

# 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](mailto:team@WordForest.org)

Website: [WordForest.org](http://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 reforesting 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

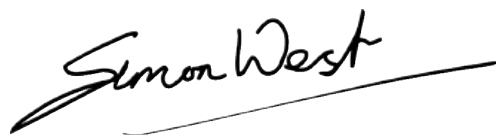
Although Tracey is moving away from the role of CEO, her passion for our mission remains as strong as ever, and she will continue to do all she can for the charity she built with such love and determination.

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 fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

**"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!

*Phil*



*"...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

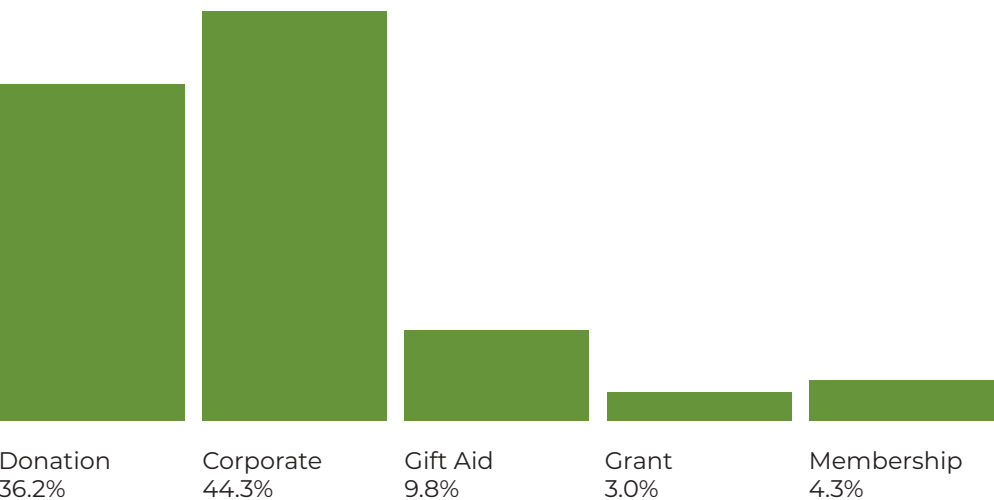
In 2024-2025 (year 8) our income was **£67,507.62**, a decrease of 11.8% over our 2023-2024 income of £76,711.63

## 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£67,507.62</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>£76,711.63</b>	<b>-12%</b>

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



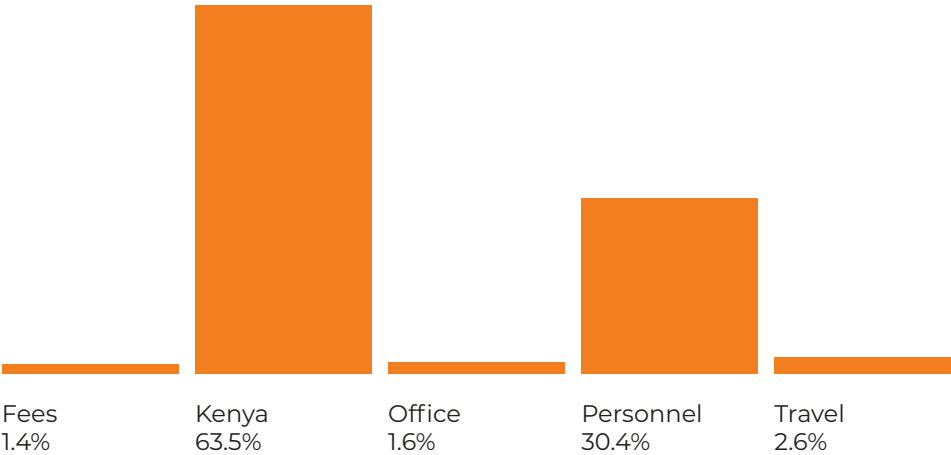
## Outgoings

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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£65,337.97</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>£82,241.25</b>	<b>-21%</b>

## Outgoings





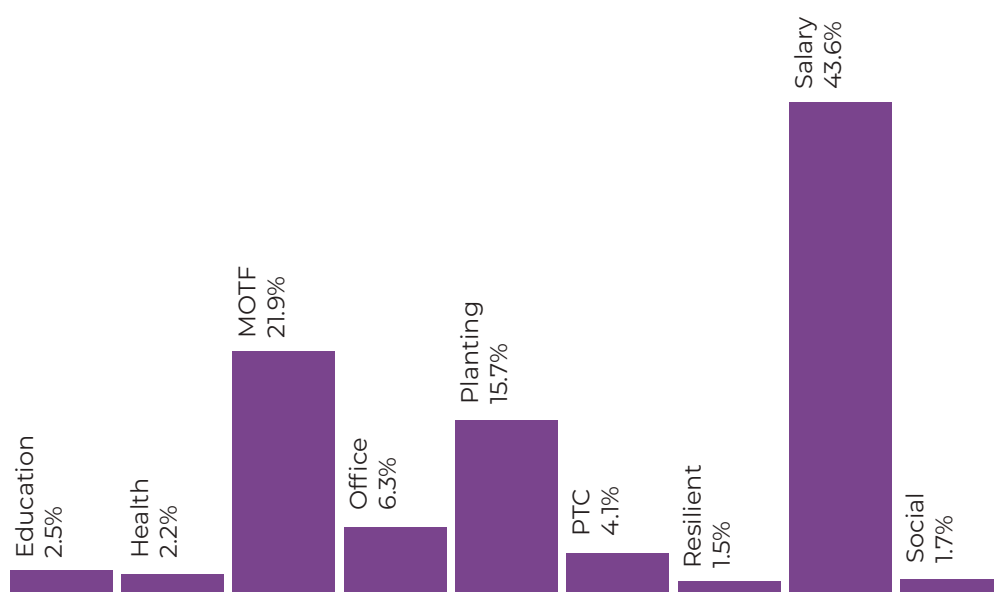
## Kenya projects by Category

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>Ksh 6,660,132</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>£40,334.07</b>

## 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.**

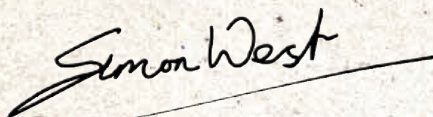
This year marks a transition in leadership, and on behalf of the Trustees, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Tracey West for her unwavering dedication as CEO. Under her leadership, Word Forest has grown in impact and reach, creating lasting change for communities in Kenya and further strengthening 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>) – 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/](https://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.

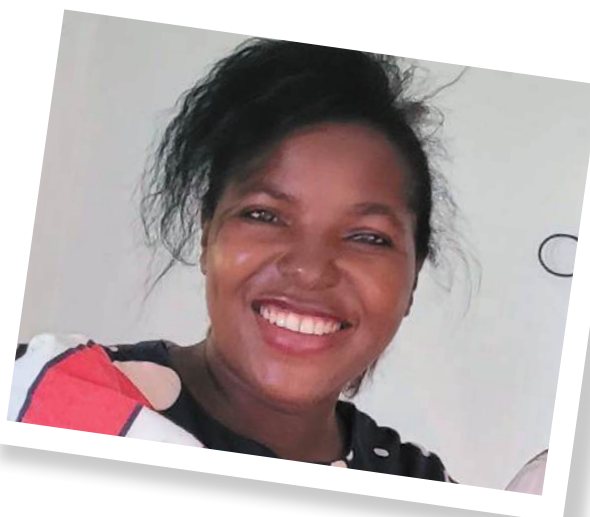
##### Table Banking

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.

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.

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





# 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.

