perfectly able to do this, thanks to Word Forest projects and belief in our group. It has been a big eye-opener to us all and many positive actions have happened as we've embraced our movement towards more women's empowerment.

We are so thrilled, encouraged, motivated and our self-esteem has been boosted. Thanks to our collective learning, we are now able to enjoy the fruits of our labours and from time to time we do have a very healthy abundance of food.

Meeting Colleagues and Christmas Blessings

Since we met with Tracey, Simon, Eva (from our HQ in Garashi) and Phil in December 2022, we have been uplifted even more. The Mothers come to the meetings on time or even early, because their husbands have been made happy by the watches that they were gifted by Word Forest for Christmas. Our men are now always encouraging us to get to our meetings. This involvement of men in Word Forest projects has also managed to bring us more peace in our marriages. There is much less conflict and that is a blessing indeed.

At Christmas 2022, the Mothers were indeed grateful to receive gifts of the portable solar lamps. Each one has 4 separate light bulbs on long wires which we can put in different places in our homes. It also has a big portable torch which we can take outside when we hear animal noises in the night and it scares them away.

This lamp has improved our lives in a big way since the light acts as a security system for us, not only in our houses, but it also prevents wild animals from invading our plants. Some of the worst ones are the hippos, mongooses, rabbits and monkeys. Some of our houses were also being invaded with bats but right now because of light, the bats are not coming anymore and they cannot destroy our precious items. Bats urine is very poisonous and it has destroyed many properties around here.

These wonderful lamps also give us lighting so our children are able to do their homework and studies comfortably once the sun has gone down at 6pm. We Mothers also enjoy the fact that we no longer have to buy kerosene to fill our lamps for the night. This has brought us big cost savings and made our homes safer. We were also very grateful to receive the lip salve cream for our dry lips and that is a blessing in these dry, hot conditions.

The formation of this group has done more for us all than you could ever imagine. We have become strong as women and more productive members of our community who are blessed to be better nourished with good food and broad education.

Through the permaculture teachings and knowledge from our tutors, our kitchen gardens have become much larger. We started small, as that is one of the key permaculture principles. We now understand how to grow a wider variety of fruit trees, vegetables and medicinal plants. This knowledge has also been of great help because our local environment is greener where we live and I'm glad to say we will soon be making a harvest once again.

The Challenges We Still Face

Life is much better in many ways, however we still face a lot of other difficulties. We must walk before we can run but we know that as time goes on and our projects expand, we will be able to overcome our problems.

On our shambas, the most common issue is a lack of proper fencing around our kitchen gardens. We do try to improvise by making dead hedges with broken branches from thorny trees which we stack together, but it doesn't always work and it is messy.

Also, despite the fact that we are very close to Lake Victoria here on Rusinga Island, we are mainly up in the hills and we suffer from not being close to a water source. We ideally need small water tanks/butts. These will make our lives much easier during the hot months, and during the rainy season we'll be able to capture free, fresh water from the skies above.

We would all benefit from having a few more simple farming hand tools, like jembes, slashers, pangas, a wheelbarrow would be wonderful too. This would help us improve the picture around our kitchen gardens and at our PTC.

We have been planning ahead and once funds do become available, we would like to start a few new projects. They all have a sustainability focus and they would help us raise income for our group too. These include:

1. A sapling nursery
2. Soap and mat making courses, like the ones the Mothers had in Garashi
3. Tailoring/handicrafts training, so we can mend clothes and make items to sell

Conclusion and a Final Request

We want to appreciate all of our donors for the timely receipts of our salaries, our money for food for our meetings, payment for the cook and the monthly stipend for the Mothers to plant more trees.

We kindly request if possible to recruit more Mothers, since we have many more very vulnerable women in our community who would benefit from being part of our team. Our program would be of great help to them and us, since we would be able to plant more trees to help our planet.

God bless you all richly with good health and happiness,

Joy Masseno, Eunice Majuma and the Mothers of the Forest on Rusinga Island

Solomon Owiti: Rusinga Island Permaculture Lead

A Moment of Reflection and Thanks

Let me begin by taking a moment on behalf of my whole community to express our feelings of gratitude for the amazing year we've had through 2022/3. Simon West, Tracey West and the Word Forest Organisation fraternity, let me once more say thank you. You made me truly confirm the existence of the phrase: "If you want to go fast, go alone and if you want to go far, go together"

In spite of all of our challenges with the weather, rising temperatures and big cost of living increases since COVID, we have had a good year full of sustainable development projects in the community that target climate change, as well as improving our food and water security.

The New Normal

Over the past decade and more, Rusinga Island has been seriously hit by the terrible effects of global heating. We could go for 5-6 months without a single drop of rain. Our grandparents used to have 2 planting seasons per year but now, things have happened such that we are even straining to have one. This has led to a great deal of food insecurity, worry and stress on our Island.

However, in association with the Lake Victoria Peace and Sustainability Center and with financial support from Word Forest, we've planted and are taking care of around 100,000 trees. Their ongoing care is being done because we have mobilised our youngsters, women and men. We are taking an all round approach to getting everyone involved because we know we will all benefit from it in the long run.

#TreesAreTheKey

Everybody here knows this planting and this work is making a difference to climate change here and around the world. Many people have improved the standards of living in the community through tree planting. Many people have diverted their minds away from fishing Lake Victoria (which is very, very overfished) and they are focused on small-scale organic farming with permaculture methods. Fishing was the main and only real economic activity around here. Now, we know we need to conserve our existing mature forests and plant more trees too, if we are all to survive and thrive into the future. Word Forest has encouraged us to spread that message far and wide.

We have reached out to the men and women, girls and boys in our communities through Word Forest projects with tree planting and environmental education. We've shared ideas, had meetings with open minds and free flowing thoughts. We have made a big impact caring for our Mother earth as well as the people and wildlife upon it. We

feel like together, we are coming to the rescue of our planet and through many different initiatives, we are making good progress with all members of society.

The Mothers of the Forest

I know you will have read about the Mothers from my colleague Joy, but I wanted to share my thoughts on the group too. The Mothers come from all the different corners of Rusinga Island. They have formed a powerful alliance with each other and they are learning so much about all matters relating to climate change and food production. Each and every one of them is now equipped with permaculture and syntropic agroforestry knowledge and they utilise that in order to raise their own organic food and fresh produce for themselves and their neighbours.

During their 2 main workshops each month - held on the first and last Wednesday of every month - they come together to share a meal, discuss matters pertaining to just being women and of empowerment. It has been the pleasure of my wife Florence and I to offer our home so they can do these efforts in comfort. I know at some point in the future, we will build an Edible Classroom where they can work. For now, this is all good.

These meetings have made the women play a much bigger role in the wider community. They are all taking care of more trees than they were before. Together, we've planted 500 additional trees around our Permaculture Training Centre. Their kitchen gardens by their homesteads are flourishing too because they are implementing the permaculture principles and ethics. I am so proud to be part of their learning.

Word Forest Came to the Island

We were very much happy to receive the Word Forest Team in December 2022, led by Simon West, Tracey West and Phil Gamble, their permaculture expert from the UK. They also brought along Eva from Garashi, Coast Province and Paul and Laura Clark, Word Forest Corporate Partners, Phat Pasty, from the UK. We all had many very wonderful moments planting trees together, offering permaculture advice during the workshops Phil led and the gifts we were given made a very big impact on us and our families.

I am a lover of football, as are many youths and men from the Island. One of the most memorable events from their visit was the arrival of the kindly donated football kit from Bristol Rovers, which was given to our local football team. We have renamed ourselves the Rusinga Rovers in their honour!

We have a new initiative and we're using football as a way to engage with the younger generation and also for us to be more inclusive in the community. Word Forest already does great work with women, but they know we mustn't forget the men and youths too! The arrival of the football kit and the naming of the Rusinga Rovers was very powerful. We have a mens and a women's football team and when Word Forest were with us, we brought everyone together to do some tree planting in thanks.

Bristol Rovers kit and footballs were donated by the Bristol Rovers Community Trust and we remain incredibly grateful to them. To add to this already great concept, Simon West came up with the idea of a Trees for Trainers project and I am so pleased to say the players in the mens, youths and women's team now have trainers to wear when they play. This has made a huge difference to their health and their minds too. We all feel stronger and more united as we look the same, we are a proper team!

We know we need to start our own sapling nursery so we can keep up with all the planting we want to do in the future. We know this is going to take infrastructure, some buildings and more fencing. As soon as we are able to receive funds, we will get to it, we

will make the Island proud with our saplings and more planting. Our humble request is that we start creating a tree nursery so we can get back on our journey towards regenerating Mother Earth for us now, and for future generations too.

Developing the Permaculture Teaching Centre

With gracious assistance from Word Forest, we have managed to fence in 1 hectare of my farm that I have willingly donated to the project from my family's land. This space will be of so much benefit to the Mothers of the Forest and to other groups that come there to learn.

As Rusinga Island has moved to being a one season planting community, animals are usually being left to graze freely where they roam but there is a lack of food for them too. By putting a fence around the Mother's vegetable planting area, we're doing all we can to fully protect the food we human beings need to survive.

I am so happy we have created this little Permaculture Teaching Centre. We can demonstrate how to carry out the practices of Bill Mollinson, the creator of permaculture. This is what we all need across the whole of Kenya. I remain confident Word Forest will be able to raise more funds and do this undertaking.

Nobody in this world is doing things perfectly. We are all human. We all need to share ideas, information, minds, thoughts and energy for the betterment of our communities today and tomorrow. We know that by putting our energy into teaching permaculture, we are planning to make good use of the little knowledge we have gained so far. We hope to be able to train more and more people in the ways of this simple land management system. I know our demonstration farm will really help in the long term.

One of the first things we did there was to build a safe and proper pit latrine toilet and to get a large water tank installed so we can store and gather fresh water. Once we have a teaching building with a good roof, we will be able to take advantage of the runoff water. We have created all the right conditions for a training centre to be most effective. These important things are in place and we have lots of food growing too in the safe arms of the trees we've planted. All we need now is our first Edible Classroom and I know that will come as soon as it possibly can, we are ready!

Looking to the Future

With our shared mission to spread more sustainable development projects across the Island, targeting the improvement of food and water security, we will see the need to fully advocate more permaculture and syntropic agroforestry lessons.

In the year ahead, our Word Forest team is going to concentrate on getting more of our members trained and furnished with Permaculture Design Certificates (PDCs). In time, I believe it will be possible to offer more training to everyday people here on the Island and to make learning simpler and affordable. Our teaching centre is so well placed for this to happen and we are excited about the future for the first time in many years.

Everyone here looks forward to 2023/4 being a great year of action with Word Forest and the communities on Rusinga Island.

Asante sana for all of your belief in what we are doing and for your support into the future.

Solomon Owiti

Sue Jueno: Special Projects & Fundraising

Tulinde Bongo Project

For the last year Word Forest has been working closely with the Murang'a Youth Bunge County Forum CBO (MYBCF) to find ways to help their Tulinde Bongo Project which is taking place in the Kmakia, Gatere and Wanjerere ranges of the Aberdares Forest, approximately 3 hours north of Nairobi.

This amazing project covers a range of activities, with one goal, to help protect and save the Mountain Bongo, a forest antelope and a subspecies of the Bongo Antelope.

The Mountain Bongo is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, with only several 100 left worldwide, most being found in the Aberdares region in Kenya. Mary Wambui, MYBCF's Ambassador, states: "As we speak, we have less than a hundred Mountain Bongos in Kenya. The heartbreaking part of this sad story is that fifty of the last of these antelope species have been domesticated in a conservancy at Mt Kenya region for their protection. Knowledge is key to sustainability and that is why the project will target young people with the goal of creating awareness and empowering them to make change"

MYBCF was formed in 2011 with the aim of turning around fortunes for youth. It has grown from strength to strength in exposing young people to leadership development opportunities through community service projects.

Part of the planned Tulinde project includes reforesting specific areas within the Aberdares. The habitat replacement will enable the Mountain Bongo conservation, as well as play a vital part in carbon sequestration.

We were delighted to facilitate a first phase planting of 4224 saplings in April 2022 to initiate the project in the Wanjerere Forest area of the Aberdares Range. To make sure the correct species of trees were used, members of MYBCF team met with a Kenyan Forestry Service Forester and a graduate of wildlife management who worked at the Mount Kenya Conservancy where the 50 sheltered Mountain Bongo antelopes reside. On their advice, 1400 Podocarpus, 1000 Olea Africanus, 912 Prunus Africana and 912 Syzgiumguinese saplings were planted by 44 youths employed by MYBCF over two and a half days.

