



The Word Forest Organisation

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

THIS IS THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR  
THE WORD FOREST ORGANISATION, A CHARITY REGISTERED IN THE  
UNITED KINGDOM BY THE CHARITY COMMISSION WITH NO 1172497







# Registered Address & Contact Details

Unit 1,  
St. Michaels Business Centre  
Church Street  
Lyme Regis  
Dorset  
DT7 3DB  
Tel: 01297 533 111  
Email: [team@wordforest.org](mailto:team@wordforest.org)  
Website: <https://www.wordforest.org/>





## Trustees

- Mr Simon West (Chair)
- Ms Rikey Austin
- Mr Ru Hartwell
- Mrs Helen Roberts
- Mrs Izzy Robertson

## Managing Director

- Mr Simon West

## Chief Executive Officer

- Mrs Tracey West

---

# Our Constitutional Structure

The Word Forest Organisation was incorporated as a CIO on 7th April 2017.

Our constitution follows the model for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as set out by the Charity Commission for England & Wales and was adopted on 7th April 2017.



# Charitable Objects and Public Benefit

Our charitable objects are:

To promote sustainable development\* for the benefit of the public in Kenya by:

- (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
- (b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

\*Sustainable development means  
“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 in planning our activities.

The positive social impact of our work is considered before we direct the BGU and outcomes are directly monitored. This enables the Trustees to be confident that the charity has, through its range of activities, achieved significant public benefit for the community in Kenya.







## PLANTING TREES

Our core activity of planting trees continued with over 30,000 new trees planted during the year.

## BUILDING CLASSROOMS

We commissioned the construction of four complete classrooms including 30 desks each and one library cupboard per school.

# Activites

## GROWTH OF MOTHERS OF THE FOREST

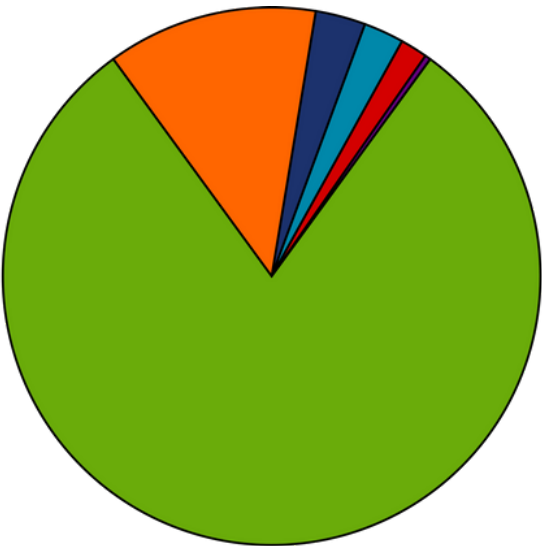
We continued the support for the forty Mothers of the Forest and during our monitoring and evaluation visit in February we recruited Michael Jefwa, a local secondary school teacher, to give two hours of lessons, twice a month to the Mothers.

# Financial Summary

## INCOME

Our first year income of £22,147.62 was a great start for our new charity and we went into our second year with hopes to exceed that income amount.

We set a target to raise £30,000, building on our membership and hoping to gain grant or major donor income. This proved far harder than we had imagined, but due to some incredibly generous one-off donations totalling £43,750, we way exceeded that target, and ended the year with a combined total income of £85,323.38. Of this, £6,000 was raised specifically for our monitoring and evaluation visit to Kenya in February.

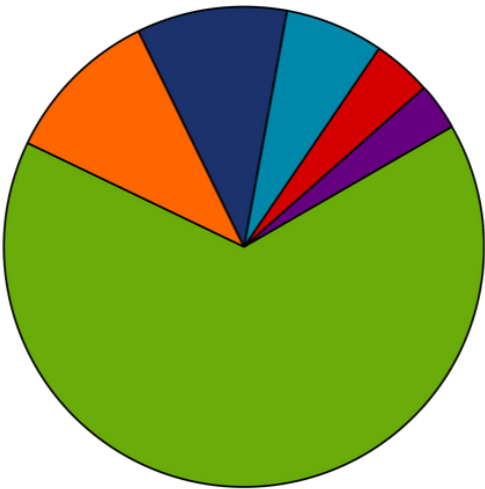


Miscellaneous	£300.00	0.4%
Sales	£1,393.70	1.6%
Membership	£2,063.75	2.4%
Events	£2,568.94	3.0%
Gift Aid	£10,801.79	12.7%
Donations	£68,195.20	79.9%
Total	£85,323.38	100.0%

## OUTGOINGS

Our total outgoings of £79,044.89 include £5,250 for making our documentary film #TreesAreTheKey, which we are confident will raise far more than this amount in the coming year. In August we started paying our CEO a minimal salary - £10 per hour as previously agreed by the Trustees, but only for 100 hours per month. This is far less than the actual hours she worked, estimated to be over 170 hours per month.

