

# Friends of Rowntree Park

## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ending 30 September 2025

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# CHARITY INFORMATION

For the year ending 30 September 2025

## Charity Overview

Registered Charity Name:	Friends of Rowntree Park
Charity Number:	1183948
Principal Office Address:	16 Norfolk Street York YO23 1JY
Trustees:	Lucy Katherine Brown Agnes Reka Szechy Edward George Woollard Polly Louisa Bennett (resigned 31 January 2025) Jane Elen Mackay Rebecca Blues Anthony Chester Dr Catherine Jane Mortimer Jacqueline Bateson (appointed January 2025, Chair) Matthew Smelt-Webb (appointed 1 March 2025)

# TRUSTEES' REPORT

For the year ending 30 September 2025

## Introduction

The trustees hereby present the annual report for Friends of Rowntree Park, a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (registered number 1183948). Friends of Rowntree Park (hereafter referred to as FRP) is a charity focused on maintaining and improving Rowntree Park in York.

## The Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the year were as follows:

- Lucy Katherine Brown
- Agnes Reka Szechy
- Edward George Woollard
- Polly Louisa Bennett (resigned 31 January 2025)
- Jane Elen Mackay
- Rebecca Blues
- Anthony Chester
- Dr Catherine Jane Mortimer
- Jacqueline Bateson (appointed January 2025, Chair)
- Matthew Smelt-Webb (appointed 1 March 2025)

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Trust Deed. Trustees meet quarterly, and all decisions are reached by agreement. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

## Background

The Friends of Rowntree Park are a registered charity. From 1993-2019, the Friends of Rowntree Park ran as a not-for-profit organisation with a committee leading the day-to-day management of our volunteer activities.

The Friends of Rowntree Park became a charity in June 2019 and trustees were appointed at this time. All trustees and committee members are volunteers.

Our volunteers love Rowntree Park in York and help care for it. Our volunteers do activities such as garden, litter pick, help with wildlife, run community events and projects, as well as focusing on education and mental health and wellbeing.

## Objectives and Activities

Our vision is for The Friends to be a well-resourced and sustainable group of volunteers and staff focused on enhancing the value of the park as a cherished, thriving, green space at the heart of our local community.

We aim to the quality of life for residents and visitors through use of the park and its facilities, enabling and delivering a range of activities that engage all sectors of the community.

Our aims are:

- Conserve, protect and improve the physical space and environment of the park
- Offer educational opportunities related to history, biodiversity and other aspects of good environmental practices
- Provide opportunities for education, recreation and other leisure interests
- Promote civic responsibility, volunteering, health and wellbeing

Over the 2024-25 financial year, the Friends have contributed to these aims through a huge and varied range of activities, including but not limited to:

- Regular children's events, including a weekly pre-school Forest School and Wild Ones nature youth group for teenage girls, a monthly Very Young Friend and quarterly Family Forest Schools.
- Other children's / family events, such as the Easter Trail, Children's Christmas Crafts, Autumn Art and the Autumn Fayre, Festive Forest School, Children's Christmas Crafts, a city-wide Nature Challenge and a Halloween Event
- Adult events, including Wreath Making, Christmas Crafts, Willow-weaving, history walks and talks, York Unlocked, York Festival of Ideas and York Environment Week, which included wildlife area and seed collecting sessions.
- Other projects, such as Art in the Park, the Remembrance Display, involvement in York Unlocked, York Festival of Ideas and York Environment Week, and the Make Space York Festival. Charity Manager, Abigail Gaines, also led related sessions for York International Women's Week, spoke at The Mansion House for International Women's Day and at York Theatre for the Women of the World Show.

We have also organised a range of outside providers to run events including nature writing, York Buddhists meet-ups, theatre productions, a pizza van and group social meet up / gatherings as well as children's birthday parties and even a wedding!

We run a membership scheme where anyone can join the Friends of Rowntree Park. This money helps fund the work we do.

