**Marcher Apple Network Trustees’ Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

**Directors and Trustees** Peter Austerfield (Life Vice-President, resigned 2Dec23)

 Phil Chadwick (co-opted 3Apr23, elected 2Dec23)

 Jacqueline Denman (Chairman till 26May23, resigned 23Aug23)

 James Nason (co-opted 12Jan24)

Andrew Pillow (Company Secretary and Treasurer, resigned 2Dec23, co-opted 2Dec23)

Stephen Ainsleigh Rice (co-opted 3Apr23, elected 2Dec23, Chairman from 26May23)

 David Smith.

**Registered Office** Brock House,

 Pelham Road,

 Upton Magna,

 Shropshire,

 SY4 4UA

**Independent Examiners** Silver and Co.,

 The Hollies,

 16, St, John Street,

 Brdgenorth,

 Shropshire,

 WV15 6AG

**Bankers** Barclays Bank

 1/3 Broad Street,

 Hereford,

 HR4 8 BH

 Lloyds Bank

 25 Gresham Street,

 London EC2V 7HN

 Virgin Money

 Virgin Money,

 Gosforth,

 Newcastle upon Tyne,

 NE3 4PL

**MARCHER APPLE NETWORK**

**(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**TRIUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024**

The trustees, who are also Directors of the charity for the purposes of Companies Act submit their annual report and unaudited statements for the Year Ended 31st March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” revised in 2019 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

**Directors and Trustees**

The Directors and Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Peter Austerfield (Life Vice-President, resigned 2Dec23)

Phil Chadwick (co-opted 3Apr23, elected 2Dec23)

Jacqueline Denman (Chairman till 26May23, resigned 23Aug23)

James Nason (co-opted 12Jan24)

Andrew Pillow (Company Secretary and Treasurer, resigned 2Dec23, co-opted 2Dec23)

Stephen Ainsleigh Rice (co-opted 3Apr23, elected 2Dec23, Chairman from 26May23)

David Smith.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

Trustees manage the Charity. Legal matters, major expenditure, organisational changes, risk management and reputational concerns are a collective responsibility. Responsibility for continued operations is given to individual Trustees.

**Statement of Directors’ and Trustees’ Responsibilities**

The trustees (who are also Directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees’ Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statement for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs for the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the period. In preparing these financial statement, the trustees are required to:

-select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

- observe the methods and principle in the Charities SORP 2005 (FRSSE);

- 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;

- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable then to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**MARCHER APPLE NETWORK**

**(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024**

In so far as the trustees are aware:

-there is no relevant information of which the charitable company’s examiner is unaware; and

- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the examiner is aware of that information.

- The trustees are not in consultation with the independent examiners to provide further information to meet the requirements of FRS 102 Statement of Recommended Practice.

**Internal Control and Risk Management**

The Directors review the effectiveness of all material internal controls, including operational, financial and compliance controls and risk management systems.

The internal control systems are designed to meet the Company’s particular needs and the risks to which it is exposed, to manage these risks and to provide reasonable assurance against misstatement or loss.

**Objectives and Activities**

The objects for which the Association is established are to further the education of the public by promotion of research, identification and to conserve by any recognised means, old varieties of apples, pears and other fruits found growing in the Marches Area of England and Wales, and elsewhere, and to make collected information available to individuals or organisations by displays, demonstrations, talks or any other communication system.

**Volunteers**

The Charity is grateful for the continued help from its volunteers who are involved in service provisions. It is estimated that over 1,500 volunteer hours were provided during the year in a wide range of activities. If this is conservatively valued at £12 an hour, the volunteer effort amounts to at least £18,000.

**Trustees’ Annual General Meeting Report (Strategic Report)**

 Report is reproduced here for member information.

Marcher Apple Network is a company limited by guarantee, Company No. 3787303. It is also registered as a charity, Charity No. 1095151, and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Directors of Marcher Apple Network are the Charity Trustees. This combined annual report contains the Directors’ report as required by company law.

**Directors and Trustees**

Peter Austerfield (Life Vice-President, resigned 2Dec23)

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Stephen Ainsleigh Rice (co-opted 3Apr23, elected 2Dec23, Chairman from 26May23)

David Smith.

**Summary of the main achievements and concerns during 2023/24**

*Membership*

Our annual subscription has been £10 since 2005. It was proposed to the AGM 2022 that it be increased to £20. Members approved it. This increase, by a factor of two, is only slightly larger than the RPIH index increase over 17 years.

MAN has welcomed 11 new members. Membership stands at 170, including two honorary ‘dormant members’.

Both the subscription increase and difficulty with our Bank account (see below) are the likely reason form many members not renewing their membership.

*Trustees/Directors, Volunteers and Donors*

Two of the four continuing Trustees have substantial health issues and were only able to give very limited attention to MAN. At a Trustee meeting on 3rd April, just after the end of the financial year the continuing four Trustees/Directors co-opted two members (Phil Chadwick and Stephen Ainsleigh Rice). In response to the appeal made during 2022 for new Trustees to come forward, we’re grateful that more members have expressed an interest since March 2023. James Nason was co-opted in January and we have one more considering.