We ended the year with a balance of £10,932.78 and an average monthly income of £3,464.45 (excluding the one-off donations)



Other	£2,513.75	3.2%
Office	£3,139.30	4.0%
Events	£5,250.00	6.6%
Personnel	£8,000.00	10.1%
Kenya Trip 2019	£8,407.21	10.6%
Sent to Kenya	£51,734.63	65.4%
Total	£79,044.89	100.0%





# Financial Summary

## **INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTS EXAMINATION**

Our accounts were independently examined by Maria Holland of 47, Summerhill Road, Lyme Regis DT7 3DT, who reported: "The record keeping and accounting practices of The Word Forest Organisation are accurate and complete. I am happy to state that they give a true and fair view of the charity's financial transactions."







# Trustees Statement

## BY SIMON WEST, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees continue to support and advise the charity and to oversee its operations. Every major decision has been taken in full consultation with the Trustees and they take a very active role in determining the best course of action for the charity.

As Chair of Trustees I have tried to ensure that we employ best practices in all of our work. We registered with the Fundraising Regulator and committed to follow the Code of Fundraising Practice and the Fundraising Promise.

We also improved our understanding and implementation of data protection measures, ensuring that all financial transactions are undertaken by trusted third parties (The Co-operative Bank, PayPal and iZettle) and that we never receive (and hence cannot store) any sensitive financial information.







# CEO Report 2018/19



Our second year as a registered charity has been somewhat of a whirlwind.

I must confess, our net results both financially, and in positive measured impact in the communities we're working with, have exceeded all of our expectations.

We continue to build on the good foundations laid in our first year, when we cemented our working relationship with the Boré Green Umbrella (BGU) by finally meeting the people who have been planting trees and building classrooms with us, during our inaugural annual Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) visit to Kenya.

The charity founders - myself and Simon West - have been planting in this region since 2012 as philanthropists, but 2018 saw our first visit to Kenya, enabled via ring-fenced funds from one of our major donors.

The BGU committee reported through their Chair, Theophrastus Kitunga, that they are keen to continue strengthening the connection between our two countries and to increase knowledge in Boré about the impact trees have on local and global environments, via education

The BGU is a formalised cooperative of around 400 tree planters and builders (around 60% men 40% women) who have a wide variety of skills: thatchers, stonemasons, carpenters, tree planters, nursery workers etc. We've always had frequent updates from many of them via emails and short videos on WhatsApp, but actually visiting the site in February 2018, made a world of difference to Simon and I. It closed the gap on the 5,000 miles that sit between us and it brought more clarity on what this hard working community needs to lift themselves out of poverty.

During our second year as a charity, we were delighted to receive ring-fenced funds again for our second M&E visit. Our small team were in the bush for the whole of February 2019 - just before the long rains were due to kick in - and they were joined by a few self-funded volunteers, who were there for a week. The volunteers worked every day on a variety of tasks including helping the Mothers learn new crafting skills.





# CEO Report 2018/19



Here's a summary of some of our activities during that visit:

## #TreesAreTheKey

We know one of our greatest challenges is telling our story in the most concise, enlightening and positive way. Our dream of commissioning a proper documentary was realised with ring-fenced funds from a wonderful supporter. This allowed us to commission acclaimed filmmaker, Tim Tyson Short.

Tim has been making films for over 30 years. He has produced content on current affairs, for news outlets, for drama and campaign videos, for natural history programmes and more. He has also worked extensively throughout Africa and specifically in Kenya and around Coast Province.

He accompanied us during our M&E visit and over the course of a very intense week, he captured phenomenal footage about many of the elements that make up Word Forest's holistic mission.



**The Future:** #TreesAreTheKey will be a 40 minute documentary with its own website, [TreesAreTheKey.com](https://TreesAreTheKey.com). It has a multi-faceted story to tell about the holistic approach The Word Forest Organisation is taking to cleaning the air that we breathe all over the world through tree planting.

We're planning to put the film out on general release towards the end of 2019. We're hoping that with a voice over kindly recorded by Kate Winslet, it'll help us deliver the message to a wide audience.

Planting trees anywhere in the world is a marvellous idea, but planting them in the tropics is an absolute win-win, both for the communities taking care of the forest and for the planet too. Visit [TreesAreTheKey.com](https://TreesAreTheKey.com) to watch the story unfold.





