CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 701430

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	02214293
Registered	1989-04-13
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Market Square Congleton Cheshire CW12 1ET
Phone	01260276360
Email	info@congletonmuseum.co.uk
Website	www.congletonmuseum.co.uk

Activities

Objects: TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLICE IN THE TOWN OF CONGLETON AND ITS ENVIRONS BY THE PROVISION AF A MUSEUM.

Activities: Presenting and interpreting the heritage of Congleton and surrounding area through its collections to residents and visitors by permanent and temporary exhibitions; delivering effective educational and research opportunities for all ages and abilities; collecting and conserving objects associated primarily with the history of the area to support the Museum's educational and learning activities.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** TOWN OF CONGLETON AND ITS ENVIRONS.
- Cheshire East
- Cheshire West & Chester
- Staffordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£29,624	£33,691	-	-
2024-03-31	£50,747	£69,346	-	-
2023-03-31	£28,147	£30,482	-	-
2022-03-31	£35,922	£35,178	-	-
2021-03-31	£97,772	£61,455	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Anne Gubbins	Chair	
Brenda Proudlove		2026-02-04
Della Ann Bordley		2024-10-08
Felicity Anne Whitelock		2022-12-12
Geoffrey Pettengell		2026-02-04
John Whitelock		2025-10-29
Michael Keith Laurence		2003-06-01
Penelope Kay Wesley		2025-11-29
Peter James Lane		2021-01-18
Sian Hampson		2026-02-04
Suzanne Jane Firkin		2019-09-16

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CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 701430

Accounts

Congleton Museum

Report of the Board of Trustees
2024-25

To be considered at the Annual Meeting to be held on

19 January 2025 at 6.30pm

in Congleton Town Hall

Registered Office

Market Square, Congleton Cheshire. CW12 1ET

Tel 01260 276360

Email: info@congletonmuseum.co.uk

Registered Charity No: 701430 Registered Company No: 02214293 Accredited Museum No: RD262



Congleton. 1980. Little Street.

Mary Edith Hulme with daughter Mrs May Whitby.

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1) Introduction

Congleton Museum Trust continues to be registered under its Memorandum and Articles of Association as a Charity (No 701430) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No 02214293). The museum remains fully accredited (No 262) within the scheme administered by Arts Council, England.

This report covers the activities of the trust for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

The 2024–25 reporting period was a time of profound transformation for the museum. Despite a governance crisis that resulted in the loss of permanent staff and a temporary closure during December and January, the museum has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Our primary efforts have been focused on stabilising management, undertaking an external 'Health Check', and preparing for re-accreditation.

2) Governance and Management

Board of Trustees

The museum continues to be managed by the Board of Trustees, which met bi-monthly until October 2024 then more frequently as required.

Trustees serve for one year and are elected by the members at the annual meeting.

The board has the power to co-opt additional trustees during the reporting year. Such trustees will have their appointment confirmed at the next annual meeting.

The composition of the board was restructured to strengthen expertise during this critical period, Della Bordley and Sergey Kamenskiy were co-opted to the board in October 2024.

Leadership Changes: Following an internal conflict, Ian Doughty was removed from the chair. Since January 2025, the board has been led by Joint Chairs, Anne Gubbins and Sergey Kamenskiy.

Trustees holding office between April 2024 and March 2025

Two members of the board are appointed by external organisations:

Cllr Suzy Firkin continued to represent Congleton Town Council

Mrs Linda Hulse continued to represent Congleton History Society

The following trustees were re-elected at the Annual General Meeting, held on Monday 15 January 2025:

Mrs Anne Gubbins

Mr Ian Doughty

Mr Peter Lane

Mr Mike Laurence

Mrs Felicity Whitelock

Mr Sergey Kamenskiy

Mrs Della Bordley

Induction of New Trustees

Newly appointed trustees receive briefing sessions with the chair and key members of the trust, as well as a range of key documents including:

- a handbook outlining
- their role and responsibilities
- the trust's objectives
- the acquisition and disposal policy
- the services offered by the museum
- the trust's governing document
- the last three sets of accounts and annual reports
- the current business plan
- minutes of recent trustee meetings
- a guide to being a trustee
- role descriptions for trustees and honorary officers
- declaration of ability to be a trustee e.g., not disqualified

Professional Advice and Support

Curatorial Adviser 2024-2025

The accreditation scheme continues to require those museums without professionally qualified curatorial staff to appoint a 'Museum Mentor'. This service is offered free of charge by museum professionals employed by larger institutions as part of their ongoing professional development. Mrs Katherine Lynch, Director of Heritage for the Port Sunlight Village Trust, continued as Congleton Museum's mentor for the year 2024-25.

Treasurer

John Pemberton FCA continued to act as treasurer.

Certifying Examiner 2024-2025

The trust's accounts have been independently examined by Mr David Bales, of 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent.

Museum Staffing and resulting Governance Issues

Anna Maluk continued to work at the museum until the end of November 2024. Her fundraising skills and her expertise with the website and social media continued to have considerable impact.

Her line manager until mid October was the then chair of trustees, Ian Doughty. Their working relationship broke down and Ms Maluk raised a formal grievance. Mr. Doughty failed to co-operate with the procedure, instead acting without board authority and trying to summarily dismiss her, with no regard for employment law. Ms. Maluk resigned, so from the beginning of December 2024, the museum was left with no paid staff. Mr. Doughty stopped coming in to work at the museum without notice and all operations were carried out by volunteers and trustees.

Mr. Doughty failed to turn up for a scheduled talk to the public despite promising to do so, he accused other trustees of dishonesty, he ignored emails from the public and other museums. Continuing to act without board authority, he reported the museum to the Charity Commission and the Fundraising Regulator, without telling us what we were accused of. Despite his objections he was removed from the chair in January and replaced by Anne Gubbins and Sergey Kamenskiy.

Because of the lack of personnel and the need for internal reorganisation, the museum was officially closed to the public for three weeks over the Christmas period instead of the usual two.

At the AGM in January, although the board asked members not to re-elect him as a trustee, he was elected. He agreed to work two days a week in the museum and trustees have attempted to work with him. It seems that things are gradually getting back to normal, and work has begun on advertising for a new employee.

Volunteers

We continue to rely on an excellent team of volunteers to run the museum from day to day, to support special events and to work on the collections.

During 2023-24 the museum's volunteer base remained stable at around 50 people.

Volunteer activity has fluctuated over the past three years, largely reflecting our operational circumstances. Having seen an initial rise from 4,996 hours (£99,000) in 2022/23 to a peak of 6,092 hours (£121,950) the following year, figures for the current reporting period have returned to 4,677 hours (£93,624).

This recent decline is primarily attributed to the temporary closure of the museum and a staffing vacancy between December and March, alongside broader management challenges. Despite these disruptions, the dedication of our volunteers remains the foundation of the museum; without this active engagement, the variety of effective services we provide would simply not exist.

The work undertaken by our front of house volunteers in making our visitors welcome ensures there is a continual flow of donations to support the museum. Their friendly, helpful approach makes sure the visitor experience we offer is rewarding, while their explanation of the importance of donations to our existence continues to encourage generous gifts. This will be of increasing importance as we face the challenge of ever-rising costs. The comments in the visitor's book continue to bear witness to their valuable work.

It is also important to acknowledge the work undertaken by 'backroom' volunteers involved in curatorial management, research, exhibition development and activity delivery, which contributes considerably to our ability to attract new visitors and encourages return visits.

We say this in every annual report, but cannot emphasise enough the financial value of the work undertaken by our volunteers. It would not be possible, within our limited financial resources, for the museum to purchase the breadth and quality of expertise to be found among them.

The trustees are very grateful for their support.

Organisational Health Check, March 2025

An OHC was conducted with the support of Museum Development North (MDN). The objective of this audit was to identify the organisation's strengths, pinpoint critical risk areas and establish development priorities for the following 12 months. The process involved a self-assessment against key performance indicators and consultative sessions with sector experts.

Key Areas of Analysis

The diagnostic identified three priority areas requiring urgent attention (the current "health" rating from the audit is shown in brackets):

- Governance, Leadership, and Business Planning (36%)
- Workforce Development and People Management (25%)
- Collections Management (33%)

Audit Findings

Strengths

- Proactive Governance**:** the Board of Trustees is highly engaged and demonstrates a commendable "hands-on" approach to leadership.
- Financial Resilience: the museum has been successful in securing grants, particularly for collections-based projects. Management of financial risks remains robust.
- Collections Development: significant work has been undertaken in researching the collections. Furthermore, strong partnerships with national institutions (such as the British Museum and National Museums Liverpool) allow a local museum in Congleton to host items of national significance.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- Strategic Vacuum: the current Forward Plan is outdated. Trustees are frequently drawn into day-to-day operational tasks ("firefighting"), leaving insufficient time for long-term strategic planning.
- Succession Planning: there is an historical over-reliance on a few key individuals. As the core group of volunteers and trustees ages, the lack of a formal succession plan creates a risk of losing institutional memory and operational continuity.
- Workforce Management: there is a clear need to redefine the role of paid staff and restructure management to clearly delineate responsibilities between staff, trustees, and volunteers.
- Productivity and Engagement: While the museum has 53 volunteers "on paper," the primary workload is sustained by a core group of approximately 12 people. Furthermore, footfall is inconsistent—high during specific events but low during standard opening hours.

Recommendations and Action Plan 2025–2026

Based on the MDN report, the Board of Trustees has adopted the following recommendations:

1) **Development of a New Forward Plan**
   - Conduct a series of strategic sessions to redefine the museum's vision.
   - Transition from operational to strategic governance by delegating routine tasks through a new management structure.
2) **Skills Audit and Succession Planning**
   - Conduct a comprehensive Skills Audit of the current team.
   - Develop a succession plan for key roles to mitigate "single points of failure."
   - Implement a formalised induction programme for new trustees and volunteers.
3) **Optimisation of Internal Communications**
   - Establish systematic communication with the Friends of the Museum and volunteers, involving them more closely in the planning process.
   - Update contact databases to ensure full GDPR compliance.
4) **Financial Analysis**
   - Introduce cost-benefit analysis for all new projects prior to launch.
   - Enhance management reporting to ensure a clear distinction between restricted and unrestricted funds.

This audit represents a vital milestone for the museum, confirming our viability and providing a clear roadmap for the internal transformation required for our future prosperity.

Museum Accreditation

The museum's full accredited status remains valid. The most recent information available from Arts Council England is that Congleton Museum is likely to be invited to renew its accreditation in June 2025 for a submission date early in 2026. Preparatory work is already underway.

Not only will we be required to report progress on three areas for improvement identified in the 2017 award letter, but all our documentation, procedures and processes need to be reviewed. Without accreditation we will not be able to access the development funding we will require to fulfil our future aspirations. Maintaining our full accredited status remains crucial if Congleton Museum is to continue to be recognised as an effective and efficient organisation by its peers.

The issues we will be required to report upon are:

Secure occupancy

We need to secure the future of the museum beyond the terms of the current lease for Market Square, which is due to mature in 2027. Discussions with Congleton Town Council have begun, and we are assured we can stay in Market Square after 2027, but we also need to have a plan in place which clearly identifies our future accommodation aspirations.

Collections development policy (Archival holding)

We have to consider adopting the Archives Service Accreditation Standard. The museum's current collecting policy states that:

'Where archive material is collected there is an expectation that it will support the museum's other collecting fields by providing illustrative material for exhibitions or contextual information for artefacts. Documents which are accessioned have been specifically donated to the museum by organisations or individuals and would not normally be deposited at a national or local archive office. There is a growing collection of documents relating to individuals, local societies, businesses and events which fall within this category. These documents provide valuable illustrative material, which is used to enhance both the main and temporary exhibitions.'

This aspect of the museum's collection has continued to grow since this recommendation was made in 2017. However, while there may be an increasing imperative to consider adopting the Archive Service Accreditation Standard, this needs to be balanced against the increased workload it would generate for the museum's small management team.

The implications of seeking Archive Service Accreditation are complex and still under active consideration.

Accession Documentation Plan

We must confirm progress towards the planned completion of retrospective documentation backlogs at stage three (discrepancy checking) and stage four (accession register and security copy making, labelling, location and movement control indexing, and object exit loans in and out). While considerable progress has been made in ensuring items listed in the accession registers are transferred on to the museum's database, COMACS, much still remains to be done to complete associated data fields, such as detailed description, location, condition, keywords and value.

To improve the efficiency of this work and provide online access to the collections, the trustees have approved the transition to a modern platform, eHive. This solution has been recognised as the most suitable and cost-effective for the museum's requirements. The new system will allow for the database to be integrated with the website to publish the collection online. To secure resources for the project, grant applications were submitted to the AIM (Museum Fundamentals) programme and the Congleton Inclosure Trust.

3) Financial Review

Executive Summary: Operational Resilience

The financial year 2024–25 presents a picture of operational resilience. The museum ended the year with an unrestricted deficit of £8,388. Strategically, this represents a significant improvement in two key areas:

- The deficit has been reduced by over 50% compared to the £17,249 shortfall recorded in the previous financial year (2023–24).
- Performance vs Budget: The result is significantly better than the initial budget projections, which anticipated a deficit of -£11,500.

However, it must be noted that this reduction was largely driven by a forced contraction in costs—specifically the absence of a paid assistant manager for four months, lower utility usage and the conclusion of major capital projects. Running a structural deficit remains the primary risk to the organisation and the board recognises that relying on reserves to bridge the gap is not a long-term solution.

Income Analysis: Revenue Composition & Dynamics

Total Income for the year was £29,624. To understand the true financial health of the museum, it is necessary to separate restricted project funds from the day-to-day operating budget.

Restricted Funding (15%): We successfully secured £4,321 in restricted grants from The Royal Society, compared to £19,300 in 2023–24, which included a large one-off website grant. While this is a significant achievement, these funds are ring-fenced for the "Our Disappearing Nature" project and cannot be used to cover utility bills, insurance, or salaries.

Operating Income (85%): The remaining £25,303 represents the unrestricted income available to run the museum.

When analysing how the museum funds its core existence (excluding the restricted project), the reliance on grants becomes even more apparent. The breakdown of our operating income is as follows:

Unrestricted Grants (34%): grants remain the single largest source of operational funding, totalling £8,693, an increase of 59% from £5,470 in 2023–24. This includes the critical £5,380 annual revenue grant from Cheshire East Council. This heavy reliance (over one-third of operating income) highlights our vulnerability to public sector cuts.

Commercial Trading (36%): combined revenue from the shop and events continues to grow, now outstripping grant income.

- **Shop Sales:** £4,908 (19%**)** up 17% from £4,212 in the previous year. Despite the closure period, the shop performed exceptionally well, demonstrating the success of new stock lines.
- **Events, Walks & Talks**: £4,197 (17%) consistent with the £4,167 generated in 2023–24. This revenue stream proved resilient, justifying the strategy of moving towards ticketed, "immersive" experiences.

Donations (13%): contributing £3,194, a sharp drop of 44% from £5,727 in 2023–24.

While visitor numbers have fluctuated, the "yield per visitor" has followed a downward trajectory over the last three years: falling from £1.16 in 2022–23, to £1.01 in 2023–24, and further to just £0.67 in 2024–25. Reversing this trend is a priority.

Other Income & Gift Aid (17%): the remaining £4,311 is derived from a mix of smaller income streams, all of which saw a decline compared to the previous year:

- **Publishing & Printing:** £1,357 (down from £1,908 in 2023–24). This decline in income from book sales and printing services reflects the general downturn in retail activity.
- **Membership Subscriptions**: £1,077 (down from £1,420 in 2023–24). A 24% decrease, highlighting the need to revitalise our "Friends" scheme in the coming year.
- **Gift Aid/VAT Claim**s: £954 (down significantly from £6,599 in 2023–24). As noted, the previous year's figure was inflated by a non-recurring retrospective VAT 33A refund.
- **Interest & Room Hire**: Combined income of £923 (comprising £573 in bank interest and £350 in room hire fees). This compares unfavourably to £1,944 in the previous year, reflecting lower cash balances and reduced room bookings.