The member survey of 2021 led to some more members to volunteer in areas they enjoy. Currently we have about a dozen Members who kindly volunteer at shows, newsletters, photography or orchard work in roles other than as Trustees. Their help is much appreciated. Yet we remain very short of help; 20 years ago there were several dozen active members.

MAN gratefully acknowledges receiving a legacy from a well-respected former member.

*AGM December 2023*

We held a hybrid Annual General Meeting from the Museum of Cider in Hereford and made available to Members to participate via Teams. In-person attendence was 17 and via Teams 11 a further participated.

*Summary of Public benefit derived from MAN’s activities*

We’re delighted to report that during the year MAN activities continued to consolidate its collection and curatorial notes, again attended some Shows and began Identification work. It is becoming clearer than much of the original mission has now been accomplished:

* Ninety-five varieties have been described and photographed, about half of which are heritage or historically interesting.
* Through the copy collection of MAN’s varieties hosted at F P Matthews, MAN has been able to provide the National Fruit Collection with scions of twenty-one heritage varieties not at the NFC. These include three resulting from collaborations with the East of England Apple Orchard Project and the Hereford Museum of Cider.  The identity of a further five at the NFC was confirmed from the work by MAN.  All have been accredited through the Register of Local Cultivars process organised by fruitID.com. The NFC Curator has expressed appreciation for the excellent work carried out in finding, describing, documenting and presenting information for peer review and public benefit.
* From MAN’s orchards and that of a member, scions of about forty varieties have been provided to the National Botanic Garden of Wales for the creation of a collection of Welsh varieties that are variously heritage, associated or otherwise connected.
* Further steps have been taken to back up the collection through selective distribution of 54 sets of scions to members and the public.
* MAN has established a track record and is known and recognised for the exceptional body of knowledge which it has developed.

MAN’s collection now includes 273 (about 12%) of the apple varieties held at the National Fruit Collection. There are a further 277 varieties not held at the NFC. In total these include most of those historically associated with Wales and the English border counties. It is a regional contribution to reducing biodiversity risk.

Our Secretary receives and answers many requests for advice via our website. It is a service clearly greatly valued. It builds upon Wade Muggleton’s many years of practical orchard and conservation work; further support derives from links with his extensive network of experts.

MAN is supporting a project Led by The National Trust, University of Wales (Lampeter) and National Botanic Garden of Wales to define which varieties are of a Welsh Heritage, or are Associated with Wales or are otherwise connected.

*Shows and ID*

A variable harvest in 2023, with lots of trees having huge crops of small deformed apples. For MAN attends Autumn Shows and attempts identification there and then. Often just one sample is submitted, but we really need a 3 minimum better 5-6. We tell them to come back next year with more! Sadly some are ungenerous with paying for our help or making donations.

This year there were shows at Craven Arms, Tenbury Wells, Big Apple and Leominster and National Botanic Garden of Wales. The difficulty though is that we now have few members able to do identification. Yet, the experience is developing, they are getting pretty good and managed 57 varieties this year.

MAN also receives ad-hoc requests for ID either specifically handed in at Shows or sent by post. Less than half of the twenty-two received were sets of good specimens. ID was made on 15 varieties, either as one or a few possibilities.

*The Orchards*

FP Matthews Ltd. Most generously agreed to copy at their expense the entire collection and house them at their nursery orchard. This will take several years to complete and will provide considerable relief and protection against loss of trees. As part of F P Matthews holding a complete copy of MAN’s collection, another 60 varieties were grafted this winter. We are most grateful.

Changing our way of grass management and finding a partner organization for running Paramor are currently subject of increased effort. We have had encouragement that there are several folk in the local Cwmdu community who are interested in becoming more involved, including Local and County Councillors.

The landlord at Ty Glyn, Stephen Ainsleigh Rice, who is also Chair of Trustees reluctantly issued a Break Notice on the lease of land for the cordon collection to be effect on 24th August 2025. His reasons include several potential conflicts of interest, the increased burden on him as Chair of Trustees, the few volunteers taking an active interest in managing the collections at Paramor and Ty Glyn, and personal matters. The collection is and will remain accessible to members.

All trees at Paramor and Ty Glyn were pruned during the summer. A further 11 varieties were accredited through the Register of Local Cultivars, including of ‘Eggleton Styre’. Some 23 samples were submitted for DNA fingerprinting mainly for confirming identity; results are outstanding several months as of 31st March.

Two estates, Penpont and Pitchford Hall, have expressed interest in creating new orchards totalling over 400 trees. They are keen to include varieties from MAN’s collection that are variously of local origin (Welsh, northern Welsh Marches/West Midlands), UK heritage, ones known before 1800, and its ‘unknowns or unsures’. Together these will provide a further nearly complete copy of the whole collection.

Bank accounts

During 2023, a misunderstanding with Barclays Bank led to the closure of our account in July, just 11 days before annual membership subscriptions were due to be paid, it created much confusion and extra work for Trustees and members. We have now opened a business account with Lloyds Bank.