# CEO Report 2018/19



## Clear the Air: reforest Kenya 2019

In February 2019, with partial funding from the Welsh government, we hosted our second international tree conference, 'Clear the Air: reforest Kenya'. Last year, we held it at the headquarters of The Green Belt Movement in Nairobi. This year, we held it at the Boré Community Forest Centre, a project we've been delighted to contribute towards the construction of, with a recompense of trees being planted to the value of our donation.

The venue is situated on the edge of a breathtaking sandstone canyon known as the 'Nyari' which roughly translates to 'the place broken by itself'. If you look up the nearby Hell's Kitchen in Marafa, you'll see it's a fairly popular tourist spot.

The Forest Centre is essentially an accommodation centre which offers outdoor covered space for meetings and education too - in fact, we use it for the fortnightly meetings of the Mothers of the Forest.

Over 4 days, 19 delegates (8 of whom were women) came together to talk trees. They comprised our UK team of 4 plus tree planting champions from across Kenya and from within our Boré planting projects. We also had delegates from Uganda and Wales too.

They represented various environmental, nature and wildlife organisations, including the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, a charitable, non-profit formed in 1968, the first conservation education programme of its kind on the continent of Africa. We welcomed the Mbale coordinator from the Size of Wales' Ten Million Trees project. We had a founder of the Peace and Sustainability Centre on Rusinga Island near Lake Victoria in the far west of Kenya and we had a National Geographic Explorer too.

The purpose of the 4 day conference was to explore many of the common problems that tree planters in the tropics face day in day out and collectively to come up with ways to reduce, or perhaps even eradicate them.

Key topics included:

- Indoor and outdoor (ambient) air pollution caused an estimated 7 million deaths globally in 2016, according to the World Health Organisation. What are the most eco-friendly ways of cooking?
- Discuss the common ways to earn a living in financially challenged rural communities that frequently have to cope with harsh droughts and explore ideas for sustainable alternatives.
- Charcoal burning: one of the largest informal businesses in Africa. It's the go-to fuel for many of the urban poor who use it for cooking and heat. What are the most effective ways to reform people who illegally make this coveted commodity?
- What needs to happen to encourage traditional cultures to adopt new ideas and what are the biggest challenges

**The Future:** we are making plans to host our third international reforestation conference, Clear the Air: reforest Kenya 2020. Potential sites include an eco-centre north of Nairobi, or possibly the Aberdares Forest.





# CEO Report 2018/19



## Mothers of the Forest: year 2

We gather data regularly from the Mothers via Google Form Questionnaires, ably facilitated by Eva Jefa and Esther Kombe. The washable sanitary pad project that we set up in year one has now equipped the 40 Mothers with enough pads for them and their immediate female members of the family, to cope with their periods.

The funding we acquired to buy a hand-operated sewing machine and to employ a local seamstress to teach the Mothers how to make pads, was gratefully received. Our Ethics Trustee, Rikey Austin's How To Make Pads video, was diligently translated and subtitled by Simon and Eva. It was uploaded to our YouTube account and Eva downloaded it onto the Word Forest laptop, so the Mothers didn't have to use up their precious data allowance when they needed a refresher.

The video enabled the women to come together and learn more about the crafting process of making the pads; the skills were great to learn and the simple act of working together on the project as a team was uplifting too. Do bear in mind, the Mothers have never had an opportunity to make anything like this before. In fact, 25 of the 40 had never even attended school, so the very act of simply making the pads, was empowering and it proved to be a huge boost to their confidence too.

This year, we learned that the Mothers desperately needed more underwear to facilitate the use of the pads. One of our stalwart supporters, Karen Forrester Jones, championed a campaign to get women to donate unworn or good quality underwear. On our second M&E visit, we took over 850 pairs of knickers and around 300 bras, many of which were brand new. The impact was enormous, more women and young girls now have the ability to wear pads and this has changed their lives dramatically.







# CEO Report 2018/19



The results of our positive impact survey of the Mothers were powerful. When asked how the pads had made a difference to their lives, responses include:

- Made me well
- You can use again and again
- I've saved money since using the washable pads
- I am a widow and the washable pads have helped me a lot as I don't need to worry about buying pads for my last born daughter every month
- My grandchildren can use the money they would have used to buy pads for other things like soap
- I don't need to ask money from my husband for pads and that money can be used for something else in the house
- I haven't bought pads for my daughter since I gave her those pads in 2018 and she made more for herself

**The Future:** During our discussions with the Mothers, we identified a hunger for more knowledge about permaculture to increase understanding of agroforestry. This is a land use management system where trees are grown around, or among crops, protecting them from the elements, increasing biodiversity, reducing erosion and ultimately improving crop yields. We were very happy to verbally commit to sending Eva and Esther on a certificated permaculture course, next year.



