



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date	To	Period end date
	1 April 2024		31 March 2025



This proforma has been modified as the charity is also registered as a company. As such, this report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name **United Bank of Carbon**

Other names charity is known by UBoC

Website www.uboc.co.uk

Registered charity number 1133285

Charity's principal address 1 Parliament Street,
Harrogate

North Yorkshire,

Postcode HG1 2QU

Registered Company name and address **United Bank of Carbon
(registered company 06924700)**

1 Parliament Street,

Harrogate

North Yorkshire, HG1 2QU

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Jonathan Wild	Chair	Whole year	N/A
2	Piers Forster		Whole year	N/A
3	Jennifer Harrison	Treasurer	Whole year	N/A
4	Sheila Huntridge	Secretary	Whole year	N/A

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year
N/A	

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Independent Examiner	Kerry Birch FCCA, CTA Peter Howard & Co	4 Wharfe Mews, Cliffe Terrace, Wetherby, LS22 6LX

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (e.g. trust deed, constitution)	Trust deed
How the charity is constituted (e.g. trust, association, company)	Company Limited by Guarantee, United Bank of Carbon (registered company 06924700)
Trustee selection methods (e.g. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by unanimous written decision of all existing Trustees

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

The United Bank of Carbon (UBoC) is a registered environmental charity dedicated to the protection, planting, and restoration of trees and forests both within the United Kingdom and across the world. The UBoC Research Team of scientists based at the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds provides both management and academic expertise, playing a vital role in the achievement of the charity's environmental objectives.

Governance Structure:

Independent Trustees meetings
The Trustees meet independently between three and four times annually. The focus of these meetings is to review the charity's activities and finances, review governance and reporting procedures, and evaluate strategic direction. The Trustees also carry out regular assessments of the risks facing the charity and appraise their own performance. Plans to manage and mitigate both potential and identified risks are monitored, updated, and acted upon accordingly.

The Trustees do not receive any form of remuneration, nor do they claim expenses for their work with the charity.

Steering Group Meetings
The Trustees attend Steering Group meetings with the UBoC Research Team of scientists. These meetings are held between three and four times each year and are formally minuted to ensure and uphold good governance practices, oversee the management of donor funds, and that the charity's activities are aligned with its objectives. In addition, these meetings provide a forum for the consideration and management of any risks facing the organisation.

Financial oversight

An Independent Examiner is appointed to ensure robust oversight of the charity's financial practices.

The United Bank of Carbon is also responsible for its own submissions to Companies House, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

Trustee Induction and Guidance

When new Trustees are appointed they receive guidance covering aspects such as good governance, donor fund management, risk management, and environmental responsibilities. In addition, new Trustees are required to read the Charity Commission's online documentation outlining the role and responsibilities of charity trustees.

Organisational Structure

UBoC's structure is designed to minimise operational costs and long-term contractual relationships costs.

Sheila Huntridge (SH), Trustee and Company Secretary, manages UBoC's daily administration and accounting, organises Trustees' meetings, records minutes, prepares annual statements, and oversees governance. She is fully supported by the other Trustees.

The Trustees hold regular meetings with the UBoC Steering Group (SG) at the University of Leeds to review progress on agreed short- and long-term objectives. Between these meetings commissioned work from the University and pro-bono work by Trustees and other co-opted team members, contributes to the delivery of these objectives. Each member of the SG team has a defined role.

University of Leeds Research Team of Scientists:

Professor Dominick Spracklen (DS) and Dr Catherine Scott (CS) are scientific advisors to UBoC at the University of Leeds. CS is Director of the Leeds Ecosystem Atmosphere and Forest (LEAF) centre at the University of Leeds.

CS and DS are responsible for liaising with the University of Leeds on staffing and studentships.

Thomas Sloan (TS) is UBoC's Forest Science and Policy Fellow and provides scientific oversight and input across UBoC funded projects. TS is responsible for organising Steering Group meetings and recording minutes of meetings.

Robin Hayward (RH) is UBoC's Science and Communications Officer and is responsible for preparing content for both the UBoC and LEAF websites, managing UBoC's social media presence and delivering various engagement activities.

Sophie Brandon (SB) is UBoC's Nature Based Solutions Project Officer and is responsible for leading volunteer engagement and practical conservation, in particular at the Gair Wood project.

George Porton (GP) and Robyn Wrigley (RW) are Research Assistants who work on UBoC-affiliated projects, primarily Wild Ingleborough and Snaizeholme.

UBoC partially funds a number of postgraduate students at the University of Leeds who also contribute to the charity's activities:

UBoC-affiliated academic staff (Piers Forster, Dominick Spracklen, and Cat Scott) also supervise other students undertaking forest related PhDs.

