



Trustees' Annual Report 2025



Constitutional matters

Trustees:

1 During 2024/25 the Trustees of Hands on Heritage CIO were Andrew Crisp (Chairman), Duncan Allan (Treasurer), Stephen Worrall (Secretary), and Kelly Hayward.

In accordance with the Constitution one third of the Trustees should stand down each year and are able to stand for re-election. Duncan

Allan and Stephen Worrall will stand down at the 2025 AGM and will stand for re-election.

We always welcome expressions of interest from any volunteer with experience or skills that as a Trustee, would help HoH deliver its aims and objectives. It is good to have new Trustees with new ideas and experience to help HoH deliver valuable practical experiences to Suffolk schools into the future. We particularly need a 'webmaster' who can keep an eye on our website and email addresses. This need not be a Trustee position, it could be a young volunteer role, even if you cannot attend school visits or regular site activities, it is an important contribution to the running of HoH business.

2 The Trustees met once during the past reporting period, on the 25th November 2025. During the year Trustees were briefed by email and face to face discussions and routine matters agreed without a further formal meeting. The 2025 AGM was held on site on the 9th December 2025, following some volunteer workshops. Electronic copies of the minutes of the meetings can be requested from the Secretary, Stephen Worrall.

3 Trustees have received a report on HoH's financial position and reviewed matters of Governance. We were pleased to be able to offer a full programme of school visits and site maintenance operations.

4 The Trustees reviewed potential Conflicts of Interest at each meeting, and formally confirm in this report that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

5 The new 10 year lease with Forestry England is allowing the charity to plan with more certainty for it's future. The first year Key Performance Indicators (KPI) review with Forestry England was held on the 14th January 2025 to ensure we are meeting the requirements of the lease and FE management standards. The meeting went smoothly, Trustees presented a KPI Pack including all the documentation required under the agreement, to support the meeting discussion.

Operational matters

Schools:

6 Our Schools Lead is Judy Powell supported throughout the year by Di Gooding who has organised volunteers for visits.

A fantastic year of school visits thanks to the volunteer's willingness to help and the expertise they bring to the workshops. This year we have had 17 school visits from 10 different schools with approximately 464 school children visiting including an overnight stay from Kessingland.

School visits started this year on 1 April and our last school was the 21 October. We have had a mix of topics with 8 schools studying Romans, 1 Saxon and 8 Stone Age/Iron Age.

We have started to re- introduce the lamp making workshop and shell jewellery for the Stone age days and doing cordage and cheese making with the older Kessingland students.



The schools this year have been very good at getting involved and we have had lots of praise on how it is one of the best school trips they have. This autumn we had Dennington school studying Romans, they were a brilliant group of Year 3 & 4's, asking and answering lots of questions with enthusiasm and politeness, we have had some lovely letters from them with quotes like:

Thank you for an amazing trip, I loved it so much. Tom

I really loved being an archaeologist and excavating. Me and my partner found 2 pieces of a pot and someone else found two other pieces and we think they are from the same pot.

I loved the weaving because I could choose the colours I used and I really liked the pattern it made. Daisy

I liked whittling butter spreaders, it was so cool. I used it on my sandwich last night. Layla

Thank you for a fantastic, wonderful epic trip! I really loved being an archaeologist because me and my friend found a mosaic and it was really cool. The toilets were very nice. The wee Hoose was the best. Ewan.

I loved making the pewter necklaces with Mike and Steven, they were really funny! Frankie.

I really like the pewter making and it was really satisfying to watch and it was really fun. Boe



Sketch of Roman dig

Nine schools have booked so far for 2026 with the first school coming on the 24 March. We are organising lots of workshops for volunteers and any friends that may be interested in helping in the future. This year we have had between 10-14 volunteers helping on each school day but we could do with more help, especially as we want to make sure we have enough people to work with the children to succeed in their tasks.

The Roundhouse is used by each school visiting the site, we ask the children to leave their mark on the walls in the form of a natural pigment finger print. This way they each take away an item they have made in the workshops and an insight into how we used to live in past times, plus they leave their own mark to record their time on site.



