



Grith Pioneers Trustees' Annual Report

Year ending: 31st March 2024

Charity registration number: 1188105

Objectives and Activities

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	<p>(a) To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection, and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the land owned and/or managed by Grith Pioneers, by conducting a variety of environmental improvement and woodland management activities.</p> <p>(b) To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the land owned and/or managed by Grith Pioneers, by providing access to the natural environment for camps and outdoor education activities.</p>
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	<p>1. To manage the woodland in accordance with the Shining Cliff Woods Management Plan and any other activities which will enhance the biodiversity and/or ecosystem services provided by the woods, in line with the Natural England SSSI citation.</p> <p>2. To provide and manage areas of the woodland suitable for use as educational and/or recreational activities which enhance members of the public's understanding of the natural environment.</p> <p>3. To ensure that the assets of Grith Pioneers including the hostel and other buildings are used for the benefit of the general public, not least in extending their understanding of the natural environment.</p>
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	<p>We as trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-benefit-rules-for-charities</p>

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policy on grant making	Grith Pioneers may support organisations and individuals whose aim is to further the objectives of the CIO.
Contribution made by volunteers	We have volunteer wardens who review campers' permits while walking the woods and checking for dangers and hazards. Volunteers also help to maintain tracks, cut back invasive species and marshal when felling occurs. Volunteers also carry out surveys and counts – eg fungi

	<p>Trustees and council have met six times since the 2023 AGM, sometimes on Zoom, sometimes in the woods, and as always, many of us also got together for working days, walks, and at camps.</p> <p>Grith Pioneers currently has 32 members.</p>
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Achievements and Performance

<p>Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.</p>	<p>Education/training; Community; Development; Recreation</p> <p>Camps and booked activities</p> <p>Over the year since our last AGM, the number of camp bookings of various length has stayed at around 80, across the two separate camping areas (total number of nights is just under 160, making approximately 10% 'occupancy' at either site). The profile is, as is becoming normal, mostly smaller weekend visits of one-to-three people, but with youth groups and charities running their larger week-long camps. On balance, booked activities are broadly similar to last year in terms of days and numbers of people, with 300 adults and 95 children camping in total, and 46 daytime activities booked for 48 adults and 195 children, plus Wildlings which use parts of the woods two days per week for early years education.</p> <p>Activities organised by Shining Cliff Centre have again increased. Shining Cliff Centre CIC has seen rises in hostel occupancy, bookings, and new customers. Occupancy was up to 63% in 2023 (from 58% and 50% in the previous two years), there were 172 bookings, of which 56 were by new customers. A total of 1485 people have stayed at Shining Cliff hostel and a further 1147 people have accessed woodland sessions; these include 77 wellbeing sessions (up from 36 last year), 44 forest school sessions, and 19 volunteer conservation sessions.</p> <p>Areas of the woodland for recreation</p> <p>Car parks and laybys continue to be full by mid-morning every weekend throughout the year, and mid-week activity remains significant. Shining Cliff Woods continues to be a hugely popular place for recreation, exercise, and to benefit from being within nature. As last year, we continue to prioritise our efforts towards the safety of these visitors using the woods lawfully – i.e. those on foot. We have removed another 20-25 Ash trees next to the lower end of Beggarswell track and the public footpath down to the reservoir which may have caused a risk as they succumb to Ash die-back. By the end of 2024 we hope to have completed this work.</p> <p>Other significant efforts by Grith and volunteer groups to improve the safety and enjoyment of visitors to the woods included, clearing windblown trees, repairing storm-water damage to the upper section of Beggarswell track, culvert clearing and improvements under the track to the hostel car park, clearing and maintaining drainage channels, replacing 'No Cycling' signs at the hostel car park, and foot-bridge repairs.</p> <p>All are ongoing efforts and these and similar activities will need to be done in 2024 and every year! One more significant action we need to consider is how to reinforce the reservoir bank. As climate change causes rainfall to increase and become more torrential, overtopping is becoming more frequent and more severe, causing erosion, and inconvenience to walkers on the public footpath.</p>
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Economic/community, Development/employment

Asset maintenance (including hostel/centre)

Income of Shining Cliff Centre CIC was around £60k, mostly from overnight accommodation (≈£40k) but also grant funding (≈£10k) and day sessions and activities. Outgoings are mainly wages and staff costs, including training to extend the range of wellbeing activities the centre can offer. Building maintenance and improvements were also significant, leaving £3k profit.

This year included continued maintenance of the water system and fire safety system, improved bathroom heating and a smart new front door! The Beech Hut toilet has also been rebuilt, and floor supports of the woodland classroom reinforced with new bearers. A major investment, and something that has not been addressed before, was a geotechnical survey of the cliff, resulting in a comprehensive report and work to improve the long-term stability of the cliff.

Centre plans for 2024 include LOTC accreditation (Learning Outside the Classroom) which will further encourage schools to make use of the hostel and all the activities now on offer.

Every time we visit the hostel, in addition to the financial re-investment, the love and care that has gone into it over the last 5 years is really apparent, making it such a lovely place to be. We wish Kate all the best for the second half of her 10-year lease.

Environment/conservation/heritage

Woodland Management and Environmental Improvement

Ash die-back is now really beginning to take a hold on the South side of the stream below the reservoir. Although seeing magnificent stands of old Ash succumbing to disease is distressing for many people, there may be some benefits to overall biodiversity. For example, young saplings are coming through in succession; birch, oak, wild cherry and wych elm – diversifying the ages of trees in the woods. Also, we leave the ash trees that are located away from public footpaths to provide dead standing wood, great for invertebrates and the woodpeckers which feed on them.

