

Kent Men of the Trees CIO - Charity Number 1203852

Trustees' Annual Report for calendar year 2025

Overview

We varied our activities in 2025 compared to earlier years, to include two Winter presentations which were very well received, and both events attracted a good number of both members and guests.

- The challenges of fruit farming – Paul Hamlyn
- The restoration of elms to the Kent landscape – Lyndsay Wayman-Rook

The traditional “Long Trip”, a visit for a week to arboreta and gardens in another county, sadly had to be cancelled as the take-up by members was insufficient. Your Trustees are considering whether to attempt another Long Trip in 2026 or to replace this event with alternatives.

The annual lunch was very well attended – close to 40 covers - and a great success

During this year we adopted a “working name” for the charity – Kent Friends of the Trees – which is registered with the Charity Commission. The Trustees agreed that this was an appropriate step that retained our heritage name but allowed us, by adopting the working name, to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding about our very inclusive membership. The website, and all publications now present our working name as our brand, but refer to the legal name where necessary.

Governance

During the year there were some changes to the Trustee group:

- Elizabeth Cairns stepped down in order to dedicate herself to her beautiful garden. Elizabeth was very supportive and gave wise counsel during the transition of the charity from Trust Fund to the current CIO legal form and no doubt smoothed our path through the process, for which we are most grateful.
- Tony Fincham and Anthony Curl agreed to take on the role as Trustee. Both have prior experience of trusteeship but have otherwise very differing backgrounds – which will bring new perspectives to our discussions.

The Trustees as at 31 December 2025 were:

George Kirby – Chair

Richard Latham

Michael Hamilton

Tony Fincham

Anthony Curl

Financial Position

As is clear from the annual accounts, this year has achieved the result the Trustees have been working towards for some time, to show a small surplus of income over expenses. This is the result of careful financial management by the Trustees supported by our Treasurer, Denise Alchin, who prepares a financial report and forecast for every meeting of the Trustees. Of course, there are very often “exceptional” items in any set of accounts and to a degree these explain our surplus in 2025; however, I am confident that we have the appropriate processes in place to ensure we act in a way that will continue the excellent result shown for 2025.

Income and Expense:

A) Income

Our recurring income flow is generated substantially from annual membership fees (including Gift Aid where appropriate), member and guest attendance fees for other events set up by the charity, including day trips and in the past the Long Trip. The Long Trip was cancelled relatively late after many arrangements had been set up, but an insufficient number of bookings taken; we therefore had to return all payments made in full to those members who had booked to join the trip.

Other recurring income will be the interest on a deposit held with a UK bank.

One-off income during the year was the receipt of grant funding from the Tree Council that substantially supported our gifting of trees to Hythe Green Preservation Society in 2024 – where the total expenses incurred by the charity for these trees were reflected. We also received compensation from our main banker during the year as a result of complaints made by our treasurer in the course of making changes to the banking mandate during the year.

B) Expenditure

The charity has outgoings in respect of every activity we undertake – including day trips, talks and Arbor publication. The main recurring expenditure is incurred ensuring the administration of our charity: financial, membership and events requirements are organised, delivered, recorded and accounted for by our sole employee.

This year, as reflected above, the long trip payments which we had received were returned to the disappointed Long Trip attendees when the trip was cancelled. The publication of Arbor also involves external cost in preparing and printing the final excellent product. The rebranding to our working name also incurred one-off costs

during the year. Other expenses are housekeeping in the main, such as IT costs for supporting our website and insurance for the Trustees

Activities supporting our charitable objectives:

The charitable purposes of the charity are primarily to support tree planting in Kent, but also to foster the knowledge and appreciation of trees more generally. The activities below are delivering on our objectives. The new activity planned for this year (referred to below) should further under line our strong delivery of our charity objectives.

When agreeing to continue our existing activities, or adding new activities to our programme, the Trustees always take into account the charity commission's public benefit guidance.

A) Tree planting

We gifted only 5 trees in total to 3 parish councils in 2025 significantly because we set ourselves a firm budget for tree purchases, given our need to manage our resources carefully.

The Tree of the Year competition, run in 2025 for the first time, was won by the village of Wye and a further tree was gifted as prize. The level of participation in the competition was satisfying, but we hope to grow the number of entrants when we run the competition in 2026.

Additionally, the Trustees agreed to plant a tree in thanks for the time and focus that Paul Smallwood brought to the charity Kent Men of the Trees which grew the membership and shaped the activities over a period of nearly 30 years. The tree, a Whitebeam as kindly suggested by Patricia Smallwood, will be planted in Stanford North where the Smallwood family lived for over 60 years.