Children's finger prints



We have organised volunteer training days on rush rope/string making, a Roman tile workshop and wall painting sessions.

Maintenance:

7 Donald Burton is our Maintenance Lead and he has headed up our maintenance teams throughout the year. Maintenance priorities have been driven by issues identified in the 2024 buildings inspections and ongoing surveys to keep the site in a safe and sound condition.

Some of the tasks undertaken during 2025 included:

Replacement of 2 table tops with new oak boards.

Repair of the cooking hearth.

Repair of the small ovens.

Construction of a wooden rail around the Roman Dig.

Modification of tie beams to Roman Dig roof structure.

Replacement of the herb bed edge timbers.

New door mechanism for the 'Roman' Toilet.

Installation of shutters, heating stove and removable poly carbonate windows to the Weaving House.

Construction of display tables for small ovens.

Cutting down of numerous unsafe dead trees, including a large fallen tree that threatened our storage building and the Roman Dig area.
Updating the site interpretation board



A special project was completed to extend our toilet facilities. Known as 'The Wee Hoose', the new building accommodates a re-purposed abandoned stainless steel urinal which has been fixed onto a new frame built of engineered timber. A 10m long soak away weeper drain has also been installed. The building was constructed of chestnut poles with ash rafters supporting a living grass roof placed on a waterproof membrane. Excess water from the roof helps to flush the urinal.



As ever our thanks go to our maintenance volunteers who have given many hours of their valuable time on Tuesdays throughout the year and in all weathers to keep the site safe and in excellent condition.

Financial matters

Treasurer:

8 Annual Accounts - 1st October 2024 – 30th September 2025

Balance at 01/10/2024 **£14,413.73**

Income - £4,710.00

Expenditure - £5,488.80

Balance at 30/09/2025 **£13,634.93**

Income from schools this year has been broadly in line with previous years with our regular schools continuing to visit annually. It is pleasing to see that schools are willing to find funding despite the financial squeeze. Our decision in past years to cap any increase in costs to schools seems to be a contributory factor in retaining our bookings. Schools now see us as extremely good value for money.

Income from schools has been our sole source of funding this year as the funded element of the Rendlesham Revealed HLF Project has finished.

Spending has been higher this year. The development of the site has continued with the installation of a new urinal block as well as the continued development of the weaving house but it has added to the site facilities enormously and is excellent value for money.

Legal fees for the completion of our lease with Forestry England has added to our spending but is still well below the £2000 set aside for this.

We have also had a small budget for promotion – The Saxon Waterfront Day where we had a stall alongside the potters to highlight our work within the community.

Jon Roots continues to keep the website running from his home in Wiltshire and has, slightly reluctantly, accepted payment for his costs this year.

We remain grateful to our existing sponsors, and we are as usual in the debt of Jane Dale, whose firm M.E.A.T. has been our major sponsor over the years.

9 The Rendlesham Revealed Ipswich Ware Kiln Firing Experiment with The East Anglian Potters

Over the last three years a group of potters supported by volunteers from HoH have been using the site to conduct experiments to investigate the kilns used to produce Ipswich Ware pottery. This is a distinctive, mass-produced coil pottery and was one of the first mass production industries to establish itself in the 'new town' of Gipeswic (Ipswich!) in the 7th-9th Centuries.

The HLF funded project supported the project for two years whilst the third and final year has been supported by HoH, giving our time and materials at no cost. This final year of support has allowed the potters to finish their experiments and draw conclusions.

Although Jnana, who led the project is still considering her conclusions we can make some general comments on the outcomes.

- Based on archaeological evidence from Ipswich the kiln produced pottery that was useable.
- Despite much discussion and tweaking of the kiln it did not achieve the expected high temperatures.
- The pottery remained a bright orange colour after firing rather than the distinctive grey black from archaeological samples.
- The clay used for the bulk of the pottery required much working and additional sand to make it workable.



Conclusions:

The kiln, although usable, isn't right and adjustments need to be made to the flue and firing chamber, the dome and the process of closing the kiln down and sealing it to produce the right colour of pottery.

The London clay used in the experiments is different from that used by the Saxons – their claypits are now under housing!

The potters did experiment with different clays and the best was from deposits in Chillesford – everyone who used it said it was lovely!

The on-site project is now finished although I'm sure the potters will continue to experiment with clays and finishes in the future.

Thanks to all of you who were involved in the project. We don't usually single out individuals but a special thanks to Tony who has supported the project wholeheartedly and in its final year (2025) worked tirelessly for most of the week in supporting the potter's needs. He was hardly able to stand at the end of the week and took several days to recover but as he said, 'When and where would I ever get to do this again?'

The final firing took place on the 9/10th October, to produce another batch of Ipswich Ware pots, this time reaching a temperature of over 900 degrees centigrade. The kiln will now be dismantled but the area will be used to support future school workshops covering the Saxon period.

10 Weaving House

This year we have been able to use the Weaving House for all our schools workshops and it has been a very successful venue for us. The children are very interested in our copy of a Roman building and are surprised to know we built it ourselves!

We run the workshop for the schools based on the historical periods the children are studying. We attempt to get them thinking about material, how it is made, how skilled the people in the past were and how important textiles have been throughout history. The second part of the activity is the weaving and for this we have ten small looms based on a Roman tool. They are set up for the children with a variety of different coloured warps and each child chooses the one they would like to use, they also choose the colour for the weft thread and by the end of the workshop have each woven a strip of material which is their own work! These can be worn as a bracelet, put in their pocket, carried home for a present – they have a choice!

The members of the weaving team are also involved with research into ancient textiles and the fascinating techniques involved. We have now assembled our copy of the ancient warp-weighted loom and are learning how to use it.



This loom was first developed in the Neolithic period and was used in this area until Medieval times so it will be a good demonstration of ancient weaving for all the historical periods we cover. We have also been considering other techniques and dyeing wool with plants, nalbinding, sprang and card weaving have been under discussion recently.

It is a privilege to be able to share our enthusiasm with the children but lovely to have the opportunity to follow our own interests with our colleagues.



11 **Volunteers and members**

As ever the whole HoH project relies totally on the active and enthusiastic support of our volunteers. Whilst total numbers have reduced over the last couple of years we have a core membership who have delivered a tremendous service to our local schools and who have kept the site in excellent working order. The Trustees' thanks go out to all who have helped in the continued success of the Hands on Heritage vision!



We continue to seek new volunteers to join HoH. Introducing new faces to the team is vital to help secure the project's long term future and help existing volunteers continue to deliver the high quality workshops we are known for.

Schools continue to be keen to visit the site, even though their budgets are under pressure, such is the educational and wellbeing value offered through our programme of workshops.

Andrew Crisp

Chair of Trustees

Supported by:



Annual Accounts - 1st October 2024 - 30th September 2025Balance at 01/10/2024 **£14,413.73**Balance at 30/09/2025 **£13,634.93**

Assets			
Cash in Bank	13,634.93		
Fixed Assets	0		
Debtors	0		
Liabilities			
Creditors	0		
Accruals	0		
Total Liabilities	0		
Net Assets	13634.93		
Income and Expenditure			
Income			
Visits to site	4710.00		School visits,
Total Income	4710.00		
Expenditure			
Site Maintenance	2619.76		Weaving House, Site Maintenance & Repairs, Site improvement, coppice work at Hasketon
School visit supplies	764.66	Costs for Kess o/n. approx. £300	Re-stocking equipment for schools, catering supplies.
Gas for kitchen	166.93	Canister gas for kitchen operation	
Admin	160.86		Website costs incurred by Jon Roots
Promotion	288.14		Site signage + Woodbridge Waterfront Saxon day
Legal Costs	826.18		Solicitor costs re - F/E lease
Indemnity Insurance	662.27		
Total Expenditure	5488.80		
Summary - Start Balance 14413.73+ Income 4710.00 - Expenditure 5488.80 = 13634.93			