

Chairman's Report at  
AGM of Sutton Walls Conservation Group 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025

This year we had challenges with the weather at the beginning of the year and were unable to access the walls to carry out maintenance. We did have some trees down but Mr Cranmore and team were able to remove them very quickly from our footpaths and maintain access for our visitors.

We managed to get in 4 work parties during the year, 2 specifically with regards to our guided walks for the Herefordshire Histories Festival in May. The Herefordshire Histories event, which included an exhibition at Sutton Village Hall, was very successful and well received and we have already agreed that we will do this again in May 2026.

It was with sadness that we recorded the passing of Chris Thomas, one of our founding trustees who was our repository of all our media records and manager of the website and all things IT. Chris has left a wonderful legacy of photographic records current and past for us to retain as an additional record of Sutton Walls activity. Alison Thomas, Chris's wife, kindly asked for his funeral donations to go to Sutton Walls Conservation Group and this money has been used to pay for an additional set of display boards to improve our presentations which Chris used to love setting up.

We have been trying to recruit new trustees to rebuild our numbers and create succession planning and introduce people with additional skills. This year Alison Thomas has kindly joined us and agreed to help us with the media items and displays that Chris used to do, Derek Atkinson joins us with his experience of being a Hereford City and Cathedral guide and general historian and Judy Stevenson joins us as a founding committee member bringing her vast knowledge of Sutton Walls and her experience of many years with Herefordshire Museum Services.

This year we received monies from Herefordshire Community Foundation for the purchase of a Stihl brush cutter. Many thanks to the persistence of Mrs Keating. This now provides us with professional equipment to do a good job of clearing overgrown areas.

We also received monies for brushcutter training for Richard Gilbert which now gives us 3 qualified people for brushcutting, building our capacity to manage the site.

This Woodland Management Plan (WMP) has considerably advanced with all stakeholders having been consulted. Historic England and the Forestry Commission held a site meeting with our professional forestry agent, Andrew Pickup, and committee members Tony Bramley and Richard Cranmore. Discussions are now advanced between the Historic England and the Forestry Commission who put forward proposals for the WMP which we have approved. We are now waiting to get 'in principal' approval of the outline WMP and formal confirmation we are eligible for the Countryside Stewardship grant which will pay circa £10,000 per year for ten years. This will cover contractor and agent support costs. Our agent hopes we will be able to prepare for works and make grant claims in the 2026/27 financial year. This is very positive news and we are hugely grateful to Andrew Pickup for his hard work on our behalf and to Tony Bramley who has liaised with all the parties and spearheaded this complicated grant application process.

Footpaths are still a challenge as Sutton St Nicholas Parish Council and the County Council who are responsible for keeping foot paths clear advise that there is no money available but we are looking towards a bid to the Parish Council to access a grant until a longer term solution is found.

It was decided to initiate from 2026 onwards, aspects of the Research Project which are achievable by the group, starting with familiarisation and recording of artefacts recovered from Kathleen Kenyon's excavations in 1948-51.

Thus ends the report.

**Sutton Walls Conservation Group (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation), Charity number 1175194**

**Financial statements for the year ended 5 April 2025**

**Receipts and payments account**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £	Year ended 5 April 2024 £
<b>Receipts</b>					
Grants		0	0	0	6275
Donations, including Giftaid recovery		0	0	0	500
Short-term loan		0	0	0	1000
Miscellaneous		261	0	261	601
<i>Sub-total</i>		<u>261</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>261</u>	<u>8376</u>
<b>Payments</b>					
Legal and professional fees		0	0	0	-350
Estate maintenance		-43	-437	-480	-1440
Short-term loan		-1000	0	-1000	0
Signage		0	0	0	-4020
Publicity		0	0	0	-695
Training		0	0	0	-440
Insurance		-358	0	-358	-328
Bank charges		0	0	0	-10
Miscellaneous		-24	0	-24	-56
<i>Sub-total</i>		<u>-1425</u>	<u>-437</u>	<u>-1862</u>	<u>-7339</u>
Net receipts/(payments) for year		-1164	-437	-1601	1037
Cash funds at start of year		2192	851	3043	2006
Transfers between funds				0	0
Cash funds at end of year		<u>1028</u>	<u>414</u>	<u>1442</u>	<u>3043</u>

**Statement of assets and liabilities**

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £	5 April 2024 £
<b>Cash funds</b>				
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>1028</u>	<u>414</u>	<u>1442</u>	<u>3043</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Grass cutting	0	0	0	480
Tree survey	150	0	150	0
Short-term loan	0	0	0	1000
	<u>150</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>1480</u>