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

UBoC's mission is to promote environmental sustainability by protecting and restoring the world's forests and green spaces through environmentally and socially responsible partnerships. UBoC's primary objectives for the public benefit are to:

1. Provide key research to assess the benefits of forests, woodland and green space for climate, biodiversity, water resources, local livelihoods, and health and wellbeing. Focusing on research with clear environmental, economic and societal impact.
2. Support local and national businesses to realise the value of forests, woodland and green space for efficient and effective operational costs, net earnings, customer and employee retention and satisfaction, and environmental goals.
3. Develop and maintain exemplar forest, woodland and green space projects with partners.
4. Enhance environmental education around forests, woodland and green space in the Yorkshire region, UK national forests and tropical forests within each local community.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

The Trustees determine that UBoC has complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Following the year-ended 31 March 2024, a new Gift Agreement between UBoC and the University of Leeds (UoL) was agreed securing funding for a further period of five years from July 2024 to the end of June 2029, which will be used by the University to initiate a new *Alliance for Northern Nature* that brings together regional, national and international organisations to design, deliver and monitor ambitious nature recovery and climate action across the UK. The funding will also support the wider work of the Leeds Ecosystem, Atmosphere and Forest (LEAF) centre at the University of Leeds

As part of this new funding agreement the charity and UBoC supported team at the University of Leeds have updated the aims of the charity to the include a number of public benefit activities which UBoC has undertaken:

1. **Initiate a new *Alliance for Northern Nature* to provide overall leadership and coordination of all UBoC supported UK projects. This *Alliance* will:**
 - a) Work closely with regional, national and international organisations to design and deliver at least three ambitious landscape-scale (10,000 hectare+) initiatives of national importance.
 - b) Act as a convening hub, providing a forum for discussions and dissemination of knowledge from UBoC's "Living Laboratory" projects.
 - c) Provide evidence to local, regional and national policy makers to support the planning and delivery of woodland creation and habitat restoration across the UK.
 - d) Use UBoC's "Living Laboratory" sites as bases for education and communication with local communities including schools, colleges and Universities.
 - e) Leverage funding from other sources for any UBoC investment into the *Alliance*.

2. Support LEAF to:

- a) Provide leadership and act as an ambassador for tree and woodland related research at the University of Leeds.
- b) Communicate the latest forest-related research from across the wider LEAF network at the University of Leeds in ways which are accessible to a range of target audiences.
- c) Provide evidence to local, regional, national and global policy makers on the role of trees and woodlands in tackling both climate and biodiversity crises.
- d) Lead and coordinate large funding proposals to support world-leading research to build the evidence base on the importance of trees and woodland in tackling global challenges.
- e) Educate and inspire a range of demographics on the subject of trees and woodlands through hands-on activities and talks at science fairs and events, and the production of free tree and woodland-related resources, in partnership with other national organisations.
- f) Create a legacy of high-quality science communication beyond the immediate team by providing training and support for researchers to undertake their own communication work.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grant making;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

UBoC maintains a £1 dormant investment in its trading arm company United Bank of Carbon Trading Ltd. (registered company 06579824)

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

We have a number of objectives as listed above in section C. Progress against annual milestones to further these objectives is presented to the trustees in a written report on a quarterly basis.

We raise private funds and public grants and commission work to deliver these objectives, with University of Leeds (UoL) as the principal delivery partner. UBoC has no direct employees.

Currently the main focus of the charity is on work within the UK.

We have four areas of primary interest with key partner projects:

- 1. The Leeds Ecosystem, Atmosphere and Forest (LEAF) Centre.** LEAF is a network of forest and woodland researchers at the University of Leeds, led by CS and coordinated by UBoC supported staff. It connects UBoC researchers with external organisations to help deliver policy impact from research. Key partners include White Rose Forest (WRF) and Leeds City Council (LCC) who collaborate through LEAF to inform carbon strategies, tree planting, and urban planning. This financial year LEAF supported WRF's new Action Plan, joined the WRF Leeds District Group, and contributed UBoC research on tree replacement rates to LCC's draft Local Plan, which has now completed public consultation.
- 2. West Lakes.** The 630-hectare *Restoring Hardknott Forest Project* in South Cumbria demonstrates UBoC's commitment to leadership and scientific monitoring within a partnership that includes Forestry England, the University of Leeds, the John Muir Trust, and commercial sponsors such as Northern Monk Brewery through their Faith in the Future foundation. This site forms part of the broader Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery project. Scientific monitoring includes surveys of butterflies and moths, assessments of adder and dormouse populations, evaluations of deer impact, and drone-based deer monitoring. Practical conservation activities undertaken at the site include tree tube maintenance and removal, dry-stone wall restoration, dam repairs, and wildflower and tree planting initiatives. The project features a new plant nursery, initially prioritising the cultivation of wildflowers and rare high-altitude scrub species. The team has also contributed to ongoing monitoring for the South Cumbria Pine Marten Recovery Project, with involvement from staff across both Restoring Hardknott Forest and Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery projects. Outreach initiatives include school visits, bat and wildlife walks, and volunteer engagement days.
- 3. Western Dales.** The 1200-hectare *Wild Ingleborough Partnership* in the Yorkshire Dales involves collaboration with Natural England, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, WWF-UK, the University of Leeds, and commercial sponsors. Annual monitoring activities include surveys of butterflies, tree survival rates, vegetation in long-term monitoring plots, and watercourses. Practical conservation work includes site boundary maintenance, thistle management, seed collection and propagation, as well as peatland restoration. The site maintains a tree and wildflower nursery. During the winter 28,100 trees were planted, bringing the total number of trees to over 150,000 since the start of the project in summer 2021. The site also hosts public engagement events such as Ground Nest Fest, school outreach and tours (including Nature Connection Days and The Curlew Schools Project), stakeholder meetings and guided walks.