In addition, through our connection with Kent Plan Tree, we have enabled members and friends to receive new Elm saplings that are hoped to be resistant to Dutch Elm disease.

B) Educational walks and talks

The addition of talks by experts in their field, set up by the charity and open both to charity members and to the public in general, was an initiative to provide an opportunity to learn about a variety of topics closely related to trees in Kent. Both the "Fruit Farming" and the "Elm" presentations were of exceptional quality as they discussed the theme issues and environmental challenges and benefits.

We visited 5 different locations as a day trip – again primarily offered to members of the charity but open to guests as well; with support from an expert guide on these visits, attendees were able to absorb both enthusiasm and knowledge from our hosts. In every case there were trees to observe and appreciate, whether large or small, rare or common, alive or dead.

C) Arbor magazine

The charity publication, which is issued 3 or 4 times a year, is a well-respected document. This is circulated to members and is also used by Trustees to engage with the public and to attract new members. The publication contains a combination of event reporting as well as semi-technical information on any subject broadly related to trees.

Membership

We are pleased to have a small, but growing, corporate membership, and we try to include these parishes in our activities – so one of the winter presentations is to be held in Loose.

Other personal membership list is static, with some losses due to old age and new members attracted by the activities we offer. We have hopes that membership will increase as we continue to open our activities to guests who may ultimately become members

In addition to the excellent series of Arbor editions edited by Peter Blandon, and our existing website which is regularly updated / refreshed with new activities and reports, the charity now has a presence on social media channels – Facebook primarily - which we hope will be one route to attracting new members.

Looking forward

The Trustees have been in conversation with Led by the Wild CIC to establish a programme “Growing Guardians” which will engage with 3 local schools in Ashford / Folkestone & Hythe to give primary school pupils access to environmental learning and experience, but also and critically to grow trees from seed to be planted out locally at the end of their primary school time. We have applied for funding to allow us to support this project and this will, we believe, significantly raise the profile of the charity.

The Kent Men of the Trees CIO - Charity No 1203852
Receipts and Payments Account
Period from 1st January to 31st December 2025

	2025	2024
Receipts		
Subscriptions	1830	2341
Corp Subscriptions	185	145
Donations	1619	733
Members Annual Tour	14802	18650
Day Trips	1443	131
Members Lunch	1395	805
Natwest Compensation	650	350
Gift Aid Reclaim	1123	0
Grant Funding	858	0
Other	7	76
Deposit a/c interest	705	157
Total Receipts	24617	23,387
Payments		
Trees	408	2336
Day Trip Costs	914	125
Day Trip Refunds	150	0
Annual Tour /Refunds	14802	16967
Admin/Treasurer Fees	4150	4790
Meeting Costs	256	95
Postage	95	227
Travel	18	23
Marketing	403	0
Insurance	179	179
Stationery/Printing	81	248
Website	260	250
Arbor Magazine	881	824
Examiner	150	0
Other Refunds	65	14
Members Lunch	1237	690
Total Payments	24,049	26,768
Net increase / (Decrease) in assets in the period	568	-3,381
Transfer from KMOTT Trust Fund	12	24,440
Accumulated Surplus / (Deficit) brought forward	21,059	0
Accumulated Surplus / (Deficit) carried forward	21,640	21,059
Represented by		
Natwest Bank Current Balance	6,640	5,997
UTB Fixed deposit account	15,000	15,000
Unity Instant access		63
Total Net Assets	21,640	21,059

On behalf of the Trustees of CIO Kent Men of the Trees, we hereby accept, adopt and approve the Annual Accounts

Chairman

Dated

5/3/2026

Trustee

Dated

5/3/26.

Notes to the accounts

- This is the second set of accounts for CIO Kent Men of the Trees. Registration date 5th July 2023.
- Trust bank accounts have been retained to ensure the Charity does not forego any donations and payments made during transition period
- This Receipts and Payments account has been prepared on a cash basis
- Gift Aid is reclaimed where supported by membership declarations. These accounts include reclaims made, and paid, in respect of calendar years 2024 and 2025
- Marketing expenditure relates to the rebranding of the charity during the year
- Postage costs recorded relate only to the purchase of stamps in a period
- Subscriptions were higher than usual in 2024 as they include a Life Membership fee of £350 and historic, overdue subs were pursued and paid, following transistition to CIO
- Donations were significantly higher in 2025 due to one-off donations offsetting the marketing costs arising from the rebranding of the charity
- The Annual tour was cancelled in 2025 and payments made by members to join the tour were refunded. Costs incurred in planning the cancelled tour are included in admin expenses

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Kent Men of the Trees CIO (charity number 1203852).

I report to the trustees on the accounts of the above CIO for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on page 1

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 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
- 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.



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10 March 2026