Expenditure Analysis: the "Artificial Low"

Total expenditure for the year was £33,691, a sharp decrease of 51% compared to £69,346 in 2023–24. While this reduction significantly helped reduce the deficit, a line-by-line analysis reveals that these savings arose from three distinct factors: operational efficiency, staffing vacancies, and the conclusion of capital projects.

Key Year-on-Year Variances:

- **Energy Efficiency:** a significant achievement this year was the reduction in energy costs, which fell by 30% compared to the previous year. Following the sharp increases noted in the 2023–24 report, electricity costs were successfully controlled, dropping from £6,509 to £4,534.
- **Staffing & Vacancies:** salary costs decreased by 12%, falling from £12,824 to £11,250. However, this saving should be viewed with caution. It is directly attributable to the museum operating without a manager for four months. This figure reflects a 0.5 FTE staffing model, which is the current realistic operational target for the trust.
- **IT & Projects:** the most dramatic variance occurred in IT & Software, where expenditure dropped by 93%. This is due to the completion of the major grant-funded website build in the previous financial year. This confirms that the museum's "base" IT costs are sustainable at approx. £2,000 per annum.
- **Strategic Investment:** conversely, expenditure on events & exhibitions increased by 27% (rising from £2,221 to £2,817). This was a deliberate decision to spend more on generating activity to drive footfall and trading income.

Analysis of Baseline Costs

The data suggests that the minimum operational cost to maintain the facility—covering utilities, insurance, statutory compliance, IT, and basic maintenance—stands at approximately £20,000 per annum before staff costs are added.

Financial Risk: the Stagnation of Funding

The trustees continue to review operational and business risks associated with the financial health of the organisation. Two key risks dominate the long-term outlook:

- **The Erosion of Public Funding**
  Cheshire East Council supported the work of the museum in 2024–25 through an annual revenue grant of £5,380. This makes a valuable contribution to the museum's balance sheet; however, it is important to recognise that it cannot be guaranteed from year to year. Crucially, this level of core funding has remained stagnant since 2008–09.

It has not been adjusted for inflation for over 15 years. Had this grant kept pace with inflation, it would now be worth approximately £8,700. This "real terms" cut forces the museum to generate an additional £3,000–£4,000 annually just to stand still.

- **Premises Security**
  The trust acknowledges the critical support of Congleton Town Council in providing the building rent-free.

Future Strategy & Income Generation

To address the structural deficit and move towards a sustainable break-even model, the trust is adopting a three-pillar strategy for 2025–26:

- **High-Margin Events Programme**: we will expand the schedule of ticketed, immersive events (such as Roman Week, Ghost Walks, and Workshops). These events have proven to be our most profitable activity, delivering high ROI compared to standard admissions.
- **Grant-Aided Staffing**: we are actively seeking external funding specifically to subsidise core salary costs. This is essential to support the move to a sustainable 0.5 FTE managerial model without draining reserves.
- **Membership & Patronage**: we will launch a revitalised drive to increase recurring income through an expanded "Friends" scheme and improved donation points to address the falling visitor yield.

Conclusion

Congleton Museum remains financially secure in the immediate term, holding £45,720 in cash reserves and £4,321 in restricted project funds. The reduction of the deficit to £8,388 is a positive step, though largely driven by the specific circumstances of the year. The focus for 2025–26 is to bridge the gap between our "cost of existence" and our trading income through the strategic initiatives outlined above.

VAT 33A Refund Scheme

During the reporting year the museum has met its obligations under the provisions of the VAT 33a scheme by ensuring the public has free access to its collections and permanent exhibitions for a minimum of 30 hours per week. The museum’s published opening hours are in excess of this minimum at 33 hours. Continuing to secure the relevant VAT exceptions under this provision is crucial to the future financial sustainability of the museum.

4) Objectives and Activities

Since its inception the primary objective of the trust has been to ‘advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its environs' by:

- promoting and preserving a museum for the benefit of the public
- acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research
- presenting exhibits for display
- providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- presenting aspects of the town’s history through permanent and temporary displays
- providing learning opportunities for all ages through its education services
- providing research facilities
- encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

There have been no changes to these aims and objectives during the year. The museum also continues to acquire finds from metal detecting and archaeological assessments prior to greenfield site developments.

Visitor Figures

The museum experienced an overall decline in total footfall of **25.29%**. This is directly attributable to the three-week period of closure, the absence of a paid manager to coordinate group bookings, and a complete cessation of school visits.

However, whilst general museum admissions fell, specific targeted activities—particularly Sunday Walks and Special Events—saw significant growth, demonstrating the success of the new immersive events strategy.

Category	2023-24	2024-25	Variance
Adult Visitors (Museum)	3,673	2,970	▼ -19.14%
Child Visitors (Museum)	1,107	837	▼ -24.39%
School Groups	308	0	▼ -100%
Sunday Heritage Walks	207	225	▲ +8.70%
Lectures & Talks	375	248	▼ -33.87%
Special Events & Workshops	179	474	▲ +164.8%
Total Visitors (All categories)	**6,363**	**4,754**	**▼ -25.29%**

Engagement Analysis

While the record-breaking total figures of 2023-24 were not sustained due to operational challenges, 2024-25 marked a significant shift in *how* people engage with the museum.

The drop in general admission (adults -19%, children -24%) was partially offset by a surge in event-based attendance. The strategy to move towards interactive, ticketed experiences proved highly effective. Special Events and Workshops saw a dramatic rise of 164.8%, attracting 474 participants compared to 179 in the previous year.

Notable successes included the sold-out "Swift-Tea" and "Wizard's Workshop", which successfully brought in new demographics (teenagers and young adults) who do not typically visit for traditional exhibitions. The "Halloween Ghost Walks" and "Meet Santa" events further cemented the museum's role as a community hub, generating crucial income during the winter months.

Conversely, the programme of lectures and talks saw a decline in attendance (dropping from 375 to 248), reflecting the interruption in the regular schedule during the management transition. However, individual flagship events, such as the "Congleton and Gallipoli 1915" lecture, proved popular.

Sunday Heritage Walks continued their steady growth (+8.7%), proving the enduring appeal of exploring the town's history on foot.

Schools Activities

Engagement with schools remains a critical area for development. In 2023-24, the museum began to recover post-Covid momentum with 308 students visiting. However, in 2024-25, due to the lack of a dedicated education officer or manager to coordinate bookings and the operational closure, no school visits were recorded.

It is acknowledged that this is an area where considerable improvements need be made. The trustees are currently reviewing the education offer to address logistical barriers (space, transport costs) and are developing a new outreach strategy to re-engage local schools in the coming year.

Year	Visitors/Contacts	Education	Total
2015-16	2,985	776	3,761
2016-17	5,020	896	5,916
2017-18	3,586	961	4,547
2018-19	2,968	1,462	4,430
2019-20	2,673	1,363	4,046
2020-21	47	0	47
2021-22	1,273	85	1,358
2022-23	4,164	21	4,185
2023-24	6,055	308	6,363
2024-25	4,754	0	4,754

Events Programme and Public Engagement

During this reporting period, the museum shifted its focus from traditional walks and lectures towards more interactive, thematic, and immersive formats to broaden our audience reach.

Creative Workshops and Youth Engagement

Wizard's Workshop: Make Your Own Wand (4 April 2024)

An interactive two-hour session held during the Easter holidays. Led by guest maker Sarah (Happy Times Craft), participants used Powertex to create unique "magical" wands. The event targeted teenagers (10+) and adults, successfully engaging a demographic often under-represented in our visitor data. Ticket sales generated £101.00.

Afternoon Swift-Tea (4 & 9 June 2024)

An innovative format designed to attract a younger audience ("Swifties"). The event featured a themed afternoon tea and a friendship bracelet-making workshop. Both sessions were a total sell-out, positioning the museum as a relevant contemporary community space. Total revenue of £307.00.

Bubbly and Brushstrokes (3 July 2024)

An evening watercolour masterclass for beginners led by local artist Craig Mayer. The "art + prosecco" format proved highly popular with the adult audience and demonstrated a high profit margin. Sell-out event, revenue of £256.00.

Historical Education and Research

Town Heritage Walks

A consistent programme of guided walks operated from April to October.

***Congleton and Gallipoli* 1915** (23 July 2024):

A major commemorative event featuring a lecture by Ian Doughty and Linda Hulse at the Town Hall, followed by an exclusive preview of the new exhibition at the museum. This was the most successful lecture event of the year. Revenue of £464.00.

Retail Tales: History of Shops (24 September 2024):

An exploration of Congleton's commercial history led by Ian Doughty. Revenue of £187.00.

Seasonal and Immersive Projects

Halloween Ghost Walks (30 Oct & 1 Nov 2024):

Evening tours exploring local legends and tragedies. Both nights were sold out, supported by the sale of souvenir torch keyrings. Total revenue: £477.00.

Escape Room: The Centurion's Curse (Oct – Nov 2024):

A museum-based quest for groups of up to 8 people. This format allowed the museum to utilise the gallery space during out-of-hours periods. Total revenue: £210.00.

Meet Santa! (30 Nov – 1 Dec 2024):

Our flagship family event, featuring Christingle making, a Santa's Grotto, and a Christmas trail. This was the most significant money raising activity of the winter season. Total revenue: £1,195.00.

Community & Partnerships

This year saw the launch of two large-scale projects aimed at long-term community interaction.

Town Expeditions Project

A comprehensive project for families, delivered in partnership with Congleton Bath House and Physic Garden. The project featured thematic trails across the town. Over 300 families participated, with "Heritage Passports" used to track progress.

On Town Centre Play Day (August 2024), the museum's stand engaged approximately 200 people. The Art in the Garden event (11 August) attracted 62 people and received outstanding feedback.

Visitor numbers in August 2024 rose by 18% compared to August 2023.

Threads of Remembrance

A community art project marking the 110th anniversary of the start of WWI. Volunteers and visitors crocheted/knitted over 2,000 forget-me-nots at weekly coffee mornings. Approximately 3,000 volunteer hours were dedicated to this work.

The installation toured the town in October-February, including an appearance at St Peter's Church, Congleton Library, the town hall and the museum itself.

Green Island Fiesta (8 September 2024)

The museum joined this festival to record the industrial heritage of the Green Island area.

Museum Assistant Manager Anna Maluk recorded interviews with residents to preserve "living memories" of factory work and local life and the then Chair of Trustees, Ian Doughty, led a tour of the area's historic sites.

Environmental Initiative & Citizen Science

In 2024-2025, the museum expanded its remit into environmental research with the project **Our Disappearing Nature!** which is supported by a grant from The Royal Society. The objective is to create a modern catalogue of Congleton's flora and compare it with the 1915 records of Reverend G. Cartlidge, assessing the impact of climate change on our local ecosystem over the last century. This year focused on recruiting and training a volunteer research corps and preparing for the City Nature Challenge (April 2025) as the primary data collection launch.

Digital Engagement

Website

Website data (Google Analytics 4) covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Traffic and User Behaviour

	2024-25	2023-24	% change
Active users	4,870	7,800	-37.5
Total page views	19,541	38,000	-48.5

During 2024–25, website traffic reached a steady state, following the surge in engagement that accompanied the previous year's launch. While this indicates a sustainable baseline, the lack of further growth was also influenced by operational disruptions. Specifically, the absence of a permanent Assistant Manager for four months, combined with the museum's temporary closure in December and January, led to a reduction in consistent digital promotion and online outreach.

Despite a decrease in overall traffic, the site shows high effectiveness in converting views into ticket sales for key events.

Technical Audience Overview

The trend towards mobile usage has intensified, with the website now functioning as a primarily mobile platform.

- **Mobile Devices**: 65.3% of users, an increase from 58% in 2023/24, confirming that users are increasingly seeking information "on the go" or while planning visits via phone.
- **Desktop Computers**: 32.0% of users, *a* decrease from 37% last year.
- **Tablets**: 2.8% of users.

Browsers: Safari is the leading browser (over 2,000 users), followed by Chrome. Safari's dominance correlates with the high volume of mobile traffic (iPhone users).

Traffic Acquisition - *how people find the site*

- Organic Search (Google Search): 61.7% of sessions (2,861 sessions). This is the primary driver of traffic, resulting in 2,700 new users.
- Direct: 24.26% (1,125 sessions). These are users entering the URL directly or via bookmarks/offline promotion.
- Organic Social: 12.85% (596 sessions). This channel brought in 579 first-time users.
- Referral: 1.64% (76 sessions).

Popular Content and Events

An analysis of specific page views shows a direct link between digital interest and the success of physical events.

Page Path	Views	Active Users	Relationship to Events (Annual Report)
Home (/)	16,334	1,757	The primary entry point for 83.59% of traffic.
History of Congleton	360	361	Strong baseline interest in local history.
Meet Santa	244	241	Generated £1,195 in revenue (the winter's top contributor).
What's On	178	178	Key page for those seeking current activities.
Afternoon Swift-Tea	147	147	This event was a total sell-out (revenue of £307).
Printing Service	106	105	Consistent interest in museum services.
Town Expeditions	104	103	Project engaged over 300 families in person.

Social Media

In 2024-2025, numbers of followers grew steadily, though engagement activity fluctuated due to staffing changes. Detailed interaction data is available for July 2024 – March 2025.

Facebook

Followers: 2,020 , a 23.4% rise on the previous year

Interactions (likes, shares, comments): 4,209 interactions were recorded from July 2024 to March 2025, a 24% decrease compared to the previous equivalent period. This is a direct consequence of the lack of regular postings after November 2024.

Top Content Examples: some posts achieved viral reach despite lower overall posting frequency:

- Reel "Unleash your inner detective" (2 Oct 2024) - 8,722 views.
- Photo "Threads of Remembrance exhibition" (31 Oct 2024) - 7,383 views and 4,173 reach, highlighting people's deep engagement with commemorative themes.
- Reel " We've been keeping a secret" (10 Jul 2024) - 5,447 views.

Instagram

Followers: 1,016

Reach: Increased by 180.7% (reaching 1.8K users). This is consistent with the explosive growth of the previous year (187.4%).

Profile Visits: Increased by 94% (456 visits). While lower than last year's 125.4% increase, a 94% growth remains exceptionally high.

Active User Geography

Demographics have shifted significantly for the current reporting period (1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025).

Website - active users by town/city		
London	1,135	23.31%
Congleton	712	14.62%
Manchester	185	3.8%
Stoke on Trent	143	2.94%
Liverpool	116	2.38%

Social Media	
Biddulph	5.6%.
Macclesfield	4.7%.
Stoke-on-Trent	3.4%.
Crewe	2.9%.
Sandbach	2.7%.

The emergence of London as the top source of website traffic (nearly double that of Congleton for active users) suggests that the museum is increasingly being viewed as a destination for visitors from outside the immediate region.

Conclusions and Strategy

Digital Value of Events: target pages for sell-out events like *Meet Santa* and *Swift-Tea* show high conversion from digital interest to physical attendance.

Consistent Online Visibility: the site relies heavily on Google Search (61.7% of sessions). This provided stability during the staffing crisis when social media referrals dropped.

