

where  
words  
work

# **Mythstories**

museum of myth and fable

**University Centre Shrewsbury  
Guildhall  
Frankwell Quay  
Shrewsbury  
SY3 8HQ**

**Charity Reg. No. 1161594**

**Annual Report  
Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**



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# 1. Our Mission

**Mythstories** works with the spoken word; on-line and in outreach projects.

We encourage our users to be storytellers themselves, passing on oral heritage and keeping it alive.

# 2. Status of the Charity

**Mythstories** is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by a standard 'Foundation' constitution.

Mythstories began as a website in June 1998, before opening as a museum in February 1999. The original Charity was created by a Deed of Trust in 2001 and merged with the CIO in 2015. During 2022/3 the museum artefacts will be dispersed and Mythstories will revert to its website base.

# 3. Governance and Management

**Contact** c/o Mr. S. Poole, Fullersmoor Cottage, Smithy Lane, Brown Knowl, Broxon, Cheshire, CH3 9JY [info@mythstories.com](mailto:info@mythstories.com)

During the year six Trustees held office:

Jacob Edward Owen Williams (second term – ends 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024)

Zara Bannu (first term – ends 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023)

Philip Leslie Jefferies (first term – ends 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023)

Simon Poole (first term – ends 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023)

Jennifer Watson (first term – ends 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

Joseph White (first term – ends 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

The maximum number of Trustees that can serve is 7.

The Trustees cover the following skill areas: cultural and community education, diversity, health psychology and resilience, legal expertise, verbal arts practice. Some have experience as former young storytellers, some have current experience of academic life as teachers, lecturers and researchers.

No in-person meetings took place during the year. Trustees held formal meetings on-line and maintained contact via a WhatsApp group. Key policy documents and governance information, all contracts and current project

information together with daily ledger and management accounts are maintained on cloud storage to which all Trustees have access.

Three Trustees and a key volunteer have access to the on-line bank account, with payments being reviewed and authorised monthly.

Ongoing and routine work continues to be delegated to two key volunteers.

## 4. Objectives

The primary focus of **Mythstories** is educational; preserving and disseminating traditional tales. It does this by:

A Maintaining a publicly accessible collection of storytelling artefacts which introduce visitors to traditional tales and folklore and a library which includes volumes of stories as well as books on the theory and application of storytelling. The collection incorporates the **Society for Storytelling Library** and a copy of the audio archive of performance storytelling created by the **London Centre for International Storytelling**. This collection will be dispersed during 2022/23, beginning with the libraries and archive which will relocate to the **Centre for Folklore Myth and Magic** in Todmorden, Yorkshire, before it opens in May/June 2022

B Maintaining a website, free at the point of use, disseminating traditional tales and ideas for their use in formal and informal educational settings.

C Initiating outreach projects in the Shropshire/Mid-Wales borders area, which focus on the region's oral heritage.

D Working with other organisations to promote storytelling in the United Kingdom.

E Exploring the educational uses of storytelling, as a gateway to literacy and to develop 'soft' life-skills.

The Trustees and management keep in mind the **Charity Commission's** guidance on public benefit when designing and delivering activities that flow from this objective.



## 5. Achievements and Performance

**University Centre Shrewsbury** remained closed to the public during the year, which prevented opening the museum to the public.

In September 2021 the **University of Chester** confirmed they no longer wished to continue housing the collection on the UCS campus. Without the reduction in overheads that this arrangement allowed, Mythstories museum would be unable to continue as a financially viable operation. Trustees revisited the consultation carried out prior to the relocation to UCS in 2019 and took the decision to revert to a digital museum with outreach projects. The University offered financial support to relocate the artefacts and it was agreed both parties would work towards dispersing the collection by the end of September 2022.

