

# Friends of the Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK)



Annual report and  
financial statements

Financial year

1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Charity no. 1177405

<https://highgateromankiln.org.uk>



**Haringey**  
LONDON

THE HIGHGATE  
ROMAN KILN PROJECT



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## Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) Annual Report 2024-2025

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard application in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) was registered by the Charity Commission as a CIO (charity no 1177405) on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Its object:

*To advance the education of the public in all aspects of the second century AD Romano-British pottery kiln and factory excavated in Highgate Wood and in particular, by supporting the charitable work of Bruce Castle Museum, the owner of the Roman pottery kiln excavated in the Wood, and the City of London, owner of the Wood, in returning the kiln to the Wood for its display, preservation, study and interpretation for the public benefit.*



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## Structure, Governance and Management

### *The Trustees*

Catherine West MP (part year, chair till 14/11/24)

Charlie Andrew

Peter Barber OBE FSA (part year)

Rosie Boughton

Cllr Cathy Brennan

Monica Buttling-Smith (part year)

Michael Hammerson FSA

Nick Peacey MBE (secretary)

Harvey Sheldon FSA (chair from 14/11/24)

Jeremy Simons, OBE FSA

Trustees are appointed for three years in the first instance.

### *Our partners*

The Trustees are grateful to all who supported us during the year.  
They include:

Claire Skinner and Hugh Dennis, our patrons

Bill LoSasso, Rob Shakespeare, Jonathan Meares, Declan O'Brien and  
Cindy Blaney, Natural Environment Division of the City of London  
Corporation

Deborah Hedgecock, Curator, and the team at the Bruce Castle  
Museum, London Borough of Haringey

The Highgate Society

The Hornsey Historical Society

The Lauderdale House Society

The Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association

Simon Blake, our Independent Examiner

The volunteers and donors who have given us generous time and  
funding

The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the grant award to FOHRK, lead  
applicant for the *Firing London's Imagination* partnership



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# FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE ROMAN KILN

## Annual Report 2024-2025

### Introduction

This has been an important year for FORHK and its partners, the City of London Corporation and the London Borough of Haringey. It has seen the restoration of the Roman kiln, and its return to Highgate Wood where it was originally excavated. We have built a replica kiln within the Wood, and fired it twice. And we have expanded the education programme to include a course for older students. Throughout we have continued to inform and involve volunteers and visitors to Highgate Wood, and to publicise the project widely.

### Restoration and return of the kiln

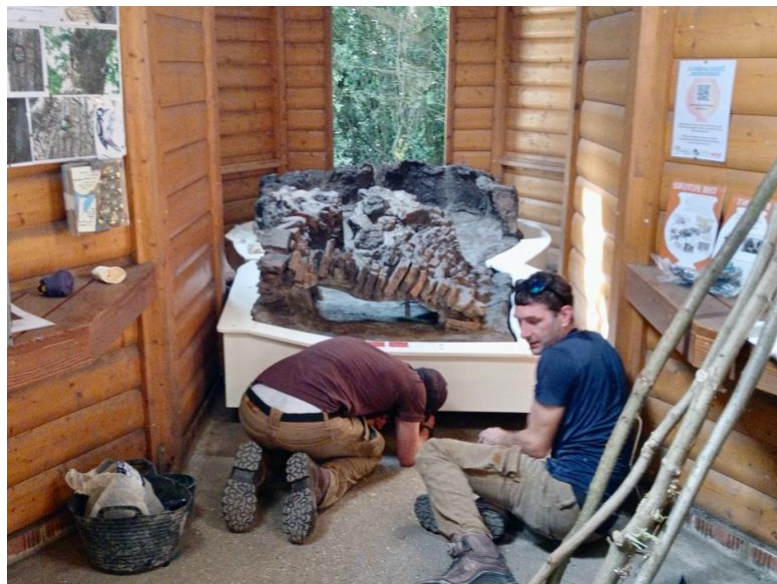
The original kiln was transported to the Natural Building Centre in Llanrwst, Wales, in February 2024. After a full assessment of the condition of the kiln, Ned Scharer of the NBC invited the Trustees to discuss the best way to proceed, on a Zoom call on 16 April. It was agreed that the restoration should be 'honest', that is, it should be clear to a viewer looking closely where restoration work had been undertaken to the original fabric. That said, it was thought unnecessary - indeed unwise - to attempt to remove all the restoration interventions undertaken in previous years. Further, it was accepted that the firebox/flue arch would need to be supported, so that the restored kiln looked as much as possible as it did when first excavated.