Proposed actions for the years ahead include: clearing some trees from next to streams to enable greater light levels and encourage more molluscs and other invertebrates to thrive in the water; regular water testing to monitor nitrate and phosphate levels; installing more 'soft dams' on all the streams, using felled timber, to slow water flows and hold back silt; clear the grassy area next to the reservoir to encourage insects and birds; occasional felling of sycamore trees to enable more light to get in and provide space for oak regeneration and continue to remove re-growth of felled sycamores; create more wood piles ('bug and fungi hotels') using felled wood; coppice hazels to ensure healthy stands and nesting habitats; continue to remove (including root stock wherever possible) rhododendron wherever they are found around the woods; continue to grade the edging of the woodland to enable easier access/exit for birdlife and extend rides to connect existing clearings, allowing easier access for the rarer birds such as fly-catchers.

We will soon discuss which of these we can prioritise, so please get in contact if you have any comments or want to get more involved. We intend to present a management plan to Natural England towards the end of the year and also to increase the number of ongoing ecological surveys through training of Grith members and local people.

Dr Ian J Graham, Chair of Grith Pioneers Council

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	Unrestricted income for the period to 31 st March 2024 is £7,528 (2023: £6,739) with no Restricted or Endowment income. Income is mainly from the rental of the hostel, with some income from camping fees and memberships. Expenditure amounted to £779 (2023: £5,743). Shining Cliff Woods and the hostel are Grith Pioneers CIO's assets and are currently held at nil value.
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	Grith Pioneers CIO is fortunate to have a reserve of Unrestricted income funds to enable the ongoing management of the woodland. The woodland management plan is prepared for several years in advance, however there is an element of unpredictability eg there might be occasion to remove trees more immediately than planned due to storm damage or invasive disease. Trustees will always seek the best price for major works. The reserves of the CIO need to be sufficient to cover these planned and unplanned costs. The income of the CIO may drop due to unexpected external factors, such as Covid-19, it is necessary to have enough reserves to protect the continuity of charitable objectives.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	Grith Pioneers CIO has a balance of £42,266 (2023: £35,517) in Unrestricted Income reserves with no Restricted or Endowment Income reserves.
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	N/A
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	N/A
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	The trustees consider that the level of reserves held is sufficient to ensure the CIO continuing as a going concern.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	Grith Pioneer's principle source of funds continues to be from letting the hostel on a tenancy agreement, to an organisation that shares Grith's values. Members also provide valuable income through their subscription. Fees paid by campers and other woodland users support Grith to maintain the woods for all members of the wider public to access and enjoy.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	The trustees do not have an investment policy other than their aim to bank with ethical banks that share Grith's values and principles. To this end Grith Pioneers operate current and deposit account with Triodos Bank, a leading ethical bank. The CIO's cash reserves are now held with Triodos Bank. The HSBC account, being a legacy from Grith banking with Midland Bank has now been closed.
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:	
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Grith Pioneers Charitable Incorporated Organisation with voting members other than its charity trustees
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Membership vote

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Relationship with any related parties	Grith Pioneers CIO is a member organisation with trustees drawn from the membership. Trustees and members volunteer their time and pay membership subscriptions as agreed by members. There are no related party relationships.
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Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Grith Pioneers CIO
Other name the charity uses	Grith
Registered charity number	1188105
Charity's principal address	Sycamore Farm, Ashleyhay, Wirksworth, Matlock, DE4 4AG


Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Kathleen Moss	Treasurer		
2	Michelle Kershaw-Wright			
3	Michael Cross			
4	Martin Redman			
5	Nicholas Glaister			
6				
7				
8				
9				

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		11th May 2024
Full name(s)	Kathleen Moss	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer	



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name Grith Pioneers	No (if any) 1188105
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Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period from	Period start date 01/04/2023	To	Period end date 31/03/2024
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Section A Receipts and payments


	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Membership fees	260	-	-	260	260
Rental income hostel	4,992	-	-	4,992	4,992
Camping fees	1,388	-	-	1,388	1,258
Wayleave	64	-	-	64	64
Interest	698	-	-	698	145
Sales (sweatshirts)	-	-	-	-	-
Donations	126	-	-	126	20
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	7,528	-	-	7,528	6,739
Total receipts	7,528	-	-	7,528	6,739
A3 Payments					
Maintenance (hostel water system)	-	-	-	-	4,440
Tree surgery	-	-	-	-	500
Insurance	641	-	-	641	571
Subscriptions	45	-	-	45	125
General admin (tax software)	-	-	-	-	30
Bank charges	53	-	-	53	77
Meeting expenses	40	-	-	40	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	779	-	-	779	5,743
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	779	-	-	779	5,743
Net of receipts/(payments)	6,749	-	-	6,749	996
A5 Transfers between funds					
	-	-	-	-	-
Funds brought forward	35,517	-	-	35,517	34,521
Cash funds this year end	42,266	-	-	42,266	35,517

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	HSBC Current	-	-	-
	Triodos Current	14,366	-	-
	Triodos Deposit	27,900	-	-
	Total cash funds	42,266	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
	Shining Cliff Woods	Unrestricted	-	-
	Shining Cliff Hostel	Unrestricted	-	-
	no monetary value held in accounts		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Kathleen Moss	11th May 2024