It is with thanks to The Souter Charitable Trust that we were able to secure an annual subscription to the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK) for 3,500 students in the Aberdares Range. As part of the subscription the students and teachers, based at 12 selected MYBCF schools, received three different issues of Komba magazine for the year, free lectures and video / slideshows, access to the WCK mobile conservation education lectures and film showings, plus their WCK roadshows. All with the aim to help and encourage the conservation of wildlife.

We would also like to thank Animal Friends Pet Insurance who enabled us to fund the purchase of camera traps that will help monitor the last few remaining Mountain Bongo and collect data. These are to be set up in the coming months.

One last thank you needs to go to Alex Lancaster, our volunteer bid writer, who secured the above mentioned grants for the WCK memberships and the camera traps. Thank you so much for your support and dedication.

Lindsey Selleck: E-learning Content Creator

The Educational Learning Platform (ELP) is slowly but surely growing with 5 courses live, 2 ready to be published shortly and numerous ideas flowing for more.

Two of the current courses focus on education; The Importance of Trees and An Introduction to Climate Change. The former of the two has a large focus on the work

done by the Word Forest in Kenya, highlighting the importance of the organisation. The latter has been developed in a way which provides the general population with easy to digest information on a complex topic. More educational focussed courses are being developed as I believe it is important to inform people about what is happening to our planet and highlight why the work done by the Word Forest is crucial.

The other three courses are more lifestyle oriented; Conscious Consumerism, Eco-resilience and Spiral Wind; A creative writing course. The existing lifestyle courses are targeted more towards a Western World audience at the moment due to the content. However, there is hope to make more courses which are specifically aimed at the people in Kenya over the coming months.

The plans for new courses include an in depth course or perhaps even a set of courses looking at permaculture within the U.K. and Kenya. These courses will include videos which were filmed during the last visit to Kenya, in addition to ones filmed here in the U.K. The aim is for the part focussing on Kenya to be able to be used for teaching out there.

Additionally, we are looking to create courses which can be used as an extra tool by the Mothers of The Forest to teach basic English literacy and numeracy skills to those who are keen to learn.

It would be great to have the ELP used by teachers or organisations to help teach people of all ages and backgrounds why we need to care for our planet and how to be better environmentalists. I hope that the platform continues to grow over the next year and that we are able to market the courses to a wider audience, in order to increase the number of people who take our courses and learn from us.

Jed Robertson: Digital Media Specialist

Social media is a complex and often difficult world to manage, especially as a charity or non-profit organisation. To us, it serves several functions that must all be balanced by the team that creates our content and schedules it to go out on each of our platforms. We currently use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, each of which must be managed in a slightly different way. From the short, punchy 280 characters of Twitter to the visual focus of Instagram the minutiae are many but we try to cater for all, however they absorb their media.

Firstly, it acts as a way to keep our wonderful supporters informed on the work we do through articles, updates and links to our various resources such as training courses and videos. It's our main point of contact with the world beyond our walls and so it is imperative that it remains as active as we are, a true reflection of the sheer amount of work we do. In addition, we can keep the severity of climate chaos on the front lines in the forefront of people's minds through our reporting.

Secondly, it acts as a form of portfolio. To corporate donors, individuals looking for a charity to support or potential volunteers, social media shows the best version of us to those who want to give. Not only that, it also provides all the links and information necessary for a quick and easy donation process.

Thirdly, it allows us to celebrate specific supporters, without whom we wouldn't be able to do the things we do. We have many corporate partners and are happy to provide a bit of promotion in return for their help.

We currently operate our social media channels without a marketing budget, which is getting increasingly harder as the platforms push paid promotion more and more. This is mostly due to our commitment to direct as much of our income as possible to direct action on the ground in Kenya (more than 80% this year). However, we are currently conducting research into how paid promotion has helped other charities. If trends

show that paid promotion creates a net positive in earnings then it will be something we pursue, albeit trepidatiously.

In conclusion, social media is a fantastic tool to reach a wider audience, but it is not without its challenges. As the algorithms and rules constantly mutate, we will try to move with them and bring you the best news feed we can.

Dominic Hurndall: Founding Partner, Oaklin

The people of Oaklin are passionate about what they do, but they also care deeply that the firm they work for is playing its part in supporting local communities and protecting and restoring the environment. They care about empowering women and about offering education to those who have not had the same opportunities we enjoy. We have long felt that we should play a leading role as a business in helping society tackle these challenges. At first we were unsure about how we might take forward something constructive, fearing wasted investment and false flag opportunists, which is why we were so pleased to discover Word Forest.

With Tracey and her team, we have found a partner who tackles the big challenges we face as a global community, in one connected and co-ordinated response. Their approach brings reforestation, sustainable business, education and empowerment of women together in one 'virtuous circle'. For us, the Word Forest approach is as refreshing as it is effective and is exactly what the SDGs are intended to encourage businesses towards.

We have been delighted to raise money for Word Forest and we are now proud to be helping them pursue Gold Standard accreditation for their projects, which we believe is the fastest way to help scale up the operation. We have made huge progress as a joint team over the last financial year and we are poised to make significant headway as the accreditation application is submitted in the weeks ahead. We are also helping Word Forest structure their offering to fit other corporate partners who would find as much value from working with them as we have. Businesses large and small must be at the vanguard of improving our world and striving to achieve a sustainable future. With Word Forest we are confident that we are making a fantastic contribution to achieving these critical goals.

And Finally...

We're thrilled to name our Volunteers of the Year for 2023/23. They are:

Harry Lloyd, Corporate Partner Liaison and responsible for helping Word Forest rise to the challenges of being a better, more financially successful charity.

Karoline Hohorst, Corporate Partner Liaison and responsible for getting Word Forest through the highly challenging application process to become a Gold Standard Carbon Offset organisation.

Lindsey Selleck, the facilitator and expander of our Educational Learning Platform. Her work is doing a great job for the whole planet by encouraging people to be better all round environmentalists.

All three have gone above and beyond the call of duty. They've put in countless volunteer hours to help and with many early starts too. We're incredibly grateful for their belief in our work and our team.

We wouldn't be here without the unwavering financial support of our awesome Corporate Partners. We've added a few new ones to our list over the past year and we've got some amazing stalwarts like Phat Pasty and Oaklin Consulting, who remain solidly dedicated to reforesting Kenya with us.

Dearest All Corporate Partners, large and small. Please take a moment to accept our asante sana and to recognise how important you are to us all. Thank you for everything you're doing to enable Word Forest to crack on. Without you, we'd be doing the same job, just a great deal more slowly.

Childrensalon Green Gazelles Herb UK Oaklin Phat Pasty Swift Crafted and more

There's a long way to go before women and men have equal opportunities across Kenya (and the UK, come to that) and we're not limiting our projects to supporting women alone. We pride ourselves on our inclusivity, our intergenerational, disability-positive, multi-gender opportunities for all.

I'm leaving Eva Jefwa to have the final say. Eva oversees everything we're doing across Kenya. She has met everyone in our wider team personally and we couldn't be happier with their dedication.

I asked Eva for 7 words to sum up what we are - she gave me 8 and I'm not ditching one to get what I asked for - I'm thrilled with the extra word! They are:

Care Knowledge Sustainability Transparent Hope Empower Light Ethical

We look forward to interacting with you all in the years to come.

Sincerely yours, in service to our planet, people and wildlife,



Tracey West

THE WORD FOREST ORGANISATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1172497

Accounts

Word Forest

Annual Report 2021-2022

This is the Annual Report and Accounts for Word Forest, a charity registered in the United Kingdom by the Charity Commission
Charity No: 1172497

Registered Address and Contact Details

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Devon
EX10 0AH

Tel: 01297 533 111

Email: team@WordForest.org

Website: WordForest.org

Trustees

Mr Simon West FRSA (Chair of Trustees)
Ms Rikey Austin
Ms Eva Dixon
Mr Philip Gamble
Mrs Helen Roberts
Mrs Izzy Robertson

Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Tracey West FRSA

Managing Director

Mr Simon West FRSA

Our Constitutional Structure

Word Forest was incorporated as a CIO on 7th April 2017.

Our constitution follows the model for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as set out by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and was adopted on 7th April 2017 and revised on 1st February 2021.

Charitable Objects and Public Benefit

To promote sustainable development* for the benefit of the public in countries to be determined by the Trustees by:

- (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;

(b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

*Sustainable development means “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 in planning our activities.

The positive social impact of our work is considered before we direct our tree-planting communities, and outcomes are directly monitored. This enables the Trustees to be confident that the charity has, through its range of activities, achieved significant public benefit for the community in Kenya, and in countries as determined by the Trustees.

Financial Summary

Income

In 2020-2021 (year 4) we had a total income of **£76,146.94**. In 2021-2022 (year 5) our income was **£81,381.85**, an increase of **7%**.

Income by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2020-2021	Change
Donation	£45,035.57	55.34%	£42,068.68	7%
Corporate	£17,950.88	22.06%	£7,531.70	138%
Gift Aid	£7,484.82	9.20%	£9,387.92	-20%
Grant	£5,200.00	6.39%	£11,975.00	-57%
Membership	£4,341.35	5.33%	£4,129.09	5%
Sales	£1,369.23	1.68%	£1,054.55	30%
Total	£81,381.85	100.00%	£76,146.94	7%

Our ring fenced income was **£24,410.18**, (almost entirely for salaries) and our non-ring fenced income was **£56,971.67**.

Outgoings

Our total outgoings were **£96,978.27**. **£49,950.52** of this went directly to Kenya. This represents 51.5% of our total income, but **87.68%** of our non-ring fenced income.

For 2022-2023 we have increased our rate of pay for people we employ in Kenya to 200 Kenyan Shillings per hour, or **416,000 KES** per year full time equivalent, which is the same as a senior high school teacher or middle manager.

We ended the year with a balance of **£3,609.27** and an average monthly income of **£6,781.82**, compared to **£6,345.58** the previous year - an increase of **39%**.

Note we have altered our categories for this report so some figures aren't directly comparable.

Outgoings by Category

Category	Amount	Percent	2020-2021	Change
Events	£775.00	0.8%	£0.00	100%
Fees	£3,513.23	3.6%	£480.69	631%
Travel	£6,609.21	6.8%	£0.00	100%
Office	£11,308.50	11.7%	£7,119.68	59%
Personnel	£24,821.81	25.6%	£12,026.90	106%
Kenya	£49,950.52	51.5%	£50,037.88	0%
Total	£96,978.27	100.0%	£69,665.15	39%

Trustees' Statement

For our 5th year, our Trustees continue to support and advise the charity and oversee its operations. Every major decision was taken in full consultation with the Trustees and they take a very active role in determining the best course of action for the charity.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website.

This report and accounts was approved by the trustees on Xth X 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon West". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Simon West FRSA
Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Word Forest

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Word Forest, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), for the year ended 30th March 2022.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity Trustees of the CIO 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 CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

The accounts were independently examined and approved on 15th July 2022.



Katharine Long

Charleston Cottage
The Street
Charmouth
DT6 6NX

From our Team

Eva Jefa

Eva has been coordinator of Mothers of The Forest since 2019 and has worked solidly and consistently for Word Forest since then. She is an amazing advocate for everything that enhances the Kenyan environment and helps the people survive the problems of climate chaos. No task seems too hard for Eva to tackle, from learning and then teaching permaculture practices to fully project managing the building of two houses, a much-needed toilet block and a classroom. Eva writes:

The year 2021, socially

The year 2020, better known as the "covid year", had its many challenges and we are all glad we are past that.

It was though, not without effects that are still being felt up to date.

People are still struggling to make ends meet since they lost their jobs. Those who can afford to are acquiring new skills to allow them to cope - those who cannot afford to acquire new skills are at the mercy of those who can afford to pay them for doing small odd jobs now and then.

The school girls who had been impregnated during the covid year are now single parents, who have either returned to school if their parents were supportive, or are at home raising their children one way or the other, and when I say 'the other' I mean that they are willing to do whatever it takes to make sure they and their children are fed and clothed. This could lead to other unwanted pregnancies or getting married as a second or even third wife. All these are the wounds that the year 2020 left us with.

The weather

Extremely extreme weather conditions continue to cause havoc that is seriously being felt throughout the entire country. Essential commodities such as food, especially maize meal which is our staple food, are becoming scarce country wide by the day. The price of maize flour has shot up by 110% in less than a year.