During the year Mythstories continued to deliver outreach:

The first half of the year saw the completion of a major project '**Wise Words in Wild Places**' funded by **Arts Council England, Shropshire Council and Energize, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin** and supported by the **Shropshire Area of Natural Beauty, Shropshire Outdoor Partnership, Shropshire Library and Shropshire Archives**. The question the project was designed to answer was "can on-line viewers become active listeners and experience the essence of a storytelling performance, retaining their ability to build unique pictures in their heads?". And on a practical level, as Covid-measures receded, it became important to encourage people to spend more time in the countryside. Over the year we commissioned 10 videos for site-specific Shropshire stories: a storyteller created the audio track for each, film-makers accompanied this with either 'slow tv' or archive footage specific to each site, or in one case an animation. The resultant videos are available via QR codes at the sites, on YouTube or through the Mythstories' website. A leaflet complete with QR codes was distributed throughout the regional day-tourist area to encourage families emerging from Covid isolation to visit these sites.



### 6 Llanymynech

Storyteller **Clare Murphy** tells "**Ned Pugh of Llanymynech**" from North Shropshire, film by **Neda Ahmadi**



Storytellers also led five storywalks at different sites, accompanied by an 'expert' on the sites' flora, fauna or industrial heritage. Again aimed at families emerging from Covid isolation, these walks proved so beneficial that funding was secured from **The National Lottery Fund Local Connections Fund** for a further three walks in the second half of the year.



Wise Words in Wild Places was artistically evaluated by commissioning an artist to produce a sketchbook reacting to the films. This sketchbook and those done by young people who attended the walks were exhibited at **Shrewsbury Library** in September/October 2021 alongside QR codes leading to the videos.

The **Zoom Away With Words** storytelling club for young people, part-funded by a grant from the **Community Fund** initially flourished, with monthly on-line meetings led by storyteller volunteers and interim on-line meetings between members. Parents were asked to supervise the young people when on line and a number of parents encouraged their children to engage with the project, practising or researching the stories in between club sessions. Over the summer the families were able to meet up to socialise. In the autumn the on-line sessions were augmented by a monthly in-person meeting at **Shropshire Library** and a project on local tales, funded by the



**Arnold Clark Community Fund**, commenced. The young people recorded local tales, which were uploaded to Mythstories YouTube channel. They then designed postcards sign-posting their recordings which were printed and sent to friends and family members over the Christmas period. A final celebratory event was held in February 2022, with 8 families attending.

During the year Mythstories' Arts Award Adviser worked with one young home-educated person to successfully complete her Silver Arts Award. The main artform was Poetry and the young person led a public poetry-walk around Shrewsbury as part of her Leadership challenge.



In Spring 2022 Mythstories' volunteers worked in partnership with **The Hive** a creative venue running wellbeing projects based in Shrewsbury, to facilitate a series of workshops for home-educating families which looked at the history and legacy of the now redundant Newport – Shrewsbury canal. The **Hidden Waterways** project, funded by the **Lottery Fund for Heritage**, involved many different artforms and the home educating families chose to use pottery. Three workshops were held in March 2022 (a further two workshops took place after year end during April), with all being fully booked and 19 different families attending, some on multiple occasions.



## 6. Volunteers

In general, all routine work was undertaken by two key volunteers. Projects were delivered by self-employed artists and other professionals, or by suitably experienced Mythstories volunteers. 17 artists were contracted, and a further 17 volunteers were involved during the year.

In May / June 2021 Mythstories' volunteers mentored a work-based learning student from the University during a six-week remote work placement. The student researched facts behind the story of a 6<sup>th</sup> Century Saint – St. Rumwald – whose short life is commemorated in medieval Shrewsbury street names. The student then wrote a Mummer's Play based on his research.

A professional storyteller spent time with volunteers further developing her ideas for storytelling in education with artefacts. She has since used these in her one-to-one tutoring with Children with Special Needs. She helped devise and will ultimately deliver Mythstories' CPD programme for school teaching staff, which is currently on hold pending the research project by the University of Chester

Volunteers attended one-to-one mentoring sessions run by **The Space** and funded by **Arts Council England**. Volunteers also attended webinars run by **The Digital Cultural Network**. These have resulted in a new Digital Engagement Strategy which, when fully implemented, will bring Mythstories work to the attention of a wider audience.

Following the decision to disperse the collection, Volunteers attended a training session on dispersal of museum collections organised by the **West Midlands Museum Development** and received one to one advice from their officers and **Arts Council England** representatives. Mythstories remains in contact with them and thanks them for their support.

