

FRIENDS OF YORK WALLS

TRUSTEES REPORT 2024

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024.

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) – till March 2024
Simon Mattam
Alan Fleming
Barry Crump
Rachel Hollingworth
Laura Patrickson

The trustees served on the Management Committee.

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 help secure high standards of maintenance of York's Walls and fortifications.
8. Identify opportunities for possible improved access, both physical and intellectual.
9. Explore the potential of engaging the public in the history of the Walls in new ways.
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 2024

3.1 Opening Fishergate Postern Tower to the public

The tower was visited by 6,756 people compared with 6,800 in 2023.

The donations made by visitors to the Tower in 2024 were £3,635 compared with £3,692 in 2023, confirming that the organisation has a steady income to assure its viability.

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.

Planting on the ramparts next to Fishergate Postern Tower continued experimenting with which flowers could out-compete the grass.

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

The work of consulting with the public on the new design proposals for this display continued through the year. The visitor reaction was 98% in favour of moving to a new design, and supported the white on black colour way by a ratio of 2:1.

The process of implementing a new design with will continue into 2025.

3.5 Masons' Marks

Further examination of the walls inside Fishergate Postern Tower revealed another 20 mason marks in the building taking the total to 85 marks identified, covering 9 different shapes.

The top floor was photographed and the images used to initiate the planned database of all the marks. This work will continue into 2025. Once completed the database will be 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.

A new departure this year was to put forward two event days in the University of York's Festival Ideas programme featuring opportunities for the public to hunt for mason marks in Fishergate Postern Tower. This brought in nearly 100 local residents.

3.6 Artists' Works

The process of commissioning local artists to create a work with some aspect of the City Walls as their subject matter continued. We now have 21 works including paintings, watercolours, prints and textiles. We also have 6 works by past artists.

All of the works were put on display for Friends of York Walls to see at the Annual Friends Meeting in October, and digital copies are now on the website with a brief note about each work.

The next step is to acquire a suitable hanging system and then put the collection on display in Fishergate Postern Tower to enrich the visitor experience.

Acquisition of further works is being paused.

3.7 Annual Friends Meeting

An Annual Friends Meeting, the first since COVID, was held in October at the Bedern Hall, attended by 45 members, including some of the founding members from 2010, which was a great honour.

The occasion was taken to welcome John Oxley as an Honorary Trustee of the Friends of York Walls, in thanks for his informing supporting work when in office, including facilitating our acquisition and the lease of Fishergate Postern Tower.

The meeting also featured an input from Barry Crump, our new Trustee, bringing links with the University of York and a valuable new academic gravitas to the work of the organisation.

3.8 Friends of York Walls main website and 'Sponsor a Stone' scheme

The FOYW website was initially produced in 2010 and continues to provide a very useful information resource on York's City walls and the activities of the Friends of York Walls. During 2024 the website was viewed over 140,000 times by a worldwide visitor base of almost 75,000.

Year on year since it started the site has been visited many times, and a major milestone was reached on 14th October 2024 when the one millionth view took place!

The City Walls Trail home page regularly receives over 250 hits per day, achieving a total of 90,000 hits over the past year, underlining what a substantial piece of work it is and how valuable visitors find it. Its URL is to be found referred to in many places, a symptom of the respect in which it is held by other organisations in the tourism field.

The website continues to host the “Sponsor a Stone” scheme, started in 2012, where anyone can pick a specific stone on the west or north wall of FPT and for a £20 minimum donation they get a personalised certificate and listing against their selected stone. In 2024 15 stones were sponsored. Most dedications were of an “In Memoriam” or “special occasion” nature.

The website also provided a platform for presenting the new artworks which has been acquired as part of the ongoing arts project. The website also now holds an accessible copy of every known historical map of York.

3.9 York City Walls Audio Trail

The audio trail of the walls, was first created in July 2022, using the Guide.AI platform, and has now had two full years of operation.

During 2024, 750 new people downloaded the trail compared with 766 the previous year, confirming that it is proving continually popular with visitors. Each new user’s download provides the Friends with a donation of 80p, and over the year this generated £476.00.

