

## FRIENDS OF YORK WALLS

# TRUSTEES REPORT 2022

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022.

## 1 Structure, Governance and Management

The Friends of York Walls was established in 2010. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation first registered on 20 November 2014, registration number 1159300. The charity was established with objects and powers, and is governed under the terms of its Constitution.

The trustees who served during the year were:

Bill Hill (Chair)  
Samantha McDermott (Honorary Secretary)  
Simon Mattam  
Alan Fleming

The trustees served on the Management Committee, which had in addition the following members:

Basil Jones  
Penny Heptonstall (Honorary Treasurer)

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All the trustees guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

The trustees have assessed the financial risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to them and to other major risks.

## 2 Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity as expressed in its articles/constitution are:

- 1 To educate the public in the history, natural history and architecture of the historic defences of York and its city walls.
- 2 To secure the preservation, protection and improvement of their features.

The Fishergate Postern Tower has been the venue for the regular activities of the charity along with the walls more generally.

The Friends of York Walls have the aims to:

1. Influence the management, care and presentation of York's City Walls and Defences for the benefit of local residents and visitors.
2. Organise and undertake practical work and public events in cooperation with the City of York Council and other like-minded groups or individuals.
3. Encourage people generally to utilise the Walls as an amenity.
4. Identify opportunities for potential improvement of the Walls.
5. Establish links with local residents.
6. Monitor and act where appropriate to protect the historical views from and towards the Walls.
7. Act as a pressure group, when necessary, to maintain high standards of maintenance of York's Walls and fortifications.
8. Identify opportunities for possible improved access, physical and intellectual.
9. Explore the potential of Fishergate Postern and the Red Tower.
10. Establish Fishergate Postern Tower as a historical attraction.
11. Explore fundraising avenues such as grants and bequests.
12. Involve schools.
13. Create resource packages, leaflets and other material to help people appreciate the Walls.
14. Arrange walks and talks.
15. Participate in and foster local cultural events.
16. Support other like-minded organisations.
17. Consult with those interested in the Walls.
18. Develop the Friends website, Instagram, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts.
19. Communicate with members via email addresses and newsletters.
20. Raise the public profile of the group by generating local media coverage.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

### **3 Achievements and Performance in 2022**

#### **3.1 Opening Fishergate Postern Tower to the public**

The tower was visited by 6,003 people compared with 4,916 in 2021 and 3,281 in 2020 (years of reduced openings because of COVID). The 2022 figure achieved our target of 6,000, just!

The donations made by visitors to the Tower in 2022 was £3,627 compared with £2,817 in 2021. The 2022 figure exceeded our target for 2022 of £3,550.

#### **3.2 Planting wildflowers on the ramparts – Growing Greener Spaces grant**

The aim of this project is to increase the critical mass of pollinator-friendly wildflowers on the ramparts, thus adding to their visitor interest and through this, adding to visitor engagement with the heritage of the ramparts and walls.

It also contributes to implementing the City of York Council's Pollinator Friendly Strategy for York, and to developing the concept of Citizen Scientist in collaboration with St Nicks.

Progress was made into this project using the grant of £1,500 from the Growing Greener Spaces scheme towards the cost of wildflower plants and equipment, and a grant from Buglife who facilitated volunteers from local business for a planting day in October. This took place on an area of the ramparts next to Fishergate Postern Tower and established a foothold on which to build in 2023.

#### **3.3 Guided Walks**

These were continued, confirming our role of providing well-researched, accurate guided walks, but bespoke tailored to what visitors want.

#### **3.4 Redesign of Timeline Display in Fishergate Postern Tower**

As part of our strategy of gradual improvement of the standard of visual displays in the Tower, we began working with the designer Dianne Turner to revise the Timeline Display on the second floor. This work will continue into 2024.

#### **3.5 Geology of the Stone used in the Walls**

We secured a grant from the Geologists Association Curry Fund towards researching the geology of the stone used in the walls. This enabled us to work with a group of specialists including Dr Liam Herringshaw, geologist and palaeontologist who runs Hidden Horizons, Dr Dav Smith from the University of York (Building Archaeologist), and Professor Mike Rogerson from the University of Northumberland (Specialist in Carbonates) from the University of

Northumberland. We also had inputs from the Head Stonemason at York Minster, John David, and from the Council's Bar Walls Manager and Council's stonemason team.