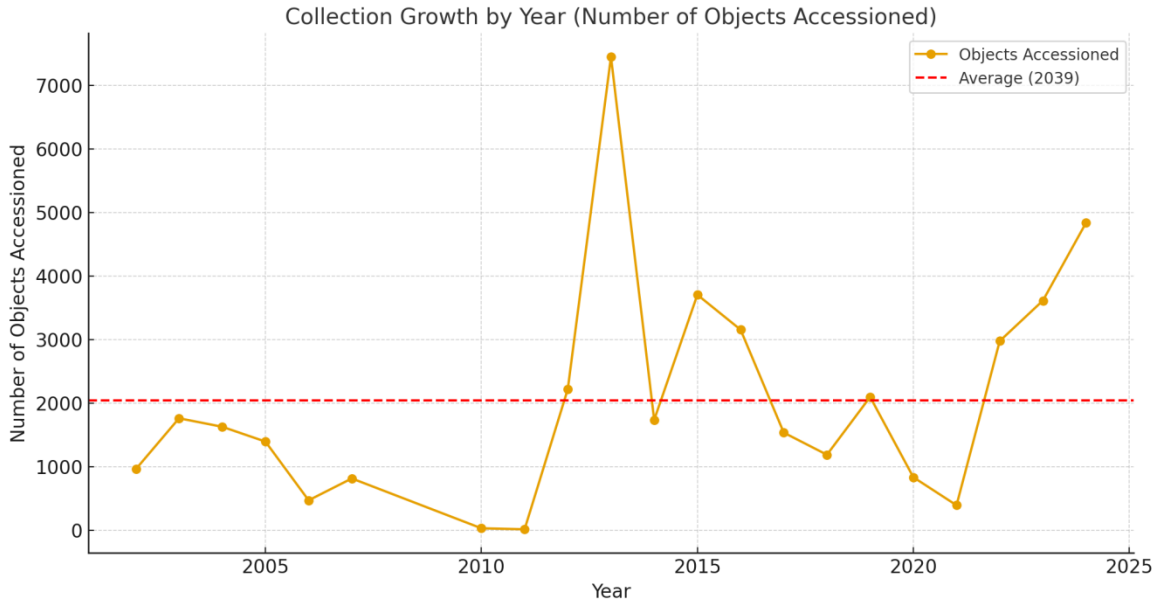
Mobile-First Audience: With 65.3% of users on mobile, all future digital content and "What's On" information must be optimised for small screens.

5) Collection Management

The declared aims and objectives of the museum continue to be the collection, preservation and interpretation of the heritage of Congleton and the surrounding district, so that future generations have a clear understanding of how the town developed and the influence it and its inhabitants had on regional and national events, as well as the contribution they made to industrial innovation. The museum's collecting policy tries to include all aspects of the town's heritage. This places the development of the town and its inhabitants within a wider context.

The museum's continuing active engagement with the Portable Antiquities Service, the British Museum, Museum of Liverpool and Museum Development North West provides the museum and residents with a wide range of advice and support. Through this network, Congleton Museum is able to retain and display archaeological finds from the East Cheshire area which the Portable Antiquities data base identifies as being of regional, and in some cases national, importance. Congleton Museum's collections are increasingly recognised as being of greater significance than would be expected from an institution of its size.

Based on an analysis of Transfer of Title forms completed during 2024–2025, the museum formally accepted around 2,000 items into its collections, a figure consistent with the established annual average for recent years (see the acquisitions trend chart below).



In terms of collection categories, the profile of acquisitions in 2024–2025 broadly reflects the overall structure of the museum's collections. Archive material represented approximately 40% of all items accepted, compared with around 43% of the total collection. Images, primarily photographs and related visual material, accounted for approximately 39–40% of new accessions, closely matching their c.33% share of the wider collection. This alignment indicates continuity in collecting activity (see the comparative table below).

Category	2024–25 acquisitions	Share of total collection
Archives	c.40%	c.43%
Images	c.39–40%	c.33%
Objects	c.18%	c.14%
Library	c.3%	c.6%

Museum objects made up around 18% of acquisitions, a higher proportion than their representation within the overall collection (see table above). These included material across established object categories such as textiles, glass and ceramics, tools and machinery, civic and institutional material, personal items and domestic and commercial objects. Library material accounted for a smaller proportion of new accessions at approximately 3%, compared with around 6% of the total collection.

Acquisition activity during the year was strongly shaped by a small number of large-scale donations. Five major transfers together accounted for over 1,000 items, meaning that around half of all acquisitions resulted from these substantial groups. The largest single transfer comprised approximately 320 items (mostly photos and documents), followed by four further major transfers of 189, 182, 165 and 154 items respectively.

Vital to ensuring all the collections are conserved to the highest possible standard is the museum's digital environmental monitoring system. This is continuing to maintain an accurate record of temperature, humidity and light quality, which will, with the current agreed levels of security, provide the necessary data and assurance required should the museum seek to borrow items from national collections.

We are continually grateful to those individuals who believe that Congleton Museum is the most appropriate depository for their cherished family and business items, thereby enabling them to be accessed and enjoyed by future generations.

6) Partnerships and External Organisations

The museum's partnership with the Portable Antiquities Service for the North West and National Museums Liverpool remains strong. The quarterly 'Finds Days' held during 2024-2025 were well attended.

Currently the trust is a member of:

- Museum Development North (MDN)
- East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
- Association of Independent Museums (AIM)
- Museums of Cheshire (MOC)
- Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East (CVS)
- Arts Council England (ACE)
- Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group
- Association of Cultural Enterprise
- Museums Association

Membership of these organisations continues to give the trust access to training, information on future developments and funding opportunities available within the museum and heritage sector. They enable the museum to work more effectively and meet development targets.

Company Registration Number 02214293

Charity Registration Number 701430

Congleton Museum Trust

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Congleton Museum Trust

Legal and Administrative Information

Board of Management	**A Gubbins**
	M Laurence
	I Doughty
	F Whitelock
	S Firkin
	P Lane
	D Bordley
	S Kamenskiy
	J Whitelock
	K Wesley
Company Number	**02214293**
Charity Number	**701430**
Registered Office	**Market Chambers**
	Market Square
	Congleton
	Cheshire
	CW12 1ET
Independent Examiner	**D Bales**
	6 Rowan Close
	Biddulph Moor
	Stoke on Trent
Bankers	**NatWest**
	46 High Street
	Congleton
	Cheshire

Congleton Museum Trust

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Congleton Museum Trust

Trustees' Report (including Directors' Report)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Board of Management present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)* (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

Objectives and activities

The primary objective of the Trust is to establish and to advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its' environs by:

- Promoting and preserving for the benefit of the public a museum;
- Acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research;
- Preserving exhibits for display;
- Providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- Presenting aspects of the town's history through permanent and temporary displays;
- Providing learning opportunities for all ages through its' education services;
- Providing research facilities;
- Encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

Achievements and performance

Fund balances at 31/3/25 and (31/3/24) were:-

Unrestricted (General)	£37,059	(£45,447)
Unrestricted (Designated)	£7,700	(£7,700)
Restricted	£4,321)	(£0)

General Fund Income in the year was £25,303 (prior year £31,447), Expenditure £33,691 (£48,696) giving a deficit of -£8,388 (-£17,249). The previous year, 2023/24 had unusually high expenditure on IT. However 2024/25 was more similar to 2022/23, but with the additional cost of staffing.

Restricted Funds Income in the year was £4,321 (£19,300), Expenditure £0 (£20,625). A single grant was received during the year. All previous grants had been used by 31/3/24.

Financial review

Unrestricted funds at the end of the financial year totalled £44,759 including a designated fund of £7,700. It is the policy of the Trust that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to six months' expenditure. The Board of Management considers that reserves of this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Trust's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

The Board of Management has assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

The Board of Management is satisfied that sufficient funding is available for the Museum to continue operating for the foreseeable future.

Congleton Museum Trust

Trustees' Report (including Directors' Report) (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Structure, governance and management
The Trust is constituted as a company limited by guarantee and is therefore governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Management, who are also the trustees of the charity and directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of the signature of the financial statements were:

A Gubbins	
M Laurence	
I Doughty	
L Hulse	Resigned 31/07/25
F Whitelock	
S Firkin	
P Lane	
M Aspey	Appointed 1/04/24 Resigned 19/11/24
D Bordley	Appointed 8/10/24
S Kamenskiy	Appointed 8/10/24
J Whitelock	Appointed 29/11/25
K Wesley	Appointed 29/11/25

Further details of the management of the Trust and of the activities for the year can be found in the separate document "Report of the Board of Trustees 2024-25".

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Management.

Anne Gubbins

A Gubbins
Joint Chair of the Board of Management
Dated:

Congleton Museum Trust

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Board of Management, who are also the directors of Congleton Museum Trust for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Board of Management to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Trust and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board of Management are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Trust will continue in operation.

The Board of Management are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Congleton Museum Trust

Year ended 31 March 2025

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Congleton Museum Trust (the Company)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102}].

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

Signed: D. Bales

Name: David Bales

Address: 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent. Date:

21st January 2026

Congleton Museum Trust
Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
		£	£	£	£	£
Income from:						
Donations and Legacies	2	12,841	-	4,321	17,162	37,096
Charitable Activities	3	6,197	-	-	6,197	7,531
Other Trading Activities	4	6,265	-	-	6,265	6,120
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total		25,303	-	4,321	29,624	50,747
Expenditure on:						
Raising Funds	5	1,571	-	-	1,571	1,746
Charitable Activities	6	32,120	-	-	32,120	67,600
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total		33,691	-	-	33,691	69,346
Net Gains/(losses) on Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Net Income/(Expenditure)		-8,388	-	4,321	-4,067	-18,599
Transfers between Funds		-	-	-	-	-
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)						
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes		-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		-8,388	-	4,321	-4,067	-18,599
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		45,447	7,700	-	53,147	71,746
Total funds carried forward		37,059	7,700	4,321	49,080	53,147

Congleton Museum Trust
Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 March 2025

	Note	Total Funds £	Prior Year Funds £
Fixed Assets:			
Intangible assets		-	-
Tangible assets		-	-
Heritage assets		-	-
Investments		-	-
Total fixed assets		0	0
Current assets:			
Stocks		1,789	2,091
Debtors		2,967	7,941
Investments		-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		45,720	45,718
Total current assets		50,476	55,750
Liabilities:			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year		1,396	2,603
Net current assets or liabilities		49,080	53,147
Total assets less current liabilities		49,080	53,147
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		-	-
Provisions for liabilities		-	-
Net asset or liabilities excluding pension asset or liability		49,080	53,147
Defined benefit pension scheme asset or liability		-	-
Total net assets or liabilities		**49,080**	**53,147**
The Funds of the charity:			
Endowment funds		-	-
Restricted income funds	7	4,321	-
Unrestricted funds (general)		37,059	45,447
Unrestricted funds (designated)		7,700	7,700
Revaluation reserve		-	-
Pension reserve		-	-
Total unrestricted funds		44,759	53,147
Total charity funds		**49,080**	**53,147**

Congleton Museum Trust

Balance Sheet (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Management on 22 December 2025.

Anne Gubbins

A Gubbins

Trustee

Company registration number 02214293

Congleton Museum Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

Charity information

Congleton Museum Trust is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1ET.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The Trust is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Trust has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Trust. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies followed are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Board of Management have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Board of Management continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Board of Management in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the financial statements.

1.4 Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be measured reliably.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP.

1.5 Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

1.6 Fixed assets

Fixed assets are included in the accounts at cost less accumulated depreciation and are depreciated over their expected useful lives.

1.7 Heritage assets

Information on the cost or valuation of many of the heritage assets owned by the Trust is not available. Therefore, heritage assets are not shown in the Trust's balance sheet. The Trust has not incorporated a valuation of heritage assets in the financial statements as the benefits of doing so are outweighed by the costs of obtaining such a valuation.

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

1.9 Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price.

Congleton Museum Trust
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For the Year ended 31 March 2025

2	**Donations and Legacies**	**Unrestricted Funds**	**Designated Funds**	**Restricted Funds**	**Total Funds**	**Prior Year Total Funds**
		£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
	Donations	3,194	0	0	3,194	5,727
	Grants	8,693	0	4,321	13,014	24,770
	Gift Aid and VAT reclaim	954	0	0	954	6,599
		12,841	0	4,321	17,162	37,096

3	**Charitable Activities (income)**					
		£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
	Membership subs	1,077	0	0	1,077	1,420
	Walks and talks	4,197	0	0	4,197	4,167
	Room hire	350	0	0	350	1,228
	Bank interest received	573	0	0	573	716
		6,197	0	0	6,197	7,531

4	**Other Trading Activities**					
		£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
	Shop income	4,908	0	0	4,908	4,212
	Publishing income	1,357	0	0	1,357	1,908
		6,265	0	0	6,265	6,120

5	**Cost of Raising Funds**					
		£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
	Cost of shop sales	1,571	0	0	1,571	1,746
		1,571	0	0	1,571	1,746

6	**Charitable Activities (expenditure)**					
		£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
	Additions to collections	175	0	0	175	708
	Collections expenditure	953	0	0	953	6,016
	Events and exhibitions	2,817	0	0	2,817	2,221
	Salaries	11,250	0	0	11,250	12,824
	Electricity	4,534	0	0	4,534	6,509
	Water	472	0	0	472	396
	Security and safety	1,344	0	0	1,344	1,514
	IT software, hardware and broadband	1,971	0	0	1,971	29,204
	Insurance	2,895	0	0	2,895	2,993
	Outside subscriptions	276	0	0	276	277
	Office consumables	410	0	0	410	613
	Sundry expenses	2,982	0	0	2,982	1,183
	Equipment rental, support and usage	1,693	0	0	1,693	2,524
	Advertising and marketing	348	0	0	348	618
		32,120	0	0	32,120	67,600

7 **Restricted funds summary**

	Royal Society	Total
	£	£
Balances b/f	0	0
Income in year	4,321	4,321
Expenditure in year	0	0
Balances c/f	4,321	4,321

8 **Employees**

The average number of employees during the year was 1 (2024: 1).

9 **Related Party Transactions**

There were no transactions during the year involving the directors/trustees or related parties.

Congleton Museum Trust

Year ended 31 March 2025

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Congleton Museum Trust (the Company)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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

Signed: D. Bales

Name: David Bales

Address: 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent.

Date: 21st January 2026

CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 701430

Accounts

Report of the Board of Trustees 2023-24

To be considered at the Annual Meeting to be held on
15th January 2025 at 2.30 pm
in the Bridestones Suite of Congleton Town Hall.

Registered Office
Market Square, Congleton Cheshire. CW12 1ET
Tel 01260 276360
Email: infor@congletonmuseum.co.uk

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1. Introduction

Congleton Museum Trust continues to be Registered as a Charity (No 701430) and a

Company Limited by Guarantee (No 02214293). The museum remains fully accredited (No 262) within the scheme administered by Arts Council, England.

This report covers the activities of the trust for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

During the year we have expanded museum activities, improving the engagement of the public with the museum and its services. We continue to prioritise financial viability within an economic environment which remains hostile. The museum ended 2023-24, in a reasonably strong financial position with reserves of £53,147 this figure being predominantly made up of retained capital received as grants during the years 2021 to 2023 to support the museum during the Covid pandemic.

The total deficit for the year was £18,599 (2022-23 £1,335).

This significant increase in losses can be attributed to a planned budgetary loss due to the employment of an Assistant Manager and a contribution of over £11,000 made towards the new website, installed during the year, which wasn't included in the operational budget.

Total losses were £7,000 less than budgeted due to strong increases in income (in particular donations and events) which to a degree offset the costs of employing the Assistant Manager.

2. Governance and Management

Board of Trustees

The museum continues to be managed by the Board of Trustees, which meets, in person, on a bi-monthly basis.

Trustees holding office between April 2023 and March 2024

Two members of the board are appointed by external organisations:

Cllr Suzy Firkin continued to represent Congleton Town Council.

Mrs Linda Hulse continued to represent Congleton History Society.

The following trustees were re-elected at the Annual General Meeting, held on Monday 27th December 2023:

Mr Ian Doughty	Chair
Mrs Anne Gubbins	Vice Chair
Mr Peter Lane	
Mr Mike Laurence	Company Secretary
Mrs Felicity Whitelock	

In line with its agreed policy of ensuring diversity, inclusion and future sustainability through effective succession planning, the board continues to review the skills and expertise of its membership. The recruitment of new trustees remains a high priority.

Work is continuing on the development of an appropriate strategy, not only at board level, but also in respect of operational activities and service delivery.

Induction of New Trustees

Newly appointed trustees receive briefing sessions with the chair and key members of the trust, as well as a range of key documents including; -

- a handbook outlining:
  - their role and responsibilities
  - the trust's objectives
  - the acquisition and disposal policy
  - the services offered by the museum;
- the trust's governing document
- the last three sets of accounts and annual reports
- the current business plan
- minutes of recent trustee meetings;
- a guide to being a trustee;
- role descriptions for trustees and honorary officers
- declaration of ability to be a trustee e.g., not disqualified

Professional Advice and Support

Curatorial Adviser 2023-2024

The accreditation scheme continues to require those museums without professionally qualified curatorial staff to appoint a 'Museum Mentor'. This service is offered free of charge by museum professionals employed by larger institutions as part of their ongoing professional development. Mrs Katherine Lynch, Director of Heritage for the Port Sunlight Village Trust continued as Congleton Museum's mentor for the year 2023-24.