Political and economically

To add salt to the wound, the increased geopolitical risks induced by the war in Ukraine weighs adversely on global economic conditions, hence the inflation elevation.

Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat, barley, corn, cooking oil and petroleum products particularly for African countries and the disruption to the flow of these goods is compounding other supply chain and climate challenges, driving up food and gas prices and causing shortages which are pushing millions of people into hunger.

The price of a basic food basket has more than tripled in the course of less than 10 months and fuel prices have risen to the highest. The scarcity for the past 6 months is the worst Kenya has faced in over a decade.

Light in the tunnel

However, all hope is not lost.

A VIP latrine (very improved pit latrine) was constructed by Word Forest a month before the school was to be shut down by the Ministry of Education for lack of a toilet. Ufanisi ECD (early childhood development) school was hand built by parents of the Shakadulo area because there is no school for 11km. Their young children would have to walk for hours to get to school and by the time they got there, they would be too tired to concentrate. 95% of the children stopped going because of the distance.

The few who went had to wait to be at least 10 years and above to begin nursery school. This led to dropping out because of bullying by fellow students or just by feeling that one was the odd one out in class. It was even worse for the girl child as she would begin puberty while still at nursery level.

The school began as a single room mud structure but 3 years back, an NGO known as ADS PWANI put up a 3 classroom permanent structure and there was room for more children. Parents of Shakadulo continued to contribute monthly to pay 2 teachers until the school was properly registered as a community school.

Early last year, the county government assigned a single teacher to the school and as required by law, officials from the Ministry of Education and Health visited the school and discovered that there was no toilet. The officials wanted to shut down the school immediately but the parents pleaded with them and asked to be given time. They forwarded their proposals to different governmental and non governmental organisations and just when they were about to give up, they saw me headed to Mama Mluo's place and that is when Word Forest was approached.

Now they not only have 2 toilets but they also have a staff house that is furnished with a bed and mattress for their teacher.

Hope for a better tomorrow

This, the recent classroom built by Word Forest at Tumaini Zhongwani, the charcoal burners rehabilitation program and the Mothers Of The Forest women's empowerment group (that not only assists the mothers to acquire sustainable income generating skills but also gives the mothers an opportunity to relax, share ideas and just be) give the people hope of a better tomorrow.

CEO response to Eva's report

The staple food Eva mentioned in her report, ugali, made from maize flour and water (rarely milk in the areas we work in), is the most basic of foodstuffs and was

widely available at a reasonable price. A 1kg packet now goes for 250 Ksh (£1.78), having gone up from 120 Ksh.

This blistering hike has been steep and incredibly swift. Also, it comes despite the fact that maize flour was set to go down slightly following a government directive on the lifting of levies announced by Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Peter Munya on 28th June.

The prices of the absolute basics are crippling. As a consequence, around 755,000 children under the age of five in Kenya are set to suffer from acute malnutrition throughout 2022, plus 103,000 pregnant or lactating women are likely to become acutely malnourished and in need of urgent treatment too. Further, the unprecedented drought they're continuing to suffer exacerbates the threat of starvation for millions not only in Kenya but also Ethiopia and Somalia (Issue Date: 9 June 2022 ReliefWeb). Rainfall deficits during the recent March-April-May 2022 rainy season have been the most severe in the last 70 years in all three countries.

This unparalleled catastrophic set of events are the things that have moved pure survival to the top of their priority list and it's quite understandable really. Critically, devastatingly and unfortunately, there is no governmental magic wand in the wings ready to alleviate the pressures on regular everyday people to survive in rural Kenya, or urban Kenya come to that, they're both buckling under the same fate.

The 'business as usual' narrative needs an urgent rewrite. I've no desire to play politics, I'm just an environmentalist but here are a few ideas that might make a good starting point - I'm sure there's a bit of cash down the back of the sofa that could be used for some of the following.

1. We need to see governmental unification on a global scale that favours the protection of natural capital and stops and punishes the Big Corp exploitation of it.
2. Ecocide needs to be woven into law the world over.
3. Deforestation-free supply chains should be pre-requisites for the commencement of all new businesses.
4. Existing businesses should be given assistance to tot up their current carbon footprint and historic 'carbon bills' and then encouraged to square up their planetary debt via charities like Word Forest.
5. Train travel should be so greatly subsidised it's as good as free.
6. Grants and tax breaks for all manner of home and office eco-improvements should be implemented with immediate effect.
7. All new buildings should come with eco-no-brainers like top spec insulation, solar generation capabilities, air/ground source heat pumps and so on. Existing housing stock should be retrofitted.
8. Environmental education should be statutory in schools, beginning at pre-school.

9. There should also be a range of sustainable living courses and resources available free of charge to adults too.
10. Oh, and while we're dreaming big, let's have substantial investment in the EV network, everywhere!

If any of these initiatives start rolling out in the coming year, we will be the groundbreaking generation that actually got the memo and acted upon it - we will be responsible for the creation of a far more sustainable planet.

Until then, Word Forest will continue to reach for the stars, wishing it could have a fraction of the investment being made to look at them.

Sue Jueno

Sue is our Special Projects & Fundraising core team member and one of our longest serving volunteers. She was instrumental in assembling a bid writing team to give Word Forest its best shot at winning grants. She writes:

The pandemic pushed many charities into crisis, however many people unable to work during that period kindly gave many volunteer hours and their expertise to help them through. Reach Volunteering, set up to connect people, skills and good causes, was a life line for Word Forest. Their online platform helped us attract volunteers who were happy to share their time and professional skills. We had a fabulous influx of people offering copywriting, bid writing and marketing skills, and once people were able to return to their jobs we were delighted many remained with us.

Since then we have been able to create a team of bid writers that give their expertise when they have free time during their week, or month. Writing bids is a time consuming task, so to have a group of people with knowledge of the grant system and the dedication in helping us access new funding has been a godsend! Our bid requests are diverse - a range of tree planting projects, classroom builds, new women's empowerment courses, permaculture food forests, charcoal burners rehabilitation courses – the list goes on! So we would very much like to thank Miranda, Alex, Alison, Aru, Caroline, Emma, Kathryn, Kirsty and Lauren for your time and support.

And thanks goes to Reach Volunteering, for without your platform we wouldn't have connected with these amazing individuals!

Jo Smith

Jo joined us in 2020 and is a core team member. She has taken on a variety of roles including expertly managing our Oxford Interns to ensure they have a great time volunteering for us and that they produce top quality outputs from the projects they are assigned to work on. She writes:

One of the highlights of my year volunteering with Word Forest was the opportunity to attend and report at COP26. An eye opening week which gave me a chance to look globally at what is happening, hear what

corporations are doing and not doing, as well as hearing the stories from those on the front line of climate change.

It was a privilege to meet some of my colleagues who I had previously only worked with online and to hear first hand from our scientific expert Bill McGuire the stark reality about what the future holds and to be told the realistic forecast as well as the facts behind the rhetoric that we often hear.

It was inspiring to be able to attend sessions in the Green Zone, to hear good news stories, to hear about the media and script writers recognising the power of their medium and their responsibility to include these climate issues in their stories. It was great to have the chance to ask a question to challenge one of the many panels on their apathy and 'set answers' to try to get to the root of the issue.

I took away the feeling of urgency, to act to make a difference to the future we are leaving to the next generation. So I continue to volunteer with Word Forest to enable us to continue to support the work in Kenya and to find ways to generate income to allow us to rapidly increase the number of trees we can get into the ground.

Lindsey Selleck

Lindsey started volunteering with us to help create and market content on our Education Learning Platform. She has this to say:

I've been with Word Forest since October 2020 and during that time I've helped to turn the Educational Learning Platform (ELP) from an idea to a site which is live and has our first short courses on, with many more being developed in the background. When I joined, there were not many specific details regarding the ELP, just that it was to provide education and skills to make everyone better environmentalists whilst raising awareness of the work done by Word Forest. Initially this lack of specific aims and details was a challenge for me to get to grips with, but now I am happily working on being creative and developing the platform as well as coordinating with our other E-Learning volunteers to make this a great source of information for all environmentalists out there.

As an environmentalist both in my daily life and in terms of my education, it's been a great experience for me so far to spend my time doing something worthwhile for an important cause whilst learning, both using and developing new skills and speaking to new people who share similar interests to me (even if it is just virtually!).

Bethany Martin

Bethany joined us in early 2020 and has been creating fabulous designs for our clothing and other items. She says:

I began volunteering with Word Forest 2 years ago in the role of designer, lending my creative design skills to help create a range of sustainable merchandise, with the aim of raising both money and awareness of the

charity. It came at a time when I was made redundant from my job, in lockdown, and looking for something to fill some time. I couldn't be more glad this opportunity came to me. It has helped me develop professionally, yes, but most importantly, personally, changing the way I view the world and inspiring me to take an active part in protecting the planet. My volunteering role has given me a creative outlet in which to express my passion for the natural world and it is very exciting to see my designs come to life. What I value most though, is the connection I have made to so many inspiring people, and I am thrilled that I can say I too am part of this amazing organisation, which strives every day to make the world a better place.

Jed Robertson

Jed has been a supporter since we started Word Forest, and joined us as an employee in July 2021. He writes:

Working for Word Forest in the role of Digital Media Specialist is especially rewarding. In my quest to tell the stories surrounding our work, I continue to see just how important our mission is to both people and planet. Whether it be the return of a threatened species, a new income stream for a marginalised member of society or the chance at education for a young woman, I am always finding new ways in which our charity makes a positive difference.

It's not just our work on the ground either. Our Educational Learning Platform (ELP) exists to educate people far from the front line of climate chaos so that they may gain knowledge of the rarely taught concepts that have led to our current situation. These things may seem like common sense when you know, but it is imperative that future tree-planters are aware of how important it is to care for the people on the ground who can in turn keep the trees alive.

I think that one thing we do exceptionally well is the three-pronged approach to reforestation. It stands to benefit everyone equally and is a far better option than the often-performative acts of planting trees without the appropriate means in place to keep them alive. Firstly, by rewarding tree-planting through the building infrastructure such as schools, we give the Kenyan people short-term incentives in addition to the long-term incentive shared by us all, the future of the planet. Secondly, by ensuring that tree-planting provides alternative forms of income such as the sale of fruit or ingredients for medicine, we help the people move away from destructive methods such as charcoal burning. This furthers the net increase of trees in the ground and brings in much more money for those in desperate need. Finally, by educating people on how certain planting methods (permaculture, syntropic agroforestry etc) can benefit them, we not only strengthen tree health but food security, financial security, environmental health and countless other things.

With all this considered, the thing I love most about Word Forest is that passion for the environment and passion for improving the lives of people

run in tandem, on equal footing at all times. This unity and true care for all aspects of the process make the charity something truly special.

Simon West

Simon is our Managing Director, chair of Trustees and co-founder of the charity. He volunteers full time for Word Forest and tries to keep it running as well as possible whilst incurring minimum costs. He is responsible for our websites, finances and fills a variety of technical roles. He writes:

I am sometimes a bit pessimistic. The incredible success last year, increasing our income by 84%, surely couldn't continue for the coming year, could it? Our donors' generosity had been tested and we surely would need a lot of luck to match that.

Our luck held, and with lots of hard work by all of our amazing volunteers we managed to increase our income by a further 7% over 2020-2021. Specifically, we more than doubled our corporate sponsorship income and increased donations, membership and sales. Gift aid was down slightly and the discretionary grant we received as our only COVID-19 related benefit didn't happen.

Our outgoings included £3,690 for 11 core members of our team to attend COP26 in Glasgow. Many of us were there for the whole two weeks and we produced 54 articles and videos, interacted with many of the movers and shakers in the world of climate change and made a lot of very useful connections. The entire cost was met by very kindly donated, ring fenced funds from some of our corporate partners. They clearly saw the need for us to be there, to witness the successes and the failures of the COP process, and to spend time networking and spreading the name "Word Forest".

We had TV coverage, with half a dozen appearances on diverse channels, and produced many short videos. All of the content can be seen at <https://www.wordforest.org/cop26/>

During the year we took on our second employee. Jed Robertson managed to secure a government funded Kickstarter position with us, with responsibility for media. He was instrumental in getting a lot of our video content online. As his funded 6 months with the Kickstarter scheme came to an end, the Trustees decided that they would like to continue to employ him, but could only afford 1 day a week. In October, Jo Smith started an apprenticeship with us, courtesy of a generous donor funding her salary, and in March we also employed Sue Jueno on an identical, one day a week contract.

