



Grith Pioneers Trustees' Annual Report

Year ending: 31st March 2025

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	<p>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 of flora and fauna.</p> <p>Trustees and council have met eight times since the 2024 AGM (2023: 6), sometimes on Zoom, sometimes in the woods, and, as always, many of us also met for working days, walks, and at camps.</p> <p>Grith Pioneers currently has 32 members.</p>

Achievements and Performance

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>On behalf of our members, friends, and the many thousands of people who have enjoyed Shining Cliff Woods and Centre over the last year, I would like to formally thank the trustees, council members, and volunteers for their hard work and valued contributions.</p> <p>In December, Grith Pioneers, with the help of donations of over £65k from over 200 people, purchased at auction two beautiful fields totalling about 8 acres, very close to Shining Cliff Woods. This was one of the most significant actions in our close-to 100-year history, one I can't describe fully here, but which the BBC cover in their article: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c75l2py2v4vo (or search for 'Grith Pioneers buy more land for community'). Thank you to everyone involved – it was an incredible and wonderful effort. We look forward to describing the plans for our new land in next year's annual report. This year we are simply leaving the fields undisturbed while discussing potential plans with all interested people, enabling us to observe the changes over four seasons, and understand the area's ecology and potential.</p> <p>Education/training; Community; Development; Recreation</p> <p>Camps and booked activities</p> <p>The activity profile across the 60 or so bookings is as normal; mostly smaller weekend visits of one-to-three people, with charities such as Forest School Camps and others running their larger week-long camps for children and young people. Over the year since our last AGM, there were just over 140 nights of camping across the two camping areas (down from 160 last year). 'Occupancy' at the most popular site crept over 25% when the 15 "day-bookings" are included. We don't want to go beyond 25% in case it starts to have a noticeable impact on the wider woodland. However, numbers have fallen since February due to our enhanced risk assessment for campsite bookings which requires organisations to provide copies of public indemnity insurance. 14 organisations have met the requirement, so plenty of activities are still happening.</p> <p>Booked activities are broadly similar to last year in terms of numbers of people, with 240 adults and 90 children camping, 35 adults and 180 children on day-only bookings. Wildlings forest school continue to use different parts of the woods two days per week for early years education.</p>

In summary, we are happy with the numbers and feel it strikes a balance of people benefiting from using the sites for camping and other outdoor activities without risk of significant impact to the wider woods.

Areas of the woodland for recreation

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 is 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 and enjoyment of these visitors using the woods.

Significant efforts by Grith and volunteer groups like Forest Schools and Shining Cliff Centre volunteers have improved the safety and enjoyment of visitors to the woods. These included regular safety checks, clearing windblown trees from Beggarswell track and other rights of way, removing overhanging hazardous branches on all rights of way and above the hostel fire pit throughout the year, culvert clearing, clearing and maintaining drainage channels, replacing 'No Cycling' signs, drystone wall repair, clearing the war memorial and other meeting areas.

We also now have two new benches, one constructed and placed at a viewing point in the new 'top field', and one by the Grith hut.

Liaison with the local rights of way officer regarding the storm erosion of Beggarswell track has been somewhat successful, as there is agreement that remedial work is required and it will be programmed when budgets permit.

Planned activities for next year include:

- Ongoing Ash dieback removal near rights of way;
- Rhododendron clearance in Beggarswell Wood;
- Handrail reinstatement on the reservoir footbridge;
- Reservoir lower bank reinforcement to reduce damage from overtopping; Car park control measures if unauthorised use becomes an issue;
- A new grill to reduce blockage of Peat Pits culvert under the track to the car park;
- Additional no cycling signage to the eastern and western boundaries; Drystone wall repairs as required and specifically the new fields boundary walls to the road.

Environment / conservation/heritage

Woodland Management and Environmental Improvement

Much of the planned work was done, including installing some substantial 'soft dams' on the streams from Wiggonlea and Peat Pits, to slow the flow of water down the streams, reduce silt being deposited further downstream and to re-wet areas of woodland away from rights of way. Also clearing some small trees around streams to allow greater light levels. As usual, there was hazel coppicing, and removal of rhododendron at Beggarswell, and of sycamore re-growth on the border with the 'deer park'. Some bird boxes were also installed. We are going to leave the remaining ash trees (which are not near rights of way) to provide dead standing wood where safe, and to enable young saplings to come through in succession. Probably a very good thing for overall biodiversity.

Informal surveys have begun on the new land purchased by Netherpark Farm. Proposed actions for the years ahead will focus on commencement of habitat creation works in these new fields, once the initial management plan is agreed.

We are currently undertaking a review of the wider ecology Management Plan.