Certifying Examiner 2023-2023

John Pemberton continues to act as treasurer.

The trust's accounts have been independently examined by Mr David Bales, of 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent,

The trust continues to monitor carefully the management of the personal data it holds to ensure continued compliance with current General Data Protection Regulations.

Museum Accreditation

The museum's full accredited status remains valid.

The most recent information available from Arts Council England is that the earliest Congleton Museum will be invited to renew its accreditation will be in December 2024 for a submission date of July 2025. Preparatory work is already underway.

Not only will we be required to report progress on the three areas for improvement identified in the 2017 award letter but all our documentation, procedures and processes need to be reviewed. Without accreditation we will not be able to access the development funding we will require to fulfil our future aspirations.

Maintaining our full accredited status remains crucial if Congleton Museum is to continue to be recognised as an effective and efficient organisation by its peers.

The issues we will be required to report upon are:

Secure occupancy: we need to secure the future of the museum beyond the terms of the current lease for Market Square, which is due to mature in 2027. Discussions with Congleton Town Council have begun, and we are assured we can stay in Market Square after 2027, but we also need to have a plan in place which clearly identifies our future accommodation aspirations.

Collections development policy (Archival holding): we have to consider adopting the Archives Service Accreditation Standard.

> The museum's current collecting policy states that:
>
> 'Where archive material is collected there is an expectation that it will support the museum's other collecting fields by providing illustrative material for exhibitions or contextual information for artefacts. Documents which are accessioned have been specifically donated to the museum by organisations or individuals and would not normally be deposited at a national or local archive office. There is a growing collection of documents relating to individuals, local societies, businesses and events which fall within this category. These documents provide valuable illustrative material, which is used to enhance both the main and temporary exhibitions.'

This aspect of the museum's collection has continued to grow since this recommendation was made in 2017. However, while there may be an increasing imperative to consider adopting the Archive Service Accreditation Standard, this needs to be balanced against the increased workload it would generate for the museum's small management team.

The implications of seeking Archive Service Accreditation are complex and still under active consideration.

Accession Documentation Plan: we must confirm progress towards the planned completion of retrospective documentation backlogs at stage three (discrepancy checking) and stage four (accession register and security copy making, labelling, location and movement control indexing, and object exit loans in and out).

While considerable progress has been made in ensuring items listed in the accessions registers are transferred on to the museum's database, COMACS, much still remains to be done to complete associated data fields, such as detailed

description, location, condition, keywords and value. A major, long-term challenge is the creation and uploading of images for all items from the collections.

Museum Staffing

Assistant Manager

Ms Anna Maluk had been in post for just three months at the start of this period. Her fundraising skills and her wealth of expertise and knowledge have had considerable impact on the development of the museum through an increased range of activities. Her highly effective management of the museum's new website and its social media sites is evidenced in the public engagement figures cited below.

Volunteers

We continue to rely on an excellent team of volunteers to run the museum from day to day, to support the increasing number of special events and to work on the collections.

During 2023-24 the museum's volunteer base expanded from 40 to 53, reducing the initial strains experienced when the museum re-opened after the pandemic. The new volunteers have helped the museum to make a wider range of activities available.

Volunteer hours increased by 22%, from 4,996 to 6,092 for the year, with the financial equivalent of their contribution increasing from £99,000 to £121,950. Without this active volunteer engagement the variety of effective services provided by the museum would not exist.

The work undertaken by our front of house volunteers in making our visitors welcome ensures there is a continual flow of donations to support the museum. The friendly, helpful approach of these volunteers makes sure the visitor experience we offer is rewarding and their explanation of the importance of donations to our existence continues to encourage generous gifts. This will be of increasing importance as we face the challenge of ever-rising costs. The comments in the visitor's book continue to bear witness to their valuable work.

It is also important to acknowledge the work undertaken by 'backroom' volunteers involved in curatorial management, research, exhibition development and activity delivery, which contributes considerably to our ability to attract new visitors and encourages return visits.

We say this in every annual report, but cannot emphasise enough the financial value of the work undertaken by our volunteers. It would not be possible, within our limited financial resources, for the museum to purchase the breadth and quality of expertise to be found among them.

Work undertaken by our volunteers includes:

- providing a warm welcome to visitors
- selling items through the shop
- ensuring a positive visitor experience by providing information about the museum, its exhibits and the stories they tell
- inputting information into the collections database

- accessioning items into the collection
- the preparation and delivery of temporary exhibitions
- filing newspaper cuttings and articles
- scanning photographs
- administrative tasks
- writing publications
- supporting school visits
- supporting special events

In other words, we could not manage without them and the trustees are very grateful for their support.

Student placements

The museum has a popular programme of work experience support for students from Cheshire East and Staffordshire high schools. In 2023-24, 9 students accepted placements.

There is also an engagement programme for student volunteers, who are currently transcribing 18th and 19th century documents. This has proved particularly valuable for students intending to study history at university, since working with original documents is no longer covered by current examination syllabi. Students are transcribing Congleton Corporation's fragile documents from the 18th and early 19th centuries with a view to making them and the information they contain more widely available without damaging the originals. Copies of these transcriptions will be uploaded to our website on their completion.

Providing this level of support for the personal development of young people requires considerable commitment from both staff and volunteers and is particularly challenging for an organisation the size of Congleton Museum.

Cost of Administering the Charity

Costs incurred in administrating the charity included:

- the fee paid in respect of the submission of the annual accounts to Companies House;
- £200 paid to the Certifying Examiner.

Financial Risk

The trustees continue to review those areas of operational and business risk associated with the financial health of the organisation.

Possible changes to the way in which local authorities allocate their funding remains a medium-term risk but there is always the possibility of it being escalated to high-risk in future financial years. Cheshire East Council supported the work of the museum in 2023-24 through an annual revenue grant of £5,380. This makes a valuable contribution to the museum's balance sheet; however, it is important to recognise that it cannot be

guaranteed from year to year. As local authorities continue to face successive adverse funding settlements and rising costs for the delivery of statutory services, funding from this source may come under threat. (The grant for the 2024-25 financial year has been received.)

The trust acknowledges the support given by Congleton Town Council in providing and maintaining the museum building free of charge, which makes a considerable contribution to the continuing financial viability of the museum. The inclusion of the assessed rental value of £4,500 would have a considerable adverse impact on the museum's balance sheet.

The gap between income and expenditure

The Charity's funds at 1 April 2023 consisted of Unrestricted (General) £62,696, Unrestricted (Designated) £7,700, and Restricted £1,350, making a total of £71,746.
General Fund: income was £31,447, expenditure £48,696, leaving a balance of £45,447 at the year end.
Designated Fund: had no change and remained £7,700 at the year end.
Restricted Fund: had income of £19,300, expenditure of £20,650 leaving a zero balance at the year end.
The museum continues to strive towards the achievement of an annual trading profit. However, as expected, costs have increased substantially.

The museum's visitor figures rose during the reporting period but donation income has not increased proportionately.

General fund income (£31,447) was higher than 2022-23 (£23,991) in almost all areas of activity. Expenditure (£48,696) was, however, significantly higher than 2022-23 (£25,326), leaving a deficit for the year of £17,249. The major contributing factors were one-off IT costs, higher energy costs and first full year salary for the part-time Museum Administrator. The Board will be taking steps to address this situation.

However, Congleton Museum remains financially secure, with sufficient balances to withstand any immediate pressures.

VAT 33A Refund Scheme

During the reporting year the museum has met its obligations under the provisions of the VAT 33a scheme by ensuring the public has free access to its collections and permanent exhibitions for a minimum of 30 hours per week. The museum's published opening hours are in excess of this minimum at 33 hours. Continuing to secure the relevant VAT exceptions under this provision is crucial to the future financial sustainability of the museum, as costs and consequential VAT charges continue to rise.

Business continuity and succession planning

Ensuring business continuity and managing succession planning remain issues the trustees need to address. This will form a key element in the museum's new forward plan, which is being developed during 2024-25.

3. Objectives and Activities

Since its inception the primary objective of the trust has been to 'advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its environs' by:

- promoting and preserving a museum for the benefit of the public
- acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research
- presenting exhibits for display
- providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- presenting aspects of the town's history through permanent and temporary displays;
- providing learning opportunities for all ages through its education services;
- providing research facilities;
- encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

There have been no changes to these aims and objectives during the year and the museum also continues to acquire finds from metal detecting and archaeological assessments prior to greenfield site developments.

Accessing the museum and its services

Year	Visitors/ Contacts	Education	Total
2015-16	2,985	776	3,761
2016-17	5,020	896	5,916
2017-18	3,586	961	4,547
2018-19	2,968	1,462	4,430
2019-20	2,673	1,363	4,046
2020-21	47	0	47
2021-22	1,273	85	1,358
2022-23	4,164	21	4,185
2023-24	6,055	308	6,363

The number of people engaging with the museum continued to rise in 2023-24, providing us with our highest ever total figure, though school contacts have not yet reached pre-Covid levels.

Once again, an area of particular success, was 'Roman Week, a series of activities held during February half term, which saw engagement with 332 children and 350 adults .a rise on the previous year of 157 and 148 respectively.

The museum continued to deliver its programme of guided walks and talks, with attendances of 264 and 375 respectively. Newly introduced object handling sessions attracted 107 people and 78 people enjoyed a variety of paid for craft sessions..

2023 marked the 21st anniversary of the opening of the museum building to the public. 50 volunteers, friends of the museum and members of the public joined in the celebrations.

The museum's 'Our Story' project, a collaboration between the museum and Congleton Pride, which collects LGBT+ stories and experiences to create of an archive which can be accessed by all, continues. This year, LGBT History Month was marked with an art exhibition called "Pride of Place", providing local artists with an opportunity to express their narratives through photography, paintings, textiles, video, and digital works.

The Assistant Manager has organised a varied collection of other events and activities throughout the year, ranging from needlefelting classes to coffee mornings to crochet forget-me-nots for Remembrance Day, from a wand making workshop to a ghost walk, all with the aim of encouraging people to see the museum as a welcoming hub for community activities. They have been successful and visitor numbers – and income - continue to rise..

Schools Activities

Engagement with schools remains challenging. The limited space available within the museum to accommodate more than 30 students, the associated costs of transport, as well as aligning the museum's collections to an individual school's curriculum, are all key factors. In 2023-24, the museum engaged with 308 students through 7 school visits, an improvement on the single school visit of the previous year. It is acknowledged that this is an area where considerable improvements need be made and the trustees are currently looking at this.

Economic Impact

Under its grant funding agreement with Museum Development North West, Congleton Museum is obliged to participate in the annual National Museum Survey.

Applying the Association of Independent Museums' economic impact framework to the in person contact figure of 6,363 shows the museum's indirect contribution to the local visitor economy for 2023-24 was in the region of £149,270, an increase of 35% on the previous year.

Where visitors come from

The museum provides a visitors' book for people to comment on their experiences. An analysis of the addresses provided gives an interesting insight into where our visitors are from. As expected, a high proportion are from Congleton and the surrounding communities. There is, however, an extensive reach across Cheshire, including Chester, Crewe, and Runcorn. A similar pattern exists in North Staffordshire, with addresses in Biddulph, Stoke on Trent, Uttoxeter and Newcastle. National locations include London, Grantham, Ripon, Harrogate, Sevenoaks, Kelso and Perth.

Congleton Museum also has an international reach, with visitors from Italy, Holland, Germany, France, Colombia, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA. The constantly increasing number of visitors from outside the UK suggests that Congleton and its museum is becoming a recognised international visitor destination

Social media engagement

The museum's profile on social media has increased significantly, mainly through the work of the Assistant Manager, with regular postings and promotion of events .

During the year, 66,400 individuals saw or interacted with the museum's Facebook page, an increase of 113.5% on 2022-23. There were 441 new followers, bringing the total to 1,636. Page visits are also up to 14,500, an increase of 358.1%.

Instagram reach increased by 187.4% and profile visits by 125.4%.

The museum's TikTok videos each received on average 800 views.





Followers across all social media channels were predominately from Congleton. However, other Cheshire East locations accounted for 11.4%, an increase of 22%, and 15.4% of followers were Staffordshire based, an increase of 32% on the previous year.

Museum Website

The museum's new website went live in August 2023. This is a crucial element in extending the museum's engagement with local, national and international audiences. The limitations of the museum's current premises and the fragile nature of its archaeological collections make it very difficult for people to have full access. The website is a platform upon which its vast numismatic collections, as well as many artefacts currently held in store, can be displayed to international audiences. It is fundamental in raising awareness of the museum and its activities, as well as promoting Congleton.

Since the website went live it has achieved 38,000 views from 7,800 users, showing that customers are returning. 58% of users are accessing the website from their phone, suggesting they may be planning a visit whilst 'out and about'. 37% of visits were from desktops - these users were probably planning their visits in advance and searching for information about what's on in Congleton and at the museum. The website receives more hits during holidays. Easter weekend was an example of this, when pages were viewed nearly 3000 times, confirming that the museum is viewed by the public as a destination. Usually, users are seeking the 'What's On' page. The museum promotes all its events online, most of which sell out in advance, thus bringing people to the town and boosting the local economy. Most people are accessing the website directly, rather than following links from other sites.

4. Museum Development

With our website now in place, work continues on using it to improve access to our collections and encourage people to visit Congleton and its museum. The new branding is also in place across all our public documents and publicity material. We now have the foundation to move forward with other digitisation plans including new methods of display and ways of improving outreach to local schools and organisations.

The physical limitations of the museum building still affect our ability to store and display our collection. The trustees will work on a new strategic plan during 2024 and 2025 with this issue at the forefront of their debate.

5. Collection Management

The declared aims and objectives of the museum continue to be the collection, preservation and interpretation of the heritage of Congleton and the surrounding district, so that future generations have a clear understanding of how the town developed and the influence it and its inhabitants had on regional and national events, as well as the contribution they made to industrial innovation. The museum's collecting policy tries to include all aspects of the town's heritage. This places the development of the town and its inhabitants within a wider context.

2,710 new items, reflecting the evolution of the locality's heritage, were added to the museum's collections during the year.

The museum's continuing active engagement with the Portable Antiquities Service, the British Museum, Museum of Liverpool and Museum Development North West provides the museum and residents with a wide range of advice and support. Through this network, Congleton Museum is able to retain and display archaeological finds from the East Cheshire area which the Portable Antiquities data base identifies as being of regional, and in some cases national, importance. Congleton Museum's collections are increasingly recognised as being of greater significance than would be expected from an institution of its size.

During 2023-24, the museum was advised of four significant finds from the wider area which, subject to available funding, it hopes to acquire. These consist of a medieval gold locket and three gold rings, one each from the Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods.

The 19 documents relating to the career of St Thomas Reade, soldier, sailor, and diplomat, which the museum has bought, are of national importance. 16 refer to Sir Thomas's tour of duty as Deputy Governor to Sir Hudson Lowe on St Helena during Napoleon's exile on the island, including a note book where Sir Thomas records aspects of his interviews with the emperor. Two relate to his role as British Consul General in Tunis, where he was instrumental in persuading the Bey to abolish slavery throughout his dominions. It is anticipated the acquisition of these documents will be the catalyst for the donation of further related items.

The museum has continued developing its understanding of Congleton's clock manufacturing industry, through the acquisition of further examples of the clockmakers art. Research has indicated that between 1660 and 1880, there were at least 30 craftsmen involved in this trade. Two clocks have now been added to the collection, one

by 19th century cabinet maker Joseph Steele, the other by Johannes Kent, who died in 1686, making him the towns earliest recorded clockmaker to date. This is a particularly important find - one of Kent's lantern clocks is in the collections of the British Museum.

The accession (cataloguing) of over 420 monochrome and colour postcards of the town and surrounding area, including some taken during the 1950s to support slum clearance orders, has been a major boost to the museum's already extensive image archive. This collection is central in sharing, with both established and new residents, how the town and locality has changed over the past 160 years, thus contributing to that crucial sense of place.

