



RFS

ROYAL FORESTRY SOCIETY



The Royal Forestry Society

# Annual Review 2023



# A Letter from the President

The concerns and observations that were raised in last year's review, namely; economic uncertainty; decreased sales of UK timber; and decline in timber prices are all still relevant. Equally, a continued, sector-wide skills and capacity shortage is an ongoing challenge for the current and future forestry workforce.

Despite the above, the forestry sector is working hard to try and meet the rapidly expanding demand for tree planting, sustainable wood products and biodiversity gain. And foresters continue to impress and surprise us all with their ingenuity and creativity in creating solutions to address these challenges.

Forestry still resonates well with the public as a tool to be used to mitigate climate change but care must be taken that productive agricultural land is not taken out of production in favour of forestry. If the respective devolved governments wish to achieve their tree planting targets, it is essential that the necessary skill sets and personnel are available. Education and appropriate funding are key.

In 2023 the Society redoubled its efforts to help support the forestry industries, in particular by increasing the number of year-long traineeships for young people from 7 to 10 a year. We also recruited a Forestry Careers Advisor to help promote forestry careers to children (aged 14+), young adults and those looking to change their career (whatever their age). 2023 also saw the launch of The Green Tree Badge; a new initiative to connect children of all ages (and their families) with the trees in their communities. Please do lend your support to this important new project if you are able.

Divisional meetings were (once again) a central feature of the Society and our mission to share ideas and best practice in forestry. An excellent Whole Society Meeting was ably hosted by the South Eastern Division and the Society's AGM was held in person for the first time since the pandemic. Needless to say that none of this could be achieved without the work of our incredible volunteers, the central support staff, our contractors and ongoing support from you, the Members.

B. C. Herbert

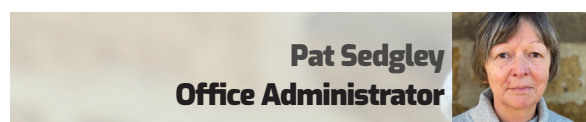
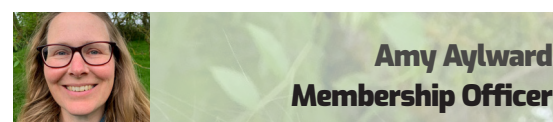
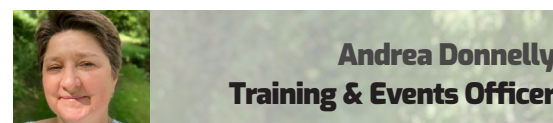
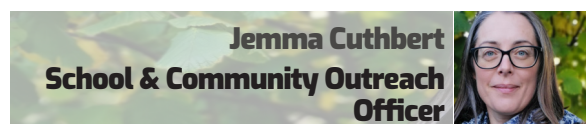
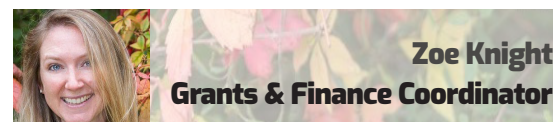
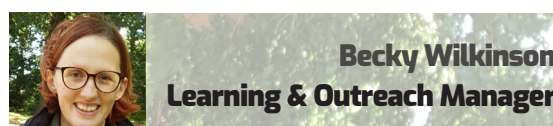


**“Foresters continue to impress and surprise  
us all with their ingenuity and creativity in  
creating solutions”**

- Ben Herbert

President of the Royal Forestry Society

## Your RFS Team





# We are the RFS

## Our Priorities

We are an educational charity inspiring passion and excellence in woodland management. We work with others to:

- **Share learning and best practice** through publications, woodland meetings, training, lectures and online resources for our members.
- Deliver forestry **education for children and young people**.
- **Inform and inspire** more people to pursue careers in forestry (and its allied sectors).
- **Raise awareness** of issues affecting woodlands to the government and media.
- **Demonstrate responsible ownership** through management of our RFS woodlands.