The end of 2021-2022 saw a flurry of building work commissioned in Kenya and the establishment of a brand new branch of Mothers of the Forest (See our CEO's report later for more details) The proportion of non-ring fenced funds used to fund our projects in Kenya was 87.68%, well exceeding our target of 80%.

The final big piece of news we have is that we purchased four acres of land near Garashi. Our hope is to secure the funds to build a permaculture teaching centre, a tree nursery and a food forest.

Our plans for 2022 and beyond now include becoming a certified seller of carbon credits via Gold Standard. Our corporate partners Oaklin are helping us work through the process and over the coming year we hope that this will become a major new source of income.

Izzy Robertson

Izzy is our Literacy Trustee and is responsible for much of the written output Word Forest creates. She writes many of our news posts and edits, tweaks and schedules those written by our amazing band of volunteer writers. She says:

It's hard to believe that we've just reached the end of our fifth year as a charity – they say that time flies when you're enjoying yourself and, despite the difficulties that have arisen over the past twelve months, we have been able to celebrate some wonderful progress.

The Mothers Of The Forest women's empowerment group in Boré goes from strength to strength and as this financial year ticks into the next, we will be welcoming another branch (excuse the pun!) based on Rusinga Island.

Our colleagues in Kenya continue their outstanding work in (frequently) very challenging circumstances. Eva Jefa (facilitator of the Mothers of The Forest) and her assistant Esther Kombe have continued to disseminate information about permaculture growing methods to the community, who have been able to observe the benefits on Eva's shamba. Eva and Esther were also able to lead an education programme for charcoal burners, to help them understand the importance of protecting the forest, why charcoal burning is detrimental to the environment both locally and globally, and to explore other potential ways of making a living. This programme was requested by members of the community after Eva mentioned it as an idea.

Here in the UK our phenomenal team pours in energy, love and countless hours to help in a multitude of ways, and the support of our corporate partners, members and donors has been so generous, allowing us to expand our work, get more trees in the ground and reach out to more people.

Some of our team represented Word Forest at COP 26 in Glasgow, attending many interesting talks and discussions and running a screening of the documentary #TreesAreTheKey at one of the fringe venues. We were fortunate to be included in the Hot Poets project, a collaboration between poets, NGOs and scientists – the poem written for us by the amazing Zena Edwards just blew us away. Our online Trees Are The Key Awareness Week provided a springboard for the launch of our new, free learning platform.

We have also been fortunate enough to welcome a new Special Adviser, Jo Lawrance, who brings invaluable specialist knowledge of governmental policy and international relations.

I end this year with immense gratitude to everyone who supports Word Forest in any way, shape or form; you have helped us continue to grow like the trees in Kenya and that gives me hope for the future. Thank you!

Meteorologically Speaking

By Clare Nasir

Clare Nasir is Word Forest's Patron, a meteorologist, weather forecaster, author and TV presenter.

Heat has intensified early across the Northern Hemisphere this year and yet again, the consequences as a result have made headline news across the planet.

One hundred million people have been affected by heatwaves in the USA. Life-threatening temperatures have produced devastating wildfires, many of which continue to rage across Spain, whilst in the Norwegian Arctic, thermometers have registered the unthinkable temperature of 30°C.

Further east, the seasonal rains have ended 22 days early in Japan and in recent days, you may have noticed the news reporting they've been replaced by record-breaking temperatures and the worst heatwave in Japan's history. They've seen the hottest temperature since records began in 1875, 40.2 °C. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has asked people to ration air conditioning in order to conserve their limited electricity supplies.

Drawing our focus to Africa for a moment, lest we forget the 140 million people crippled by the worst drought in 40 years over the Horn of Africa that has resulted in child marriages doubling in the last year.

Thank goodness for Word Forest. They're tackling these weather extremes and resulting social issues head on by planting fast growing trees in the tropics and supporting the communities who plant and tend them. It's a solution that Mother Nature would surely endorse. It's simple, there are no wires or cables required for trees to start drawing down and locking in CO2 from the atmosphere and with your continued support, it will continue to give us all hope for the future.

There was a snippet of news announced on June 30th that I'd really like to draw your attention to. The World Meteorological Office has just launched a new finance mechanism to strengthen weather and climate observations.

Why is this important?

Observational weather data, such as past temperature, humidity, wind, underpins our understanding of future weather. Across Europe, North America and some parts of Asia the catalogue of past meteorological information is comprehensive, with some data sets going back to the 1800's – when ingested into supercomputers, detailed climate trends are revealed. This in turn informs on how to protect communities from future extreme weather.

Past weather records don't exist in every part of the world - many regions, including much of Africa, lack this crucial ingredient.

The new Systematic Observation Financing Facility, SOFF, launched on the 30th June, is readdressing this imbalance.

It's an international response to climate change that provides the tools to fill the data gaps. The gaps that affect our capacity to predict and adapt to extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and heatwaves.

How does it work?

The SOFF trans-disciplinary teams have addressed not only the data issue but also long-term local support to a global problem.

The objective of SOFF is to support Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and LDCs (least developed countries) through the provision of grant financing and technical assistance for the sustained collection and international exchange of surface-based weather and climate observations according to the internationally agreed Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) and to help other developing countries in assessing how to meet the GBON requirements.

In other words – a practical fund of big cash that invests and supports local data hubs, that will provide continual environmental measurements, in the air, in the ground, in water - lakes, rivers, shorelines. A proper data-fest. In turn this information will be utilised in the most sophisticated climate models to gain strong insights into future – local – risk.

And I think there's more...

I joined the UK Met Office in the early 1990's and my first task was observing the weather; I reported on cloud type, daily rainfall total, max and min temperatures. Many of the meteorologists and climatologists at the Met Office today had a similar start to their careers. It's a subtle yet powerful way to feel and understand the rhythms of our atmosphere, creating a strong, earthed based anchor to any role in weather and climate.

So my final thought, this fresh initiative has the potential to do so much more - to inspire, support and develop the careers of young minds in small towns and villages living on the frontline of climate change. Give them the opportunity and resources – and they become instrumental in their own communities as well as part of our global environmental effort to rebalance Earth's increasingly skewed rhythms.

It's time to up the game

Earlier this year, I was proud to represent Word Forest on the BBC's Catchpoint, a Q&A game show hosted by Paddy McGuinness. I'm continually looking for new ways to raise Word Forest's flag and we *all* need to do that to help them reach their goal of reforesting Kenya. It sounds enormously ambitious but that's what we have to be these days. This is perhaps the biggest challenge mankind has ever faced.

Meteorologically speaking, Word Forest could really do with a fair wind blowing behind it to catch the eyes of as many new supporters and Corporate Partners as possible. Global warming is something we're all going to experience to varying degrees. If we help Word Forest get those all important trees planted, perhaps we will be able to stop the degrees from rising after all.

More Trees or a Technological Wheeze?

By Professor Bill McGuire

Bill McGuire is Word Forest's Special Scientific Advisor and Professor Emeritus of Geophysical and Climate Hazards at UCL. He was a contributor to the 2012 IPCC SREX report on climate change and extreme events.

When you get down to the nitty-gritty, there are just two ways to cool the planet; either suck carbon from the atmosphere or block out the sun so that less of its heat makes it through to the surface. In the case of the former, it has never been clearer that trees are the key. Unsurprisingly, that's also the name of Word Forest's documentary narrated by Kate Winslet and it's what Word Forest believes through and through.

Sucking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere at a prodigious rate and locking it up in wood, trees play a massive role in keeping atmospheric carbon levels far lower than they would otherwise be. If we want to make a serious dent in carbon emissions, one of the most obvious ways forward is to plant more trees and lots of them - precisely what Word Forest has spent the last 5 years doing. Their Team are dedicatedly locked on to an ambitious goal of reforesting Kenya, planting as many fast growing trees as it can. But more than this, they know what the secret ingredient is to ensuring those trees reach maturity. It's working closely with Kenyan communities to listen to what they need, to facilitate education, build schools and support women's empowerment. As one of our Corporate Partners, Oaklin Consulting, says: "Word Forest has created a virtuous circle of positive action".

There is absolutely no point in afforestation however if there is no-one around to keep an eye on those volatile saplings, as they strive to get a foothold in the soil. Nothing is more critical, therefore, than looking after the tree planting communities across Kenya, so they can do a great job of nurturing those trees to maturity.

Such schemes operating on a global scale have the potential to transform the way we tackle the climate emergency, while at the same time the commodities from the forests can actively reduce poverty and hunger too. As time goes on, expanding such initiatives in the tropics, where trees grow up to 10 times faster than anywhere else on the planet, will become ever more crucial to our survival.

As well as targeting natural solutions like tree planting to combat global heating (which are essentially relatively straightforward to facilitate) there is also a growing interest in using technology to bring temperatures under control. Intentionally messing around with an already broken climate is a can of worms that we really don't want to open but this isn't stopping those itching to block out the power of the sun.

Moves to tackle global heating by reducing the level of incoming solar radiation constitute nothing more than risky experiments that seek to 'fix' the mess we have already made of our once stable climate. But solar radiation management (SRM) does nothing to reduce the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and as such, it is simply focused on treating a symptom, rather than tackling the cause

of global heating. Many of those in thrall to the idea of SRM are adamant that there are no risks and they tout computer models that claim to show no adverse effects on the Earth's environment. My take is that such unfounded optimism is naïve in the extreme and nothing more than scientific hubris of the worst kind.

The truth is that SRM is nothing new. In fact, for as long as our planet has been around, nature has been modulating how much of the sun's output reaches the Earth's surface, often with major consequences for the climate that would cause mayhem for global society and the economy if they happened today.

Any natural phenomenon big enough to load the atmosphere with sunlight-blocking material will do the job – the principal culprits being asteroid and comet impacts and very large volcanic explosions or clusters of smaller volcanic eruptions. Impact events of a kilometre or more in size will load the atmosphere with dust, leading to a fall in global temperatures known as a cosmic winter. Exceptional volcanic outbursts have the same effect but this time the cooling that follows – known as volcanic winter – is a consequence of the immense volumes of sulphur dioxide gas pumped into the atmosphere. The gas mixes with water vapour to form a veil of sulphuric acid aerosols in the stratosphere, which is effective at blocking incoming solar radiation.

The frequency of impact events large enough to cause a significant fall in global temperatures is low, and the return period of a 1-km wide asteroid strike is at least half a million years, probably longer. Volcanic events capable of bringing about significant global cooling are, however, far more common.

Volcanic super-eruptions (defined on the basis that they eject at least 1,000 cubic kilometres of ash, rock and lava) have an average return period as low as 50,000 years. Plus, they have the potential to bring about a sudden and sustained drawdown in global temperatures. Following the colossal eruption of Toba (Sumatra, Indonesia) around 74,000 years ago – arguably the most catastrophic natural event in the last 2.5 million years – the global temperature fell by somewhere between 3.9°C and 9°C in response to the expulsion into the atmosphere of up to 2,000 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide. The period of significant cooling lasted for several years and may have driven a considerable increase in snow and ice cover.

Smaller, climate-perturbing, volcanic events may have return periods of just a century or two, perhaps even less. Most relevant to us is the 1815 eruption of Tambora (Sumbawa, Indonesia), which led to the so-called year without a summer in 1816. A global average temperature fall of just 0.7°C had a major impact on weather patterns, particularly in the northern hemisphere, resulting in one of the coldest ever European summers. Widespread crop failures across Europe and eastern North America resulted in famine and the last, great, subsistence crisis in the western world.

Volcanic loading of the atmosphere also had a major regional impact a few decades earlier in 1783 and 1784. This time, the culprit was the long-lived Laki lava eruption in Iceland, which generated a sulphurous cloud that drifted across Europe. The insulating effect of the volcanic haze resulted in blistering summer temperatures in 1783 and very poor air quality. In contrast, the following winter was unusually severe in both Europe and eastern North America, resulting in at least 8,000 excess deaths in the UK alone. Further afield the eruption has been

implicated in the weakening of both the African and South Asian monsoons, in the former case leading to reduced flow of the Nile and major famine in Egypt.

The key take-away from all this is that atmospheric loading comes with serious consequences. Nature's solar radiation management has invariably had knock-on effects on the world's weather patterns and it is unreasonably optimistic to think that comparable measures taken by humankind would be any different.

The idea that mimicking a large volcanic eruption by maintaining, year-on-year, significant levels of sun-blocking materials in the stratosphere would have no deleterious effects beggars belief and it is telling that eminent climatologist, Alan Robock, has listed 28 very good reasons why SRM is not a great idea.