A Roman potter's fingermarks

We went on to consider how the kiln could best be exhibited once it is returned to Highgate Wood, so that it was as accessible as possible, while protected from damage, whether wilful or accidental. The continued support of the kiln on seven movable bases will assist in returning and repositioning it; it will also make it much easier to relocate the kiln when the refurbishment of the visitor centre takes place, or if it were to be loaned to another institution in the future.

Following the restoration work at the Natural Building Centre, the kiln was returned to Highgate Wood on 27 August 2024. It was placed in the Information Centre, which had been subject to minor work to close off the second entrance: the size of the kiln made it impossible for through traffic to continue.



The Natural Building Centre team  
installing the restored kiln

Display boards explain the history of the pottery industry in Highgate Wood in Roman times and the archaeological excavations which led to its discovery. The locating of the kiln and the display boards in the Information Centre has temporarily displaced the ecological information about Highgate Wood previously displayed there: the eventual rebuild should enable this to be restored.





Home after 56 years

The new exhibition of the kiln was ceremonially opened by our patron Hugh Dennis.

### **Construction and firing of the replica kiln**

It had been resolved early in the year that the construction and firing of a replica kiln would both provide valuable information about the work of the original potters, and also engage a considerable degree of public interest. Graham Taylor, widely thought to be the foremost authority on Roman kilns, and with a wealth of practical experience of building and firing replica kilns at Vindolanda, was invited to supervise the project. Building the kiln took place in the week beginning 12 August 2024, with a team of volunteers and trustees, utilising materials from Highgate Wood.



Credit: Kieran Keeton

The first firing of the kiln then took place on Highgate Wood Heritage Day, September 1, to maximise the public interest in the project on a day of greater than usual footfall in the Wood: the original kiln had just that week been returned to the Hut. A key partner for this process was a local ceramic studio and pottery, Turning Earth, whose interest and involvement in the project has been hugely valuable.



Graham Taylor and volunteers unloading the kiln

Shem Morgan, from Turning Earth took on responsibility for the second firing of the kiln on September 21, with Graham Taylor's long range guidance. This second firing was able to utilise experience gained at the first firing in respect of the raising and monitoring of the temperature, and the degree to which oxygen could be eliminated from inside the kiln - reduction - to affect the eventual constitution and appearance of the pottery. 12 volunteer potters had undergone training in the making of various styles of Roman ceramics similar to those excavated in Highgate Wood. Several hundred pots made by them and by other volunteers were fired in the kiln, including pots made by students from The Treehouse School for those with autistic spectrum disorder.

We welcomed over 1,500 visitors to the site over August and September, to view the newly returned original kiln and the replica kiln and its firings; 40 volunteers took part in different aspects of the project. The City's media team estimated that 4,400,000

people watched the broadcasts on the BBC and ITV regional news. The historian Eleanor Barraclough came to the second firing and made an excellent 15 minute programme about it for Radio 3:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0027db5>

## Educational programmes and STEAM

The appointment of Michaela Wright as half-time heritage engagement officer, in October 2023, has contributed a great deal to the range and success of the educational programmes undertaken in relation to the project. The following summary relates to the academic year September 2023 - September 2024, overlapping with the year that is the subject of this Annual Report, and gives a flavour of the scale of the educational programmes undertaken by *Firing London's Imagination*

- 905 school aged pupils took part in our learning programme
- Four KS1 - lower KS2 Roman woodland adventure sessions were delivered in Highgate Wood *'all the different activities were pitched just right - the map reading, the quercus identification, checking for squirrels and birds - these were things many of my class were not used to doing, so it was a real adventure for them'* (teacher feedback)
- 30 KS2 hands-on archaeology and clay sessions were delivered in local schools

Significant efforts have been made to engage schools with pupils less likely to visit the Wood, and less familiar with heritage issues.

An important new initiative in the summer term of 2024 was the introduction of a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) course run over five consecutive days for 12 A level students from local schools. The object of the course was to provide structured work experience in different aspects of ceramics, archaeology, and heritage management, with a problem-solving approach. The course gained very positive feedback from both students and teachers, and will be run again in the summer term of 2025. What is more, FYI have been encouraged to consider the development of the course within the FE sector, to provide experience of work within the heritage sector to students on a variety of different programmes.



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## Wider publicity

During the year, Nick Peacey (Secretary) has undertaken a series of accompanied walks from the original and replica kilns, to the excavation site, which have regularly engaged local visitors to the Wood. We were also pleased to welcome a group of young people, with their parents and carers from the City of London Young Archaeologists Club. Harvey Sheldon (Chair) and Nick Peacey have also spoken to a number of specialist groups about the project, including Hendon and District Archaeological Society, the West Essex Archaeology Group and at the Mudlarking Exhibition, organised by our Trustee Monika Buttling-Smith at the Guildhall.

Meanwhile, Michaela Wright has developed the project's presence on social media, reaching 2,800 accounts on Instagram in September 2024 with the return of the kiln and the construction and firing of the replica kiln. And we heard early in 2025 that the project is now scheduled as a Ceramic World Destination on the map of the Museum of Ceramic Art 'A Virtual Platform Celebrating Clay', based in New York.



Seasons in Highgate Wood

Credit: Jeff Overs

## Looking forward

A key task for the next year, the final funding year of the project, will be to undertake the reconstruction of the Information Centre into a more appropriate setting for the restored kiln. There has been a good deal of activity on this topic this year, with architectural design work already undertaken and discussed by Trustees and partners, and by the Highgate Wood Consultative Committee. We will also be turning our attention to the experience of a visitor keen to visit the site of the original excavation, with discussions already under way about waymarking, designing an accessible route for visitors with disabilities, and the development of augmented reality experiences to place the viewer back in the second century CE with the potters.

With the end of the project now in sight, Trustees are embarking on discussion of the ways in which the kiln should be set in its wider context: *locally* - related to other Roman finds in the area, such as the Cranley Gardens hoard; *geographically* - the relationship to London and its access roads; *historically* - the history of Highgate Wood from Roman times to now; and *geologically* - why this particular botany and clay was found in Highgate Wood.

## FOHRK Trustee membership

There have been key changes in Trustee membership during the year. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to our Chair, Catherine West MP, when she became a Minister; we are grateful for the support she has shown to the project over the years. We have been delighted to welcome Harvey Sheldon as our new Chair and two new Trustees, Peter Barber, the Chair of Hornsey Historical Society and Monica Buttling-Smith, a Freeman of the City of London and a volunteer from Turning Earth Highgate who was heavily involved in the September firings of the replica kiln.



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**Statement of financial activities incorporating income and  
expenditure account for period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025**

Note s	Activities in furtherance of the CIO's objects	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted funds £	2024/5 All funds £	2023/4 All funds £
	Incoming resources				
	Donations	0	727	727	486
1	Grants NHLF	91351	0	91351	5940
	Grants other	0	0	0	0
	Fee for lecture	0	0	0	0
	Bank Interest	0	30	30	23
	Total incoming resources	91351	757	92108	6449
	Resources expended -				
2	Administration	0	401	401	351
	Travel expenses etc	0	0	0	511
	Marketing/design	3117	0	3117	473
	Volunteer expenses	1205	0	1205	0
	Consultancy/courses	1000	0	1000	7774
	Catering: public events, Lauderdale House	0	0	0	0
	Learning materials	281	0	281	2018
	Repayment	0	0	0	285
	Repayment to CLC	84685	0	84685	0
	Digitisation	0	0	0	819
	Total expenditure	90288	401	90689	12231
	Surplus/deficit for the period	1063	356	1419	(-)5782
	Carried forward from FY 2023-2024	(-)3751	14,400	10649	
	C/F to FY 2025/2026	-2688	14756	12068	

## **1. Accounting Policies**

### **a) Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards. They follow the recommendations in the statement of recommended practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities (issued in March 2005).

### **b) Income**

Grants are credited to income when receivable.

### **c) Expenses**

Expenses are recognised in the period when they are incurred.

### **d) Restricted funds**

These are grants received for specific purposes. Expenses incurred for these purposes are charged to the restricted fund.

## **2. Staff costs**

The charity has no employees.

### **Notes to accounts**

1. Claim from NLHF grant (This covers net expenditure by FOHRK and CLC.)
2. Bank charges (CAFBANK), web support for fund-raising including Just Giving, website maintenance



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK)

On accounts for the year  
ended

31st March 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1177405

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

S.Blake

Date:

29/12/2025

Name:

Simon Blake

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

FCA (retired)

Address:

8 Birchwood Avenue

London

N10 3BE

### Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

IFR.

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## Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2025

	Restricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £	2024/25 All funds
Fixed assets	0	0	0
Current assets	-2688	14756	12068
Net assets	-2688	14756	12068

Approved by the Trustees on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

Nicholas Peacey

Secretary



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