A new collection of 630 items of artwork and examples of the products of local company, Berisford's Labels, has been of considerable interest. They show how the town's main industry of silk manufacture morphed from spinning to weaving, to ribbon manufacture, to the production of labels for garments, commemorative bookmarks and football club badges.

The importance of Congleton Museum's collections is being acknowledged by other institutions. The Peoples' History Museum in Manchester has transferred two evocative photographic prints, titled 'The Altogether' by prominent photographer Chris Coekin, depicting workers at John Pring and Sons, of Sandbach. Reading Museum has transferred an early 19th century portrait of local business man Charles Low by Albin Roberts Burt.

These, with recently acquired portraits of Manchester industrialist John Hope and his wife Rachel, of Mossley Hall, will be used to illustrate the industrial and commercial life of the area during the 19th and 20th centuries. The Hope portraits are of particular interest as they relate to a major financial scandal of the early 20th century.

Volunteers have now completed the identification, classification, accessioning, and packing of all 6,956 coins from the Peover Hoard. The next stage will be to photograph both sides of each coin, initially for identification purposes, but later for posting on the museum's website.

Vital to ensuring all the collections are conserved to the highest possible standard is the museum's digital environmental monitoring system. This is continuing to maintain an accurate record of temperature, humidity and light quality, which will, with the current agreed levels of security, provide the necessary data and assurance required should the museum seek to borrow items from national collections.

As each new aspect of the museum's activities grows, it places increasing pressure on the space available for both storage and interpretation. This is further compounded by the museum being identified as a receiving museum for an increasing number of archaeological archives being generated by planning applications from developers. During the year the museum has been notified of possible such archives from Congleton, Middlewich, Macclesfield and Crewe. While some will consist only of a written report and a small number of items, others may create a considerable physical archive which may help us to understand the wider heritage of the Cheshire East area. As this pressure grows on both space and time, the museum's management will have to consider whether some of the archaeological archives offered may have to be refused.

We are continually grateful to those individuals who believe that Congleton Museum is the most appropriate depository for their cherished family and business items, thereby enabling them to be accessed and enjoyed by future generations.

6. Partnerships and External Organisations

The museum's partnership with the Portable Antiquities Service for the North West and National Museums Liverpool remains strong. The quarterly 'Finds Days' held during 2023-2024 were well attended.

Currently the trust is a member of:

- Museum Development North West. (MDNW)
- East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
- Association of Independent Museums (AIM)
- Museums of Cheshire (MOC)
- Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East(CVS)
- Arts Council England (ACE)
- Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group
- Association of Cultural Enterprise
- Museums Association

Membership of these organisations continues to give the trust access to training, information on future developments and funding opportunities available within the museum and heritage sector. They enable the museum to work more effectively and meet development targets.

Company Registration Number 02214293

Charity Registration Number 701430

Congleton Museum Trust

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Congleton Museum Trust

Legal and Administrative Information

Board of Management	I Doughty
	M Laurence
	A Gubbins
	L Hulse
	F Whitelock
	S Firkin
	P Lane
	D Bordley
	S Kamenskiy
Company Number	02214293
Charity Number	701430
Registered Office	Market Chambers
	Market Square
	Congleton
	Cheshire
	CW12 1ET
Independent Examiner	D Bales
	6 Rowan Close
	Biddulph Moor
	Stoke on Trent
Bankers	NatWest
	46 High Street
	Congleton
	Cheshire

Congleton Museum Trust

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Congleton Museum Trust

Trustees' Report (including Directors' Report)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Board of Management present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)* (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

Objectives and activities

The primary objective of the Trust is to establish and to advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its' environs by:

- Promoting and preserving for the benefit of the public a museum;
- Acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research;
- Preserving exhibits for display;
- Providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- Presenting aspects of the town's history through permanent and temporary displays;
- Providing learning opportunities for all ages through its' education services;
- Providing research facilities;
- Encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

Achievements and performance

The Charity's funds at 1 April 2023 consisted of Unrestricted (General) £62,696, Unrestricted (Designated) £7,700 and Restricted £1,350, making a total of £71,746.

General Fund: income was £31,447, expenditure £48,696, leaving a balance of £45,447 at the year end.
Designated Fund: had no change and remained £7,700 at the year end.
Restricted Fund: had income of £19,300, expenditure of £20,650 leaving a zero balance at the year end.

General fund income (£31,447) was higher than 2023 (£23,991) in almost all areas of activity. Expenditure (£48,696) was however significantly higher than 2023 (£25,326), leaving a deficit for the year of £17,249. The major contributing factors were one-off IT costs, higher energy costs and first full year salary for the part-time Museum Administrator. The Board will be taking steps to address this situation.

Financial review

Unrestricted funds at the end of the financial year totalled £53,147 including a designated fund of £7,700. It is the policy of the Trust that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to six months' expenditure. The Board of Management considers that reserves of this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Trust's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

The Board of Management has assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

The Board of Management is satisfied that sufficient funding is available for the Museum to continue operating for the foreseeable future.

Congleton Museum Trust

Trustees' Report (including Directors' Report) (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Structure, governance and management

The Trust is constituted as a company limited by guarantee and is therefore governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Management, who are also the trustees of the charity and directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of the signature of the financial statements were:

I Doughty	
M Laurence	
A Gubbins	
L Hulse	
F Whitelock	
S Firkin	
P Lane	
M Aspey	Appointed 1/04/24 Resigned 19/11/24
D Bordley	Appointed 8/10/24
S Kamenskiy	Appointed 8/10/24

Further details of the management of the Trust and of the activities for the year can be found in the separate document "Report of the Board of Trustees 2023-24".

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Management.

Anne Gubbins

A Gubbins
Deputy Chair of the Board of Management
Dated: 15th January 2025

Congleton Museum Trust

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Board of Management, who are also the directors of Congleton Museum Trust for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Board of Management to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Trust and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board of Management are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Trust will continue in operation.

The Board of Management are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Congleton Museum Trust

Year ended 31 March 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Congleton Museum Trust (the Company)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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

Signed: D. Bales

Name: David Bales

Address: 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent.

Date: 17th January 2025

Congleton Museum Trust
Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
		£	£	£	£	£
Income from:						
Donations and Legacies	2	17,796	-	19,300	37,096	20,616
Charitable Activities	3	7,531	-	-	7,531	3,209
Other Trading Activities	4	6,120	-	-	6,120	4,322
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total		31,447	0	19,300	50,747	28,147
Expenditure on:						
Raising Funds	5	1,746	-	-	1,746	643
Charitable Activities	6	46,950	-	20,650	67,600	29,839
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total		48,696	0	20,650	69,346	30,482
Net Gains/(losses) on Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Net Income/(Expenditure)		-17,249	0	-1,350	-18,599	-2,335
Transfers between Funds		-	-	-	-	-
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)						
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes		-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		-17,249	0	-1,350	-18,599	-2,335
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		62,696	7,700	1,350	71,746	74,081
Total funds carried forward		45,447	7,700	0	53,147	71,746

Congleton Museum Trust
Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 March 2024

	Note	Total Funds £	Prior Year Funds £
Fixed Assets:			
Intangible assets		-	-
Tangible assets		-	-
Heritage assets		-	-
Investments		-	-
Total fixed assets		0	0
Current assets:			
Stocks		2,091	1,211
Debtors		7,941	8,168
Investments		-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		45,718	64,401
Total current assets		55,750	73,780
Liabilities:			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year		2,603	2,034
Net current assets or liabilities		53,147	71,746
Total assets less current liabilities		53,147	71,746
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		-	-
Provisions for liabilities		-	-
Net asset or liabilities excluding pension asset or liability		53,147	71,746
Defined benefit pension scheme asset or liability		-	-
Total net assets or liabilities		53,147	71,746
The Funds of the charity:			
Endowment funds		-	-
Restricted income funds	7	0	1,350
Unrestricted funds (general)		45,447	62,696
Unrestricted funds (designated)		7,700	7,700
Revaluation reserve		-	-
Pension reserve		-	-
Total unrestricted funds		53,147	70,396
Total charity funds		**53,147**	**71,746**

Congleton Museum Trust

Balance Sheet (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Management on 16 December 2024.

M Laurence

Trustee

Company registration number 02214293

Congleton Museum Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

Charity information

Congleton Museum Trust is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1ET.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The Trust is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Trust has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Trust. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies followed are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Board of Management have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Board of Management continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Board of Management in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the financial statements.

1.4 Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be measured reliably.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP.

1.5 Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

1.6 Fixed assets

Fixed assets are included in the accounts at cost less accumulated depreciation and are depreciated over their expected useful lives.

1.7 Heritage assets

Information on the cost or valuation of many of the heritage assets owned by the Trust is not available. Therefore, heritage assets are not shown in the Trust's balance sheet. The Trust has not incorporated a valuation of heritage assets in the financial statements as the benefits of doing so are outweighed by the costs of obtaining such a valuation.

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

1.9 Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price.

2 **Donations and Legacies**	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Donations	5,727	0	0	5,727	3,304
Grants	5,470	0	19,300	24,770	9,536
Gift Aid and VAT reclaim	6,599	0	0	6,599	7,776
	17,796	0	19,300	37,096	20,616

3 **Charitable Activities (income)**					
	£	£	£	£	£
Membership subs	1,420	0	0	1,420	1,275
Education project revenue	0	0	0	0	0
Walks and talks	4,167	0	0	4,167	1,567
Room hire	1,228	0	0	1,228	145
Bank interest received	716	0	0	716	222
	7,531	0	0	7,531	3,209

4 **Other Trading Activities**					
	£	£	£	£	£
Shop income	4,212	0	0	4,212	2,945
Publishing income	1,908	0	0	1,908	1,377
	6,120	0	0	6,120	4,322

5 **Cost of Raising Funds**					
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of shop sales	1,746	0	0	1,746	643
	1,746	0	0	1,746	643

6 **Charitable Activities (expenditure)**					
	£	£	£	£	£
Additions to collections	708	0	0	708	1,898
Collections expenditure	1,866	0	4,150	6,016	2,451
Events and exhibitions	1,471	0	750	2,221	612
Salaries	12,824	0	0	12,824	2,753
Electricity	6,509	0	0	6,509	4,493
Water	396	0	0	396	322
Household and cleaning	0	0	0	0	465
Security and safety	1,514	0	0	1,514	1,302
IT software and hardware	11,897	0	15,750	27,647	7,324
Insurance	2,993	0	0	2,993	2,605
Telephone and broadband	1,557	0	0	1,557	1,592
Outside subscriptions	277	0	0	277	485
Office consumables	613	0	0	613	387
Sundry expenses	1,183	0	0	1,183	746
Equipment rental, support and usage	2,524	0	0	2,524	2,404
Advertising and marketing	618	0	0	618	0
	46,950	0	20,650	67,600	29,839

7 **Restricted funds summary**

	Website	Reade Papers	Peover Hoard	Roman Week	Roman Centurions	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balances b/f	0	0	1,350	0	0	1,350
Income in year	15,750	2,800	0	250	500	19,300
Expenditure in year	-15,750	-2,800	-1,350	-250	-500	-20,650
Balances c/f	0	0	0	0	0	0

8 **Employees**

The average number of employees during the year was 1 (2023: 1).

9 **Related Party Transactions**

There were no transactions during the year involving the directors/trustees or related parties.

Congleton Museum Trust

Year ended 31 March 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Congleton Museum Trust (the Company)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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

Signed: D. Bales

Name: David Bales

Address: 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent.

Date: 17th January 2025

CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 701430

Accounts

Congleton Museum



Nathaniel Maxey Pattison

Report of the Board of Trustees 2022-23

To be considered at the Annual Meeting to be held on 27th November 2023 in the Bridestones Suite of Congleton Town Hall.

Registered Office
Market Square, Congleton Cheshire. CW12 1ET
Tel 01260 276360
Email: infor@congletonmuseum.co.uk

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Governance and Management
3. Objectives and Activities
4. Museum Development
5. Collections Management
6. Partnerships and External Organisations
7. Volunteers
8. Financial Report



1972 Charter Year Medal

1. Introduction

Congleton Museum Trust continues to be Registered as a Charity (No 701430) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No 02214293). The museum remains fully accredited (No 262) within the scheme administered by Arts Council, England.

This report covers the activities of the trust for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, the first full year of operation since the covid 19 pandemic.

During the year we have been trying to address two underlying concerns - how to:

- re-engage the public with the museum and its services; and
- continue to ensure financial viability within an increasingly hostile economic environment.

In the 2021-22 report and at the subsequent annual meeting, we identified that 2022-23 could be a challenging year and expressed the hope that it might end with a balanced set of accounts. It is therefore, pleasing to note that the operational deficit for the year is only £1,335.

To end 2022-23 in such a strong financial position, with such a challenging economic environment, is a testimony to the hard work and commitment of all our volunteers, upon whom the success of the museum depends.

Our visitors' book effectively records their experiences of the museum and how they are welcomed, emphasising the important role our volunteers have in ensuring Congleton Museum continues to deliver a first-class visitor experience.

2. Governance and Management

Board of Trustees

The museum continues to be managed by the Board of Trustees, which meets, in person, on a bi-monthly basis.

Trustees holding office between April 2022 and March 2023

Two members of the board were appointed by external organisations:

Cllr Suzy Firkin was re-appointed to represent Congleton Town Council at its 2022 Annual Meeting.

Mrs Linda Hulse continued to represent the Congleton History Society.

The following trustees were re-elected at the Annual General Meeting, held on Monday 12th December 2022:

Mr Ian Doughty	Chair of Trustees
Mrs Anne Gubbins	
Mr Peter Lane	
Mr Mike Laurence	Company Secretary
Cllr Kay Wesley	

At the same meeting, Mrs Felicity Whitelock was elected as a new trustee.



Congleton Golden Jubilee Medal 2022

In line with its agreed policy of ensuring diversity, inclusion and future sustainability through effective succession planning, the board continues to review the skills and expertise of its membership. The recruitment of new trustees remains a high priority. Work is continuing on the development of an appropriate strategy, not only at board level, but also in respect of operational activities and service delivery.

Induction of New Trustees

Newly appointed trustees receive briefing sessions with the chair and key members of the trust, as well as a range of key documents including; -

- a handbook outlining:
  - their role and responsibilities
  - the trust's objectives
  - the acquisition and disposal policy
  - the services offered by the museum;
- the trust's governing document
- the last three sets of accounts and annual reports

- the current business plan
- minutes of recent trustee meetings;
- a guide to being a trustee;
- role descriptions for trustees and
- honorary officers to clarify their responsibilities;
- declaration of ability to be a trustee e.g., not disqualified

Professional Advice and Support

Curatorial Adviser 2022-2023

The accreditation scheme continues to require those museums without professionally qualified curatorial staff to appoint a 'Museum Mentor'. This service continues to be offered free of charge by museum professionals employed by larger institutions as part of their ongoing professional development.

Mrs Katherine Lynch, Director of Heritage for the Port Sunlight Village Trust continued as Congleton Museum's mentor for the year 2022-23.



St Peter's vicarage prior to restoration

Certifying Examiner 2022-2023

When submitting the 2021-22 accounts, it became clear that the format did not comply with the Charity Commission's requirements. The accounts needed to be reformatted and subjected to an independent examination. The trust is grateful to Mr. David Bales, a local accountant, for undertaking this work on its behalf.

The trustees subsequently asked Mr Bales, of 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent, to undertake this role in respect of the 2022-2023 accounts.

General Data Protection Regulations

The trust continues to monitor carefully the management of the personal data it holds to ensure continued compliance with current General Data Protection Regulations.

Museum Accreditation

The museum's full accredited status remains valid.

The most recent information available from Arts Council England is that the earliest Congleton Museum will be invited to renew its accreditation will be in December 2024 for a submission date of July 2025.

Whilst this may appear to be a long way away, a great deal of preparatory work will need to be undertaken during the intervening months.

