

**Trustees' Annual Report**  
**for the period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023**  
**(with a summary of activities from November 2021 - March 2023)**



**Abbey Cwmhir**  
**Heritage Trust**

*Ymddiriedolaeth*  
*Treftadaeth*  
*Abaty Cwmhir*

## **Reference and Administrative details**

Name of Charity: Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust  
Charity No: 1196905  
Principal address: Ty'r Ehedydd, Abbeycwmhir, Powys LD1 6PL

### **Current Trustees:**

Roger Coward  
John Hughes  
Julian Lovell - Secretary  
Jackie Marriott - Treasurer & Membership Secretary  
Sian Meredudd  
Mel Walters

As a result of changing to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) at the end of March 2022, the Trust has changed its reporting year end from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The report of achievements and performance below covers the 17 month period from November 2021 to March 2023. This period covers both the 2022/3 financial year and the previous 5 months since the last AGM, which covered activities up to October 2021. Members have previously received the financial results for the period November 2021 - March 2022, so that financial information is not repeated here.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The Trust's Object is to advance the education of the public in the preservation and the historical and cultural importance of Cwmhir Abbey through the provision of information, events, research and continued learning.

The Trust carries out a range of activities, many of which are focussed on Community Heritage under the project 'Demystifying the Abbey'.

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Our activities include:

- Assistance to Cadw in the content of the Exhibition Room at the Abbey ruins.
- Hosting a series of on-line talks that are open to the public
- Providing a public facing newsletter summarising the Trust's research and community activities
- Offering the opportunity for volunteers to become involved in research activities associated with the Trust's aims. This includes both desk based research and field based activities
- Provision of training events associated with the Trust's research
- An annual memorial service for Llywelyn ap Gruffydd
- Maintaining our on-line presence through a website and social media
- This year we collaborated with the History Forum for Wales exhibition at the National Eisteddfod, allowing us to be part of a bigger bilingual exhibition joining with other history groups. This drew attention to the importance of the Abbey in the history of Wales.

The Trust is extremely grateful for the substantial support provided by many volunteers. None of the activities above would be possible without their support.

Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust can confirm that they have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

## **Achievements and Performance**

During this period the Trust has supported Cadw, through a grant of £12,670 to deliver improvements to the visitor experience at the Abbey. This has included improving lighting in the Exhibition Room and the commissioning and display of a number of 3D models of stones from the ruins that have been relocated to other places. These include Capitals now found in St Idloes Church, Llanidloes and statues that can be seen at Radnorshire Museum, Llandrindod Wells. The grant has also allowed the Trust to commission a new display board to be located at the ruins themselves. Cadw does not charge for access to the Exhibition Room at Abbeycwmhir, and we are most grateful to the Hamer family for allowing public access to the abbey ruins.

The Trust also completed the delivery of a grant to 'Demystify the Landscape' from Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) to the value of £11,191 that encouraged volunteering by providing a series of publically accessible training events. The events completed during the reporting period were:

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- 20/21<sup>st</sup> November 2021 – Dr Joe Botting - How rocks shape our landscape and how rocks have influenced man's activities
- 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - Ross Cook – Field Day on Vernacular Buildings in Radnorshire: Two rare 16th Century building survivals
- 12th/13th March 2022 – Dr Jemma Bezant – Be a Landscape Detective: from Desk to Field
- 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 – John Handley – On-line talk: Plants in the medieval period – importance, survival and myth
- 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – Dr Ian Brooks - Investigating our landscape with hands-on geophysical surveying: Training in the use of resistivity and magnetometry methods for archaeological surveying at Gwernygo near Kerry in June 2022. This event was linked to a public field trip to Gwernygo on 11th June 2022, hosted jointly by the Trust and Sarn Local History Group, who provided the local knowledge and organisation. Our thanks go to Carrie White for all the work she did to make this trip such a success.
- 25<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – Fiona Gomersall – Understanding our landscape through botanical field surveying

We thank all the landowners who gave us permission to conduct these events on their property.

A video was made of our visit to Llanddewi Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022 which is available on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and with a link from our website. Our thanks to Alison Finnieston for the recording and preparation of this video.