# CEO Report 2018/19



Florence Furaha and Eva Jefa: Eva took the reins from Florence as facilitator of the Mothers of the Forest, when Florence departed for pastures new, studying at the University of Nairobi. Florence did a remarkable job of bringing the Mothers together once a month at the Boré Community Forest Centre.

Florence coordinated their discussions, sharing best practice for looking after the forest and ensured the women had a nutritious meal, prepared by Edward Mwanyule. Our trustees and team would like their gratitude noted for the wonderful job she did strengthening the foundations of the women's empowerment group.

Eva - a mother and grandmother herself - comes, from the nearby village of Garashi. She increased the numbers of Mothers attending meetings from 20 to 40 and through demand from the Mothers, ramped up the meetings to twice a month, which is still held at the Forest Centre.

Eva's belief in the abilities that lie within all the women, is evident and she is on a mission to help them learn more about things that interest them, at their own speed.

A survey of 20 Mothers showed:

- 95% feel more connected to their neighbours and community
- 90% understand more about the need to plant trees, not cut them down
- 85% have inspiration to make or do things you haven't done before
- 85% have more self confidence in their own abilities
- 75% would like to take more lessons
- 60% used to make charcoal, but now don't do it at all
- 35% say their feelings of depressions have lifted
- 30% have been able to make a small business because of the money from table banking

Under Florence and then Eva's caring wings, the Mothers report they have improved their knowledge of the following:

- 100% healthcare for themselves and others
- 95% growing vegetables
- 95% planting trees
- 90% growing saplings
- 90% collecting and storing seeds ready for replanting
- 85% reading and counting
- 85% different types of trees and what they need to grow well
- 85% taking cuttings and propagation







# CEO Report 2018/19



At the close of our second year, the 40 Mothers were starting to embark upon an amazing journey of learning with Eva and local primary school headmaster, Michael Jefwa: learning how to read and write in Kiswahili and English (primary school children in Kenya are taught primarily in English) and to do arithmetic.

The benefits of this scale of adult learning are easy to see, however, let's just single out mathematics for a moment. It's all very well planting trees on your shamba (homestead) and benefitting from a wonderful yield of say mangoes or paw paw, but if you are unable to take the excess commodities to market because you cannot count out a money exchange, it makes lifting yourself out of a challenging financial position, even more difficult.

From February 2019, Michael began coming to the twice monthly meetings to do an hour of literacy lessons and an hour of maths. The vast majority of the Mothers never had any formal education before, a handful went to primary school and a smaller handful still received some secondary education. Michael's very first lesson was captured in our documentary, #TreesAreTheKey .

The Future: With Eva's guidance, the Mothers continue to make remarkable progress with their adult learning. It's a position they never dreamed they'd find themselves in and their thirst for knowledge is unquenched. We are planning to send Eva and Esther Kombe (one of the slightly more accomplished Mothers) on permaculture courses, so they can bring the knowledge back and teach the rest of the group.

Find more about the Mothers in our updates at [WordForest.org/news](https://wordforest.org/news).





# CEO Report 2018/19



## Classrooms: an update

We commissioned the building of several large stone built classrooms over the past year and we received countless images and videos detailing the handover days. These take place when the head, teachers and children take official ownership of the building and integrate it into their school. It's a huge affair that involves the parents and people from the local community and frequently takes up most of a day to complete.

Remarkably, just before the class is handed over, parents and locals are invited in the classroom to walk around it to inspect it and make sure everything has been done to a good standard. Once they approve it, the ceremony is over and the celebrations begin.

Our small team and the volunteer crew were delighted to attend the official handing over of a new classroom at Amkeni Primary along with hundreds of attendees from the local community. We were absolutely honoured to be asked to unlock the padlock and declare the classroom open for learning.

We spent time assessing which of the other schools in the Boré area needed the support of a solid stone classroom. We endeavoured to gather all the data we required to produce a prioritised list.

**The Future:** In April 2018, when the long rains came a month early, displacing 20,000 people from this region, Nuru School at Mikuyuni near the bank of the Galana Sabaki River, was utterly decimated. Nuru's 600+ pupils needed a new venue for learning, urgently. Almost overnight, nearby Kaya Primary received an influx of over 350 students, taking them from 500 to 850.