The bottom line is this: global heating techno-fixes such as SRM are doubly dangerous. Not only are they risky and/or extortionately expensive, energy intensive and environmentally damaging but their promotion as 'solutions', acts to turn hearts and minds away from the desperately urgent task of slashing emissions as rapidly as possible. We can perfectly well do that right now and continue to mitigate their lasting effects with well managed, tree planting projects near the equator that have a raft of humanitarian support initiatives stitched into them, such as those being implemented by Word Forest.

Without concomitant reductions in emissions, SRM and other climate 'fixes' will only store up problems for the future but there is no reason to think that this will happen. Indeed, it is more likely that, instead of being used as a temporary 'sticking plaster', any climate engineering scheme adopted will be hijacked as an excuse to enable business as usual to continue and free market capitalism to flourish. It's no surprise to learn that technological solutions such as SRM are beloved of both fossil fuel corporations and billionaires.

To conclude: we have messed with our planet's climate quite enough thank you. Let's make sure that the SRM can of worms is one that stays well and truly closed. Word Forest's ambitious and equitable bottom-up blueprint for doing business differently to counter our planet's ails is needed more than ever before. Their inevitable scale up to becoming a multi-million pound environmental and education charity won't come soon enough.

Bill's most recent novel, [Skyseed](#), is an eco-thriller about climate engineering gone wrong. His new book, [Hothouse Earth: an Inhabitant's Guide](#) (as featured on his LinkedIn profile) will be out in August 2022. [Click here](#) to find a local independent bookshop near you to place your orders for these and Bill's other works. [New website coming soon.](#)

Thoughts from Bill

"As global heating accelerates, and serious climate breakdown becomes inevitable, it has never been more important to listen to what those in the scientific community are saying about the many problems heading our way in the coming decades. In the - frankly inexcusable - absence of any public information

campaign, I urge everyone to follow the excellent climate coverage online at [The Guardian](#) and the [BBC](#).”

“There are also plenty of other good climate change online sources out there, including [NASA's Global Climate Change](#) site and Real Climate, climate science from climate scientists.”

5 Headline Stories We've Read Today:

1. Italy Declares State of Emergency in Drought-hit Northern Regions
2. Spain and Portugal Suffering Driest Climate for 1,200 Years
3. Events like Italian Glacier Collapse Likely to Increase as Planet Heats
4. Unseasonable Heat to Hit Parts of Canada and China This Week
5. 'Every Year it Gets Worse': on the frontline of the climate crisis in Bangladesh

5 Headline Stories We'd Love to Read Tomorrow:

1. Kenya Rejoices as Canopy Cover Across the Country Reaches 50%
2. UK Corporation Tax to Include 1% Obligatory Support for Environmental Charities to Reforest Sub-Saharan Africa
3. Permaculture, Organic Growing and Composting to Feature in New Curriculum
4. Women's Empowerment Groups Across Kenya Inspire Neighbouring Countries to Initiate the Same
5. Temperatures in the Tropical Regions Finally Show Signs of Stabilisation as Reforestation Efforts Begin to Pay Off

CEO's Report

Tracey West: CEO and Fundraiser

Our Devon based international reforestation charity, Word Forest, is blessed to have Professor Bill McGuire as our Special Scientific Advisor and senior Met Office meteorologist and weather presenter, Clare Nasir, as one of our Patrons. These two alone are thoroughly respected heavyweights in terms of predicting what's heading our way climatically and meteorologically.

Part of my job involves - to the best of my ability - coming up with ways to anticipate and mitigate what may well follow, societally and environmentally. It's worthy of note that Bill and Clare lend their full elbow to our reforestation strategy and supportive humanitarian initiatives.

Word Forest is 5 years old and remains dedicatedly focused on raising funds to plant trees in Kenya that grow up to 10 times faster than anywhere else on the planet. We favour food-bearing varieties that alleviate some of the pressures of malnutrition and starvation for humans, and also help to address the decline in wildlife.

The CO₂ drawdown of the trees you enable us to plant is vast and by definition, that makes the tree planting communities of Kenya some of the most important people in the world right now. En masse tree planting in the tropics is relatively inexpensive to secure.

We've kept our price of £2.50 (per planted sapling nurtured into a mature tree) the same since we started back in 2017. We remain shocked to the core at the deeply disturbing rise of organisations who claim they can also get a tree planted for a handful of pennies or cents.

Having done it myself - and not to any large degree, I confess - I can tell you that the human fuel required to plant a tree properly in Kenya, is pretty substantial. You can't just heel in a sapling over there, that's impossible. Holes have to be dug with short-handled hand tools - not shiny, sharp spades - in very tightly-packed, hostile, hard soil, ideally 60cms/2ft wide by 60cms/2ft deep. That's what's needed if a young sapling is to stand any chance of setting its roots down and finding some moisture.

It also needs an efficient coverage of mulch: grasses, maize stalks, beanstalks, banana leaves and other such biodegradable materials. This reduces precious water loss from the blistering heat and hot winds. It also minimises competition from weeds and improves the soil structure too. All of those materials need to be gathered and transported to the sapling on foot - that takes additional energy and effort.

Finally, the vulnerable sapling needs regular watering and maintenance in the early months. Our friend from Nairobi, Cyprian Ogoti, is a devoted tree planter and he states in our documentary, [#TreesAreTheKey narrated by Kate Winslet](#): "You wouldn't have a baby and leave it in a corner to care for itself." It's the same with saplings, they need attention, time and human effort. Word Forest has always recognised that, it's why we ask for a donation of £2.50 per tree.

When you make an environmental investment with our charity, you get way more than you bargained for. We break the £2.50 into smaller pockets that plant and care for the sapling. We also shave a little off for one of our humanitarian support initiatives: building a school, facilitating education on anything from ABC123, environmental education or permaculture lessons, or maybe providing a nutritious meal with fruit and fresh water for the women that attend our Mothers of the Forest women's empowerment meetings twice a month.

The list of things we're doing (and aiming to expand) to make the lives of tree planters a bit easier, is getting longer. Despite having a ridiculous array of daily challenges, they continue to work incredibly hard to help the planet steady itself by planting and caring for trees.

Our raft of simple initiatives to help Kenyans cope with the wide ranging symptoms of global heating are ambitious. The news about them has created a buzz which has reached the very edges of national government.

Across Kenya, Word Forest is regarded as a well respected organisation that sticks to its word. We're pioneering, we set a high bar and there's a queue of people who want to work with us because we wholeheartedly care about the Kenyan people. We continue to place an equal priority on their welfare and the trees that need planting.

Word Forest knows the value of the small details and over the last year, we've been thrilled as new corporate partners have joined us who share those values. It is evident that trees in the tropics have phenomenal ability as a serious mitigator of global heating, yet the power of them remains largely untapped by the world's governments who claim they're behind plans for a Net Zero world.

The trees we enable the planting of, just a handful of degrees south of the equator, are perfectly placed to be incredibly efficient at alleviating climate breakdown. With good management, they're also capable of tackling hunger and poverty head on too.

The metrics of their all-round efficacy are far greater than from any tree planting project we could initiate in the UK. This absolutely highlights, bolds and underlines the critical imperative to protect mature tree stock in the UK and across the planet.

I'd like to take a moment to commend all of our amazing volunteers, corporate partners and supporters for their belief in what we're doing. They also toil relentlessly to raise awareness of the absolute necessity to elevate our shared existential problem to a more prominent place on everyone's list.

Smaller environmental charities like Word Forest need seats and a voice at international forestry and climate-based round tables. There's so much knowledge we could impart about the greatest challenges we've faced and our successes too.

I've spent 2 years actively seeking an invitation to participate in discussions with the Sustainable Markets Initiative, responsible for the ambitious Terra Carta Charter but progress has been slow - I shall keep trying nonetheless.

We don't want to be lone fish, we want to share what we've learned and to inspire the countless millions who need to be on board with joined up, urgent eco-thinking and actions.

We all need to accept more responsibility for encouraging our employers, our education establishments and our councils to stitch Net Zero principles into the fibre of their being. I long for the day when blusterous over-promise, under-delivery and delirious, perilous addiction to squeezing the Earth for every drop of unsustainable energy, are gone.

In the news, we've all seen shocking, unprecedented environmental disasters be overshadowed by other shocking, unprecedented environmental disasters. Just a moment ago, Weather Tracker's Australian News reported that over 80,000 people have been forcibly evacuated from their homes by rising flood waters in Sydney and the surrounding areas. Incidentally, it's the third time this year that these regions have been devastated by floods. La Niña is reportedly the major driver and the defining characteristics are in keeping with climate breakdown predictions of enhanced intensity of seasonal global rainfall events.

In Coast Province, Kenya back in 2018, our co-founder Simon and I experienced the start of the long rains coming a whole month early. They were violent, relentless, their arrival was horrifically swift and everyone was unprepared. Even the meteorological reports on the radio stated: "Don't worry, it's not the long rains coming early". As we continued our irriguous journey to Nairobi, within a very short space of time they were eating their words. In the Boré region where our main planting projects were centred at that time, those rains went on to displace 20,000 people from their mud hut homes - that's a quarter the number of those fleeing theirs in Sydney, today.

During our Monitoring and Evaluation visit back to Kenya in the spring of the following year, we saw many of the 20,000 still living in makeshift UN tents some 12 months on, their entire homes, scant possessions, livelihoods and hopes having been completely washed away.

The residents of Sydney and Boré will undoubtedly feel the pain of a wrathful, barbed lash from Mother Nature again, it's just a matter of stormy time.

There needs to be far more unity amongst global leaders to work together to solve our existential crisis - the safety of their homelands and their own people is quite literally at stake.

Please note: according to the scientific data we're gleaning, even phenomenally large tropical tree planting initiatives are likely only to result in the world suffering fewer extreme weather events and subsequent deaths - it will not eliminate them. This makes the work Word Forest is doing even more important than ever before. No amount of tropical tree planting can reel time back to a period where we see only occasional instances of deadly, climate-related events.

My door is always open for conversations with new collaborators and most especially new funders. Together, we'll enable Word Forest's agenda to hurtle forward (in a sustainably powered vehicle, of course).

I send kind regards to all and I conclude with reiterated thanks to everyone working tirelessly to make our planet well.

Yours, in service to our planet, its people and wildlife

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey West', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tracey West FRSA
CEO and Fundraiser

And Finally...

We have released two new tools from the box this year. Our Educational Learning Platform (ELP) and the Sports Climate Alliance.

We're hoping our ELP, which is being championed by amazing volunteer Lyndsey Selleck, will become a tool that helps people become better all round environmentalists. We're also aiming for it to be an easily accessible learning resource for our beneficiaries in Kenya. Why not take a look at [Learning.WordForest.org](https://www.learning.wordforest.org) and sink your teeth into our first few courses.

Secondly, the [Sports Climate Alliance](#), headed up by another of our amazing volunteers, Connor McDonald, is in its very early days. It is an incredibly exciting initiative that we believe will help Word Forest secure a worthy place on the map of mass participation sport fundraising events. Keep an eye on [SCA.earth](https://www.sca.earth) to watch our winning flag unfurl.

THE WORD FOREST ORGANISATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1172497

Accounts



50-24/02



The

Word Forest

Organisation

Report and Accounts
2020-2021





**This is the Annual Report and Accounts for
The Word Forest Organisation
a charity registered in the United Kingdom by the Charity Commission
Charity No: 1172497**

Registered Address and Contact Details

Barnpark
Green Lane
Tipton St John
Devon
EX10 0AH
Tel: 01297 533 111
Email: team@WordForest.org

Website: WordForest.org

Our registered address changed on 1st December 2021

Trustees

Mr Simon West (Chair of Trustees)
Ms Rikey Austin
Ms Eva Dixon
Mr Philip Gamble
Mrs Helen Roberts
Mrs Izzy Robertson

During 2020-2021, Eva Dixon was appointed as a Trustee.

Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Tracey West FRSA

Managing Director

Mr Simon West FRSA





Our Constitutional Structure

The Word Forest Organisation was incorporated as a CIO on 7th April 2017.

Our constitution follows the model for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as set out by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and was adopted on 7th April 2017 and revised on 1st February 2021.

Charitable Objects and Public Benefit

To promote sustainable development* for the benefit of the public in countries to be determined by the Trustees by:

- (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
- (b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

* Sustainable development means “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 in planning our activities.

The positive social impact of our work is considered before we direct our tree-planting communities and outcomes are directly monitored. This enables the Trustees to be confident that the charity has, through its range of activities, achieved significant public benefit for the community in Kenya, and in countries as determined by the Trustees.