Study days were held on the walls and in Fishergate Postern Tower and the results will be written up into information leaflets and postings to provide visitors with well-researched guides to enhance their experience of the walls.

### 3.6 Masons' Marks

The work on the geology of the stones of the tower brought renewed attention to the masons' marks in the building, triggered by our experts finding several we hadn't spotted in the past. A thorough survey was instigated and we now have 65 marks identified, covering 7 different designs. The opinion of Dav Smith is that they are all contemporary with the construction of the building in 1504, and therefore constitute an important source of historical information.

Our aim is to form a comprehensive database of the marks, which is then made available to the public and academic community on our website, and is then donated to York Explore Archives so that it has a long-term and secure home.

### 3.7 Artists' Works

We began a new project to acquire a collection of artists' works which have some aspect of the City Walls as their subject matter. This has included works from the past, and also the commissioning of local artists to generate new works. The results will be put on display in Fishergate Postern Tower to enrich the visitor experience.

### 3.8 Interactive Virtual Tour of Fishergate Postern Tower

This was created at no financial cost to us and is available free on our website. Users choose to move to places around and inside the tower. In each place they can look all around them, zooming in on details and choosing to call onto screen short description of each place along with extra information about the special features they can see.

### 3.9 Updated online guide to the City Walls Trail

Work is continually needed to update our website's detailed guide to the City Walls Trail, a guide that City of York Council direct visitors to at the start of their own web pages on the walls. In 2020 all the text was checked and revised.

This section of the website received some 90,000 hits in 2022, more than 250 a day, underlining what a substantial piece of work it is and how valuable visitors find it.

### 3.10 York City Walls Audio Trail

In July 2022 the travel guide app Guid.AI invited the Friends of York walls to produce an audio trail around York's City Walls using their free app.

The Guide.AI app gives the author full control over the structure and text input of their guide – so it was relatively simple but long task to populate the guide using the text from the existing York Walls Trail information already on the Friends of York Walls website.

The information is broken down into 27 map points with associated pictures. These sections are indicated by "Map Points", and a "List View", on a detailed map of York, with associated GPS links. The Guide.AI software then turns the text input into spoken words using AI. The audio guide gives an introduction to each section, with more details available on the Friends' website. Users download the Audio Trail for a one-off fee of £1.99 and for this they get the 27 map points, over 100 minutes of informative audio and the full text. Each new user's download provides the Friends with an income of 80p.

The Audio Trail went live in November 2022 and in the first two months had 60 downloads, so an income of £32.

### 3.11 Annual Leaflet

Our Annual Leaflet with its map of the walls had an increased print run to 10,000 mainly to meet demand from Visit York (it is one of their most 'in-demand leaflets') and the demands of our 'help-yourself' box in Bootham Bar which we keep stocked for about 60 days a year. We supply the only maps which show the full route of the 'City Walls Trail', the official circular walking trail marked with distinctive brass studs.

### 3.12 E-Newsletter

Our e-newsletter had 9 issues, reaching 500 plus people each issue. These cumulatively form a valuable record of our activities and past issues are accessible through our website.

### 3.13 York Walls Festival 2022

The main Festival took place over the Spring Weekend at the end of April and also continued as a summer event in August. A highlight was an evening at the Mansion House to celebrate the exchange of photographs with Nanjing in China, on display in the venue. This included a talk by Barry Crump from the University of York on the City Walls in York. Barry also contributed an extended version of this talk in the York Festival of Ideas in June 2022, labelling it as part of the York Walls Festival, achieving an audience of 250 people.

The festival and linked events like the Twilight Walks are organised by Baz Jones and received funds and general support from the Friends. We are very grateful for the energies he puts into the Festival.

### 3.14 Twilight Walks

Two twilight walks were held in the Autumn attended by 40 members of the public. They covered the section of the walls between Bootham Bar and Monk Bar, and have attracted wide praise for the charm of being able to experience the walls and views of the Minster at night.

### 3.15 Links with York University

Links with the university have been strengthened through the initiative from the International Student Coordinator to include a visit to Fishergate Postern Tower in the student welcome week in September. Arising directly from this visit, two students became volunteers contributing to our projects on the Time Line and Turret.

## **4 Financial Review**

- 4.1 The charity continues to be in a financially resilient position with £30,000 in the bank and a reliable income flow of £5,000 a year.
- 4.2 The Management Committee has reiterated its commitment to ensuring that unrestricted funds of £10,000 are held as a reserve to ensure a continuing robust financial position, but otherwise envisages the cash in hand should be used to further the objects of the charity as set out in its plans for the future below.

## **5 Plans for the Future**

The plans for the future are to focus on:

- a) Continue with the mainstream work of the charity which is the implementation of 21 Open Days at FPT and promotion of knowledge of the Walls of York and their heritage.
- b) Working with the local authority to bring about the refurbishment of the roof of Fishergate Postern Tower, installation of proper electrical circuits and improved lighting, and repointing of the interior with lime mortar to reduce spalling of the stone.
- c) Building on the first steps taken in 2022 to plant pollinator friendly flowers on the rampart next to Fishergate Postern Tower, working with the Council and St Nicks, the latter helping to develop the expertise of local people in becoming Citizen Scientists on the plants on the ramparts.

- d) Preparing and publishing the results of the work on the geology of the walls, creating leaflets, media posts and information boards which enable visitors to engage more deeply with this aspect of the walls.
- e) Continue to establish a collection of art works using the walls and towers as their subject matter/inspiration, including images from the past and commissions to contemporary artists and designers.
- f) Continue to Improve the quality of the displays in Fishergate Postern Tower, including the time-line, the maps on the top floor and redesigning the ground floor.
- g) Undertake a detailed record of the masons' marks in Fishergate Postern Tower using photography and digital drawings, thus creating a database for use by the public including the academic community.
- h) Taking forward the development of school packs and other ways to engage young people in the heritage of the walls.
- i) Initiate a project which focuses on the families who have lived next to the walls in the Walmgate area, using this as a means of increasing the engagement of local people in the heritage of the walls and Fishergate Postern Tower.
- j) Initiating a project to create a display of all the historical maps of the area round Fishergate Postern Tower, and using this as a means of attracting local people to visit and engage with the heritage of the walls.
- k) Pressing ahead with the project to imagine what form of turret might have been on the top of Fishergate Postern Tower before the current tiled roof was installed and creating a visual display of the results.
- l) Seeking grant funding for projects which engage local people in practical activities related to the walls and their heritage.
- m) Recreate a portcullis in the postern gate, supported by explanatory models.

**Bill Hill**  
**Chair, on behalf of the Management Committee**  
**October 2023**



## Friends of York Walls CIO

# Treasurer's Report: 2022

### Overview

Now that we have recovered from the problems of Covid, the Friends of York Walls CIO has had a very good year. Our core operations, which lost £855 in 2021, made a surplus of £2,816 in 2022. This enabled us to implement several projects that broadened the range of our contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the city defences and to the community of people who have an interest in them.

This report is split into two main parts.

The first part covers the core activities of the FoYW and is a good guide to our basic finances. It includes the operation of the Fishergate Postern Tower (FPT) and related external events, such as the annual 'Twilight Walls'. The second part of the report covers our one-off projects, which are often partially externally funded and are best looked at individually.

The combined finances of both parts are included in the attached Profit/Loss account and Balance Sheet. The overall outcome for the year was that we made a very small operational surplus of £19 and our total financial assets, as of Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 were £30,992. We therefore have a large surplus, some of which needs to be spent (wisely) as it is eroding fast due to inflation. The inflation loss, at say 10%, is roughly equal to all the Open Day donations. On the other hand, it seems wise to keep substantial reserves for unforeseen problems or opportunities and more particularly for partially foreseen leaps in costs from City of York Council and electrical suppliers

See table below. A detailed listing of transactions is also available on request. If you have any queries, please contact Richard Hanage [richard@hanage.com](mailto:richard@hanage.com)

### 1.0 Operations

		2022	2021	2020
<b>Operations</b>	HMRC 'gift aid'	971	316	1,253
	Open day donations	4,062	2,869	1,397
	Other donations	1,346	822	1,278
	Other operations income	633	424	228
	Festival income	167	937	
	<b>Operations total income</b>	<b>7,179</b>	<b>5,368</b>	<b>4,156</b>
	less Festival expenses	1,256	2,717	-
	less operations expenses	3,107	3,506	3,035
	<b>Operations surplus</b>	<b>2,816</b>	<b>-855</b>	<b>1,121</b>
	Covid support	0	17,431	2,500
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>Total operations surplus</b>	<b>2,816</b>	<b>16,576</b>	<b>3,621</b>
	less projects net spend	2,797	1,500	-
	<b>Total surplus</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15,076</b>	<b>3,621</b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>Cumulative assets</b>	<b>30,992</b>	<b>30,973</b>	<b>15,897</b>



## Operations Surplus

The 'Operations surplus', which is a measure of the basic health of the FoYW, showed an excellent gain at £2,816 (up from a loss of £855 in 2021) as we recovered from closures and cancellations due to Covid.

