

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**Charity number: 288749**

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**CONTENTS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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	<b>Page</b>
<b>Trustees' Report</b>	<b>1 to 8</b>
<b>Legal and Administrative Information</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Independent Examiners' Report</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>	<b>13 to 20</b>

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of The Bentley Wood Charitable Trust (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the charity comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102 "Accounting and Reporting by Charities".

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The charity is managed by the trustees who make strategic decisions and are legally responsible for the management of risks faced by the charity. The day to day management of the wood is delegated to the woodland manager. The trustees seek additional advice from statutory bodies which include the Forestry Commission, Natural England and also Bentley Wood's in-house recorders' group of local interested parties. The woodland manager attends all meetings of the trustees and regularly reports and updates the chairman between the quarterly meetings.

#### **Trustees**

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Dr P Woodruffe  
Mr A G Goddard  
Mr J Spencer  
Mr S Brunt  
Mr M C Street  
Mr J Fisher

Trustees are identified and selected by trustees for their knowledge, skills and experience in relevant fields that they can bring to the charity. Specifically these include, forestry, conservation, financial, trust management, governance and local knowledge.

#### **Investment powers**

The Trust is subject to provisions of the Trustee Act 2000.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The Trust was established under a deed dated 31 January 1984.

The Trust's main functions are the maintenance of Bentley Wood SSSI and Upper Frenchmoor Copse on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border close to Salisbury and the investment of Trust monies in Shares, Securities and Personality at the absolute discretion of the trustees.

The Trust's objectives are to enhance, with assistance of grants from the Forestry Commission and Natural England, the woodland owned by the Trust and to provide an environment where wildlife can thrive and people's quality of life can be enhanced.

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Trust's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**Strategic Report**

**Achievements and performance**

**Report from the Chairman of the Bentley Wood Trustees**

The past year, 2024, has been a quietly busy year with a lot accomplished in putting long-held plans into action.

The Barn roof was renovated after giving many years of service. Its replacement and repair were long overdue and marks the first stage in developing plans for the future use of the Barn and its immediate surrounds in pursuit of the Trust's educational ambitions.

The environmental programme of improvements at Forestry Houses and the workshops ... loft insulation and roof renovation, the installation of solar photovoltaics supporting our energy consumption and reducing our carbon footprint, and the installation of battery storage and an electric vehicle charging point, have all been completed.

And more prosaically, we have completed the restoration of the Ben Lane entrance track and re-fenced the roadside boundary along West Dean Lane.

Management of the forest and its important wildlife habitats continues, all part of the cyclic yearly round of forestry activity and nature conservation management. As per the Forest Design and Conservation Plans, we have installed new cattle handling infrastructure in Barnridge to accommodate our future wood pasture expansion ambitions and have removed the Norway Spruce in preparation of the same planned expansion of wood pasture habitat.

We continue to slowly diversify the beech dominated stands in Beechways Copse, using group regeneration (at present using areas created by the demise and removal of groups of diseased ash) replanting these areas with oak, whitebeam, hornbeam, hazel and wild service, a mix reflecting the composition of woods long before their conversion to hazel dominated coppice in earlier centuries and to beech plantations in the 20th.

A similar diversification of Norway Spruce dominated stands in Mapleway Dean Copse has been pursued via group regeneration in windblow areas and replanting with a similar mix of oak, whitebeam, hazel and wild service tree, this time enhanced with disease resistant elms in the valley bottom.

And we have continued with trials of biodegradable tree tubes, (made from sheep's wool reinforced with a shellac varnish derived from cashew nut husks). It will be some years yet before the durability of these tree tubes becomes clear. They will need to last for about 10 years, but they appear to have weathered the first few years well.

The number of deer across our part of the county remains as the single largest threat to the biodiversity and management of the woods; not only Bentley Wood but all the woods surrounding us. We continue to manage the deer, with the aim of reducing their impact driven by the sheer number of fallow deer in the area. Deer are a vital and enjoyable part of the ecology of our native woodlands but their numbers, supported by highly productive surrounding arable land, a complete absence of natural predators and very mild winters, is having a big impact. Two developments in 2023 are worth noting. The drone survey undertaken across Bentley Wood and the surrounding countryside has given us a far better appreciation of the numbers of deer and their distribution. This survey will be repeated again in coming years. But numbers remain excessively high, so a decision has been made to increase the area of woodland to be fenced against deer in 2024. An unfortunate but necessary development sadly, but one we hope will eventually become unnecessary as landowners and others find ways to manage the burgeoning numbers of deer in southern England.



**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**Report from the Chairman of the Bentley Wood Trustees (continued)**

Thanks to the skill and expertise of our forest management team Bentley Wood is regarded as one of the best managed ancient woodlands in the country and as a result we have many requests by foresters and silviculturists to visit the wood guided by David Lambert, our forester and conservation manager. In 2023 these “outreach” visits included parties from the Wessex Silvicultural Group, who visited in May, a party from English Woodlands, a private forestry company looking into the possibilities of continuous cover forestry and nature conservation management in other similar woods across southern England, and from the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust looking at woodland management for butterflies at a Trust organised training workshop. Last year, 2023, also saw the initiation of discussions with the newly appointed CEO of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust over joining up action, planning and the sharing of expertise between Bentley Wood and its staff and WWT staff in the future management of the both the adjacent Blackmoor Copse nature reserve and their recent major acquisition at Great Wood, in the north of the county near Swindon.

As in previous years the future of the timber yard on the edge of Bentley Wood continues to worry us as Trustees. As said in previous reports, the prospect of large numbers of houses brings with it the possibility of more disturbance on the edge of the woods (and of course the nearby Wiltshire Trust Blackmoor Reserve), associated light pollution affecting rare moths and bats, along with possible encroachment from neighbouring gardens and an inevitable increase in people and their pets using the wood. These concerns are shared by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Events unfolded very slowly in 2023, with the site being tidied up and cooperation with the new owners and the Trust allowing for both the debris to be cleared on both sides of the fence and for the repair of some inexplicable vandalism to the boundary fence. The coming year is likely to be the year when a planning application is submitted, determining the future of the site.

Bentley Wood remains, as intended by its founders, a destination for walking and the enjoyment of wildlife. Visitor numbers remained high throughout the year. As in previous years the numbers of instances of out-of-control dogs remains high, along with the disturbance they bring to wildlife and to our essential deer stalking activities. How to manage this increase in dog usage and reduce disturbance has become a keen topic for discussion. The numbers of dogs jumping into the ponds remains a growing concern because of the growing use of external parasite treatments, which, when washed off in our ponds, has devastating consequences for pond life like dragonflies and damselflies. We continue to address some of the unwelcome parking issues at the congested Winterslow entrance. This is not a recognised car park and parking here only hampers and occasionally prevents access by the woodland management team and potentially by the emergency services should their help ever be required. It is these perennial headaches and problems that make up much of the discussion held by the Trustees.

The coming year will see a further unfolding of our now approved Forest Design Plan and the major extension of the lightly grazed wood pasture areas, where so many of the rarer butterflies, moths, plants and other wildlife are to be found. We intend to connect them to each other with much wider rides and open glades connecting areas of woodland. The overall aim remains the creation of far more wildlife habitat across the woodland, connected by open rides and open glades, areas of native woodland rich in oak and other species suited to our warming summers, while retaining a core asset of Douglas timber supporting the costs of the management of the woods while supplying goods and materials that will be in growing demand in the future. These changes are intended to make all aspects of the wood’s wildlife and management more resilient against the evident changes in climate, as the weather becomes more extreme in coming years, with expected droughts in the summer and far wetter winters.

Volunteer activities continue to be important with a lot of conservation activity undertaken due to their hard work and commitment in organising tasks and events. Indeed 2023 saw the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the volunteer group, marked by a meeting one very sunny Saturday in early September, with refreshments, speeches, and a guided tour of both sallows and butterfly rich rides led by the nation’s leading expert of Purple Emperors and their fascinating ecology, Matthew Oates.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**Report from the Chairman of the Bentley Wood Trustees (continued)**

Supporting all this change and activity are our excellent Trustees, also unpaid volunteers offering up their time and expertise, who put in such a lot of work to secure the future of Bentley Wood. We have had no changes to the make-up of the board of Trustees this past year which has contributed significantly to both continuity and ongoing commitment to plans and ambitions. As ever much of what was done in 2022 and 2023 needs to continue into the years ahead to secure these changes and embed them in the woodland, delivering the forestry and environment plans, further work on ponds and recording, managing the visitors and securing our boundaries. But as with last year it remains really important to ensure the work, for Trustees, employees and volunteers alike, remains fun, rewarding and fulfilling and that Bentley Wood continues to sustain its wildlife and its character as a place of quiet and fulfilling enjoyment to all.

Jonathan Spencer  
Chairman, Bentley Wood Trust

**Forestry Report**

I wrote in last year's report about the negative impact of the 2022 drought on the woodland (more on this later) but it turns out there were also unexpected benefits. It is generally accepted that a wet summer following an unusually warm July in the previous year will, in the absence of spring frosts, trigger a heavy mast year in beech woodland. In the UK, given the rarity of warm summers, this only happens every 5 to 15 years. 2023 was one of those years and in autumn the sheer volume of mast audibly crunched underfoot. It was the first time for many years that there was a noticeable 'nut' in the characteristic triangular husk. Much of this seed falls victim to fungal attacks, predation by insects, wood mice, bank voles and birds - notably wood pigeons, of which there were a huge number in the beech stands this winter. Cold weather also takes its toll. Temperatures below minus 6 degrees Celsius are reported to kill any exposed beech seed but some, either trodden into the ground by fallow deer or surviving under a protective blanket of leaf litter and brash, will germinate in the following spring and, with the number of deer gradually reducing, we hope to recruit some of this natural regeneration to nurse the small groups of enhancement planting we have put in over the last few years. Last year's light thinning of the overstorey in Beechwood Copse was timely in this respect and some natural regeneration in response to more light reaching the forest floor will certainly boost our ambition to diversify the structure of the beech stands, if not the diversity.

The heavy mast was not just restricted to beech. Many trees produced a bumper crop of seed last autumn. Wild service trees we planted in 2014 and 2016 flowered and fruited for the first time and the late summer rains swelled the sweet chestnut seed in the husk. Most of this was eaten by fallow deer but in the newly fenced enclosure in Park Copse we pushed some seed into the ground to hide it from squirrels and we look forward to seeing whether any of this germinates in the spring. We adopted a similar approach with acorns that Diana Cotter had collected and carefully sorted to exclude those bored into by weevils but these, oak being more light demanding, we planted in groups beneath carefully chosen gaps in the canopy. It was a year of mixed fortunes for our oak trees. Those growing as a minor component of the canopy in the north of the wood seeded prolifically whereas those in the south of the wood, where oak is dominant on the heavy clay soils, little or no acorn production was evident. In May we hosted a visit of the Wessex Silvicultural Group, and the health and quality of our oak stands were much commented upon. Come June and these same stands were for the third year in succession almost entirely defoliated by larvae of tortrix and winter moths and in late summer any subsequent Lammas growth was smothered by powdery mildew. These oaks simply have not had the opportunity to build the reserves required

Walking along some of the wood's extensive ride network in early summer I was pleased to see that not all but most of the alder buckthorn, hawthorn and goat willow I had seen defoliated following the drought of the previous year were showing signs of recovery. Similarly, there were no significant signs of the previous year's drought in the beech stands as I feared there might be. That is not to say that there will not be an impact - trees are long-lived organisms and can harbour stress induced fungal infections and diseases for many years before they take effect. The 1976 drought has been cited as the cause of much beech 'snap' - the name given to the stem of otherwise healthy-looking trees snapping at height to leave

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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### **Forestry Report (continued)**

just a stem some 15 feet or more high which subsequently dies. Beech snap is caused by a wood decay fungus that follows a previous infection by a fungal pathogen on trees weakened by sustained drought. These tall stumps are actually a useful source of standing dead wood until they collapse and are routinely colonised by woodpeckers whose nest holes are also used by bats and other birds. We leave them together with the fallen tops where we can – there are several in Beechwood Copse that can be seen from the hard tracks.

It has been our policy in recent years to thin out the Norway spruce from the mixed stands in the south of the wood and to heavily thin Norway spruce where it forms a monoculture across the central belt. Occasionally, storms have and will continue to accelerate this policy but marketing the produce has recently been complicated by the closure of the local sawmill. Giddings, as it was known locally (although it was purchased by Binderholz Timber Group and renamed in 2014) had been processing locally grown soft wood since 1942 and was the end point for almost all our spruce logs. Its closure means that produce must now travel as far as Wales to find a market which consequently increases both financial and environmental costs. To make matters worse there are two further problems on the horizon. First, storms are predicted to increase both in number and ferocity because of climate change and the south and particularly the south-east of England are predicted to become too dry to grow Norway spruce. Second, is the arrival of *Ips typographus* - the eight toothed spruce bark beetle. Infestations of this visitor from the continent were first discovered in Kent in 2018 and there have been annual influxes since then. *Ips typographus* is a serious pest of spruce plantations in Europe. It normally feeds and breeds in dead or dying spruce or aged trees exposed to drought but following windblow events the availability of suitable breeding habitat increases to such an extent that a population can attack living trees in numbers able to overwhelm even a healthy tree's natural defences. There is now in place a revised demarcated area encompassing the south-east (as far west as Winchester) within which the Forestry Commission must be notified of harvesting operations in spruce stands to enable, if necessary, mitigating measures to prevent the spread of infected material. All trees in stands where *Ips typographus* is found must be felled whether infected or not. Although we are outside the current demarcated area, we must be mindful of the possibility of it being extended again – in which case we would almost certainly be in it. The general advice is to remove Norway spruce and replant with less susceptible species - something that we intended to do anyway but maybe not quite so urgently.

David Lambert

### **Recorder's Group Report: Recording in the Wood**

The annual Recorders' Group meeting, scheduled for late February 2024, was held to review the previous year and plan the forthcoming season.

A lot of time and effort went into the 2023 season. Examples include the butterfly transect data, breeding bird and nest box recording and the annual fungus foray. The Trustees are aware that there are under-recorded groups, particularly invertebrates, and some work is being done by experts in their field to address this matter. There are also many fungi records from the early years (1980s and '90s) which needed to be updated. We have been fortunate to commission an expert to do this for us over the 2023 -24 seasons.

As you will see in the following articles, we now have records of one species not only new to the wood but also to Britain, several species of wasp that are new to the wood, over fifty new fungi and some very exciting discoveries made during bat surveys.

As the woodland structure has changed so much in the past 40 years, it is important to know about our gains and losses and whether these can be attributed to our management, to climate change, to the impact of so many more visitors or to the general loss of biodiversity in the wider landscape. We are very aware that pollution of the atmosphere and of water by fertilisers, herbicides, insecticides and a multitude of other chemicals from a whole range of different sources, has impacts far from their point of origin and that nature reserves are not immune to these threats. No longer is it enough to manage our wood responsibly, although we certainly need to, but we need to be alert to so many threats from the wider environment, over which we have no direct control.

Pat Woodruffe

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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### **Volunteer Group Activities**

The Volunteers had our famous Bentley Wood Bean Pole Celebration Event on Saturday 14 April. Thanks to all the volunteer helpers, and to local woodland craftsman for their thatching spar and hurdle-making demos. The photo exhibition about the Vols and How We Produce Our Woodland Products was appreciated by many visitors. The draw of refreshments and woodland crafts, and of course the bean poles and pea-sticks themselves, proved irresistible for some 80 people and we took a record-breaking £705, which will go towards tools, equipment, gloves and refreshments for the Vols.

Despite Covid and the vagaries of British weather the Volunteers completed 19 conservation sessions, about 690 person hours, that included removing Lawson Cypress, cutting Birch, maintenance work in and around the Draining Field pond and our favourite – hazel coppicing.

The Volunteers celebrated their 10th anniversary with a special event in the wood in September. There's a piece about this elsewhere in Nature Notes.

In the autumn we started an exciting new long-term project to plant a 270-metre hedge of mixed native trees and shrubs in the Draining Field and fence it to protect it from deer and stock. Native wild flowers will also be grown and planted out along the hedge in future years.

There are currently well over 30 regular, active volunteers and we have welcomed 7 new volunteers this year. Six volunteers received their "10 task" badges in 2023, two volunteers were given "25 task" certificates, and one each got "50 task", "75 task" and "100 task" certificates. Congratulations and a massive thank you to all our wonderful volunteers and thanks to the Trustees and David Lambert for supporting us all!

Sue Walker and Tony Goddard

### **Friends of Bentley Wood Chairman's Report**

I ended last year's report by saying that I hoped you would join with me in welcoming the changes, and new initiatives, that we had agreed with the Trustees. So how have we got on, and what has the reaction been?

We suggested change but not radical change. So, the key events remained: the Spring and Autumn Drive Thru's, the Spring AGM and the Christmas Party. We continued to host the very popular Bean Pole Celebration run by the Volunteers, as well as the Fungus Foray.

We did, though, change the Summer Party, combining it with the Morning of Marvellous Moths and over 50 of you came, making a lot of hard work well worth it. My thanks go to everyone who helped. We also added an evening with the bats where over 30 enjoyed themselves and, as an added bonus, we found glow worms on the way home!

The education initiative that we had also promised, became a reality in June when the 1st Lockerley Brownies and Rainbows came into the Wood to explore, learn and pond dip. Twenty six children from Winterslow Primary School followed in July, as did the Landford Brownies. One comment made afterwards said it all: "Just wanted to say a huge thank you to you and your team. The children had such a lovely time exploring the Wood". Again, thanks to all who helped. We will, I am sure, be continuing with this one. I am very concerned to make the Wood accessible to the young in a safe way and, through access, to educate. Good habits acquired young, tend to stick, and the young (and their parents!) are the future for the Wood.

Looking forward, 2024 is likely to be a year of consolidation as we refine these new initiatives. We also hope that the Trustees will make part of the Barn available to us, particularly because we badly need somewhere to take the local Schools, Brownies and Rainbows on wet days.

Graham Bennett  
Chair of the Friends of Bentley Wood

A full report on the Trust's activities for the year is available to all in the form of 'Bentley Wood Nature Notes 2023 from the secretary.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**Financial Review (including reserves policy)**

The attached financial statements show the current state of the finances which the trustees consider to be sound.

During the year it has been the trustees' objective to achieve the greatest possible revenue from sustainable forestry activities such as thinning and felling and to obtain the maximum grant aid from appropriate sources to achieve the Trust's objectives. The financial management policy for the year is driven by the working cash flow budget produced by the forest manager in consultation with the trustees and the trustees' bookkeeper. This cash flow budget aims to identify income from grants and planned sustainable timber harvesting and the expenditure involved in timber production and conservation works. The trustees aim to achieve a cash flow budget that breaks even. The forest manager, working closely with the bookkeeper, manages the cash flow budget and presents quarterly budget reports, collated by the bookkeeper, to the trustees at quarterly meetings. In addition to quarterly meetings the woodland manager frequently reports and updates the trustees individually throughout the year.

In order to assure sustained and sufficient annual revenue to support the Trust's conservation activities in the long term, the Trustees have adopted a strategy of building and maintaining a strategic reserve. In 2009, the Trustees set a target for this reserve of £1M. This figure was based principally on an estimate of income required to be generated from the reserve to support annual conservation expenditure should Government grants be significantly reduced, a situation considered to be likely in the current climate. An additional element was included to provide cash-flow protection for (a) timber and firewood net income variations in future years, and (b) the possible impact on costs and revenue of epidemic tree diseases, feared to pose an increasing risk. To maintain the reserve's capacity to generate required levels of annual income as inflation reduces its value over time, the reserve target has been inflated by a corresponding amount year by year. An additional aim developed by the Trustees in recent years is to protect the integrity of the habitat in Bentley Wood by ensuring the sympathetic management of a buffer zone around the wood. This may be by cooperation with neighbouring landowners but also possibly by land acquisition. To enable the Trustees to act quickly should appropriate land become available an addition to the strategic reserve target has been made. A further increase to the strategic reserve target has been made to allow for rising costs that are affecting our operations. The Trustees have therefore increased the target from £1.2M to £1.7M. During the year our Investments decreased from £1.537M at 31st March 2023 to £1.465M at 31st March 2024 however our cash balances increased during the year by £147K an overall increase of £75K to our strategic reserve.

The Trustees' policy is to continue to manage its finances so as to achieve budget surpluses when it is reasonably able to, thereby building the strategic reserve to the level required. Taking into account inflation pressures and other risk factors, the level of the reserve will continue to be reviewed from time to time.

**Plans for Future Periods**

Our successful application for a further five years of support under Countryside Stewardship will enable the Trust to continue with the restoration of a significant proportion of Bentley Wood SSSI and Upper Frenchmoor Copse. This work will involve extending our existing wood pasture, and pushing back ride edges to create glades that will increase habitat for those rare species that make Bentley Wood such a special place. The Trust also aims, with the help of the Volunteer group, to increase the area of managed hazel coppice which will further benefit wildlife and there are also plans to create more rain fed wildlife ponds. Also, with the help of the volunteers and local school children, canopy gaps arising from storm damage will be replanted with native broadleaves and shrubs to diversify both the species mix and age structure of the woodland.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES**