Under the WCVA grant we trained a total of 84 people, compared with our initial target of 39. A total of 3589 hours were delivered against a target of 3028. The grant has been very important for the Trust as it made a link with a number of people in Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire, many of whom continue to actively volunteer with us on aspects of understanding the landscape and in particular heritage research. A meeting of this group was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 and we subsequently meet on zoom on a monthly basis to share ongoing research findings. These meetings are recorded and links to the discussions are available on-line for the public to view.

As part of our research, we conduct field surveying and drone photogrammetry, and in regard to the latter, we are particularly appreciative of the support given by Julian Ravest, who has conducted drone surveys of a large number of sites of interest to us.

In 2021 and 2022 we conducted archaeological surveys at Cwmffwrn Farm in the Abbey Home Grange, and we have continued to excavate 'old cwnfforn' farmstead in this reporting period. Cwmffwrn Farm is owned by Angela and Ian Lewis and we thank them for

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their interest in our research and their permission for us to survey and excavate on their farm.

In 2020 the Trust signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Prof David Austin of Strata Florida and the AHRC 'Sacred Landscapes of Medieval Monasteries' project. This agreement gave us the resources to conduct a resistivity survey and archaeological building survey at Home Farm. Although the MoA expired at the end of 2022, the Trust's relationship with Prof Austin remains strong and productive, and it is hoped that our ongoing research will lead to the preparation of a book on Cwmhir Abbey within the series 'Strata Florida Books' <https://www.facebook.com/YstradFflur/posts/3089811434576204/>. Prof Austin continues to support us with our research and our team have had meetings with him on 3 occasions during the period (4<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023).

We hosted 6 on-line talks during the period:

- 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 Plants in the medieval period: importance, survival and myth by John Handley (see above)
- 21<sup>th</sup> April 2022 Cistercians and Scholarship in Medieval Wales by Dr Rhun Emlyn
- 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 Monastic precincts and new discoveries at Abbey Cwmhir by Prof David Austin and Julian Ravest
- 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 Constructed Pasts and Shared Identities: the Cistercian Order by Prof Janet Burton
- 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales: His Rise and Fall by Prof Huw Pryce
- 2<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Histories in Homes: the development of the house from medieval to modern by Ross Cook

We are most grateful to our speakers for the time and contribution that they have made to the Trust. Recordings of these talks have been placed on Youtube with links from our website.

The Trust uses the eventbrite.com donation method to manage the ticketing process for non-members access to these talks. This method appears effective, although it does require a certain amount of on-line dexterity by users. In the event that there is an issue, the Treasurer issues tickets manually. The donation approach has resulted in £830.26 donations made towards the Trust's heritage research fund over the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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Whilst our grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund was completed before this grant period, one of its outputs was a series of waymarked walks in the vicinity of Abbeycwmhir, accompanied by route descriptions that point out heritage features along the walks. We provide hardcopy route descriptions in the Exhibition Room and they are also on-line on our website. Whilst we do not have a way of counting the number of people who use these walks, we have had positive reports from many of our local walking groups. Visitors to the village appreciate the access to the route descriptions, which we also give to our local B&Bs, and the relevant part of our website is one of the most popular. The success of these walks has in part been due to the support given by Powys County Council Rights of Way team who helped us with waymarking and built a new pedestrian bridge over the Clywedog Brook in Summer 2022 and NRW who provided and installed two benches and installed a display board (purchased through the NLHF grant) on our behalf. We are most appreciative of their support.

The Trust hosted 'The Pilgrimage' long distance walk on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The weather was excellent and all participants gave good feedback. The Trust had the support of a number of our local community who acted as marshalls, and we are most grateful for their time. As there is a requirement to provide transport to the start of this walk at Strata Florida Abbey, we are finding that it is hard to run this walk in a way that is cost attractive to participants, and in future we may link up with local walking business's instead and provide a tour of the abbey at the end of their walk. This approach proved to be successful in September 2022 when we linked with Bryn Walking ([brynwalking.weebly.com](http://brynwalking.weebly.com)).