**Operations income** was very strong at £7,179 (up £1,811). Donation income was especially strong. This is very encouraging as it must reflect our reputation and contribution to the heritage of the city.

Open day donations were £4,062 (up £1,193) due to the increased openings (21 days) - because of Covid we did not open in 2021 until May (16 days). Sales of maps and books were also strong at £573 (up £152).

Regular donations from supporters were also very strong at £445 (up £245) and donations from walks was greatly increased at £721 (up £526) reflecting the commitment of our expert guides.

Increased donations in tax year 2021/22 were also reflected in a greatly increased 'Gift Aid' of £971, received a year in arrears. Income from sponsored stones was £180 (up £30)

Finally the very successful Twilight Walls event also brought in a useful £167, as well as providing a unique experience for our visitors.

The robust FPT Open Day income is a tribute to our volunteers and shows that any time we want to bring in extra income we can do so by opening the FPT more often at weekends – weather and volunteers permitting.

**Operations expenses** were well under control at £3,107 (down £399) but this hides some large differences item by item. For instance we have not replenished our stock of maps and books for sale, saving over £1,000 and have spent over £500 less on publicity and marketing.. On the other hand we have spent a lot more on books/maps/materials for displays (up £700) and on office and computer-related equipment for surveys etc. (up £500).

Festival expenses were down £1,461 reflecting reduced scope in 2022 but this was partially offset by reduced income, down £770.

## 2.0 Development Projects

External project funding we receive is entered into the accounts in full in the year that it is received, along with any match funding we are committed to providing. Any unspent funding at the end of each year is carried over as a 'Unspent project income' on the balance sheet to the following year. When the project is completed any over/underspend is treated as operations expenses. In this way the projects do not impact on the normal profit/loss account until they are closed. Also, any unspent funding is treated as restricted asset.

### Externally Funded Projects

During 2022 we received a grant of £300 (Bug Life) for 'Growing Greener Spaces' and did not have to commit any extra match funding. We also had a promise of £1,000 from the Curry Fund for 'Geology of the Walls' which will require matched funding of a further £1,000. In addition, £3,978 unspent funding was brought forward from 2021. Unspent funding of £1,650 was carried forward to 2023, a decrease of £2,328. We appear to be much better now at utilising project funds!

**Sharing Heritage** (Heritage Lottery Fund: £10,000 plus FoYW matching : £2,000). During 2022 the project was closed with an overspend of just £3.61. We are very grateful to Heritage Lottery Fund for their support.

**Growing Greener Spaces** (York CVS: £1,500 plus FoYW matching: £1,500). An additional £300 grant was received from Buglife during 2022. Total spending in 2022 was £1,642, leaving £650 to be carried forward to 2023. We are very grateful to York CVS and Buglife for their support.

**Twins Diary.** (Fishergate ward: £1,000)

There has been no spending on this project so the whole £1,000 is carried over to 2023.

**Geology of the Walls.** (Curry Fund: £1,000 plus FoYW matching: £1,000). This new project has been offered a grant of £1,000 by the Curry Fund which will be paid in 2023 on project completion. In the meantime £1,396 has been spent from FoYW funds. We are very grateful to the Curry Fund for enabling this project to start.

### **Self-funded projects**

**Art project.** This new project purchases art related to the walls for future display. It has no external funding and is internally funded by ear-marking extra income generated by volunteers who are willing for this income to fund the project, for instance by staffing extra open days. Earmarked funds are £637 and spend in 2022 was £451 leaving £186 unspent.

**Home Schooling Project.** This project was funded by us with a contribution from the parents of the young people involved. The total cost to us in 2022 was £950. The project is now closed.

### **3.0 Concluding thoughts**

The FPT Open Days continue to be a good steady earner, making at least £150/day. We need to ensure that we have the volunteers to sustain this, and perhaps increase the numbers of openings.

We have a large surplus of £30,992 which needs to be spent (wisely) as it is eroding fast due to inflation. The inflation loss, at say 10%, is roughly equal to all the Open Day donations.

We have several very interesting projects in hand and must ensure that we have the resources to implement them – plus any new ones we commit to.

*Penny Heptonstall & Richard Hanage 8 Nov 2023*