The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

DocuSigned by:  
  
 A7D2894B6B8A4B0...  
**Mr A G Goddard**  
 Trustee

Date: 10 January 2025

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST  
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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<b>Charity Number</b>	288749
<b>Registered Office</b>	55 Elmwood Avenue Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1DL
<b>Trustees</b>	Dr P Woodruffe Mr A G Goddard Mr J Spencer Mr S Brunt Mr M C Street Mr J Fisher
<b>Key management</b>	David Lambert
<b>Bankers</b>	HSBC Bank plc 27 High Street Ringwood Hants BH24 1BE
<b>Investment managers</b>	Sanlam Wealth Planning UK Ltd Monument Place 24 Monument Street London EC3R 8AJ
<b>Independent examiner</b>	Nick Jones FCCA Fawcetts LLP Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors Windover House St. Ann Street Salisbury SP1 2DR

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**

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I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

**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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.


**Independent examiner's statement**

I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Nicholas Jones FCCA  
Chartered Accountants  
Fawcetts LLP  
Windover House  
St. Ann Street  
Salisbury  
SP1 2DR

Date: 10 January 2025.....



**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

		Funds			2024	2023
	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Total £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:</b>						
Donations and legacies		4,678	-	-	4,678	645
Charitable activities	2	258,169	-	-	258,169	175,774
Investments	3	31,856	-	-	31,856	24,463
<b>Total income and endowments</b>		<b>294,703</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>294,703</b>	<b>200,882</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>						
Investments - management fees		-	-	3,475	3,475	5,563
Charitable activities	4	215,120	-	16,064	231,184	164,825
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>215,120</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19,539</b>	<b>234,659</b>	<b>170,388</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	13	-	-	31,207	31,207	(103,004)
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		<b>79,583</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,668</b>	<b>91,251</b>	<b>(72,510)</b>
Transfers between funds	13	100,002	-	(100,002)	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>179,585</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(88,334)</b>	<b>91,251</b>	<b>(72,510)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:</b>						
Total funds brought forward		90,082	-	3,217,482	3,307,564	3,380,074
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>269,667</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,129,148</b>	<b>3,398,815</b>	<b>3,307,564</b>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above.


The notes form part of these financial statements

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**BALANCE SHEET**

**AS AT 31 MARCH 2023**

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible fixed assets	8	1,748,789	1,723,954
Investments	9	<u>1,465,342</u>	<u>1,537,612</u>
		<u>3,214,131</u>	<u>3,261,566</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Stocks		1,692	1,116
Debtors	10	5,037	4,400
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>194,255</u>	<u>47,194</u>
		200,984	52,710
<b>CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR</b>	11	<u>16,300</u>	<u>6,712</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		184,684	45,998
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u><u>3,398,815</u></u>	<u><u>3,307,564</u></u>
<b>CHARITY FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted funds	13	269,667	90,082
Restricted funds	13	-	-
Endowment funds	13	3,129,148	3,217,482
<b>TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS</b>	12	<u><u>3,398,815</u></u>	<u><u>3,307,564</u></u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 10 January 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

DocuSigned by:  
  
 A7D2894B6B8A4B0...  
**Mr A G Goddard**  
 Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**1.1 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with the exception of listed investments which are included on a market value basis, and in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards in the United Kingdom, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS102 "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" and the Charities Act 2011.

**1.2 INCOME**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Dividends on listed investments are recognised when the underlying security is quoted as ex-dividend.

Revenue in respect of timber and venison sales is recognised at the date of delivery to the customer.

**1.3 EXPENDITURE**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure includes attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.

**1.4 ALLOCATION AND APPORTIONMENT OF COSTS**

All costs are allocated between expenditure categories in the Statement of Financial Activities on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly; others are apportioned on an appropriate basis.

**1.5 FUND ACCOUNTING**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund where allowable. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds represent those assets which must be held permanently by the charity. Income arising on the endowment funds can be used in accordance with the objects of the charity and is included as unrestricted income. Any capital gains or losses on the investments form part of the fund. Investment management charges and legal advice relating to the fund are charged against the fund.

**1.6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION**

All fixed assets are initially recorded at cost.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

Land and woodlands	not depreciated
Land and woodlands - infrastructure	5% straight line basis
Buildings	10% straight line basis
Motor vehicles	25% straight line basis
Computers and equipment	25% straight line basis

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**

**1.7 INVESTMENTS**

Listed investments held in a portfolio are recognised initially at fair value which is normally the transaction price excluding transaction cost. Subsequently, they are measured at fair value with changes recognised in net gains/(losses) on investments in the SoFA if the shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably.