We have started to offer bespoke tours of the abbey and village, advertised through our website. The groups donate to our heritage research fund and donations amounting to £110 have resulted over the period. These tours are proving very successful and have been conducted for the following groups:

Rhayader by Nature  
Bryn Walking  
Radnorshire Society

Alison Finnieston kindly recorded and prepared a video of a tour, which is available to the public on Youtube and via our website.

People are a significant part of our heritage and it is important to document their experiences. As such we are collecting memories of the village, both past and present. These memories will be recorded and preserved for future generations and are now available to view on People's Collection Wales. This is an ongoing project and if you feel you have valuable experiences and information to share please contact us on [cwmhirabbey@gmail.com](mailto:cwmhirabbey@gmail.com).

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Through a volunteer - John Brandrick - we now have a computer based 3D visualisation of the abbey as it may possibly have been. Much is speculation, as little hard evidence exists, but the image has drawn together our understanding of the likely architecture from other buildings of the period. John has done a fantastic job and we are very grateful to him.

A public facing newsletter describing some of the Trust's activities was prepared in Summer 2022 with copies made available in the Exhibition Room, the village and on our website.

Our website [www.abbeycwmhir.org](http://www.abbeycwmhir.org) has continued to develop over the period and now includes Discussion Areas that allow public feedback on specific activities. Our thanks are given to Julian and Naisi Ravest who manage the hosting of the website and have designed its overall structure. We also have a facebook and instagram presence and we advertise our activities on these platforms too.

#### Links to Other Organisations

We give our thanks to Catalyst Cymru and PAVO. Catalyst Cymru have provided our Trustees with training opportunities that have been invaluable to help us run the Trust appropriately. PAVO have also been at hand to provide advice and practical support.

Our links with Council for British Archaeology (CBA) Wales have developed during the period, such that we have been invited to host the next CBA Wales public meeting in June 2023 at Abbeycwmhir.

We have many links with the Radnorshire Society and we would particularly like to acknowledge the importance of their library resource.

During the period various papers have been submitted to a range of journals based upon our research. These are:

Lovell, J. *The Hidden History and Heritage of Abbey Cwmhir* Radnorshire Society Transactions 2021

Lovell, J. *The Encroachment Settlements of New Well* Radnorshire Society Field Group Newsletter 2022

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Austin, D., and Ravest, J. *Recent work on the precinct of Abbey Cwmhir, Radnorshire* Arch. Cam. 2022

Pardoe, V., and Walters, M. *Drone surveying over the Upper Afon Dulas: early results.* Radnorshire Society Field Group Newsletter 2021

Bezant, J., Lovell, J., Ravest, J., Walters, M., Olivant, P. *Survey of an upland landscape on the Golon Grange of Abbey Cwmhir, Radnorshire.* Archaeology in Wales 2022

Coward, R. *Old Carvings from Cwmhir Abbey and catalogue of Capital Decorations.* Radnorshire Society Transactions 2022

We were featured in an article in the national magazine *Current Archaeology* in January 2022.

Summary of the main benefits derived from the Trust's activities over this reporting period

Our beneficiaries are:

- Our local community in Abbeycwmhir and nearby
- Visitors to Abbeycwmhir
- People who are interested in landscape and heritage in mid-Wales
- People who are interested in Welsh history

The key benefits that we have achieved over the period November 2021 - March 2023 are:

- An enhanced experience for walkers in the area of Abbeycwmhir.
- An enhanced experience for visitors to the Abbey ruins and the Exhibition Room and thereby, a benefit to local tourism.
- Training opportunities for the public related to understanding our landscape and its heritage.
- Information provided in a varied and engaging manner to enhance people's understanding of the heritage of mid-Wales and Cwmhir Abbey and its granges.
- Opportunities for social interaction in a fun and engaging manner.



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## **Financial Review**

The fund's held by Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust as of 31 March 2023 are as follows:

Main Account:	£4,352.19
Deposit Account:	£6,013.23
Petty Cash:	£216.42
Total Funds Available:	<b>£10,581.84</b>

For more detailed information on Income and Expenditure please refer to the Financial Accounts, included separately, for the period ending 31 March 2023.

We hold our deposit account in reserve to enable cash flow ahead of grant income. Within our main account we hold £3,400 for our research activities.