## 8. Financial Review

### Income

Mythstories has no guaranteed regular funding and there were no opportunities for earned income, as the University buildings were closed to the general public

**Arts Council England** made the final payment to their grant for the programme 'Wise Words in Wild Places'. And Mythstories was successful in obtaining a follow-up grant for further storywalks from the **National Lottery Fund Local Connections** grant strand.

A small amount of donations came via the **SmileAmazon** website, and some sales revenue via prints sold through **Art UK**. With the dispersal of the collection, Trustees are investigating ways to increase this income strand.

The final project fund came from the **Arnold Clark Community Fund**, and was in respect to the Zoom Away With Words on-line storytelling club.

### Expenditure

Mythstories has minimum overheads, with the major on-going cost being insurance.

Project costs formed the bulk of expenditure (95%) during the year.

The small amount of payment to Staff shown in the accounts relate to work undertaken in March 2021 but paid during the first week of April.

### Reserves

Mythstories aims to hold unrestricted reserves to a maximum of 3 months' running costs plus 10% of its average annual project funding. Most of these reserves were expended on relocation and, with no visitor income since the onset of the Covid pandemic, have not been rebuilt.



## 9. Future Plans

The primary task for 2022/23 is the dispersal of the collection in such a way as to maximise its benefit to the public.


The first phase will take place in April 2022, when the **Centre for Folklore, Myth and Magic** in Todmorden will take possession of Mythstories' library, the Society for Storytelling library and the audio archive of the London Centre for International Storytelling. All 3,000 books will be kept together, be accessible to the public and available to storytellers and researchers.

Since year end the **University of Chester** has agreed to fund a research project exploring the use of storytelling objects in the Primary curriculum, which will involve many of the items in the collection being dispersed to two Primary schools. Part of the process will involve looking at the type of digital resources that schools need, and the results of this will feed into the development of the Mythstories' website.

And **La Maison Des Geants** in Belgium has agreed to host Mythstories' two processional giants, their relocation is planned for September 2022.

We will continue to develop the website resources, using the results of the research project, and refining our use of social media to raise the profile of Mythstories and its work.

Approved by the Board 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (date)

Signed:  .....  
JOE WHITE (trustee)  
28 SEP 2022

Signed:  .....  
PHILIP JEFFERIES (trustee)  
28.09.22

# MYTHSTORIES - CHARITY

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022

	Unrestricted	2022 Restricted	Total	2021 Total
Arts Council England		1490	1490	15705
Heritage Lottery Fund		1290	1290	6000
Sales	97		97	
Donations	12		12	35
Interest Earned	1		1	1
Arnold Clark		750	750	
Community Fund for Staffordshire				1000
HMRC Furlough Fund				458
Heritage Emergency Fund				6400
Energise				500.00
Total	110	3530	3640	30099
EXPENDITURE				
Employee Costs		650	650	6563
Training				
Premises				
General Administration - insurance, maintenance etc.	963		963	1051
Travel	5		5	17
Artists/Project Costs		18630	18630	4886
Advertising	120		120	
Accounts	500		500	
Other	149		149	139
Depreciation				
Total	1738	19280	21017	12656
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(1628)	(15750)	(17377)	(17443)
FULL COST RECOVERY/TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS	364	(364)		
FUNDS B/FWD	1926	16366	18292	849
FUNDS C/FWD	662	252	915	18292

JMW  
09 / 28 / 2022

  
28.09.22

# MYTHSTORIES - CHARITY

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31st MARCH 2022

	2022	2021
Fixed Assets	0	0
Current Assets		
Stock		
Bank and cash	1165	17542
Debtors		1000
	<u>1165</u>	<u>18542</u>
Liabilities		
Creditors		
Accruals	250	250
	<u>250</u>	<u>250</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>915</u>	<u>18292</u>
Net Assets	<u><u>915</u></u>	<u><u>18292</u></u>
Funds		
Unrestricted	662	1926
Restricted	252	16366
Total Funds	<u><u>915</u></u>	<u><u>18292</u></u>



Joe White 09 / 28 / 2022

Trustee



PHILIP JEFFERIES  
(TRUSTEE)

28.09.22