

Trustee Report, 2024-25

It has been a fairly quiet year for the Friends this year, but a few things have finally come to fruition.

As you are aware, we have been looking for a new home for our archives, one that is safe and accessible. We are pleased to tell you that it is now securely stored at The Storey in Durham. It took three Killhope staff five hours to transfer it downstairs (a very big thank you to them) and then two men half an hour to put it onto six pallets to be transported in a van to Durham. It is great to know that it is now safely stored for future researchers to use. A huge thank you goes to Margaret Graham who has worked tirelessly, building up, indexing and then overseeing its transfer to The Storey. Thank you also goes to those who have helped in any way with the archives, it is a wonderful resource for future generations to use.

Some progress has also been made on our website. Thanks to Mike Cave we have now found a new web designer, Neil Burnett, who is helping us plan a site that we feel will be most useful to members and non-members alike. It is a slow process and there seems to be lots to learn but we are getting there. Mike is doing a great job and we are confident it will be up and running in the near future. Thank you Mike.

The photograph exhibition at St John's Chapel was a great success and enjoyed an excellent turn out, many people reminiscing and talking about family members. Some very useful information and lovely stories were shared.

The 'What did you do at school today' exhibition is still available to see at the Heritage Centre in Allenheads. It is well worth a visit if you have not already been to take a look. It has been very well received by locals and visitors alike.

We also have some sad news. Sadly Bill Heyes died earlier this year. He was a long standing Friend of Killhope and recently a committee member. He willingly gave his time, expertise and commitment. He is a very sad loss.

Unfortunately John Sheppard is standing down from the committee, we will certainly miss his calm and reasoned manner. He would like to pass the editorship of the newsletter into new hands and is willing to help with the handover, so please consider if this is something you could do. John will collate the September issue but we need a willing volunteer moving forward. We want to thank John for all the work he has done as a Friend of Killhope. John was part of the first working party to start Killhope on its journey to where it is today and he has been a steadfast supporter throughout that journey. He and Jane, his wife, are very familiar faces at Killhope. We wish him and Jane well and hope to see him at Killhope in the future. The coffee will be on us!

Finally, as you all know, Killhope closed last year for some major refurbishment to take place and was due to open for the new season in 2025. Unfortunately it has not all gone to plan and Killhope is still closed. The only information we have is that no opening date is confirmed. We can only hope that it is sooner rather than later.

We look forward to visiting a renewed and improved Killhope soon.

Treasurer's Report FoK 2024/25 AGM 14th June 2025

Expenditure

£388 was spent on the transcription of tapes of Miners' recordings of their memories. These will be included in future Newsletters. An exhibition at St John's Chapel in October 2024 cost ££173 for hire of the hall and for reproduction of photographs.

There was an increase in the cost of insurance from £96 to £285 as previous cover was insufficient for the mineral specimens in particular on display and stored at Killhope Museum. We will arrange a fresh valuation of the Assets once the Museum reopens.

Durham have arranged the printing and circulation of the newsletters which has resulted in a considerable saving.

Income

There was an 11% increase in subscription income for the year. Bank interest more than doubled as a result of the increase in interest rates.

No claims were submitted for Gift Aid, but these can be backdated for 4 years. I will try to find time to submit a claim this year.

Accounts

There was a surplus of £674 for the year a decrease of £1,053 from last year which benefited from 4 years backdated Gift Aid claims providing income of £1,113.

£2,000 was transferred to the deposit account with United Trust Bank in October. There was no change in the Asset values but these will be

revalued for insurance purposes as soon as conditions at the Museum permit.

The accounts have been audited on a pro bono basis.

Subscriptions

As the Charity is financially stable there is no need to increase subscriptions. As most people pay by standing order on 1st January any increase would be logistically demanding.

Future Projects

The upgrade of the website friendsofkillhope.org is being discussed with Neil Burnett Design. This company is based in Kendal. His initial estimate of cost was about £3,000 compared to £4,000 for a company in the South. The area of most technical difficulty is the search facility for the Newsletters. The intention is to put all 100+ of them on the website as pdfs and allow searching by keywords. Only the most recent newsletters would be excluded to give Members a benefit as the search would be open to all.

The problem is devising a system to take the user to the correct page of the selected newsletter. Neil has discussed this with developers and has quoted £5,500 +VAT for the search. This was discussed and felt to be too high, also required manual checking of text documents. The original word and word perfect documents maybe available which would overcome the problem of the inaccurate scans.

Another alternative is to use AI to provide a list of keywords and provide links to the appropriate part of the pdf.

Seven thousand pounds has been placed on withdrawal from the 40 day notice account with UTB to cover the expected expenditure.