Not only will we be required to report progress on the three areas for improvement identified in the 2017 award letter but all our documentation, procedures and processes will need to be reviewed. Without accreditation we will not be able to access the development funding we will require to fulfil our future aspirations.

ACCREDITED
MUSEUM

The issues we will be required to report upon are:

Secure occupancy: provide an update on the negotiations to acquire Bradshaw House from Cheshire East Council.

As a move to Bradshaw House has ceased to be a possibility, we now need to have a plan in place which clearly identifies our future accommodation aspirations. We also need to secure the future of the museum beyond the terms of the current lease for Market Square, which is due to mature in 2027.

Whilst the issue has already been raised with Congleton Town Council, it is important that we make progress on this during the 2024-25 reporting year.

Collections development policy (Archival holding): consider adopting the Archives Service Accreditation Standard.

The museum's current collecting policy states that: -

'Where archive material is collected there is an expectation that it will support the museum's other collecting fields by providing illustrative material for exhibitions or contextual information for artefacts. Documents which are accessioned have been specifically donated to the museum by organisations or individuals and would not normally be deposited at a national or local archive office. There is a growing collection of documents relating to individuals, local societies, businesses and events which fall within this category. These documents provide valuable illustrative material, which is used to enhance both the main and temporary exhibitions.'


The Congleton Savings Bank,
No. 13, HIGH STREET.
Interest Allowed £2 10s. per cent per annum.
The knowledge that you have Savings to fall back upon, when required, will bring comfort to your mind, and be a source of happiness to your family.
Government Stock purchased for Depositors.
The week's duties have not been fully discharged unless a portion of the week's wages has been laid by for a season of sickness, scarce employment, or old age.
ESTABLISHED 1870. UNDER GOVERNMENT INSPECTION.
Open Saturday for Deposits and Withdrawals - - 1 to 4-15.
Saturday, " " - - 7 to 8-30.
And on Monday Evening " " - - 7 to 8-30.
SPECIAL ADVANTAGE: Sums not exceeding £10 can be withdrawn any day without Notice.
1907.
1907.
ABSOLUTELY SAFETY.
STRICTEST SECRECY.
POSTAL INFORMATION.
FESTIVALS, &c., 1907.
PRESIDENT.
THE MAYOR OF CONGLETON FOR THE TIME BEING.
ACTUARY.
C. RUSSELL HALL.

Congleton Savings Bank Calendar 1907

This aspect of the museum's collection has continued to grow since this recommendation was made in 2017. However, whilst there may be an increasing imperative to consider adopting the Archive Service Accreditation Standard, this needs to be balanced against the increased workload it would generate for the museum's small management team.

The implications of seeking Archive Service Accreditation are complex and still under active consideration.

Documentation Plan: confirm progress towards the planned completion of retrospective documentation backlogs at stage three (discrepancy checking) and stage four (accession register and security copy making and labelling, location and movement control indexing, and object exit loans in and out).

Whilst considerable progress has been made in ensuring items listed in the accessions registers are transferred on to the museum's database, COMACS, much still remains to be done to complete associated data fields, such as detailed description, location, condition, keywords, and value. A major, long-term

challenge will be the creation and uploading of images for all items from the collections.

Maintaining our full accredited status remains crucial if Congleton Museum is to continue to be recognised as an effective and efficient organisation by its peers.

Accessing the museum and its services

2022-23 has been a year of recovery in respect of public engagement, with the promotion of the museum and its services remaining the primary focus.

Year	Visitors/ Contacts	Education	Total
2015-16	2,985	776	3,761
2016-17	5,020	896	5,916
2017-18	3,586	961	4,547
2018-19	2,968	1,462	4,430
2019-20	2,673	1,363	4,046
2020-21	0,047	0,000	0,047
2021-22	1,273	85	1,358
2022-23	4,164	21	4,185
2023-24[1]	3,038	143	3,181

[1] The 2023-24 figures are for the half year 1st April to 30th September and include 99 contacts at the Green Fayre, walks 100, external talks 173, youth groups 13 and adult visits 270.

Last year we reported that visitor/engagement figures for 2021-22 were encouraging, though well below those for 2019-20, the previous full pre Covid year of operation. It is pleasing to note that for 2022-23 the total number of contacts rose to 4,164, of which 3,798 were museum visitors. The remaining 366 were people attending walks, talks and other museum activities. This is an increase of 230%.

During the year there was a reduction in the number of school contacts from 85 to 21, however, provisional figures for 2023-24 now indicate an increase in this area.

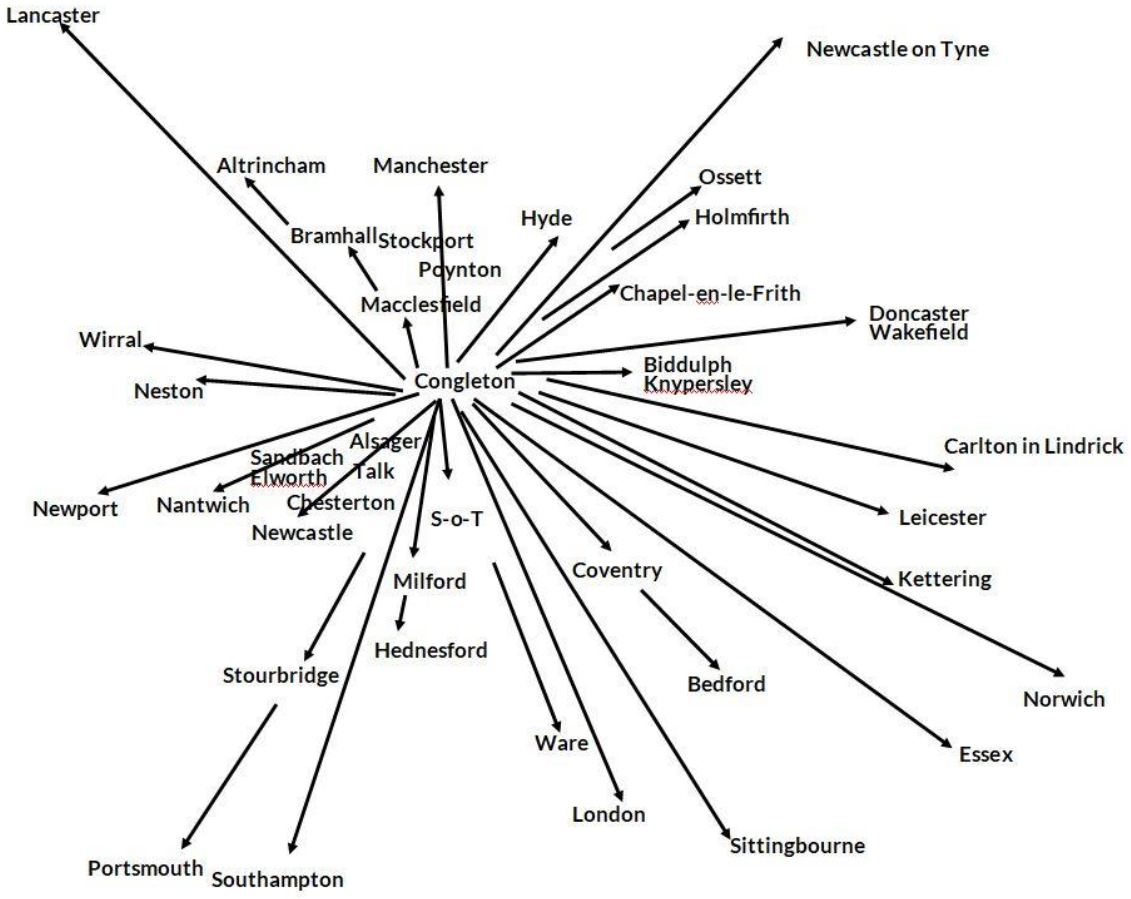
An area of particular success, was the 'Roman Week, a series of activities held during the February 2023 half term, which saw engagement with 187 children and 202 adults.

The figures for the first half of the 2023-24 financial year show a consistent rise in engagement in all areas including schools.

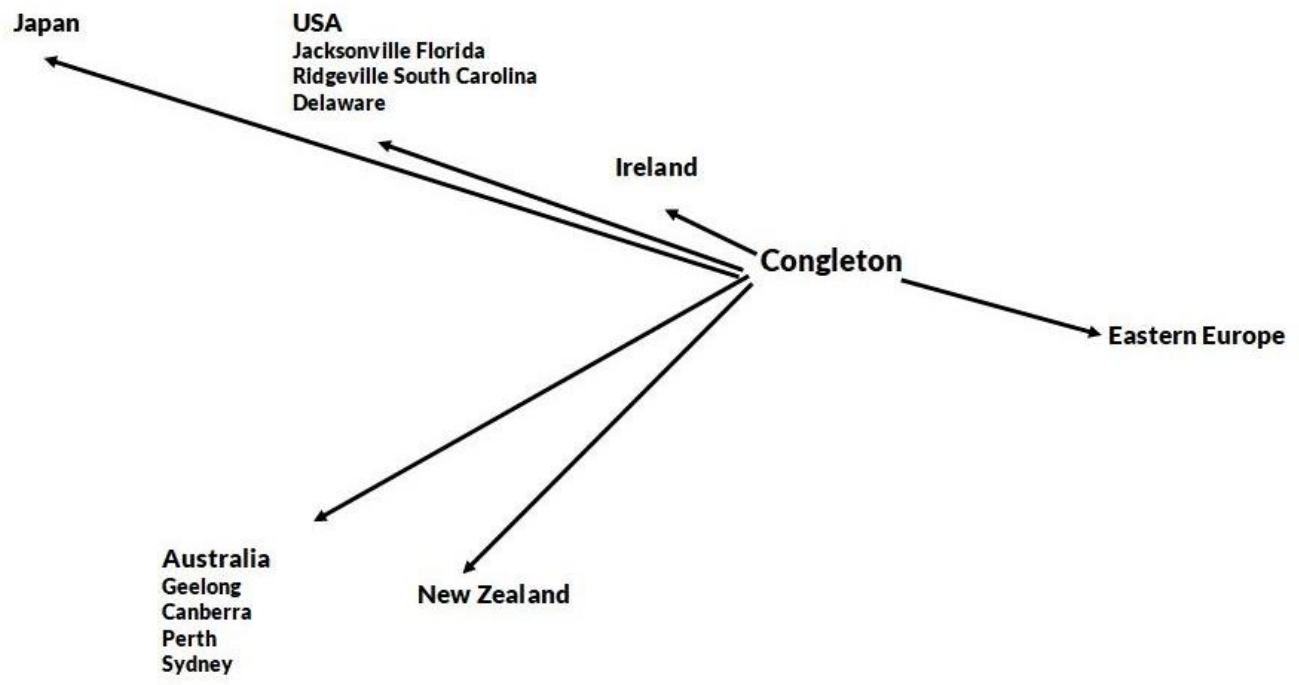
Under its grant funding agreement with Museum Development North West, Congleton Museum is obliged to participate in the annual National Museum Survey.

By applying the AIM (Association of Independent Museums) economic impact framework to the 3,798 visitors we recorded for the year, it is possible to calculate that these visitors could have contributed £100,433 to the wider local visitor economy, an increase of £66,770 (198%) on the previous year. This is a very creditable performance for one of the smallest of the North West's museums, when compared to a national average of £233,033 and £331,539 for the North West Region. The visitor figures for the first six months of 2023-24 are already indicating a further substantial increase.

Whilst Congleton may be regarded as a local museum, entries from the visitor's book suggests a considerable national and international reach. The two diagrams below illustrate the extent of this reach and clearly indicate that Congleton is increasingly becoming a tourist (visitor) destination, and that the museum plays a crucial role in supporting visitor 'dwell-time' in the town.



Locations for UK Visitors 2022-23



Locations for International Visitors 2022-23

An initial analysis for 2023-24 already suggests a wider spread of locations for both United Kingdom and international visitors.

Social media engagement.

In previous reports we noted there was a need to develop further the museum's virtual presence as a means of reaching those members of the public, who by virtue of their location, are unlikely to visit the museum.

The appointment (in January 2023) of a member of staff with expertise in social media has made a considerable impact on the museum's profile on social media.



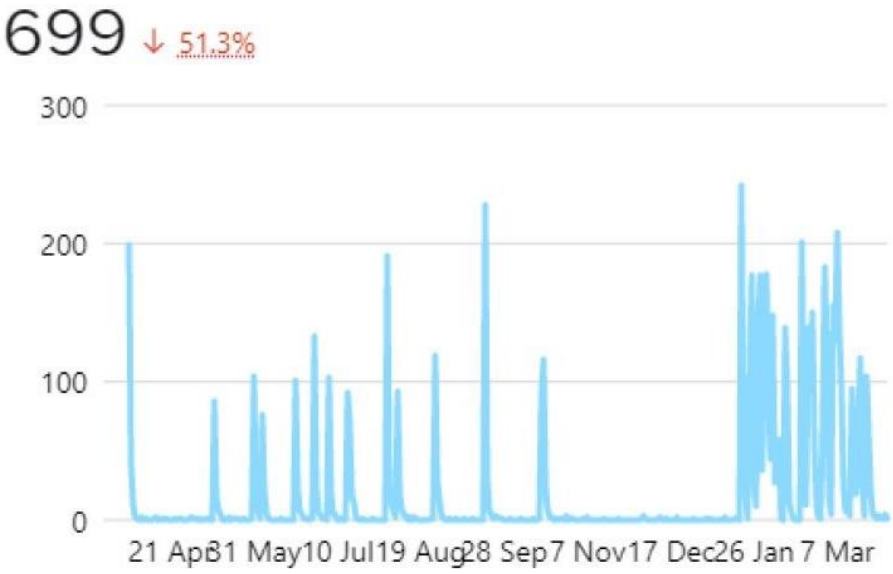
Historically the museum has retained steady engagement across social media, especially on Facebook and Instagram. However, as can be seen below, from January 2023, the museum reached a wider Facebook audience and achieved increased engagement through weekly postings, the promotion of events, and the use of hashtags.

Facebook Reach



During the reporting year the total reach - the number of individuals who saw or interacted with the museum's Facebook page was 31,535, an increase of 62% on 2021-22. The above graphic shows consistent engagement for the first three quarters of the year, with an upsurge in the final quarter with over 14,000 people accessing the Roman week posts. The museum reached a landmark of 1,000 Facebook followers in January 2023.

Instagram Reach



On Instagram the total reach was 699, down 51.3%, on the previous year. No messages were posted from October to December. However, there was a substantial increase between January and March, similar to that of Facebook, with new accounts continuing to engage.

The geographical reach for January and February 2023 for both Facebook and Instagram was, as is to be expected, predominately in Congleton. However, for Facebook in January and February, other Cheshire East locations accounted for 8.9%, and 10.5% of contacts respectively and Staffordshire locations for 11.4% and 10.8%. Similarly, for Instagram during the same period Cheshire East locations accounted for 8.75% and 8.9% and Staffordshire 3.7% and 4%.

The museum has also joined TikTok and LinkedIn, and it is hoped that engagement will grow on these two social media accounts over the next financial year.

Museum Website

Unfortunately, it is not possible to give any analysis for the museum's website in the reporting year as it was no longer fully operational. This was identified as an area of concern and the museum commissioned Joi Polloi, a nationally recognised digital agency with experience of working with museums, to develop a new website.

This is seen as a crucial element in the museum's engagement with wider local, national and international audiences. The limitations of the museum's current premises and the fragile nature of its archaeological collections make it very difficult for the public to have detailed access. The museum sees the new website as a platform upon which many aspects of its collections, currently held in store, and in particular its vast numismatic collections, can be displayed to international audiences. (The new website became operational in July 2023.)



The museum's new website

Museum Staffing 2022-2023

Museum Assistant Manager

The museum's administration officer tendered her resignation with effect from 31st March 2022. The trustees took the opportunity to review the role before advertising the post. It was felt that many of the administrative functions could ultimately be undertaken by volunteers and that the future development of the museum would require the appointment of a person who could assume many of the responsibilities currently undertaken by the volunteer Collections Manager. It was therefore agreed to create the post of Assistant Manager.