4. Gair Wood. The 36-hectare *Gair Wood project* in is North Leeds where UBoC provides leadership, scientific guidance and volunteering support as part of our partnership with the University of Leeds. The site has welcomed groups for tours, collaboration and conservation volunteering from institutions such as the Universities of Warwick and Birmingham, ITV Studios, the Environment Agency, the UK National Wealth Fund, the Leeds International Piano Competition and various local volunteer organizations. Ongoing scientific monitoring includes soil, vegetation, tree survival and animal abundance surveys. Gair Wood also serves as an educational venue supporting several student dissertation projects and field courses running throughout the year. Practical conservation work has focused on upgrading tree guards to minimise browsing pressure on the trees. The project was recognized with the University of Leeds “Research Culture 2024” award in the “Diverse Forms of Research Activity” category.

UBoC continues to support two postgraduate students (via direct funding or CASE partnerships) doing specific research in support of UBoC projects or work of global significance.

UBoC supported staff at UoL also supervise other students who are encouraged to build networks and exchange knowledge via support of the *Leeds Ecosystem, Atmosphere and Forest Centre* (LEAF), and to engage in education and outreach work.

In addition to the specific projects listed above, the UBoC supported team has carried out numerous outreach and engagement activities over the year. Members of UBoC have also promoted work through presentations to groups including Defra, the “BIG” and “CAKE” science communicator’s conference, British Ecological Society, Pint of Science, Eureka! the National Children’s Museum, the PANORAMA Doctoral Training Partnership conference, the Natural History Consortium Communicate Nature conference, the “Harvesting Balance” conference for Landscape Recovery projects at Huddersfield University, and via a LEAF Day conference organised internally by the University of Leeds team. Outreach activities for the year also included school visits, public science festivals, University of Leeds campus tree trail events, and media interviews.

Acknowledgements

The Trustees would like to express their gratitude to the UBoC Research Team of Scientists at the University of Leeds:

Professor Dominick Spracklen, Dr Cat Scott, Dr Thomas Sloan and Dr Robin Hayward.

Their ongoing support and work throughout the year have been invaluable in advancing the charity’s objectives. The Trustees recognise the vital contribution of these scientists in delivering high-quality research and their dedication to environmental sustainability.

The Trustees also wish to extend their thanks and appreciation to all project teams, partnerships and volunteers involved in UBoC activities. Over the past year these dedicated individuals and collaborative groups have continued to develop and flourish. The Trustees commend the truly remarkable achievements and significant progress realised as a direct result of their efforts. Their dedication and enthusiasm have greatly enhanced the charity’s capacity to effect positive change and deliver on its core objectives.

Section D

Achievements and performance

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

UBoC policy is to have sufficient reserve funds to enable the Trustees to disband UBoC at any time and meet all existing contractual arrangements and additionally support any UBoC funded PhD students until completion of their 3.5 year funded PhD programme. The balance sheet is assessed at Trustee meetings and core costs will be reduced as necessary to sustain this working policy.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

In July 2020, UBoC and the University of Leeds confirmed a three-year funding agreement to benefit UBoC objectives and activities. In 2023 the three-year was extended to the end of June 2024 to enable the Charity's objectives, which had been outlined and agreed in 2020, to be completed and to a certain extent to take into account the adverse effect the COVID pandemic had on progress against the objectives.

Following the year-ended 31 March 2024 a new five-year agreement was reached providing funds from July 2024 to June 2029 to initiate a new *Alliance for Northern Nature* that brings together regional, national and international organisations to design, deliver and monitor ambitious nature recovery and climate action across the UK. The funding will also support the wider work of the Leeds Ecosystem, Atmosphere and Forest (LEAF) centre at the University of Leeds

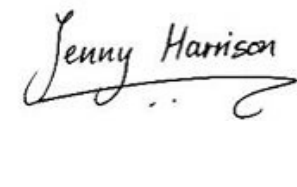
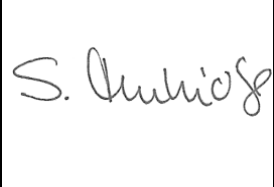
During the year UBoC also made a donation to help support the acquisition of land in Wharfedale by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, who will work to restore the land for wildlife and wider ecosystem service benefits.

Section F**Other optional information**

N/A

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signatures				
Names	Jonathan Wild	Piers Forster	Jennifer Harrison	Sheila Huntridge
Position (e.g. Chair. Secretary, etc.)	Trustee & Chair	Trustee	Trustee & Treasurer	Trustee & Company Secretary
Date	6 November 2025	6 November 2025	6 November 2025	6 November 2025