Users down-load the Audio Trail APP and the York City Walls Audio Trail for a one-off fee of £1.99 and for this they get the 27 map points and over 100 minutes of informative audio.

3.10 Annual Leaflet

Our Annual Leaflet, with its map of the walls, had a print run of 12,000 again. This is to meet demand from Visit York (it is one of their most ‘in-demand leaflets’) and the 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.

3.11 E-Newsletter

Our e-newsletter had 6 issues, reaching 500 plus people each issue. These cumulatively form a valuable record of our activities and past issues are accessible through our website.

3.12 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.

3.13 Links with York University

The Deputy College Manager delivered an 15 minute introductory talk about the walls as part of the International Student Welcome event for all new international students at the University (these typically have hundreds of attendees) as well as Walls Talk and Tour for new postgraduate students which visited Fishergate Postern Tower.

The inclusion of the Mason Mark events in the University's Festival of Ideas Programme was a useful start to raising the profile of the Friends and Fishergate Postern Tower amongst the academic community in York.

3.14 Festival of the Walls

The FoYW Festival did not take place in 2024 and its future as an additional event during the year, given other pressures, is under review.

4 Financial Review

- 4.1 The charity continues to be in a financially resilient position with £17,000 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 respond to whatever conclusion they come to about refurbishment of the roof of Fishergate Postern Tower, and repointing of the interior with lime mortar to reduce spalling of the stone.
- c) Building on the work 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) Creating a display in Fishergate Postern Tower of the collection of art works now established, to enrich the visitor experience of the tower.
- 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) Completing the 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) Continuing the project focusing 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.
- n) Enhancing the quality of displays on the top floor of Fishergate Postern Tower, including information about the roof and the conversion of the space in the early 1600s into a dovecote.
- o) Continuing initiatives like the Festival of Ideas events, and new ones, which build links with the universities in York.
- p) Take steps to secure maximum benefits from our membership of Visit York.
- q) Review the current guided walks offer including the form of the offer and how it is promoted.

- r) Review the brass stud trail and address any gaps and points of potential confusion for users.
- s) Review the York Walls Festival and decide whether to include it in the annual programme, and if so, in what form.

Bill Hill
Chair, on behalf of the Management Committee
October 2025
Revised 30/10/25



Friends of York Walls CIO

Treasurer's Report 2024

Overview

The Friends of York Walls CIO had a further good year. Our core operations made a surplus of £2,731 in 2024 (£4,486 in 2023). This enabled us to continue 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. The first 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 covers our one-off projects, some of which are partially externally funded, and are best looked at individually.

The combined finances of both parts together are shown in the attached Profit/Loss account and Balance Sheet. The overall outcome for the year was that we made a loss of £3,248 (£8,932 loss in 2023), comprising an operational gain of £2,731, offset by project spending of £5,979 - mainly the 'Art' (£4,604) and 'Growing Greener Spaces' (£1,554) projects.

Our total financial assets, as of Dec 31 2024 were therefore reduced by £3,248 to £18,812. The Trustees are retaining this for unforeseen problems or opportunities.

The table below summarises the outcomes. A detailed listing of transactions is also available on request. If you have any queries, please contact Richard Hanage richard@hanage.com

		2024	2023	2022
Operations	HMRC 'gift aid'	831	1,154	971
	Open day donations	3,918	3,672	4,062
	Other donations	1,806	1,832	1,346
	Other operations income	956	1,323	633
	Festival income (net)	306	90	1,089
	Operations total income	7,817	8,071	5,923
	less operations expenses	5,086	3,585	3,107
	Operations surplus	2,731	4,486	2,816
	Covid support	0	0	0
Totals	Total operations surplus	2,731	4,486	2,816
	less projects net spend	5,979	13,418	2,797
	Total surplus	- 3,248	- 8,932	19
Assets	Cumulative assets	18,812	22,060	30,992

1.0 Operations

Operations Surplus

The 'Operations surplus', which is a measure of the basic health of the FoYW, fell to £2,731 (down from £4,486) mainly due to the cost of the Annual Meeting (£1,634) and printing new stocks of the "Walking Guide to York City Walls" book for distribution (£499), partially offset by savings in other areas.