Following a rigorous selection process, Ms Anna Maluk was appointed and joined the museum on 1st January 2023. Anna has already brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the museum, having a B.A. in History, and M.A. in Public History and Heritage, experience of working with the Audience Agency and for the Imperial War Museum (North) and, as already mentioned, considerable expertise in the use and management of social media.

Evacuee Experience Activity Leader

Mrs Linda Ward continued to have responsibility for the organisation and delivery of the museum's Evacuee Experience. (This is a delivery-only contract).



Astbury Church painted in 1888 by Frank Saltfleet

Cost of Administering the Charity

Costs incurred in administrating the charity are:

- the fee paid in respect of the submission of the annual accounts to Companies House;
- £200 paid to the Certifying Examiner.

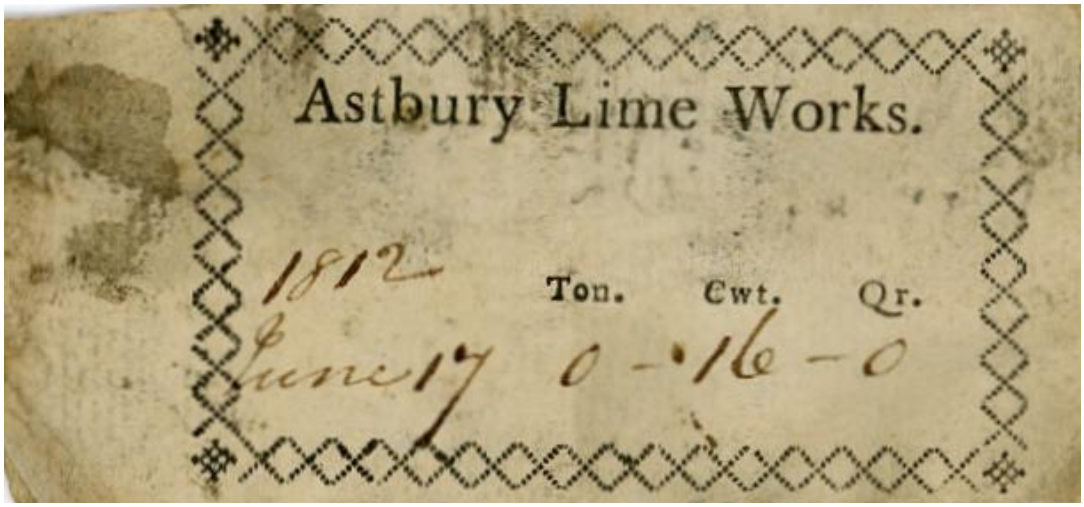
Financial Risk

The trustees continue to review those areas of operational and business risk associated with the financial health of the organisation.

Possible changes to the way in which local authorities allocate their funding.

This remains a medium-term risk but there is always the possibility of it being escalated to high-risk in future financial years. Cheshire East Council supports the work of the museum through an annual revenue grant of £5,380. This makes a valuable contribution to the museum's balance sheet; however, it is important to recognise that it cannot be assured from year to year. As local authorities continue to face successive adverse funding settlements and rising costs for the delivery of statutory services, funding from this source may come under threat. (The grant for the 2023-24 financial year has been received.)

The trust acknowledges the support given by Congleton Town Council in providing and maintaining the museum building free of charge, which makes a considerable contribution to the continuing financial viability of the museum. The inclusion of the assessed rental value of £4,500 would have a considerable adverse impact on the museum's balance sheet.



Weight ticket for the Astbury Lime works dated 1812

Addressing the gap between income and expenditure

The museum continues to strive towards the achievement of t an annual trading profit. Last year we noted that it would take time for visitor confidence to return and for the museum to make a profit, and that the Covid support grants we received would be crucial in ensuring the museum's financial viability in the meantime.

The operating deficit for the 2022-23 reporting year was less than we anticipated at £1,335. The museum's balance sheet benefitted from there being no changes in energy unit costs, the existing contract running until 31st March 2023, and that no staffing costs were incurred between 1st April and 31st December 2022. The new energy contract and a full year of staffing costs will have a considerable impact on expenditure for the 2023-24 financial year.



Dial from Johannes Kent's clock of pre 1686

Whilst visitor numbers showed signs of recovery, associated donations were £1,654 below those for the previous year. Revenue from all other areas of activity, apart from education project activity (school visits), showed a year-on-year increase.

It is pleasing to report that at the end of the 2022-23 financial year, Congleton Museum remains financially secure, with sufficient balances to withstand any cost-of-living pressures, e.g., energy costs or a reduction in donations income, for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Taking into account the revised energy and salary costs, the 2023-24 financial year began with a budgeted shortfall of £15,220. By the end of September 2023 income in all areas was above that for the same period in 2021-22 and the projected shortfall had reduced to £4,119.

Cost of Living Crisis

In the previous report we acknowledged that the current cost of living crisis could have a considerable impact on the museum's financial viability. As a free access museum, we anticipated that our visitor numbers would increase, while our donation income may proportionately decrease, as the level of disposable income within households reduces.

The rising cost of energy continues to be an area of concern. It is essential for the health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers, as well the preservation and conservation of the collections, that minimum acceptable temperatures and

humidity levels are maintained. We were fortunate that for duration of the 2022-23 financial year electricity continued to be purchased under the old contract. The new contract began on 1st April 2023. The difference in energy costs between the first quarter of 2021-22 and 2023-24 was £576; if this is repeated across the rest of the year this will account for at least £2,000 of the predicted shortfall.

VAT 33A Refund Scheme

During the reporting year the museum has met its obligations under the provisions of the VAT 33a scheme by ensuring the public has free access to its collections and permanent exhibitions for a minimum of 30 hours per week. The museum's published opening hours are in excess of this minimum at 33 hours. Continuing to secure the relevant VAT exceptions under this provision is crucial to the future financial sustainability of the museum, as costs and consequential VAT charges continue to rise.

Business continuity and Succession Planning

Ensuring business continuity and managing succession planning remain issues the trustees need to address. It is intended that this will form a key element in the museum's new forward plan, which will be developed during 2024-25.



3,5,7,9 and 11 Dane Street prior to demolition in the 1960s

3. Objectives and Activities

Since its inception the primary objective of the trust has been to 'advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its environs' by:

- promoting and preserving a museum for the benefit of the public
- acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research
- presenting exhibits for display
- providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- presenting aspects of the town's history through permanent and temporary displays;
- providing learning opportunities for all ages through its education services;
- providing research facilities;
- encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

There have been no changes to these aims and objectives during the year. However, due to the continuing increase in metal detecting and archaeological assessments prior to greenfield site developments, Congleton Museum has taken a greater interest in the acquisition of the finds these two activities have generated so that they may not be lost to future generations

Education and Learning



Paddington by Berisfords

Our programme of Sunday Walks has been well attended during the year. These are crucial events for the museum, as they provide an opportunity to introduce members of the public to Congleton's rich heritage while highlighting the work of the museum, as well as providing a valuable source of revenue.

In November 2022 we ran a series of highly successful 'Behind the Scenes' events which gave museum friends and volunteers an opportunity to access items from the collections they would not normally see.

In November 2022 we ran a series of highly successful 'Behind the Scenes' events which gave museum friends and volunteers an opportunity to access items from the collections they would not normally see.



The museum continues to offer developmental opportunities to high school students through its documentation transcription programme. Students are transcribing Congleton Corporation's fragile documents from the 18th and early 19th centuries with a view to making them and the information they contain more widely available without damaging the originals. Copies of these transcriptions will be uploaded to our new website on their completion.

There was only one school activity session during the year. This is an area already identified for future development.

Fund Raising

No specific fundraising activities took place during the 2022-23 reporting year.

4. Museum Development

Planning for the Future

Last year we reported that, during the Strategy and Planning Day held in July 2021, the following key objectives were identified: -

1. Develop and implement a Digital and Digitisation Strategy
2. Attract more volunteers and diversify our volunteer and trustee base
3. Develop engagement with local schools
4. Define the physical reality of the museum
5. Clarify the position in respect of the museum's lease on its current building

Numbers 1, 3, and 5 were taken forward during the 2002-23 reporting year.

1. **Develop and implement a Digital and Digitisation Strategy**

   In 2021-22 it was reported that Joi Polloi of Sheffield had been selected to prepare a digital strategy for the museum.

   It was agreed the museum's digital mission should include: -

   - Giving more people access to Congleton's heritage.

- Raising the profile of Congleton Museum and its collections amongst the public, peer institutions and regional and national bodies e.g., local authority and funding bodies.
- Supporting the economic stability of the museum by generating income.
- Overcoming the physical limitations of the museum, including content and method of display.
- Considering sustainability and making the museum easy to look after, requiring minimal staffing and technical understanding.

The aim will be to appeal to: -

- Local people, who we want to engage repeatedly with the museum.
- Tourists, whether visiting the museum specifically or as part of a general visit to the area
- People who may not be able to visit in person but who are interested in what we do and could contribute through eCommerce.
- Education Groups, who can be encouraged to engage with the museum's heritage assets as part of their curriculum requirements.
- Non-educational groups, who could raise the profile of the museum and provide
- an additional economic benefit.

Key to the delivery of this strategy was appropriate modern branding and an effective, responsive website. To assist in achieving this a co-creation group was established. This met between January and March 2023, initially to help identify the key requirements for both the new branding and the website and then to provide feedback on proposals.

It was agreed that both should provide the museum with a unique identity, using a bright and colourful pallet which would be attractive to a younger audience.



Collective views about the museum's branding and website

There was considerable discussion as to the role 'the bear' should play in the museum's identity. It was noted that a bear logo would not be specific to the museum as bears appeared in different guises throughout the town and represented other communities. It was agreed that a bear motif would continue to have a place but not as the museum's primary symbol.

We are grateful to both the Congleton Inclosure Trust and Congleton Town Council for providing the funding required to deliver this project.

3D Printing

The museum was successful in securing £4,156 of grant funding through Museum Development Northwest for the purchase of a 3D scanner and printer. These have already proved their worth in making reproductions of valuable and fragile items from the collection, in particular making replica coins from the Peover Hoard for use in 'excavation' activities during Roman Week.



The museum's 3D printer

2. Develop engagement with local schools

A Documenting History Competition was held as part of the Congleton 750 celebrations in 2022. School students were invited to 'write about a character from Congleton's past, create a video tour of our historic town, or capture some of the town's architecture on paper or imagine an event from medieval times.' The successful participants received their prizes during the Medieval Council meeting held on 10th November at the Town Hall.

3. Clarify the position in respect of the museum's lease on its current building

The trust has received an assurance from Congleton Town Council that the museum will be able to continue to occupy its present building when its lease ends in 2027.

Building Maintenance

The systematic programme of internal redecoration has continued. Issues relating to the structure of the building continue to be brought to the attention of our landlord. During the 2022-23 winter storms the museum roof suffered some damage. The town council undertook the appropriate repairs and the building remains watertight.

5. Collection Management

Heritage asset

The declared aims and objectives of the museum continue to be the collection, preservation and interpretation the heritage of Congleton and the surrounding district.

The museum's original promoters were keen to ensure that Congleton's unique heritage was preserved so that future generations had a clear understanding of how the town developed and the influence it and its inhabitants had on regional and national events, as well as the contribution they made to industrial innovation. The museum's collecting policy tries to include all aspects of the town's heritage. This places the development of the town and its inhabitants within a wider context.

The museum's heritage asset continues to grow as both members of the public and organisations transfer items of local and national interest to the collections.

Cheshire Hoards

The three Cheshire Hoards from Malpas, Knutsford and Poole were returned to Congleton in July 2022 and will remain until 2025, when they will transfer to Liverpool Museum for a major exhibition on treasure finds.

Peover Hoard



Coins from the Peover Hoard

A key activity for a small group of our volunteers, has been the continuing management of the Peover Hoard of 6,956 Roman coins. This has entailed the identification, classification, accessioning, photographing and packing of each coin under the guidance of our MDNW funded Roman numismatic consultant, Mr Matthew Ball, of Lincoln College, Oxford. During the summer of 2022, this project provided a group of five sixth form students from Congleton, Eaton Bank and Alsager High Schools with an opportunity to enhance their personal statements for university applications, by stating that they have successfully worked with and have identified authentic Roman artefacts.

It is anticipated that this project will be completed during the 2023-24 reporting year. We are grateful to all our volunteers who have worked so hard to bring this project to fruition

Acquisitions

The museum has been actively adding to the collection during the reporting year. In the main, we depend upon the generosity of local individuals and organisations for the donation of items to our collections. These include: -

- a spectacular collection of over 430 postcards, 5 ceramic items, 21 documents and 23 prints relating to Congleton and the surrounding area;
- a considerable collection of documents, pictures, illustrations and artifacts relating to Bossons' Artware and Brook Mills donated by the family;
- papers relating to Hulme's electrical business of Little Street;
- illustrated 'Freedom of the Borough of Congleton' and carved casket awarded to Harry Williams J.P
- a portrait of Dr Charles Bullock
- log books of girl guide hikes from St Audrey's School;
- collections of deeds relating to 21-25 Wagg Street;
- weaving instructions and labels by Berisford's and Brough, Nicholson and Hall;
- installation documents for the Congleton Corporation Electrical Company;
- a conveyance for the Vale Cottages;
- scrapbooks of cuttings and albums of photographs relating to various Congleton Carnivals and celebrations;
- a Congleton Savings Bank passbook.

We are continually grateful to those individuals who believe that Congleton Museum is the most appropriate depository for their cherished family and business items, thereby enabling them to be accessed and enjoyed by future generations. This has included a portrait of Dr Charles Bullock one of Congleton's 19th century physicians.



Dr Charles Bullock

There are, however, occasions when it becomes necessary to purchase key items which illustrate specific aspects of Congleton's heritage. During the year we have been able to buy two further longcase clocks by Congleton makers, the first by William Wilkinson, who was apprenticed to John Whitehurst the elder in 1725, for £120 and the second by Edward Drakeford, 1779-1859, for £480. The latter is of particular interest as it represents a clear link between Congleton's clockmaking heritage and silk manufacturing. Drakeford shared a patent with Charles Jeffries of the Havannah Mills for making "a swift and other apparatus thereto belonging for the purpose of winding silk and other fibrous materials".

Two items of art have also been purchased: a water colour of Astbury Church and village green by Yorkshire artist Frank Saltfleet for £106 and a portrait of Nathaniel Maxey Pattison for £1,000. The former is an interesting romantic interpretation of a well-known view of Astbury village. This has been used to produce bespoke greetings cards for sale in the museum. The latter is a well-executed oil painting of one of the owners of the Old Mill, the first large scale industrial enterprise in the town. The acquisition of this painting will enable us to illustrate more fully the origins of that wealth which enabled the Old Mill's construction and describe the impact this man and his family had on the development of the town.

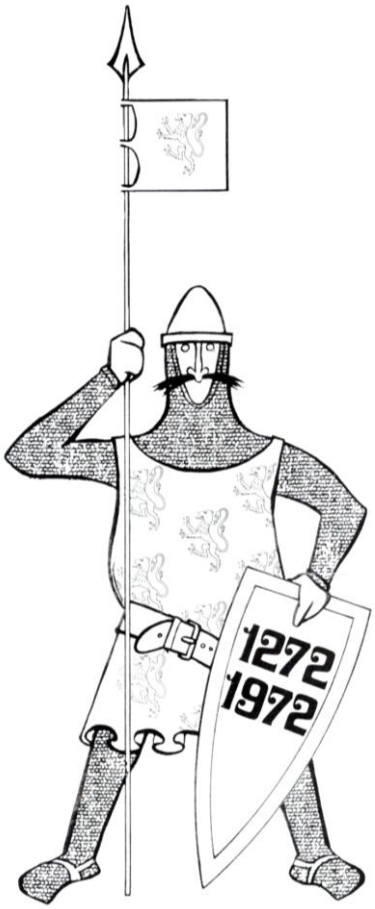
The museum has purchased two archive items: a deed relating to property on Swan Bank belonging to the Radley family for £3.99, and a set of bound maps and a description of the Moss End Estate in Smallwood and of an associated estate, Brassey Hall at Willaston, Nantwich, for £94.56. A donation of £40 was received to offset the cost of this item.