## Our Directors

**President:** Ben Herbert

**Vice President:** Alison Field

**Immediate Past President:** Sir James Scott

**Chair of the Board of Trustees:** Kitty Martin

**Hon. Treasurer:** Rodney Morgan-Giles

**Company Secretary:** Christopher Williams

Cheryl Lundberg

Ian Tubby

Harriet Schiavone

Felix Gregory

Caroline Ayre

Greg Vickers

## Extended Support Team

**QJF Editorial Board:** Prof Julian Evans OBE, Rik Pakenham, Alison Field, Dr Peter Thomas

**QJF Co-Editors:** Dr Gary Kerr, Dr Freia Bladon

**Managing Agent, Hockeridge and Pancake Woods:** John Morris.

**Warden, Charles Ackers Redwood Grove at Leighton:** Evelyn Over

**Managing Agents, Battram Wood:** Native Forestry

**Teaching Trees team:** Alice Parker, Barbara Brannigan, Jemma Cuthbert, Jessica Lloyd, Jodi Winter, Katy Ryalls, Nicki Jempson, Tim Kaye, Syreeta Muirhead and Eve Harvey

**Librarian:** Leonie Woods

**Design and Print Volunteer:** Shona McAllister

## Special thanks

Special thanks to all our divisional committee members and volunteers (in particular, those who have contributed to our many in-person and online events and training courses).





# The RFS at a Glance

In 2023...

We gained **10** trainees for our Forestry Roots programme.



We finished the year with **3,727** members.



We gave grant agreements for **£59,691** to RFS members to increase the resilience of their woodlands through planting.



**23** people successfully gained their RFS Certification in Arboriculture or Forestry (Cert. Arb. or Cert. For.).



We published **5** RFS Member **Case Studies** to help showcase good practice and share our Members' wealth of knowledge and experience.



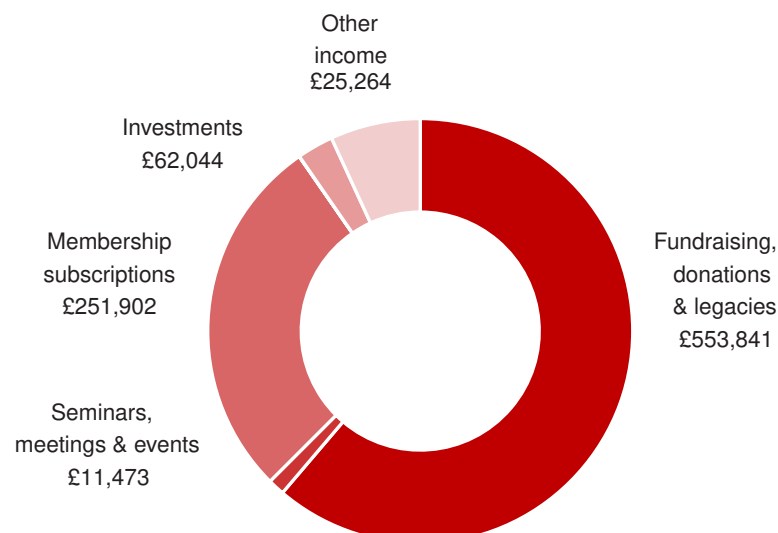
We hired a **Forestry Careers Advisor** to support young people and career changers into forestry careers.



**55%** of Teaching Trees events reached disadvantaged children, up from 38% in 2022.



We launched **The Green Tree Badge** campaign to encourage children of all ages to connect with trees in their communities.