Operations income was a little lower at £7,817 (down from £8,071). Donation income continued strong at £5,724 (up from £5,504) which is very encouraging as it reflects our reputation and contribution to the heritage of the city and the positive response of visitors to the Fishergate Postern Tower.

Open day donations were £3,918 (up from £3,672) reflecting good visitor numbers and distribution of maps and books were again weaker at £261 (down from £459) perhaps due to so much material being on-line – including from our own Audio Guide.

Regular supporter annual donations were weaker at £291 (down from £396). This is unfortunate as we need more gift-aid donations, because the tax we can reclaim on bucket donations is limited to ten times the gift-aided donations. However stones sponsorship donations were much higher at £960 (up from £367). Guided Walks donations were, at £100, much lower than the previous £415

The probability of reduced eligible donations in tax year 2023/24 is reflected in a reduced 'Gift Aid' of £800 (estimated), which is received a year in arrears

The very successful Twilight Walls event, which provides a unique experience for our visitors, brought in a useful surplus over four nights of £306.

The Guide.AI 'Audio Guide to York City Walls' generated £476 of "revenue share" for the year 2024. This represented 595 downloads - a success as an educational aid, as well as being popular with visitors

Finally, we earned £219 interest on our savings account – a reduction from £434 in 2023.

The continued 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 much higher at £5,086 (up from £3,585). The biggest item was the very enjoyable 'Friends Meeting' at Bedern Hall (£1,634) followed by publicity and marketing at £1,370 (down from £2,100). In addition £499 was spent on a new stock of the "Walking Guide to York City Walls" book, and Wi-Fi services, plus upgrading the website (£487). A total of £443 was also spent on displays and interpretation (down from £715).

Overall the operations expenses were well under control and led to an operations surplus of £2,731, down from £4,486 in 2023 but still a substantial contribution to funding future development projects.

2.0 Development Projects

Any 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.

The projects described below were financially active in 2024. A list of financially inactive projects is also included below.

Externally Funded Projects

External funding of £300 was received from York BugLife during 2024 for the Growing Greener Project..

Unspent funding of £4,033 was carried forward from 2023 and a similar amount (£3,939) was carried forward from 2024 to 2025 – nearly all from the ‘Walmgate Family History’ and ‘Twins Diary’ projects.

Growing Greener Spaces (York CVS: £1,500 and Buglife: £300 plus FoYW matching: £1,500). The remainder (£78) of the 2023 funding was carried forward 2024. Total spending in 2024 was £1,633, partially offset by the £78 carry forward and the £300 Buglife grant, leaving a project deficit of £1,255 for 2024. A further expenditure claim of £960 is expected to be in the 2025 accounts, of which £430 was incurred in 2024.

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

There has been no spending on this project which has now been combined with the ‘School Packs’ project. The whole initial £1,000 funding is therefore carried over to 2025.

Geology of the Walls. (Curry Fund: £1,000 plus FoYW matching: £1,000). This project has been offered a grant of £1,000 by the Curry Fund which will be paid on project completion. There has been no spending in 2024 so the prior over-spend of £4 remains unchanged.

Walmgate Family History (Two Ridings Community Dulverton Fund: £2000 plus FoYW matching: £1,000). This project had only just started in 2023, with a spend of £45. As a result, there was a £2,955 carry forward to 2024. Only £16 was spent in 2024 so £2,939 is carried over to 2025.

Self-funded projects

Artworks project. This project purchases art related to the walls for future display. It has no external funding. It is intended to be internally funded by ear-marking extra income generated by, for instance, running extra open days and the remainder has been funded from the operations surplus. About 14 artworks were purchased in 2024 at a total cost, including framing etc, of £4,604

Historical Maps project. This project, which is at an early stage, aims to collect and display maps of the area around the Postern Tower and complement the Walmgate Family History project. Only £120 has been spent so far, but more will be needed in the future to collect and display digital images of the maps.

Financially inactive projects

The following projects may have been active during 2024, but did not generate any income, expenditure or carry forward: Masons Marks, Bean and Gone Display, Heritage Open Day, Portcullis Model, FPT Roof Display, School Packs and Walls Lichens.

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.