Investment property is shown at most recent valuation. Any aggregate surplus or deficit arising from changes in fair value is recognised in the SoFA.

**1.8 STOCKS**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

**1.9 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Debtors are measured at their recoverable amount. Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

**1.10 TAXATION**

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**2. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Forestry income	75,099	-	-	75,099	92,168
Venison sales	1,190	-	-	1,190	1,306
Grants received	171,680	-	-	171,680	72,100
Rents received	10,200	-	-	10,200	10,200
	<u>258,169</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>258,169</u>	<u>175,774</u>

**3. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS**

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Dividends from equities	31,794	-	-	31,794	24,451
Bank interest	62	-	-	62	12
	<u>31,856</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,856</u>	<u>24,463</u>

**4. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Wages (note 5)	59,999	-	-	59,999	52,522
Contract forestry work	33,221	-	-	33,221	10,933
Conservation work	21,029	-	-	21,029	15,441
Planting	4,178	-	-	4,178	6,174
Road maintenance	16,860	-	-	16,860	3,263
Repairs	28,860	-	-	28,860	21,701
Rental expense	14,250	-	-	14,250	4,342
Depreciation	17,440	-	16,064	33,504	26,473
(Profit)/loss on disposal of asset	551	-	-	551	-
Subscriptions & membership fees	-	-	-	-	-
Support costs	10,999	-	-	10,999	10,065
Travel expenses	-	-	-	-	1,089
Miscellaneous expenses	4,016	-	-	4,016	7,987
Trustees' and volunteer expenses	1,086	-	-	1,086	2,281
Accountancy fees	2,500	-	-	2,500	2,400
Bank charges	131	-	-	131	154
	<u>215,120</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,064</u>	<u>231,184</u>	<u>164,825</u>

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**5. STAFF COSTS AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Charitable Activities:</b>		
Salaries and wages	53,991	49,082
Employers' National Insurance costs	1,124	810
	<u>55,115</u>	<u>49,892</u>
Pension contributions	4,884	2,630
	<u>59,999</u>	<u>52,522</u>

The above also represents the key management personnel remuneration.

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>No.</b>
Management	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

There were no employees who earned in excess of £60,000 per annum or more (including taxable benefits) during the year (2023: £nil).

**6. GOVERNANCE COSTS**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trustee remuneration	496	464
Independent examiner's remuneration	2,500	2,400
	<u>2,996</u>	<u>2,864</u>

**7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trustees' expenses reimbursed (delivery costs/travel)	<u>496</u>	<u>464</u>
Number of trustees receiving expenses	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

With the exception of the above, none of the trustees received any remuneration in respect of their duties as trustees during the year (2023: £nil).

There were no other related party transactions during the year.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

	Land & woodlands £	Buildings £	Motor vehicles £	Computers & equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 April 2023	1,673,765	177,922	13,316	66,603	1,931,606
Additions	-	39,390	-	22,000	61,390
Disposals	-	-	-	(10,849)	(10,849)
At 31 March 2024	1,673,765	217,312	13,316	77,754	1,982,147
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2023	49,513	97,922	13,130	47,087	207,652
Charge for the year	3,670	20,172	46	9,616	33,504
On disposals	-	-	-	(7,798)	(7,798)
At 31 March 2024	53,183	118,094	13,176	48,905	233,358
<b>Net Book Value</b>					
At 31 March 2024	1,620,582	99,218	140	28,849	1,748,789
At 31 March 2023	1,624,252	80,000	186	19,516	1,723,954

**9. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS**

	Investment portfolio £	Investment property £	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Movement in market/fair value:</b>				
Market/fair value at 1 April	1,090,674	377,613	1,468,287	1,480,647
Acquisitions at cost	423,933	-	423,933	252,650
Disposal proceeds	(491,670)	-	(491,670)	(162,006)
Realised gains/(losses) on disposals	(14,961)	-	(14,961)	(8,964)
Unrealised gains/(losses) on revaluation	46,168	-	46,168	(94,040)
Market/fair value at 31 March	1,054,144	377,613	1,431,757	1,468,287
Cash held as part of portfolio	33,585	-	33,585	69,325
Total investments	1,087,729	377,613	1,465,342	1,537,612
Historical cost	1,012,758	377,613	1,390,371	1,527,790

**Analysis of investments:**

	Funds		2024	2023
	Unrestricted £	Endowment £	Total £	Total £
Listed investments: UK quoted shares	-	1,054,144	1,054,144	1,090,674
UK cash held as part of portfolio	-	33,585	33,585	69,325
UK investment property	-	377,613	377,613	377,613
	-	1,465,342	1,465,342	1,537,612

In the opinion of the trustees the market value of the investment property remains unchanged as at 31 March 2024.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

<b>10. DEBTORS</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trade debtors	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	5,037	3,607
VAT	-	793
	<u>5,037</u>	<u>4,400</u>

<b>11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trade creditors	10,089	4,058
Accruals and deferred income	3,752	2,578
VAT	1,417	-
Other creditors	1,042	76
	<u>16,300</u>	<u>6,712</u>

<b>12. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	<b>Fixed assets</b>	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Unrestricted general funds	64,787	-	184,684	249,471
Unrestricted designated funds	20,197	-	-	20,197
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Endowment funds	1,663,805	1,465,342	-	3,129,147
	<u>1,748,789</u>	<u>1,465,342</u>	<u>184,684</u>	<u>3,398,815</u>
<b>Net Assets at the end of the year</b>				

Comparative balances for the year ended 31 March 2023:

	<b>Fixed assets</b>	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Unrestricted general funds	20,216	-	46,000	66,216
Unrestricted designated funds	23,867	-	-	23,867
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Endowment funds	1,679,869	1,537,612	-	3,217,481
	<u>1,723,952</u>	<u>1,537,612</u>	<u>46,000</u>	<u>3,307,564</u>
<b>Net Assets at the end of the year</b>				



**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**13. FUNDS**

	Balance at 01/04/2023 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Gains/ (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance at 31/03/2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
General fund	62,545	294,703	(211,450)	-	100,002	245,800
Designated fund	27,537	-	(3,670)	-	-	23,867
	<u>90,082</u>	<u>294,703</u>	<u>(215,120)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>100,002</u>	<u>269,667</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Endowment funds</b>						
Expendable endowment	3,217,482	-	(19,539)	31,207	(100,002)	3,129,148
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>3,307,564</u>	<u>294,703</u>	<u>(234,659)</u>	<u>31,207</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,398,815</u>

Comparative balances for the year ended 31 March 2023:

	Balance at 01/04/2022 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Gains/ (losses) £	Transfers £	Balance at 31/03/2023 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
General fund	107,629	200,882	(148,761)	-	(97,205)	62,545
Designated fund	27,537	-	-	-	-	27,537
	<u>135,166</u>	<u>200,882</u>	<u>(148,761)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(97,205)</u>	<u>90,082</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Endowment funds</b>						
Expendable endowment	3,244,908	-	(21,627)	(103,004)	97,205	3,217,482
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>3,380,074</u>	<u>200,882</u>	<u>(170,388)</u>	<u>(103,004)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,307,564</u>

General fund: This represents funds which have been accumulated for the general purposes of the charity.

Designated fund: This has been created in respect of fixed assets which were grant funded. The annual depreciation of the assets is charged against this fund.

Restricted fund: No restricted fund was received in the year.

Endowment fund: The expendable endowment represents the capital of the Trust established by the Trust Deed dated 31 January 1984 plus further funds held in the investment portfolio. Income on the endowment investments is treated as unrestricted income.

**THE BENTLEY WOOD CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**14. COMPARATIVE BALANCES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**

	<b>Funds</b>			<b>2023</b>
	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Endowment</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:</b>				
Donations and legacies	645	-	-	645
Charitable activities	175,774	-	-	175,774
Investments	24,463	-	-	24,463
<b>Total income</b>	<b>200,882</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>200,882</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>				
Investments - management	-	-	5,563	5,563
Charitable activities	148,761	-	16,064	164,825
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>148,761</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,627</b>	<b>170,388</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	(103,004)	(103,004)
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>52,121</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(124,631)</b>	<b>(72,510)</b>
Transfers between funds	(97,204)	-	97,204	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	<b>(45,083)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(27,427)</b>	<b>(72,510)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:</b>				
Total funds brought forward	135,166	-	3,244,908	3,380,074
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>90,083</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,217,481</b>	<b>3,307,564</b>