Our principal source of funds are grants, donations and membership as detailed in the attached accounts.

Assets held by the Trust as at the end of this financial year total £16,400, which have accumulated over several years and were transferred to the new CIO in April 2022. The majority of these Assets have been purchased during 2020 to 2023 using Grant money from National Lottery Heritage Fund, Cadw, WCVA and Magic Little Grants. The main assets include 3D Scanning models, laptop and tablet, excavation equipment, a camcorder and projector. They are currently held by Trustees or in our Exhibition Room at Home Farm, Abbeycwmhir. A full list of Assets can be made available by request.

### **Subscriptions to other bodies**

The Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust are members of:

- The Radnorshire Society
- Council for British Archeology (CBA)
- British Association for Local History (BALH - membership also includes Public Liability Insurance)

### **Grants Received during this period**

The Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust have been fortunate to receive grants from:

- Local Giving Grant - known as Magic Little Grants - Not yet spent in this financial period but planned to be utilised for Excavation supervision during 2023
- University of Wales - Building Survey and Geophysics Home Farm



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- Cadw (Welsh Government's historic environment service) - ongoing improvements to Exhibition including 3D scanning models

### **Membership Report**

Current Membership Fees £15 Single £20 Family. These fees haven't been increased for some years.

In the transition to a new CIO, with a new bank account number, we have inevitably lost a few of our members, but we are pleased to welcome the following new members in this financial year: Fiona and John Marshall; Ian Fairley and Ken Addison

Our numbers are as follows year on year counting joint membership as 2.

No of Members as at 1 April 2022	49
No of Members as at 31 March 2023 (including 4 new members)	38

### **Risks and Mitigation**

The two main risks that the Trust faces are:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Insufficient Trustees to progress the activities of the Trust	Encourage new and diverse Trustees by an active recruitment process
Protection of Data	We have already taken steps to hold much of our data on Google Drive, however lots of heritage data are held by individual researchers. The Trust needs to take advice on how best to archive Trust information.

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust is a [Charitable Incorporated Organisation \(CIO\)](#) with voting members other than its charity trustees. Trustee selection methods, including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees, can be found in our Constitution.

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Our Constitution and our Policies can be found on our website:  
<https://abbeycwmhir.org/uncategorized/policies-and-procedures>

## Accounts Year end 31 March 2023

	Credit	Debit
<b>INCOME:</b>		
Donations	£1,539.30	
Deposit Account Interest	£11.37	
Eisteddfod	£16.00	
Gift Aid	£203.99	
Grants awarded:		
Magic Little Grants 2022	£500.00	
University of Wales	£4,486.00	
Cadw	£4,008.08	
WCVA	£1,119.10	
Membership	£465.00	
Pilgrimage Walk	£450.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>£12,798.84</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>		
Assets		-£364.08
Domain Name <a href="http://www.abbeycwmhir.org">www.abbeycwmhir.org</a>		-£8.25
Eisteddfod		-£200.00
Grant Expenditure:		
University of Wales		-£3,986.00
Cadw		-£4,117.56
WCVA		-£70.00
Hall Hire		-£100.00

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Insurance		-£259.66
Online Resources		-£458.07
Pilgrimage Walk		-£168.10
Postage, Stationery & Printing		-£158.44
Subscriptions		-£47.50
Sundry		-£196.79
		<b>-£10,134.45</b>
<b>NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE:</b>	<b>£2,664.39</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL ASSETS:</b>		
Lloyds Bank Account Closing Balance	£4,352.19	
Lloyds Deposit Account Closing Balance	£6,013.23	
Petty Cash Closing Balance	£216.42	
	<b>£10,581.84</b>	
<b>REPRESENTED BY Reserves brought forward at 01/04/2022</b>		
Lloyds Bank Account	£1,727.90	
Lloyds Deposit Account	£6,001.86	
Petty Cash	£187.69	
Net Income/Expenditure	£2,664.39	
	<b>£10,581.84</b>	

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## **DECLARATIONS**

This report has been prepared, on behalf of the Trustees, by Mel Walters and Jackie Marriott using the guidance set out by the Charities Commission Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

The Trustees declare they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Julian Lovell  
Secretary  
Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust