

Alnwick Civic Society

Annual Review 2025

It's gratifying to begin this review by reporting that our finances are sound, our member numbers are healthy, and our relationships with partner organisations are in good order.

Overall, the Society's financial position remains robust. The treasurer's financial statement showed that assets at 31st December 2025 amounted to £5,542.78. For 2025 the committee determined that it should maintain its ongoing strategy of supporting a growth in the society's activities and commitments, with a particular emphasis on Heritage Awareness. In this regard there was an especially strong focus on supporting Heritage Open Days which was financed from the ring-fenced Heritage Awareness Fund and a generous donation from Alnwick Town Council, made specifically for this event.

In 2025 the committee noted a significant increase in its operating costs, particularly in respect to printing which is the society's largest financial commitment. Overall, this did mean that expenses for the year exceeded revenue by £1,135.52 but still leaving, in the committee's view, a viable carry forward figure. However, with ever mounting overheads likely to be a fact of life for the foreseeable future, the committee has decided that it will need to increase subscription fees for 2027. This will be the first adjustment for around ten years and although we don't want the increase to be off-putting we do believe we need to take some account of the inflation that has occurred in that time.

The society has now concluded its work in rationalizing its banking arrangements to provide improved online banking facilities. The old paper-based account which was held at Lloyds, Alnwick is now closed, and the overwhelming majority of members have helped smooth this process by switching to pay their subs into the newer online account.

This year we welcomed 12 new members to the Society and continued the work to ensure our existing membership database was up to date. Overall, membership stayed almost exactly constant to last year, with 114 individuals in total. Setting aside the 'one-off' donation from the Town council for Heritage Open days, members' subs once again provided the cornerstone of our annual income providing £790.50 out of a total of £1,697.28 and so we do thank you all for your continued support.

Over the last twelve months our Planning Advisory Group reviewed 192 planning applications across Alnwick and Denwick. That's 8% more activity than in the previous year. The most significant was the revised plan for the former Duke's School which was decided in October. Other decisions of note included plans for resurfacing the Cobbles on Market Street, demolition of Park Cottage, launch of Alno Lounge at the former Barclays Bank and plans for the new Banking Hub on Paikes Street. So far we have made a formal response on twenty developments. On ten we drew the attention of decision makers to an issue that we felt affected the special character of Alnwick or was important to the local community. In one case we expressed support for a proposal that made a positive contribution and we raised objections on nine proposals that did not comply with policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, Northumberland Local Plan or national policies. Once again, the recurring issues were shopfronts that did not comply with the Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide and failures to make a case for replacement of historic windows. On the whole, Conservation Officers, ourselves, and the Town Council are taking a consistent approach to these applications and there are signs of some improvement in compliance when it comes to window replacement. Progress on the standard of shopfront design is less encouraging.

The Society has continued to contribute to the refresh of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, taking a lead on Heritage and Design. That work will largely be completed in early 2026 with submission of the draft plan to NCC. They will then arrange a final consultation, independent examination and referendum. Feedback from statutory consultees and public consultations helped to refine aspects of the plan relating to heritage, without uncovering anything particularly controversial. However, some of the design proposals generated a considerable amount of comment. At the time of writing that feedback is being factored into the draft that will be submitted to NCC.

Our programme for 2025 included talks on the Alnwick Soup Kitchen and developments at Bailiffgate Museum. We worked with the Alnwick and District Camera Club to deliver the "Alnwick Through the Lens" exhibition. A joint meeting with the Alnwick Local History Society looked at the legacy of Conzen's study of Alnwick in the 1960s. David Smith MP spoke about his first year representing our constituency at Westminster. We held two panel discussions: "A spanner in the works?" considered the interaction between planning and conservation, and our "Any Questions?" evening looked at different experiences of projects to bring new life to historic buildings. Our summer outing was to Felton. For Heritage Open Days a willing band of volunteers helped to open a dozen different locations across Alnwick. Despite disappointing weather the festival attracted at least as many visitors as the previous year. We participated in the Christmas Tree Festival at St Michael's Church and led Heritage Walks for exchange students, neighbouring History Societies and Story Fest. A fresh

approach to Social Media has raised our profile and is generating interest across the wider town, and our quarterly newsletter continues to be well-received by a growing number of members and friends of the society.

Members of the society continue to work with Alnwick in Bloom to maintain the quality of Column Field and are becoming more active in litter picking. With the Town Council we have agreed to prioritize half a dozen vulnerable heritage issues, including General Lambert's House and Bondgate Tower (both of which remain on Historic England's list of Heritage at Risk). There's no easy solution to such complex challenges, but we have seen limited progress. We made better progress with more straightforward cases, several of which have now been resolved. Overall, the number of issues that we are tracking has come down from over 80 to fewer than 50.

A successful year across a wide range of activities is the result of considerable commitment by members, committee, trustees, and friends of the society. Thanks are due to all for their support in 2025.

Peter Reed

Chair ACS

Account Summary 31/12/2025

| Account Code | Account title | Balance |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| | <u>Assets</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Current Assets</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Cash in Wallet</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Classic Account</u> | £804.72 |
| | <u>Treasurers Account</u> | £4,738.06 |
| | <u>Liabilities</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Credit Card</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Income</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Donation</u> | £1,852.60 |
| | <u>Gift Aid</u> | £303.72 |
| | <u>Grant</u> | £250.00 |
| | <u>Historic Maps</u> | £688.93 |
| | <u>Subs 2023</u> | £702.50 |
| | <u>Subs 2024</u> | £794.50 |
| | <u>Subs 2025</u> | £790.50 |
| | <u>Subs 2026</u> | £40.00 |
| | <u>Expenses</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Bank Service Charge</u> | £0.70 |
| | <u>Donations</u> | £100.00 |
| | <u>Events</u> | £2,647.43 |
| | <u>Insurance</u> | £509.08 |
| | <u>Online Services</u> | £79.66 |
| | <u>Printing</u> | £3,739.60 |
| | <u>Refreshments</u> | £317.85 |
| | <u>Subscriptions</u> | £542.80 |
| | <u>Supplies</u> | £280.75 |
| | <u>Equity</u> | £0.00 |
| | <u>Opening Balances</u> | £8,337.90 |
| | <u>Imbalance-GBP</u> | £0.00 |

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Profit & Loss For Period Covering 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2025

Revenues

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| <u>Income</u> | £0.00 |
| <u>Donation</u> | £1,526.00 |
| <u>Gift Aid</u> | £140.05 |
| <u>Grant</u> | £0.00 |
| <u>Historic Maps</u> | £208.73 |
| <u>Subs 2023</u> | £0.00 |
| <u>Subs 2024</u> | £0.00 |
| <u>Subs 2025</u> | £782.50 |
| <u>Subs 2026</u> | £40.00 |
| Total Revenue | £2,697.28 |

Expenses

£0.00

Expenses

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Bank Service Charge | £0.00 |
| Donations | £100.00 |
| Events | £991.44 |
| Insurance | £195.24 |
| Online Services | £0.00 |
| Printing | £2,101.72 |
| Refreshments | £78.40 |
| Subscriptions | £225.80 |
| Supplies | £140.20 |
| Total Expenses | £3,832.80 |

Net loss for Period £1,135.52

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Balance Sheet 31/12/2025

Assets

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Assets | £0.00 |
| Current Assets | £0.00 |
| Cash in Wallet | £0.00 |
| Classic Account | £804.72 |
| Treasurers Account | £4,738.06 |
| Total Current Assets | £5,542.78 |
| Total Assets | £5,542.78 |
| Imbalance-GBP | £0.00 |
| Total Assets | £5,542.78 |

Liabilities

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Liabilities | £0.00 |
| Credit Card | £0.00 |
| Total Liabilities | £0.00 |
| Total Liabilities | £0.00 |

Equity

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Equity | £0.00 |
| Opening Balances | £8,337.90 |
| Total Equity | £8,337.90 |
| Retained Losses | £3,829.34 |
| Total Equity | £4,508.56 |

Total Liabilities & Equity £4,508.56

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