## Income breakdown

61% of our income is derived from generous donations and legacies



# Our Finances

## Summarised Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Income	Expenditure	Revenue Surplus/(Deficit)	Revaluation Gain/(Loss)	Inc./Dec. in funds
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
Head Office	321,209	(371,407)	(50,198)	58,161	7,963
<i>Designated funds</i>					
Divisions	15,167	(10,186)	4,981	-	4,981
Education	219,534	(136,748)	82,786	-	82,786
Hay Barns	-	-	-	-	-
Battram Wood	-	(5,624)	(5,624)	-	(5,624)
Hockeridge Woods	293	(16,059)	(15,766)	-	(15,766)
Leighton Pollock	3,567	(2,664)	903	4,197	5,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>559,770</b>	<b>(542,688)</b>	<b>17,082</b>	<b>62,358</b>	<b>79,440</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Duke of Cornwall	12,680	(10,564)	2,116	2,562	4,678
Leslie Astle	720	(704)	16	871	887
NDG James	1,291	(108)	1,183	1,562	2,745
Spencer Bursary	-	(104)	(104)	-	(104)
Teaching Trees	41,154	(79,888)	(38,734)	-	(38,734)
Randle Travel	1,510	(377)	1,133	1,829	2,962
Viking	2,320	(1,617)	703	2,808	3,511
Future Foresters	219,718	(172,107)	47,611		47,611
Wise About Woods	65,361	(32,563)	32,798		32,798
<b>Total</b>	<b>344,754</b>	<b>(298,032)</b>	<b>46,722</b>	<b>9,632</b>	<b>56,354</b>
<b>Total - all funds</b>	<b>904,524</b>	<b>(840,720)</b>	<b>63,804</b>	<b>71,990</b>	<b>135,794</b>
<i>Year ended</i>					
31st Dec 2022	783,351	(772,445)	10,906	(214,492)	(203,586)

### Summary Balance Sheet

	Dec 2023		Dec 2022	
Property, woodland and fixed assets	308,628		308,168	
Investments	1,632,477		1,523,029	
Stocks	4,261		3,332	
Debtors	73,885		58,904	
Cash, current and deposit accounts	291,032		281,417	
Creditors	(31,346)		(36,320)	
Subscriptions received in advance	(32,580)		(27,967)	
	<b>2,246,357</b>		<b>2,110,563</b>	
	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>		
Funds brought forward	1,542,357	568,206	<b>2,110,563</b>	<b>2,314,149</b>
Result for the year	79,440	56,354	135,794	(203,586)
Funds carried forward	1,621,797	624,560	<b>2,246,357</b>	<b>2,110,563</b>

These financial statements are only a summary of information derived from the charitable company's annual accounts and may not contain certain information for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. A copy of the full accounts can be obtained from [www.rfs.org.uk](http://www.rfs.org.uk)



# Focus on Forestry Roots

2023 saw the expansion of our extremely successful Forestry Roots programme, from eight to ten placements for young trainees. Our incredible members continue to support this programme, with more and more applications to host trainees.

We are delighted to say that we had a record number of applicants for this programme, showing a clear desire from young people to enter and learn more about the forestry sector.

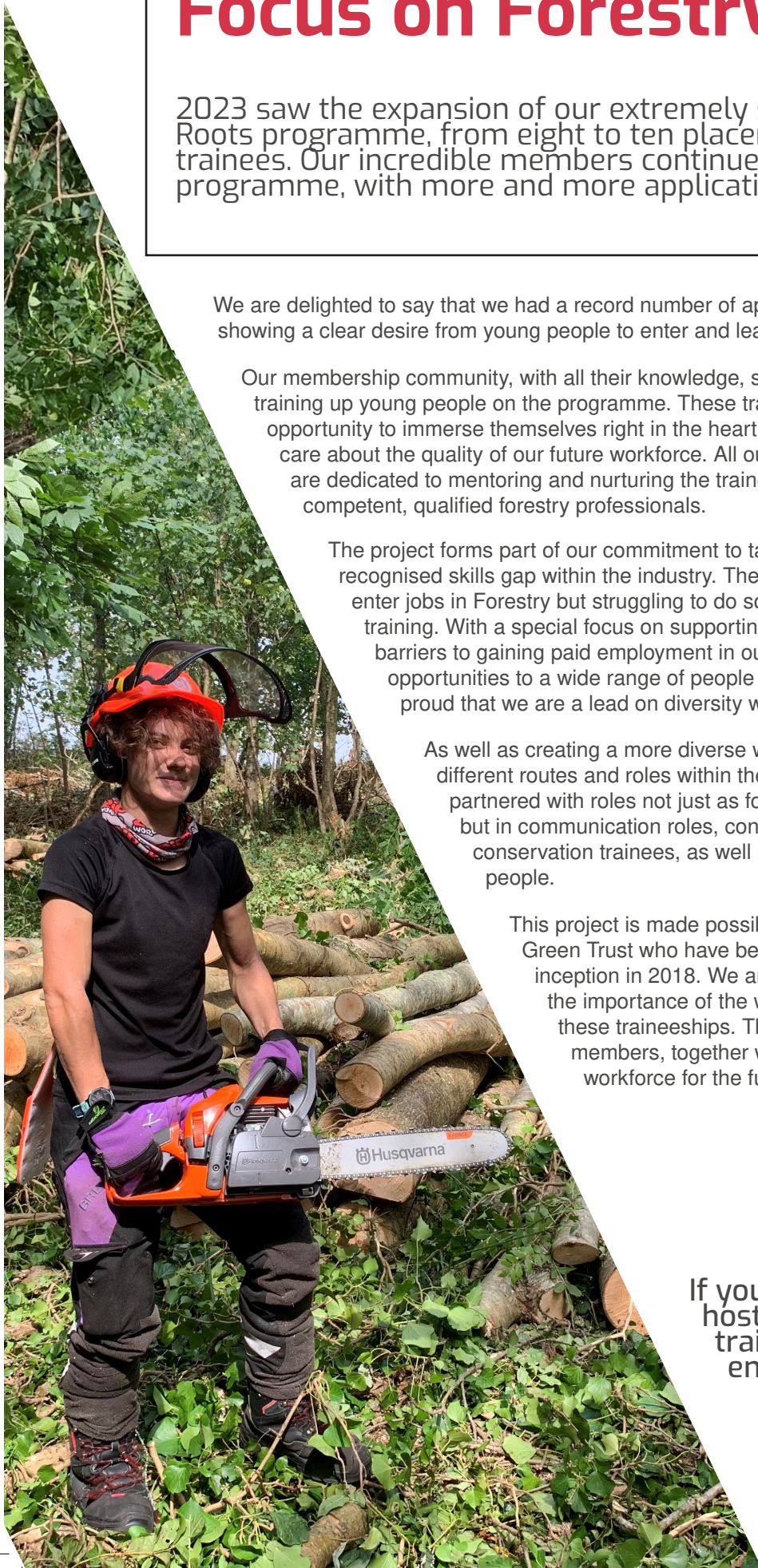
Our membership community, with all their knowledge, skill and experience, are the ones training up young people on the programme. These trainees are benefiting from the opportunity to immerse themselves right in the heart of forestry with our members who care about the quality of our future workforce. All our 'host' members (past and present) are dedicated to mentoring and nurturing the trainees, enabling them to become competent, qualified forestry professionals.

The project forms part of our commitment to taking action to address the recognised skills gap within the industry. There are many people wanting to enter jobs in Forestry but struggling to do so without the relevant experience or training. With a special focus on supporting those that may have experienced barriers to gaining paid employment in our sector, the RFS opens opportunities to a wide range of people from various backgrounds. We are proud that we are a lead on diversity within the sector.

As well as creating a more diverse workforce, we also highlight different routes and roles within the industry. Having previously partnered with roles not just as forestry assistants and trainees, but in communication roles, consultants, arborist, rangers and conservation trainees, as well as forestry workers and woods-people.

This project is made possible by the generosity of ALA Green Trust who have been funding this initiative since its inception in 2018. We are grateful that they understand the importance of the work we do and see the value in these traineeships. Thanks to both our funders and our members, together we are growing a skilled and quality workforce for the future.

If you are interested in hosting a Forestry Roots trainee in 2025, please email [careers@rfs.org.uk](mailto:careers@rfs.org.uk)





# Thank you

Our warmest thanks go to all our members, volunteers  
and the many donors and benefactors who have supported our work in 2023.  
We couldn't do any of the work we do without our supporters.

## Contact us

If you would like to make a donation to one of our programmes,  
or if you would like to find out more about the work of the RFS  
please contact us.

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