Kaya had a few stone classrooms and a few mud hut ones too, but only one latrine, the pit of which was full to bursting. The resulting problems that came with that were massively increased cases of ringworm, which often find their way into a body through bare feet. The majority of the children at Kaya have no shoes and illness was rife. Kaya earned its place on the top of the list.

Our findings were presented to our Trustees upon our return and along with consultation with the BCU which we always do (we never tell them what we're going to do, we ask them what they'd like us to help with), we made a plan for the next few schools.







# CEO Report 2018/19



## Our First Twinning

Took place between two primary schools during our M&E visit: the Gracious Children's Centre in Boré and the KleinKinder Montessori School in North Somerset. Both were presented with certificates reflecting the collaboration.

The respective Heads, Michael Jefa and Anne-Louise Shiner, are truly dedicated to raising awareness of the planetary value of trees both in the schools and the wider community. Beyond the twinning, they've worked together on an activity per term that shares environmental news, stories, poems, drawings and other creative projects. They also keep both of their schools updated through regular communication via Facebook..

In the coming year, KleinKinder are planning to hold a dedicated fundraiser centred around carrying water, a task that the youngsters in Kenya do as a matter of course.

**The Future:** to target twinning the three primary schools near our Head Office in Lyme Regis and to forge connections with them to Kundeni, Kadunguni and Kakuhani Primary Schools, moving further afield as our reach in Kenya, widens.







# CEO Report 2018/19

## Helping the Brothers of the Forest Too

One devastatingly sobering fact about Coast Province is that child prostitution is sadly rife. When your maize crops fail year on year because of drought or infestation and there's no money to put food on the table, there are two all too common backstops: making illegal charcoal and child prostitution.

We've talked extensively about the incredibly hard working women of Kenya and how the empowerment group we founded is helping them in a variety of ways. During our M&E visit, we also investigated what support systems are in place for the men - the answer: very little. It'll come as no surprise to hear there are countless ways for young men in Kenya to slip through the cracks of society and to fall into bad habits, selling drugs, making and distributing illegal alcohol, even organising prostitution, but there is a thing that brings them together for a good reason - football!

It's loved the world over and we were surprised to see how Kenyan men particularly follow the Premier League here in the UK. They support all the familiar named teams here and can reel off the names of the players.





# CEO Report 2018/19

Football provides a reason to come together to enjoy some physical activity, to emulate your favourite players, to talk about the recent games and scores - it is very much loved by young women too, but we've seen no evidence of female teams, however, the BCU do have a team.

Twenty young men meet, mostly on Saturdays on a dustbowl of a field with weeds and thorns on the ground. They had no apparel that easily identified which side they were on and it was more about having a kick about than keeping to a structured game.

During our M&E visit, we bought two strips and had them printed with Boré Green Umbrella on the front and The Word Forest Organisation on the back. Along with our volunteers, we attended their first ever match with proper kit and they were truly united in joy and appreciation.

We stood on the sidelines and filmed some of the game, astonished at how fast they were able to belt up and down the pitch.



As an enormously grateful thank you, the players planted a minimum of 10 trees each on their shambas and on the day our team departed for Malindi to fly home, they turned up at the Forest Centre on motorbikes, they changed into their strip and gave us a cavalcade for about 10 miles, by which time, their clean white shirts were a very recognisable shade of Kenyan red.

Footnote: On return from our M&E visit, Chair of Trustees, Simon approached Dale Vince, founder of sustainable energy company Ecotricity and owner of Forest Green Rovers and kindly requested a small grant to buy footwear for the team, which he granted and more trees were planted by way of thanks.

**The Future:** The elders in the team, Rodgers, Dulson and Michael, frequently give us updates from the team, expressing their gratitude for the kit and saying how it's helping keep the youngsters 'on track'. This is definitely a project we'd like to roll out in other areas. It will give gender balance for the investment we're putting into women's empowerment. All sides need support.



# And Finally...

With support from our team and a willingness to be brave and explore uncharted territory, we've managed to raise awareness of Word Forest in ways we could only dream of.

We've also set some ambitious targets for the future and they centre around community engagement in the UK and Kenya. The greatest challenge for all humans is to truly understand the planetary value of trees and to act upon it.

#TreesAreTheKey to so many of the world's problems and our job is to drive that message home with enthusiasm and excitement. I wish to close by giving my heartfelt thanks to every single volunteer and trustee that's helped us on our journey. We are so incredibly grateful for your dedication, positivity and commitment.

**Let's carry on changing the world together.**



Tracey West FRSA  
CEO and Fundraiser