We have a small group of around 50 dedicated volunteers that want to make Rowntree Park the best it can be. Volunteer gardening sessions are held four mornings a week and for the wildlife area on a Saturday every other week. The volunteers work on Rosemary's Sensory Garden, the Long Borders, Rose Garden, Friends' Garden, Pollinator Beds, Rockery and Wildlife areas. They also partake in other key volunteering activities like bird feeding, litter-picking and helping at events.

We run a range of events for all ages. Many of these tend to focus on natural and 'eco' themes.

## Objectives and Activities

Key achievements for during the 2024-25 financial year include:

- Green Flag Award contributions
- Changes to the Lodge Garden for propagation (new gate / clearing out debris)
- Increased membership fee to boost income
- Make Space York project an example of good practice, with Abigail sharing presentations to North Yorkshire Health Hubs, the Irish Government and others.

## Community Link with the Council

FRP continue to work with the council to report issues and suggest improvements. Our main contact is Dave Meigh of Public Realms, but we also work with the Environment and Community Team, who mainly support workplace volunteering in the park. Our Eco Team links were Beki Hagger and Melanie Elkan. Beki has now left but is still working in the park via St Nicks.

## Social Media

In the past year we have continued to have good social media presence, which is vital for engaging with our community and promoting our activities. From 1 October 2024, we have increased our Facebook followers by 6.3% (we now have 8.5k followers). This growth reflects our ongoing efforts to connect with our audience and share the positive impact of our initiatives. Meanwhile, over the last 90 days, our Instagram content has reached 15k accounts. This impressive reach demonstrates the effectiveness of our social media in engaging a wider audience and raising awareness about FRP. These numbers not only highlight our growing influence but also provide an opportunity to further engage with our community. By continuing to enhance our social media presence, we can attract more volunteers, participants and members.

## Future Plans

### Lodge Project

The Lodge Project Team continues to meet regularly and are currently looking at grant-making organisations for a large bid to support this project, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Work is also ongoing on our negotiations with the council on the lease and the Heads of Terms are currently being agreed.

## Structure, Governance and Management

Our Trustees and Committee work closely together. In fact, some trustees were originally committee members and still have active roles on the committee too.

Our trustees oversee the strategic planning of the charity. They make sure the Friends plans are in line with the charity's aims and that the charity's funds are handled responsibly. The priority for the trustees and the charity, as a whole, is developing strategy, especially with regard to financial planning and stability, to ensure the charity can continue as a going concern.

In January 2025, a new Chair of the Board of Trustees, Jacqueline Bateman, was appointed. She replaced interim Chair, Edward Wollard, who was appointed following the departure of Cath Mortimer.

Our committee members are involved in the day-to-day running of the charity. They plan and run events and activities in line with the charity's aims and objectives. The committee has open/public meetings four times a year in January, April, June and October (AGM). Subgroups also meet throughout the year.

The charity has a paid charity manager, Abigail Gaines, who works part-time, looking after the volunteers and members, as well as coordinating our wide-ranging activities and all the design and advertising. Those leading the Forest School and Gardening strands receive payment towards their work and we pay for a few hours of admin/finance help as well as an accountant for our end of year accounts. Since April / May 2025 we have also had two grant-funded temporary roles. A Volunteer Engagement Coordinator (Toria Morris) and a Wildlife Area Volunteer Lead (Cas Casauer).

## Reserves Policy

The charity aims to hold reserves of no less than three months of ongoing expenditure.

## Political Donations

The Friends has no party-political affiliations and does not make political donations.

## Financial Accounts

The accounts for the year ending 30 September 2025 have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Articles of Association and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities – Statement of Recommended Practice, applicable to all charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards.

The financial year has ended with a net deficit (total income less total expenditure) of £4,558, made up of a net deficit on unrestricted funds of £573, and a net deficit on restricted funds of £3,985.

Total charitable income in 2024-25 was £44,573, compared to £63,914 in 2023-24, a decrease of £19,341. This was primarily driven by a fall in restricted income from grants. However, in contrast, income from charitable and trading activities both increased during the period.

Total expenditure on charitable activities in 2024-25 was £49,131, compared to £77,083 in 2023-24 a decrease of £27,952.

The balance on unrestricted funds will reduce the charity reserves, however the release of restricted funds during the year means that there remains £22,316 in unrestricted funds to be carried forward. The balance on restricted funds will be carried forward to next financial year, in accordance with restricted grant funding requirements.

## Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:


- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- So far as each trustee is aware, there is no relevant information of which the independent reviewer is unaware, and
- Each trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant financial information that may have a material impact on the financial reports and to establish that the organisation's independent reviewer is aware of that information.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:



.....

Jacqueline Bateman  
Chair of Trustees

Approved by the board on

Date: **13/03/2026**  
.....

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

For the year ending 30 September 2025

I report on the accounts of Friends of Rowntree Park for the year ending 30 September 2025, which are set out on pages 9-13.

## Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charities Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

## Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view", and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act
  - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

Have not been met, or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....  
Nicola Ainscough FCA BSc  
Chartered Accountant  
Equilibrium Accountants Ltd  
48 Goodramgate, York, YO1 7LF

9 February 2026



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ending 30 September 2025

	Notes	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
<b>INCOME</b>					
Incoming and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	14,314	1,157	15,471	38,583
Charitable activities	3	-	24,612	24,612	22,756
Other trading activities	4	-	4,490	4,490	2,575
Investments		-	-	-	-
Other income		-	-	-	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>14,314</b>	<b>30,259</b>	<b>44,573</b>	<b>63,914</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	5	-	2,578	2,578	1,334
Charitable activities	6	17,651	24,508	42,159	72,331
Other	7	647	3,746	4,393	3,418
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>18,298</b>	<b>30,832</b>	<b>49,130</b>	<b>77,083</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) for the period</b>		<b>(3,984)</b>	<b>(573)</b>	<b>(4,557)</b>	<b>(13,169)</b>
<b>Transfer of funds</b>	8	<b>(250)</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Total funds brought forward as at 1 Oct 23		27,617	22,889	50,506	63,675
<b>Total funds carried forward as at 30 Sep 24</b>	9	<b>23,383</b>	<b>22,566</b>	<b>45,949</b>	<b>50,506</b>

The notes on pages 11-13 form a part of these financial statements

A Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses is not required as all gains and losses are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

There is no difference between the net income / (expenditure) for the period above and the historical cost equivalent. All activities are continuing.

# BALANCE SHEET

For the year ending 30 September 2025

	Notes	£	As at 30 Sep 2025 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets			-
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Stocks		-	
Prepayments		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		45,949	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year			-
<b>Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)</b>			45,949
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>			45,949
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year			-
<b>Net Assets</b>			45,949
<b>FUNDS</b>	5		
Unrestricted funds			22,316
Restricted funds			23,633
<b>Total Funds</b>			45,949

The notes on pages 11-13 form a part of these financial statements

## Trustee benefits: advances, credit and guarantees

During the year no benefits, in the form of advances, credit and guarantees, were conferred upon trustees of the charity.

## Guarantees and other financial commitments

During the year no guarantees or other financial commitments were made.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages 9-13 were approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Jacqueline Bateman  
Chair of Trustees

Date: 13/03/2026

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ending 30 September 2025

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### a) Statutory Information

Friends of Rowntree Park is a registered charity in the UK with the Charities Commission, registration number 1183948.

### b) Basis of preparation and assessment of going concern

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and on the receipts and payment basis.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

The principal accounting policies, which have been applied consistently in the period, are set out below.

### c) Compliance with accounting standards

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, the Accounting and Reporting by Charities for Smaller Entities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Effective January 2015) – (Charities 'SORP' FRS 102)): the provisions of FRS 102 Section 1A – Small Entities and other applicable accounting standards in the United Kingdom.

### d) Funds structure

Earmarked funds, as shown in the notes to the accounts, represent funds set aside by the trustees for use on specific projects. Amounts shown as Restricted Funds, on the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet, represent funds donated for specific projects in accordance with the Charities Act definition.

### e) Income recognition

Revenue is recognised in respect of non-government, non-exchange transactions, donations and funds received for goods and services supplied during the financial period on receipt.

### f) Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year the trustees did not receive any remuneration or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, as none were incurred.

## 2. DONATION AND LEGACIES INCOME

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
General	-	1,157	1,157	2,021
<b>Grants</b>				
ASDA	2,100	-	2,100	3,153
Community Ownership Fund	-	-	-	9,764
The Cooperative Foundation	500	-	500	-
Feoffees	7,000	-	7,000	-
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	-	-	-	15,000
MIND	-	-	-	1,270
National Lottery Fund	-	-	-	3,635
Tesco	-	-	-	1,000
Trailblazers	-	-	-	2,740
Two Ridings	1,414	-	1,414	-
York Children's Trust	3,300	-	3,300	-
Yorkshire Water	-	-	-	-
	14,314	1,157	15,471	38,583

## 3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES INCOME

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
Membership	-	11,390	11,390	7,976
External Event Booking Income	-	2,475	2,475	1,209
Events Income	-	10,747	10,747	13,571
	-	24,612	24,612	22,756

## 4. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES INCOME

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
FRP Merchandise	-	2,339	2,339	2,049
Duck Food	-	2,151	2,151	526
	-	4,490	4,490	2,575

## 5. RAISING FUNDS

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
Duck Food	-	560	560	74
Bird Food / Feeds	-	75	75	-
Merchandise Expenses	-	882	882	924
Advertising Expenses	-	1,061	1,061	336
	-	2,578	2,578	1,334

## 6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
Projects	-	10,397	10,397	11,806
Volunteer Retention	-	194	194	184
Forest School	-	2,284	2,284	2,815
Charity Management	-	11,633	11,633	11,089
Grant Expenses	17,651	-	17,651	46,437
	17,651	24,508	42,159	72,331

## 7. OTHER

Year to	Year to
---------	---------

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	30 Sep 2025 Total £	30 Sep 2024 Total £
General Expenses	-	650	650	282
Insurance	529	39	568	548
Fees	-	1,117	1,117	886
Website/IT	118	1,940	2,058	1,702
	647	3,746	4,393	3,418

## 8. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

The board of trustees have approved the following reallocation of funds between the restricted and unrestricted fund accounts:

Fund	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £
Charities Trust*	(250)	250	-
	(250)	250	-

\* During the 2024-25 financial year it was confirmed that the Charities Trust payment of £250 was a gift donation, and as such has been released from the restricted fund. This has now been designated towards the Lodge Garden.

## 9. RESTRICTED FUNDS RECONCILIATION

	Restricted Fund 30 Sep 2024 £	Restricted Fund movement £	Year to 30 Sep 2025 Total £
<b>Restricted Funds**</b>			
ASDA	-	1,282	1,282
Belfry	393	(393)	-
Benenden	118	(118)	-
Charities Trust (see note 8)	250	(250)	-
The Cooperative Foundation	-	500	500
Crime Commissioner	7,597	(2,580)	5,017
Feoffees	-	4,969	4,969
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	11,976	(6,000)	5,976
MSFG - Equipment	642	-	642
Trailblazers	1,011	(1,011)	-
Two Ridings	-	1,153	1,153
York Children's Trust	-	-	-
Yorkshire Water	5,630	(1,786)	3,844
	27,617	(11,427)	23,383

\*\* First Transpennine confirmed during the 2022-23 financial year that the grant issued in the previous financial period was released from all restriction and could be treated as a designated general donation. The balance on this fund is 697 (2024: £817).

# ADC131 - Friends of Rowntree Park - Annual Report - 2024-25

Final Audit Report

2026-03-13

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