We have a large surplus of £18,812 (down from £22,060), some of which could be spent (wisely), as a smaller reserve is probably sufficient.

Unspent project income is almost unchanged at £3,939 (down from £4,033) perhaps reflecting a continuing shortage of people resources to implement projects.

Richard Hanage 8 September 2025

Friends of York Walls
UK Balance Sheet - Standard
As of 31 December 2024

	<u>31 Dec 24</u>	<u>31 Dec 23</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Other Current Assets		
Expected Income	1,030.40	1,154.00
Total Other Current Assets	1,030.40	1,154.00
Cash at bank and in hand		
Cash	101.41	840.32
Charity Bank	10,000.00	0.00
HSBC Current	3,020.83	6,024.55
HSBC Save	7,715.84	17,496.81
PAYPAL New	883.09	578.10
Total Cash at bank and in hand	21,721.17	24,939.78
Total Current Assets	22,751.57	26,093.78
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
Unspent project income	3,939.28	4,033.31
Total Other Current Liabilities	3,939.28	4,033.31
Total Current Liabilities	3,939.28	4,033.31
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>18,812.29</u>	<u>22,060.47</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILIT...	<u>18,812.29</u>	<u>22,060.47</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>18,812.29</u>	<u>22,060.47</u>
Capital and Reserves		
Additional Net Assets	10,218.87	19,150.73
Initial Assets	11,841.60	11,841.60
Profit for the Year	-3,248.18	-8,931.86
Shareholder funds	<u>18,812.29</u>	<u>22,060.47</u>

Friends of York Walls

Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison

January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24	Jan - Dec 23
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
OPERATIONS INCOME		
Donations		
Donations - Audio Guide Share	476.00	430.40
Donations - Book Distribution	260.50	458.50
Donations - Buckets	2,675.52	2,509.59
Donations - Contactless	1,242.43	1,162.41
Donations - Other	453.86	367.59
Donations - Publishing	0.00	287.00
Donations - Stones	960.00	366.69
Donations - Supporters	291.41	396.14
Donations - Walks & Talks	100.00	415.00
Total Donations	6,459.72	6,393.32
Festival Income	696.60	1,153.26
HMRC Gifts Aid Income	831.09	1,154.00
Interest Earned	219.03	434.19
Total OPERATIONS INCOME	8,206.44	9,134.77
PROJECTS (FUNDED) GRANTS		
2020 Growing Greener Spaces	300.00	0.00
2023 Walmgate Family History	0.00	2,000.00
Total PROJECTS (FUNDED) GRANTS	300.00	2,000.00
Total Income	8,506.44	11,134.77
Expense		
Festival Expenses	390.61	1,062.89
OPERATIONS EXPENSES		
Annual Meeting	1,633.77	0.00
Books/Maps/Images	130.00	0.00
Display/interpretation	443.14	715.00
Electricity	70.10	5.95
Health & Safety	36.00	30.00
HSBC Fees	61.20	60.00
Insurance Expense	96.00	41.40
Office Expense	11.70	0.00
Paypal Fees	17.39	8.01
Product Purchase	499.50	0.00
Publicity & Marketing	1,370.00	2,099.90
Rent and Rates	230.54	216.34
Repairs and Maintenance	0.00	130.01
Venue expenses	0.00	143.88
WiFi & Website	486.62	135.16
Total OPERATIONS EXPENSES	5,085.96	3,585.65
PROJECTS (FUNDED) EXPENSES		
2020 Twins Diary	0.00	0.00
2021 Growing Greener Spaces	1,554.35	0.00
2022 Walls Geology	0.00	607.50
2023 Walmgate Family History	0.00	3,000.00
Total PROJECTS (FUNDED) EXPENSES	1,554.35	3,607.50
PROJECTS (SELF-FUNDED) EXPENSES		
2023 Electrics	0.00	10,832.59
2024 Historical Maps	120.00	0.00
Art Collection	4,603.70	978.00
Total PROJECTS (SELF-FUNDED) EXPENSES	4,723.70	11,810.59
Total Expense	11,754.62	20,066.63
Net Ordinary Income	-3,248.18	-8,931.86
Profit for the Year	-3,248.18	-8,931.86