Proposed actions, mostly ongoing, include:

- Visioning for the new land to develop a long term management plan; Continuing to clear 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;
- More 'soft dams' on all the streams;
- Clear grassy area next to the reservoir to encourage insects and birds; Occasional felling of sycamore trees to enable more light and provide space
- for oak regeneration;
- Continue to remove re-growth of felled sycamores, creating more wood piles ('bug and fungi hotels') using felled wood;
- Coppice hazels to ensure healthy stands and nesting habitats;
- Continue to remove rhododendron wherever they are found around the woods;
- Continue to grade the edging of the woodland to enable easier access/exit for birdlife;
- Extend rides to connect existing clearings, allowing easier access for birds such as fly-catchers.

It is proposed that, when funds allow, we increase ongoing ecological surveys through training of Grith members and local people. Including: Bryophyte (mosses and lichens), woodland botany (wildflowers and trees), invertebrates (insects), and birds. One of the aims is to review the woodland survey carried out 5 years ago.

Finally, to end with something rather more unusual, an otter was observed in the reservoir!

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	<p>Total income for the year to 31st March 2025 is £82,985 (2024: £7,528), with unrestricted income funds of £7,854 (2024: £7,528). Grith raised £75,131 restricted income funds to purchase land, Lot E, from the Nether Park Farm auction, there were no restricted income funds in 2023, of this £75,131, £9,695 are loans to Grith to be repaid when tax reclaimed via gift aid is received.</p> <p>Unrestricted income is mainly from the rental of the hostel, with some income from camping/booking fees and memberships. Expenditure in the year amounted to £106,346 (2024: £779), the largest expenditure related to the purchase of land at £103,205 and £636 of Crowdfunder fees both from restricted income funds with £28,710 contributed to the land purchase from Grith's reserves. Other expenditure of £2,505 (2024: £779) from unrestricted funds supported the routine costs, insurance, maintenance and work of the charity</p> <p>There is a gift aid reclaim of £11,727 to be received which will repay the loans made to Grith.</p> <p>Shining Cliff Woods and the hostel are Grith Pioneers CIO's assets and are currently held at nil value.</p> <p>New land purchased December 2024 is held at purchase value: £103,205.</p>
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	<p>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.</p>
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	Grith Pioneers CIO has a balance of £18,905 (2024: £42,266) 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This year we received significant donations to enable the</p>
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		CIO to purchase land and increase the footprint of the woods, this is unlikely to be repeated in the near future so income will reduce back to lower levels in the future.
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)	<i>K R Moss</i>	
Full name(s)	Kathleen Moss	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer	
17th May 2025		



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Grith Pioneers

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31/03/2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

1188105

Set out on pages

1-2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2025

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

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

**Independent
examiner's statement**

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

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

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

Signed:

Date:

13/05/25

Name:

Rachael Stevens

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

ICAEW ACA

Address:

Grange Farm, The Street

Old Basing, Hampshire

RG24 7BH



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 01/04/2024	To	Period end date 31/03/2025
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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	310	-	-	310	260
Rental income hostel	4,992	-	-	4,992	4,992
Camping/booking fees	1,458	-	-	1,458	1,388
Wayleave	64	-	-	64	64
Interest	740	-	-	740	698
Donations	290	65,436	-	65,726	126
Loan for land purchase	-	9,695	-	9,695	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	7,854	75,131	-	82,985	7,528
Total receipts	7,854	75,131	-	82,985	7,528
A3 Payments					
Maintenance	422	-	-	422	-
Tree surgery	165	-	-	165	-
Signage	405	-	-	405	-
Insurance	721	-	-	721	641
Subscriptions	87	-	-	87	45
Surveys	200	-	-	200	-
Bank charges	25	-	-	25	53
Crowdfunder charges	-	636	-	636	-
Meeting expenses	480	-	-	480	40
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	2,505	636	-	3,141	779
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Land purchase - Lot E Nether Park Farm auction	-	103,205	-	103,205	-
Sub total	-	103,205	-	103,205	-
Total payments	2,505	103,841	-	106,346	779
Net of receipts/(payments)	5,349	- 28,710	-	- 23,361	6,749
A5 Transfers between funds	- 28,710	28,710	-	-	-
Funds brought forward	42,266	-	-	42,266	35,517
Cash funds this year end	18,905	-	-	18,905	42,266

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	7,341	-	-
	Triodos Deposit	11,564	-	-
	Total cash funds	18,905	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
	Shining Cliff Woods	Unrestricted	-	-
	Shining Cliff Hostel	Unrestricted	-	-
	no monetary value held in accounts		-	-
	Land purchase - Field Lot E Nether Park Farm auction December 2024	Restricted	103,205	103,205
			-	-
			-	-

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

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
<i>K R Moss</i>	Kathleen Moss	17th May 2025