Financial Summary

Income

In 2019-2020 (year 3) we had a total income of **£41,466.92**.

In 2020-2021 (year 4) our income was **£76,146.94**, an increase of **84%**.

Outgoings

Our total outgoings were **£69,665.15**.

£50,037.88 of this went directly to Kenya.

Thanks to an anonymous, ring-fenced monthly donation of £800 plus Gift Aid, we continued to pay our CEO a partial salary for the entire year at £10 per hour for 100 hours per month. This is far less than the actual hours she worked, estimated to be approximately 200 hours per month.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to being a Real Living Wage (livingwage.org.uk) employer and to ensure that when we employ people everyone will receive the same hourly rate for their country, regardless of gender, race or creed.

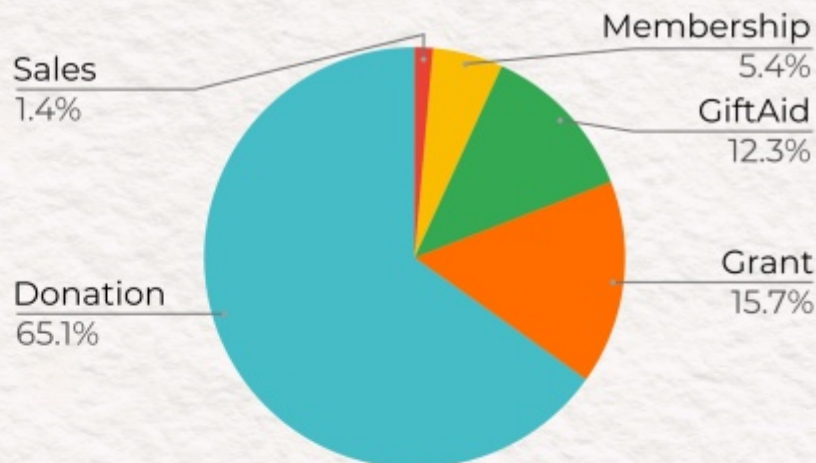
We ended the year with a balance of **£19,205.70** and an average monthly income of **£6,345.58**.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Simon West'.

Simon West FRSA
Managing Director and Chair of Trustees

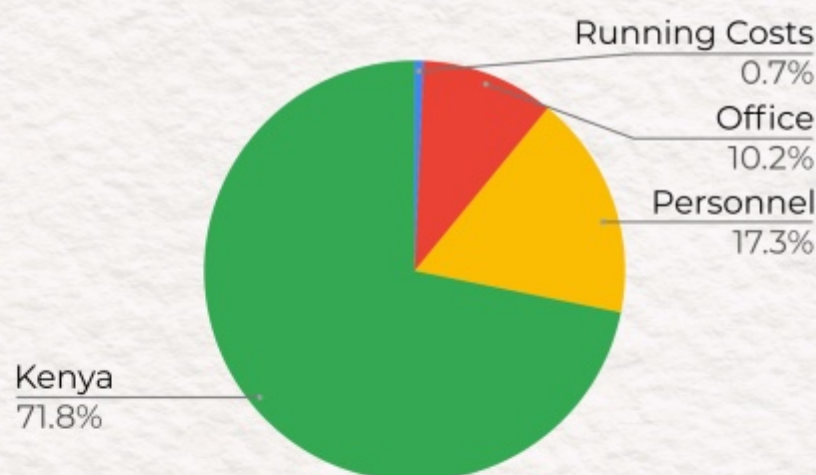


Income



Category	Amount	Percent	2019-2020	Change
Events	£0.00	0.00%	£6,482.98	-100%
General	£0.00	0.00%	£761.19	-100%
Sales	£1,054.55	1.40%	£3,967.71	-73%
Membership	£4,129.09	5.40%	£2,920.36	+41%
GiftAid	£9,387.92	12.30%	£2,900.76	+224%
Grant	£11,975.00	15.70%	£0.00	+100%
Donations	£49,600.38	65.10%	£24,433.92	+103%
Total	£76,146.94	100.0%	£41,466.92	+84%

Outgoings



Category	Amount	Percent	2019-2020	Change
Travel	£0.00	0.0%	£1,657.25	-100%
Merchandise	£0.00	0.0%	£1,851.36	-100%
Running Costs	£480.69	0.7%	£1,469.17	-67%
Office	£7,119.68	10.2%	£4,830.80	+47%
Personnel	£12,026.90	17.3%	£4,126.16	+191%
Kenya	£50,037.88	71.8%	£24,229.58	+107%
Total	£69,665.15	100.0%	£38,164.32	+83%

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Word Forest Organisation

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Word Forest Organisation, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), for the year ended 6th April 2021.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity Trustees of the CIO 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 CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

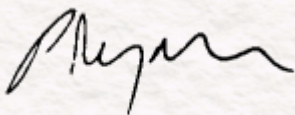
Independent Examiner's Statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

My only concern is that financial control is largely in the hands of one individual and I would recommend that the Trustees reflect on how that reliance can be mitigated.

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



Philip Ryan FCA

Address: 19 Quadra House, Bessemer Road, Basingstoke, RG21 3NB.

Date: 4th February 2022





From our Team

Jo Smith: Volunteer Digital Strategist

Digital Strategy

During 2020-21, time was spent researching and beginning to use a new customer relationship manager system called Salesforce, a powerful system that is used by thousands of businesses worldwide. It is donated free to charities and the free version gives the basic functionality to allow for organisation of data.

With time and understanding of the basics, Word Forest started recording possible grant providers and importing all our donors' information, ensuring it is stored securely. Making use of furloughed volunteers, we set up a grant process which would be ready when bid writers became available to start approaching funding providers.

Going forward into 2021-22, time will need to be spent enabling realisation of the full functionality of Salesforce. The beauty of obtaining this now, while we are small, means we can trial and learn, in preparation for scaling up. In the future, the system will be able to track donors, grants and manage our ongoing relationships. It will also be able to keep track of our projects, enabling us to record and report back on the impact we are making on the ground in Kenya and the UK.

It offers many possibilities but also lots to learn, so this is a project that will be ongoing over the next few years – watch this space for more updates.



Izzy Robertson: Literacy Trustee

The Stories and the Writers

The importance of stories can't be overstated. We, as human beings, are instinctive, natural storytellers, all of us. It's in our nature.

"Surely not," I hear you cry. "I can't tell a story and I certainly couldn't write one!"

I'm not so sure about that so let me ask you some questions. Didn't you tell your partner all the details of that horrendous day at work you had on Thursday? Wasn't it you having a good laugh with your neighbour about the ridiculous mix up with the parcels, or regaling your colleagues with the details of that amazing series you just started watching? How about when you met up with your friend for a walk and you both set the world to rights?

Thought so. We can't help it – it's part of the way we connect, sharing those day to day incidents, from the biggest events such as COVID-19, to the little things, like how missing the bus last Tuesday actually turned out to be the best thing that could have transpired. Stories can be as real or as fanciful as we like. They all help us to communicate and learn from each other and they come in a myriad of shapes and forms.

So allow me to spin you a story now; it's about an organisation trying to make a difference, a challenging set of circumstances, some very tricky times and the extraordinary goodness of people.



April 2020 – the beginning of the financial year saw us 11 days into the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, with restrictions also in force in Kenya. As our CEO and MD eruditely describe in their reports, we found ourselves having to rethink the way we did almost everything, pivoting rapidly to an entirely digital way of working – not so easy when you're a tech dinosaur like me – while continuing to support our colleagues in the tree planting communities in Kenya through the COVID storm.

Despite the optimism we all tried to foster, things did look bleak and, being such a small team, we all wondered at times how we were going to manage... or perhaps even if we, as an organisation, would survive.

Then, a ray of light. In fact, *many* rays of light as suddenly, a whole host of kind and generous hearted souls appeared, as if out of nowhere. These wonderful people, finding themselves at home with more time on their hands, offered us their spare hours and their energy in a multitude of ways.

It was transformational. Within a month we had gone from a team of 10 (give or take) to a team of 42 (yes, you read that right, a whopping, glorious FORTY TWO!) Although we were paddling madly like ducks for a while getting things in place to process and facilitate all the volunteers, it meant that suddenly we were able to approach many things in new ways. They really did carry us through. These marvellous people were offering help with everything from admin to social media to fundraising. And writing.

We've always tried to keep the website updated with interesting titbits but, honestly, it was difficult when there were so few of us. We had long wanted to increase the number of articles we published and suddenly we had a plethora of talented writers positively bubbling over with good ideas for informative and interesting pieces. They spend hours researching and stitching together articles on topics ranging from personal reflections to science led essays, book reviews to ideas for positive change. This year we have had articles virtually coming out of our ears! I will admit to being up to my eyeballs in it on a number of occasions which, while being an absolute delight in one way, made me extremely grateful for the help of our volunteer editors, without whom I would never have kept up!

Covering subjects as diverse as the value of trees, the impact of plastic in the ocean, the ethics of fashion, the effects of charcoal burning and a vast amount in between, our writers and editors have taken on projects willingly and worked endlessly to help us reach our goals. They've kept the newsfeed on the website vibrant and fresh, offered something of interest to just about everybody and been extraordinary in helping us to spread the word about what we do and why we do it.

Thank you just isn't a big enough term to express how grateful we are to all of the volunteers in all their roles. It is an honour to work with them – each and every one has been magnificent.

Now I bring you full circle. Stories are important – they connect us, help us to learn and view things with new eyes, open doors on worlds we've never seen and offer fresh nuggets of information that allow us to decide which paths to follow in our daily lives.

There is always something happening, always news to share and things to learn: discoveries, revelations and all sorts of intriguing and fascinating tales from all corners of the planet and the human mind.

Our wonderful team will continue to bring you those stories and we really hope that you continue to enjoy them.

Simon West: Managing Director

The start of our financial year 2020-21 saw us in the grip of lockdown, with a very uncertain future. Planning at that time seemed almost impossible and we had just started sending emergency food aid to Kenya to help our tree-planting friends simply survive.

As the year unfolded, we sent just over £4,000 a month, distributed from 4 centres to over 1,600 people. It was clearly not enough to feed them well, but we know that it staved off starvation for a large number of people. Four of our colleagues in Kenya bought food in bulk to get the best deal with massively inflated prices and then it was distributed to those most in need.

This continued throughout the year, but by the beginning of 2021, as curfew and lockdown restrictions on Kenyans were relaxed a little, we were able to stop this aid, having sent more than £48,000 in total. We received a very large number of unsolicited promises to plant trees from the aid recipients, as soon as the rains returned. In 2021, we were able to restart our core programmes, for example the Mothers of the Forest income-generating mat making course and the Charcoal Burners Rehabilitation Workshops, amongst others.

Our building work in Kenya started again with the construction of a house for Mluo, another member of the community in extreme need. It continued with the construction of a set of toilets and a teacher's dwelling at Ufanisi School, both essential requirements for the school to remain open.

Lockdown forced us to close the door on our newly acquired office. As the year progressed, we were able to open it again and we welcomed the ability to have some of our volunteers attend regularly. Jo Smith had her own desk and by adhering to strict hygiene and social distancing protocols, we were able to make good use of our dedicated work space.

As 2021 unfolded, Government rules on working from home and an uncertain future made it clear to us that it would not be sensible to continue to pay for the office. Tracey (our CEO) and I were able to dedicate a room in our house for the charity's use, so we took the decision to close down the office at the end of our agreed lease on 31st December 2021.

As we enter 2022, we are optimistic that we will be able to raise enough funds to scale up our Kenyan building program through grants and corporate donations.





Sikuzi



Eva Jefa: International Development Kenya

The first COVID-19 case in Kenya was confirmed on the 12th March 2020. By April 2020 the number of confirmed cases had risen to 363 people, of whom 14 never made it. After that the numbers kept rising. Schools were closed indefinitely and there was a nationwide lockdown and curfew too.

Being a community already struggling with the effects of climate change, the pandemic made an already bad situation, worse. We witnessed an unimaginable hike in the prices of everyday necessities too.

The meetings that we were having twice every month had to cease. These meetings played a big role for the Mothers of the Forest, as it was not only a space for learning new skills to assist them on their journey to empowerment, but also their safe space.

The Word Forest Organisation came up with a food aid program for the Mothers and many other people in Boré Singwaya, Garashi, Nairobi and Rusinga Island. Over 1,600 people benefited from the food aid for a whole year.

In the midst of the pandemic chaos, Word Forest created 1,000 jobs, in a tree-planting exercise that began on 19th May and ran until 29th May, 2020. In this project, 63,700 saplings were planted across the Boré area. This was a big boost for the community during this trying time and enabled them to work together whilst still observing the Kenyan government's COVID-19 guidelines.

In November 2020, I attended an advanced permaculture course. The additional knowledge that I acquired from that course is helping me to educate the Mothers and the wider community on the best practices of organic farming. This is going to take us a step closer to resilience and sustainability so we can better cope with climate related risks and at the same time create improved food and water security.

The following month, the Mothers of The Forest each received a strong wheelbarrow as their end of year gift. This has improved the lives of the Mothers in a big way. A normal day for a Kenyan woman begins with her making several trips to fetch enough water for her family. Walking several miles with a 20 litre container on your head is not easy. With a wheelbarrow, the distance is still the same but at least the mothers can now carry 3 containers, weighing 60 kilograms, in one trip, saving a lot of time. The wheelbarrows also help in carrying firewood and other stuff.

The food aid continued up to March 2021 and all the beneficiaries are forever grateful to Word Forest's kind-hearted supporters for seeing them through this trying period.



Esther Kombe: Assistant Facilitator

Mental Health Matters in Kenya Too

I hope this note will find you in good health. My job at The Word Forest Organisation is assisting Eva Jefa as we both do what we can to support the Mothers of the Forest and our local communities in many different ways.

In the last 2 years, Eva and I have attended many different training courses and we thank you very much for making that happen. We have learned so much. Our focus has been learning about environmental, permaculture matters and other things. We now teach what we've learned to our communities. To say the truth, all the Mothers are happy for the education and the money they get through planting trees. It has let them start small businesses from that income and this has helped support their families by paying for food, school fees and a few items like books and pens. It is helping their mental health a lot.



In 2021, we created and started teaching a Charcoal Burners Rehabilitation Workshop. We showed men and women why we all need to keep the trees living, not cut them down to make charcoal. It was a success and the people were very happy to be welcomed and not judged while they learned more about the trees. We have been showing them and the Mothers new ways to do things to make a living. Nothing like this has ever been done before in Kenya. We are proud of what everyone learned over the six sessions.

I want to take this chance to thank all of our supporters across the World for what you did for the Mothers in the last 2 year. The food aid was a blessing. Now lockdown and curfew has stopped, we are back having two meetings a month again with a good meal and everyone is happy for this. The Mothers are so happy to you for giving them a good balanced diet.

The drought carries on here and it makes growing food and everyday living very hard but we know we have you thinking about us and we feel calmer and steadier in our minds. God bless you all for that peace inside us.

The Mothers are also thankful for their strong wheelbarrows from the 2020 Christmas and for the materials you bought so we can make beautiful mats to sell.

We feel your support every day and I have to thank you from everybody here, God bless you all.





From Clare Nasir: Our Patron

Ongoing Drought in East Africa

I'm delighted to write a piece for this report, unfortunately, it's not in my usual upbeat tone. The facts are stark, the message is deadly serious: anthropogenic climate change and global warming are here.

The people of Kenya are living on the frontline paying the price with their lives. I hope the work of the dedicated Team at Word Forest inspires you to help them make our world well by becoming a valued member: visit WordForest.org/join. And please, rethink what more you can do to reduce your carbon footprint and step a little lighter on our planet – thank you.



Background

Droughts have extensive impacts on human beings, environment, water resources and agriculture. Across Africa various drought incidents have caused devastation and crop failures, livestock deaths and human losses too.

The 1984–85 drought in Ethiopia and Sudan resulted in 450,000 deaths. There were over 325,000 deaths during the 1974–75 drought in the Sahel and 100,000 in Mozambique.

The impacts of drought tend to be aggravated by deforestation, land degradation, growing water demand and climate change. In the last 2 decades, East Africa has been marked by a number of prevailing, dire drought events. Although droughts are frequent, they are hard to forecast due to natural variations and anthropogenic factors, along with insufficient forecasting capacities.

Drought frequency in East Africa has doubled from once every 6 years to once every 3 years since 2005. From 2003–19, East Africa was struck by 8 boreal spring droughts. In 2008–10, the Horn of Africa drought caused a wide range of dire situations. It was one of the main reasons for socio-economic instabilities. A lack of food, results in human migration, malnutrition, epidemics, famine and death.

Drought is therefore considered a strategic enemy of East Africa with acute mitigation measures required. At times, droughts and other climate extremes have occurred in the same year. The 2006–07, 2009 and 2010 droughts preceded unprecedented flash floods.

The region is known to be the most drought prone in Africa, if not the world. East Africa tends to have two rainy seasons: the East Africa Long Rains (Deyr) from March to May, and the Short Rains (Gu) from October to December. The 2020 and 2021 Deyr seasons were both substantially drier than normal and in 2021, Gu was short as well.

In recent years, Deyr has been subject to an abrupt decline due to climatic variations. As a result, overall precipitation and total water storage are decreasing across East Africa, with significant impact upon humans and wildlife.



Latest and Forecast News

The worst drought in decades is currently gripping East Africa. Landscapes are parched, thousands of livestock are dying and the humanitarian crisis heightens. Driven by climate change, it's also leading to civil strife as communities battle for scarce resources. After 3 failed rainy seasons, more than 20 million people in East Africa face some of the worst food security risks in 35 years. Kenya and Somalia have declared emergencies.

All eyes are on the forecast for March to May 2022, as another below-average rainy season would lead to an unprecedented sequence of 4 seasons which have fallen below normal. Even if the March to April rains *are* normal, the region will experience lingering long-term rainfall deficits.

However, satellite imagery from late 2021 indicates that conditions are similar to the disastrous drought of the 2010 season. Forecast models suggest that March to May 2022 may be similar to the equivalent 2011 season.

Note on La Niña

Climate change and ongoing La Niña conditions across the Pacific Ocean have contributed to the persistent dry weather.

The cooling of the eastern tropical Pacific and the warming of the western Pacific disrupts weather patterns around the world. While rainfall increases substantially around Indonesia, the effect in East Africa is suppressed rainfall. La Niña is expected to persist through the first few months of 2022.

Successive rain shortfalls over East Africa have had a cumulative effect; smaller crop harvests, shortages of forage, depleted water supplies and weakened livestock herds.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization reported at least 60,000 animals have been lost to starvation. Additionally, milk production is 80% below average. Production of cereals during 2021 Deyr was reduced by 50% to 70%, while maize and sorghum production were down 15% to 25% in 2020, and 50% in 2021.

To Put this in Perspective

Since December 2021, at least 100 giraffes have died in Kenya's northeastern Wajir province. Villages in that region have lost up to 70% of their livestock. Since September 2021, much of Kenya's north has received less than 30% of its normal rainfall. In Kenya alone, since 1999, droughts have doubled in frequency and now there is drought every 2–3 years. The UN has stated that more than 26 million people are struggling to find food across East Africa. In Northern Kenya, half a million children are acutely malnourished.

The drought across the country is intensifying ethnic conflict and cattle raiding is prevalent. It is estimated that just 1 degree of global warming increases the likelihood of conflict by a minimum of 17%. Since the 1970's, violence as a cause of death in men has risen from 22% to 35%.





Corporate Partners

We count ourselves fortunate indeed to work with several corporate partners of differing sizes. They support us in a variety of ways, both financially and organisationally. They understand the gravity of our climate crisis and are excited to be part of the solution to mitigate it.

Of exceptional note are:

The Phat Pasty Company whose unwavering support and encouragement has been nothing short of amazing.

Phat founders, Paul and Laura Clark, sent the following message:

We started our Phat business 16 years ago with the principles of sustainability at the fore. We love having a corporate partnership with The Word Forest Organisation. This charity just ticks all the boxes of what we and our business are about.

In our business activities and decisions, we do what we can to look after our amazing planet. The combination of planting trees and supporting communities is a perfect fit to our business ethos. Both professionally and personally, our collaboration helps us try, in some small way, to make a difference.

With the launch of a plant-based range some 5 years ago, we saw a great fit to link the vegan-friendly products we sell with The Word Forest Organisation.

Oaklin Consulting who have supported us in many ways, including providing London office space for our geographically dispersed team to come together once a month. We work closely with their sustainability team who really have gone the extra mile to help our charity be the best it can be.

Together, we are working on 2 substantial projects which we hope will bear some rather exciting fruit towards the end of 2022.

Bunaken Oasis who have been supporters of the aims of this charity since before it was founded.

It is a fact that without the help and wide-ranging support from all of our corporate partners, the past 2 years would have been considerably more challenging. Our team has drawn great strength from their belief in our mission.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to all of our partners.



Is Kenya a Lost Cause for Reforestation?

No, far from it! Kenya is perfectly placed for tree planting, forest restoration and protection. In fact, trees there grow up to 10 times faster than anywhere else on the planet, therefore in terms of mitigating global climate chaos, they are beasts!

The element that is frequently not costed into plans to get saplings in the ground is the physical human effort required to nurture them after they've been planted. Taking care of the people who take care of the trees sits at the top of our list of priorities.

Part of the problem stems from a blend of Big Corp and individuals in the 'Developed North' who (a) refuse to take full responsibility for their own carbon emissions and (b) have no idea of Kenya's incredible ability to improve the health and wellbeing of our entire planet through tree planting. In the coming year, we're going to tackle those problems head on with the launch of our Educational Learning Platform and our Environmental Citizen for Life Award.



Climate Change: Africa

In a report by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2019 was among the 3 warmest years on record for the continent and the trend is expected to continue. The latest predictions for the five-year period from 2020–24 show further warming and decreased rainfall, especially over North and Southern Africa. NASA reported in December 2021 that following three consecutive failed rainy seasons, more than 20 million people across eastern Africa now face some of the worst food security risks in 35 years.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in drought-prone sub-Saharan African countries like Kenya, numbers of undernourished people have increased by 45.6% since 2012.

Agriculture continues to be the backbone of Africa's economy, yet this incredibly vulnerable continent is a hot spot for climate variability. Add business as usual Big Corp deforestation to the mix and you have a perfect storm for catastrophe, unless rapid human intervention occurs to:

- unify governments across the world to support a multi-disciplined energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables
- make global Net Zero a reality
- increase levels of government and media support for reforestation and environmental charities, thus elevating them to the Critical for Human Survival status they deserve
- increase public awareness and, inevitably, funding of vital projects

According to Global Forest Watch, in 2010, Kenya had 3.18 million hectares of natural forest, extending over 5.7% of its land area. By 2020, it had lost 17.2 thousand hectares of natural forest, equivalent to 7.68 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Kenya still has less than 10% canopy cover, so we're certainly not going to run out of space to plant more trees. As an interesting comparison, the UK has around 16%.

Trustees' Statement

Simon West: Chair of Trustees

For our 4th year, our Trustees continue to support and advise the charity and oversee its operations. Every major decision was taken in full consultation with the Trustees and they take a very active role in determining the best course of action for the charity. Our board has been enhanced by the addition of Eva Dixon as our International Development Trustee, who also brings specialist knowledge of Third Sector finance.

The Trustees are also responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

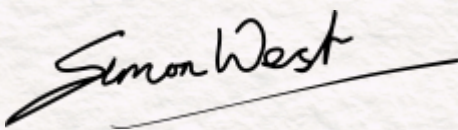
The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to ascertain to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website.

This Report and Accounts was approved by the Trustees on 15th January 2022 and signed on their behalf by:



Simon West FRSA
Managing Director and Chair of Trustees



CEO's Report

Tracey West: CEO and Fundraiser

Introduction

It is frequently said that every cloud has a silver lining.

I'm not entirely sure the calamitous events that have rained down on Kenya since my last report, could be categorised as a simple cloud. That said, it is joyful to note that continued support from our loyal membership and corporate partners has enabled our team to harness that silver and turn some of the starless darkness into light.



Africa accounts for 2–3% of global CO₂ emissions, mainly from energy and industrial sources. The 1 billion people who live in sub-Saharan Africa are responsible for just 0.55% of global emissions.

Kenya: a Layer Cake of Challenges

This section makes for very uncomfortable reading, however, the gravity of our climate crisis is such that I cannot dress the details any other way.

Without significant and swift change to human activities, projections suggest that Kenya's mean annual temperature is expected to increase by 1.0°C to 2.8°C by 2060 (World Bank Group). This will increase the risk of additional wildfires. Rainfall will continue to become more intense and the rainy seasons less predictable. Sea levels are set to rise regardless of any immediate action.

They are likely to bring flash flooding, resulting in land degradation, soil erosion and critical loss of biodiversity. Further crop and livestock losses will undoubtedly lead to extended famine, which is likely to result in human and creature displacement on unprecedented levels. Incidentally, if you'd like to see granular current and historical detail on wildfires, the climate, biodiversity, commodities and water, visit [GlobalForestWatch.org](https://www.globalforestwatch.org).

The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the everyday lives of Kenyans, in spite of the fact that income and employment levels are showing signs of recovery. Kenya's second lockdown, combined with pre-existing challenges from ongoing periods of drought, have resulted in a surge in food and water insecurity. Around 2.1 million Kenyans are now thought to be at risk of starvation as a result of the drought alone.

Production of the Kenyan staple crop maize is under threat. Projections are for it to decline by 50% in significantly drought affected regions, partly due to low acreage of cultivation – why plant it when you know it's probably doomed to fail? Some areas are so dry they're expected to have another year of total crop failure.

More than 17 million children were impacted by school closures across Kenya and the inability to access education or resources during 2020. When the restrictions were relaxed, new Government stipulations made it almost impossible for countless schools to actually reopen.

Requirements for hand sanitising, temperature monitoring of students and regular hand washing which, of course, requires sinks and water storage, were impossible to meet as many rural schools had no facilities of this kind. No immediate Government funding was made available to improve sanitation in schools.

Drought - Insecurity - Floods - Displacement - COVID-19 - Locusts - Famine

7 words sum up what millions of Kenyans have endured since April 2020.

They need no visual embellishment and it's an horrific, naked truth but you might as well add:

Rinse - Repeat

because it looks like they're an inevitability.

Aside from furnishing you with a few essential details about the 7 words, I've no intention of labouring these savage points extensively, because this year's report is filled with uplift and optimism and I don't know about you, but I think we could all benefit from a liberal sprinkling of that right now.

Heads Above The Water

COVID-19 continues to press its unrelenting boot-print upon us, and 170,000 other UK registered charities. Many NGOs worldwide are in complete disarray from increased demand for help from their beneficiaries and at the same time, they're enfeebled and exhausted from running up the challenge-laden hill in an attempt to seek and secure new funding streams.

Remarkably, The Word Forest Organisation has managed to carve a safe route through the financial scarcity that resulted from the pandemic. With incredibly stretched but talented and determined human resources, our phenomenal team digitally strategised a way out of the quagmire. We weren't able to undertake as many major projects as we'd have liked during this tumultuous period but our financial report says it all: we survived, our income increased by 84% and we're preparing to scale up our operations.

Humanitarian Support: frequently the missing piece

Once lockdowns were imposed in the UK, Kenya and across the globe, we knew our projects were going to be temporarily paralysed. The closing paragraphs of my last report stated that in March 2020, we made an initial payment to provide critical food aid to help the people in the tree planting communities we were working with.

The full extent of our support translated into over £4,000 per month being sent to our team across Kenya, who turned it into bulk purchases of critical food aid which they distributed to those who needed it most. With your good grace and kindness, we were able to do that for 12 full months. Thank you for helping us keep that lifeline open and for sharing our belief that the tree planters are critical to mitigating climate chaos.

Tree planting projects are only as good as the follow up human care that is built into them. People are needed to nurture saplings into mature trees. As Cyprian Ogoti says in our documentary #TreesAreTheKey, you wouldn't leave a baby to look after itself - saplings need care, water and intervention.

We will continue to prioritise the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the incredibly resilient Kenyan people we have the privilege of working with. They have the ability to create sustainable communities and spread the word far and wide about resilience. To the best of our ability we will do all we can to enable them to learn skills like permaculture which will allow them to thrive. It will also give the fast-growing trees in the tropics that our planet desperately needs, the best chance they have of drawing down and locking in CO₂.

The WHO ranks Kenya 4th in Africa for the highest number of poor mental health cases. 1.9 million people, 4.4% of the population, suffer from depression. In June 2020, the Government declared a mental health emergency.

Key Objectives for the Year Ahead

It's clear that we have turned a corner - a good corner. By virtue of the fact that we've recently taken on an apprentice, 2 part-time members of staff and we have very clear plans for expansion over the next 3 years, it's evident The Word Forest Organisation is here to stay.

Our plans include:

In the UK:

- Increase our permanent and part-time staff to 6 members
- Ensure all key contributing volunteers and staff have the digital equipment and resources they need
- Prepare for the launch of our Educational Learning Platform
- Increase corporate partner stewardship to help them strengthen their CSR pillars
- Increase the reach and environmental education benefits of our annual awareness campaign, Trees Are The Key Awareness Week

In Kenya:

- Build a permaculture and education centre and nursery in Coast Province
- Educate and equip our beneficiaries so they can adjust to a changing climate
- Support and grow our existing teams across Kenya, adding specialist knowledge on tree growing and permaculture
- Increase the ability of people to cope with drought, food and water insecurity through environmental and climate education, and permaculture
- Resume school building projects, ensuring 1 acre (minimum) permaculture food forests are costed in too: they're as critical as the classrooms
- Commence tree planting projects that additionally combine animal conservation benefits and/or a reduction in human wildlife conflict
- Tackle deforestation at its heart by increasing our Charcoal Burners Rehabilitation Workshops
- Increase women's empowerment through workshops and education, focusing on ways they can adapt to the changing landscape and generate income from the natural harvests and commodities of living trees
- Improve people's ability to survive during floods by increasing education on emergency water purification

Two Examples of Staying One Step Ahead

We endeavour to analyse the problems which are thrown at Kenya, then uncover solutions to mitigate their potential reoccurrence in the future. By working closely with Kenyan communities to identify the hierarchy of problems they face, we try to stay one step ahead so they don't bite them again.

After our Monitoring and Evaluation visit back in 2018, Simon and I briefly experienced the commencement of an extreme weather event as the long rains arrived in Coast Province a whole month early, then turned into countrywide flooding. This went on to displace 20,000 people in the area we were working in at the time. One of the most devastating problems everyone faced was locating clean, safe drinking water.

We returned the following year with an expert in survival situations who spent a month teaching teachers and community leaders how to purify water by upcycling a 5 litre water bottle and filling it with items found on Mother Nature's floor to create vital layers of filtration.

More recently, you may remember our news reports talking about desert locust

infestations. Some were 60 km x 40 km and contained countless millions of plant-munching critters who destroyed crucial crops grown to feed the Kenyan people. The locusts were as thick and long as your index finger. The conditions for the birthing of these gargantuan plagues that ate their way across Kenya and 27 other countries, have been strongly linked to climate change.

There's a high likelihood they'll be back, so we're planning to keep them out of our permaculture food forests by using robust nets. These nets will also conserve water and create optimum conditions for growing a diverse range of organic fruits and vegetables. The nets do increase our project costs, however, they have the ability to improve crop production and in the event of another infestation, they'll keep people fed.

Oxford Undergraduates Create a Winning Team

In March 2020, we turned to Reach Volunteering to increase our volunteer network. We boosted our number of volunteers by over 400%. This amazing human resource enabled us to set up departments for social media, marketing, design and more besides. We kept a strong focus on communication via daily video meetings.

I must say, it gave us a wonderful taster of how effective our charity could be if we had people fulfilling these roles on a full or even part-time basis. Volunteers are amazing, but there are frequent continuity issues that put spanners in the works of great plans.

We have also participated in various Oxford Undergraduate Internship Schemes. The remit being we set a 'real life work situation and high bar challenge' to an eager set of interns for a short period of time and they produce top notch results. We're about to embark on our fourth iteration of interns and we're very excited to see what they bring to our party in terms of solutions for our climate crisis.

Scale Up: On... Paused... and Back On Again!

We had been positioning ourselves and preparing to scale up since just before the pandemic struck. In January 2020, we moved into office premises at St Michael's Business Centre in Lyme Regis - unfortunately, in March we were hit by the first lockdown.

Like the rest of the world, we quickly got up to speed with how to work from home and I must admit, we had no choice but to embrace the limitations placed upon us as we welcomed video meetings and changed our dynamic.

The lease at St Michael's finished as 2021 drew to a close and we've moved across the border to Devon. We've realised that we *can* work perfectly well from home for the most part, however, there's a spark that burns bright when our team shares the same socially-distanced space.

That was evident when 9 of us came together in Glasgow to report on COP26. If you haven't seen the amazing work everybody did over that crazy fortnight, do visit [WordForest.org/COP26](https://www.wordforest.org/COP26). The newsfeed is jam-packed full of articles and videos that give you a taste of what went on. It tackles some of the topics the mainstream media omitted to give airtime or column inches to.

Any scale up worth its salt requires the gainful employment of staff!

In October 2021, with assistance from a kind-hearted donor of ringfenced funds, we were able to employ an Apprentice Business Analyst from a training scheme forged specifically to help a mum returning to work. Jo Smith has really sunk her teeth into this role already. Jo knew the ropes as she had been volunteering with us for close to two years. We're all excited to watch her develop her skills as she lays a solid pathway for our charity to tread.





We took on another employee in mid-August 2021, when we brought in Jed Robertson via the Government's Kickstart Scheme. He came onboard as a Video and Digital Media Creator and Composer (he is a supremely talented musician incidentally). The position ran for the full Kickstart duration of 6 months.

Whilst I'm sad to report that Friday just gone was Jed's last day, conversely, I'm thrilled to report that Monday coming will be his first day in part time employment with The Word Forest Organisation! Regretfully, we only have the funds to cover him for one full day a week; we have a compelling case that demonstrates our requirement of his services for the other 4 days.

Finally, joining Jed on his first day next week will be one of our most dedicated volunteers, an amazingly talented and environmentally motivated soul who has kindly given us devoted service for 2½ years. They also start on one paid day a week from Monday, taking care of a variety of tasks, and we couldn't be more thrilled.

And then there were four!

Corporate Partners: bless them all

Back in March 2020, we were set to commence a raft of corporate partner stewardship activities. They were designed to help our partners strengthen their pillars of Corporate Social Responsibility by helping them lay paths towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Lockdown put paid to that idea.

We're immensely grateful to all of our corporate partners and we'd like to thank them one and all for their patience, kindness and continued support of the critical work we do.

Without their belief in our mission to plant trees, build schools, facilitate environmental education and support women's empowerment across Kenya, we wouldn't be here today.

Even during the most challenging times, we've managed to nurture an exciting handful of new corporate relationships. We're looking forward to turning our plans into tangible, life changing realities for the people of Kenya and for our planet too.

An Awareness Week for the Mind, Body and Planet

In March 2021, we launched the inaugural Trees Are The Key Awareness Week.

Over 7 days, we explored how trees in our neighbourhoods could help to boost our mental and physical health and wellbeing. It was an amazing, if somewhat exhausting week! We released new written and video content each day and had a favourite tree photo contest too, which attracted international interest.

We're currently preparing our second awareness week and whilst I don't want to give too much away at this stage, the focus is education, enlightenment and fun. Bookmark WordForest.org/week to keep an eye on what we're up to, or, to ensure you don't miss out on any of our news, visit WordForest.org/subscribe and be the first to know.

Recognition Through Awards

It's nice to end on a couple of high notes.

In 2020, The Word Forest Organisation was runner up in the Social Change Awards category of Everybody Benefits from the Directory of Social Change. The winners and runners up were announced at a ceremony in the Houses of Parliament and it was a fabulous high point that recognised just how focused our team are on our mission.

We won a rather splendid bespoke, hand-drawn cartoon by Grizelda (featured at the beginning of this report) which showed many of our projects in action. We also won 6 months access to a database of potential funding sources.

...and finally, in October 2021, I won a People Environment Achievement Award for being an inspirational vegan! I must say, I was absolutely thrilled to receive it. My husband Simon and I are just approaching our 6th anniversary of being plant-based.

It'll come as no surprise to learn that the very foundations of The Word Forest Organisation are as environmentally friendly as they can be. Our apparel and bags are 100% organic cotton and vegan friendly; see WordForest.org/shop to buy something lovely.

In the office and at fundraising events, we only serve plant-based food and refreshments, shown to leave the lightest possible touch on our world.

We've also got a good handful of corporate partners, including the Green Gazelles, the world's first vegan rugby team, who share our love of a delicious whole food plant based diet.

Onwards and upwards we go into 2022!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey West', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tracey West FRSA
CEO and Fundraiser

Sustainable Village Resources
Kenya's Most Experienced

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ADVANCED PERMACULTURE DESIGN

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