In the past it has been a rare occurrence for the museum to purchase items, preferring, where possible, to increase the collections through donations. However, when important and interesting items relating to the heritage of the town, like those identified above, emerge, it is important we try to secure them, as they may never enter the public domain again.

Archaeological Archive

Congleton Museum continues to be the only recognised depository for the acceptance of archaeological archives generated by residential and industrial developments within Congleton and the adjacent towns and we. continue to be a member of the Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group. Participation in these meetings means the museum continues to receive advance warning of any potential archaeological archive it may be asked to accept.

As the number of applications for new developments across the area increases, so does the pressure on our limited resources. The acceptance of any future archaeological archive will be dependent upon the space required to accommodate it, its relevance to the museum's existing collections and its local, regional, and possible national heritage value. During the year we have been notified of the existence of archives, from Congleton, Middlewich, Macclesfield and Crewe. Whilst some will only generate a written report and a minimal number of items, others have the potential to create a considerable physical archive which may be crucial to understanding the wider heritage of the Cheshire East area.



Henry de Lacy, the mascot for 1972 Charter Year, drawn by Mr W R Bossons

Exhibitions 2022-23

Roman Cheshire and the Peover Hoard

During the Spring half term, 21st to 25th February 2023, the museum mounted a highly successful Roman Week, with different activities delivered every day. These included artefact handling and an opportunity to meet a team of Roman re-enactors.

In conjunction with Roman Week, a new exhibition on Roman Cheshire and the Peover Hoard was created, to show how our understanding of Roman Cheshire has changed over the past twelve years. This exhibition illustrated how, through recent metal detecting finds, all of which are now housed in Congleton Museum, the emphasis has begun to move from West to East Cheshire. It also provided an overview of the work being undertaken by volunteers on the Peover Hoard and a contextual interpretation of the Brereton Salt Pan.

Our Story

Contemporary heritage is a growing aspect of the museum's collections. 'Our Story' is an ongoing project led by Congleton Museum and Congleton Pride which began in February 2023. Its aim is to raise awareness by collecting LGBT+ stories and experiences and creating an archive which can be accessed by anyone. This project is the first of its kind in the Congleton area.



Our Story

Collecting has already begun, with many individuals offering their stories during an evening event on 18th February. The museum and Congleton Pride are in continuing discussions about how further stories can be collected, as it is important that donors have the option to remain anonymous due to the sensitive themes of the project.

Collection Management, Storage and Documentation

Collections Database

Volunteers have continued to input the 'headline data', including accession number, donor and a brief description, of new and outstanding items into COMACS, the museum's digital catalogue.

The inclusion of the additional information, such as detailed descriptions, locations, condition and supporting images, which is required to ensure that the catalogue entries for all items in the collection are as complete as possible and are 'SPECTRUM' compliant, continues to be an ongoing challenge. This is one of the issues we will be required to report on in our next accreditation return.

* SPECTRUM is the internationally recognised standard for the management of museum collections.

6. Partnerships and External Organisations

Partnerships

The museum's partnership with the Portable Antiquities Service for the North West and National Museums Liverpool remains strong. The quarterly 'Finds Days' held during 2022-2023 were well attended.

Memberships of External Organisations

Currently the trust is a member of:

- Museum Development North West. (MDNW)
- East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
- Association of Independent Museums (AIM)
- Museums of Cheshire (MOC)
- Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East(CVS)
- Arts Council England (ACE)
- Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group
- Association of Cultural Enterprise
- Museums Association

Membership of these organisations continues to give the trust access to training, information on future developments and funding opportunities available within the museum and heritage sector. They enable the museum to work more effectively and meet development targets.

7. Volunteers

Our volunteers continue to play an important role in the museum's effectiveness. Its success has been built upon their extensive commitment to providing Congleton with an important and valued visitor attraction.

The work undertaken by our front of house volunteers in making our visitors welcome ensures there is a continual flow of donations to support the museum. The friendly, helpful approach of these volunteers makes sure the visitor experience we offer is even more rewarding and their explanation of the importance of donations to our existence continues to encourage generous gifts. This will be of increasing importance as we face the challenge of ever-rising costs. The comments in the visitor's book continue to bear witness to their valuable work.

We say this in every annual report, but cannot emphasise enough the financial value of the work undertaken by our volunteers. It would not be possible, within our limited financial resources, for the museum to purchase the breadth and quality of expertise to be found amongst them.

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Hours	9410	8928	8445	1815	3713	4,996
Days	1255	1190	1126	242	495	666
Value	188,250	£178.500	£168,900	£36,300	£74,250	£99,900

The financial equivalent of the contribution made by volunteers (including trustees) remains considerable. The number of volunteer hours increased by 1,283 from 3,713 in 2021-22 to 4,996 in 2022-23; the equivalent of 666 working days, which at an average cost of £150 per day made a contribution in kind of £99,900 towards the work of the museum. It is clear that if we had to fund these hours the museum would not be financially sustainable.



Coat hanger from Haddacks Tailors of Congleton

It is also important to re-iterate our acknowledgement of the work undertaken by those volunteers involved in curatorial management, research, exhibition development and activity delivery. The development of new displays and activities contributes considerably to our ability to attract new visitors and encourages return visits. This requires a considerable amount of unseen work by these 'backroom' volunteers who are continuing to develop that detailed knowledge

about the artefacts we hold, their condition, where they are located and how they can be used.

Work undertaken by our volunteers continues to include:

- ensuring the museum is a 'visitor first' organisation by the way in which customers are welcomed;
- selling items through the shop;
- ensuring a positive visitor experience by providing information about the museum, its exhibits and the stories they tell;
- inputting information into the collections database;
- accessioning items into the collection;
- the preparation and delivery of temporary exhibitions;
- filing newspaper cuttings and articles;
- scanning photographs;
- administrative tasks;
- writing publications;
- working with the Evacuee Activity Leader and Collections Manager to support school visits.

Collectively the work of all our volunteers is crucial to developing and sustaining the museum's reputation and the trustees are very grateful for their support.

Keith Heron

We are very sad to report the recent passing of Mr Keith Heron. Keith has been both an active member and volunteer. During his time at the museum, he made a considerable contribution through his IT skills in developing and maintaining our 'Victorian Database' which enabled both the museum and family history researchers to access the census data relating to the town in a far more 'user friendly' way. His expertise with a camera produced the content for many of our modern calendars. The images he took will provide a lasting record of the town during the early 21st century.

Cllr Kay Wesley

Cllr Wesley retired as a trustee in May 2023. During her four years as a member of the board Kay made a valuable contribution by leading the museum's corporate review and helping to develop the digital strategy. Under her guidance and expertise, we were able to the select the most appropriate partner to deliver our new website and corporate branding. Kay was also successful in securing most of the required funding for the project, which will be a lasting testimony to her membership of the Trustee Board.

8. Financial Statement

Company Registration Number 02214293

Charity Registration Number 701430

Congleton Museum Trust

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Congleton Museum Trust

Legal and Administrative Information

Board of Management	I Doughty
	M Laurence
	A Gubbins
	L Hulse
	F Whitelock
	S Firkin
	P Lane
Company Number	02214293
Charity Number	701430
Registered Office	Market Chambers
	Market Square
	Congleton
	Cheshire
	CW12 1ET
Independent Examiner	D Bales
	6 Rowan Close
	Biddulph Moor
	Stoke on Trent
Bankers	NatWest
	46 High Street
	Congleton
	Cheshire

Congleton Museum Trust

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Congleton Museum Trust

Trustees' Report (including Directors' Report)
For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Board of Management present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)* (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

Objectives and activities

The primary objective of the Trust is to establish and to advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its' environs by:

- Promoting and preserving for the benefit of the public a museum;
- Acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research;
- Preserving exhibits for display;
- Providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- Presenting aspects of the town's history through permanent and temporary displays;
- Providing learning opportunities for all ages through its' education services;
- Providing research facilities;
- Encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

Achievements and performance

For the accounting year 2022-23 Congleton Museum was in a post pandemic recovery stage, where it was anticipated that visitor numbers and associated donation income would take time to recover.

The museum's financial position remains strong with a year on year decrease in total funds of only £2,335.

The operational shortfall of £1,335 was well below that anticipated. The remaining £1,000 was spent on an oil painting of one of Congleton's prominent industrialists of the late 18th century.

During the year the museum's funding benefited from there being no changes in energy costs, the existing contract running until 31 March 2023, and no staffing costs were incurred from 1 April to 31 December 2022.

Whilst visitor numbers showed signs of recovery, associated donations were £1,654 below those for the previous year. Revenue from all other areas of activity, apart from education project activity (school visits), reported a year-on-year increase.

At the end of this financial year Congleton Museum remains financially secure with sufficient balances to withstand any cost-of-living pressures, e.g., energy costs or a reduction in donations income, for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Financial review

Unrestricted funds at the end of the financial year totalled £70,396 including a designated fund of £7,700. It is the policy of the Trust that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to six months' expenditure. The Board of Management considers that reserves of this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Trust's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

The Board of Management has assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

The Board of Management is satisfied that sufficient funding is available for the Museum to continue operating for the foreseeable future.

Congleton Museum Trust

Trustees' Report (including Directors' Report) (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Structure, governance and management
The Trust is constituted as a company limited by guarantee and is therefore governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Management, who are also the trustees of the charity and directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of the signature of the financial statements were:

I Doughty	
M Laurence	
A Gubbins	
L Hulse	
A Morrison	Resigned 18/07/2022
P Wesley	Resigned 16/05/2023
S Firkin	
P Lane	
F Whitelock	Appointed 12/12/2022

Further details of the management of the Trust and of the activities for the year can be found in the separate document "Report of the Board of Trustees 2022-23".

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Management on Monday 20th November 2023

I Doughty
Chair of the Board of Management
Dated: 20/11/2023

Congleton Museum Trust

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Board of Management, who are also the directors of Congleton Museum Trust for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Board of Management to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Trust and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board of Management are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Trust will continue in operation.

The Board of Management are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Congleton Museum Trust

Year ended 31 March 2023

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Congleton Museum Trust (the Company)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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

Signed: D. Bales

Name: David Bales

Address: 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent.

Date: 23/11/2023

Congleton Museum Trust
Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Year Total Funds £
Income from:						
Donations and Legacies	2	16,460	-	4,156	20,616	30,939
Charitable Activities	3	3,209	-	-	3,209	1,853
Other Trading Activities	4	4,322	-	-	4,322	3,130
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total		23,991	-	4,156	28,147	35,922
Expenditure on:						
Raising Funds	5	643	-	-	643	592
Charitable Activities	6	24,683	1,000	4,156	29,839	34,586
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total		25,326	1,000	4,156	30,482	35,178
Net Gains/(losses) on Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Net Income/(Expenditure)		-1,335	-1,000	0	-2,335	744
Transfers between Funds		-	8,700	-8,700	-	-
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)						
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes		-	-	-	-	-
Deferred income release		0	0	0	0	16,734
Net movement in funds		-1,335	7,700	-8,700	-2,335	17,478
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		64,031	0	10,050	74,081	56,603
Total funds carried forward		62,696	7,700	1,350	71,746	74,081

Congleton Museum Trust
Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 March 2023

	Note	Total Funds £	Prior Year Funds £
Fixed Assets:			
Intangible assets		-	-
Tangible assets		-	-
Heritage assets		-	-
Investments		-	-
Total fixed assets		0	0
Current assets:			
Stocks		1,211	1,441
Debtors		8,168	5,417
Investments		-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		64,401	68,986
Total current assets		73,780	75,844
Liabilities:			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year		2,034	1,763
Net current assets or liabilities		71,746	74,081
Total assets less current liabilities		71,746	74,081
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		-	-
Provisions for liabilities		-	-
Net asset or liabilities excluding pension asset or liability		71,746	74,081
Defined benefit pension scheme asset or liability		-	-
Total net assets or liabilities		71,746	74,081
The Funds of the charity:			
Endowment funds		-	-
Restricted income funds	7	1,350	10,050
Unrestricted funds (general)		62,696	64,031
Unrestricted funds (designated)		7,700	-
Revaluation reserve		-	-
Pension reserve		-	-
Total unrestricted funds		70,396	64,031
Total charity funds		**71,746**	**74,081**

6

Congleton Museum Trust

Balance Sheet (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Management on Monday 20th November 2023.

I Doughty

Trustee

Company registration number 02214293

Congleton Museum Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

Charity information

Congleton Museum Trust is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1ET.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The Trust is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Trust has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Trust. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies followed are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Board of Management have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Board of Management continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Board of Management in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the financial statements.

1.4 Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be measured reliably.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP.

Congleton Museum Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1.5 Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

1.6 Fixed assets

Fixed assets are included in the accounts at cost less accumulated depreciation and are depreciated over their expected useful lives.

1.7 Heritage assets

Information on the cost or valuation of many of the heritage assets owned by the Trust is not available. Therefore, heritage assets are not shown in the Trust's balance sheet. The Trust has not incorporated a valuation of heritage assets in the financial statements as the benefits of doing so are outweighed by the costs of obtaining such a valuation.

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

1.9 Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price.

Congleton Museum Trust
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For the Year ended 31 March 2023

		Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
2	**Donations and Legacies**	£	£	£	£	£
	Donations	3,304	0	0	3,304	4,949
	Grants	5,380	0	4,156	9,536	21,705
	Gift Aid and VAT reclaim	7,776	0	0	7,776	4,285
		16,460	0	4,156	20,616	30,939
3	**Charitable Activities (income)**					
		£	£	£	£	£
	Membership subs	1,275	0	0	1,275	1,189
	Education project revenue	0	0	0	0	258
	Walks and talks	1,567	0	0	1,567	404
	Room hire	145	0	0	145	0
	Bank interest received	222	0	0	222	2
		3,209	0	0	3,209	1,853
4	**Other Trading Activities**					
		£	£	£	£	£
	Shop income	2,945	0	0	2,945	2,540
	Publishing income	1,377	0	0	1,377	590
		4,322	0	0	4,322	3,130
5	**Cost of Raising Funds**					
		£	£	£	£	£
	Cost of shop sales	643	0	0	643	592
		643	0	0	643	592
6	**Charitable Activities (expenditure)**					
		£	£	£	£	£
	Additions to collections	898	1,000	0	1,898	2,671
	Collections expenditure	2,451	0	0	2,451	379
	Events and exhibitions	612	0	0	612	0
	Salaries	2,753	0	0	2,753	8,361
	Electricity	4,493	0	0	4,493	3,500
	Water	322	0	0	322	354
	Household and cleaning	465	0	0	465	2,007
	Security and safety	1,302	0	0	1,302	1,306
	IT software and hardware	3,168	0	4,156	7,324	9,640
	Insurance	2,605	0	0	2,605	2,204
	Telephone and broadband	1,592	0	0	1,592	1,350
	Outside subscriptions	485	0	0	485	297
	Office consumables	387	0	0	387	552
	Sundry expenses	746	0	0	746	437
	Equipment rental, support and usage	2,404	0	0	2,404	1,210
	Depreciation	0	0	0	0	318
		24,683	1,000	4,156	29,839	34,586

Congleton Museum Trust
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For the Year ended 31 March 2023

7 **Restricted funds summary**

	Bradshaw House	Peover Hoard	UofM Hands on Project	Total
	£	£	£	£
Balances b/f	8,700	1,350		10,050
Transfer to Unrestricted Designated Fund	-8,700			-8,700
	0	1,350		1,350
Income in year			4,156	4,156
Expenditure in year:				
3D Scanner			-4,156	-4,156
Balances c/f	0	1,350	0	1,350

The balance on the Bradshaw House fund was transferred to an Unrestricted Designated fund for future capital acquisitions with the approval of the original donors as it became clear that the aims of the Bradshaw House fund could not be achieved. All donors had been offered a full refund.

8 **Employees**
The average number of employees during the year was 1
(2022: 1).

9 **Related Party Transactions**
There were no transactions during the year involving the directors/trustees or related parties.


CM

CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 701430

Accounts

Congleton
museum



Casket presented to Harry Williams on him being awarded the 'Freedom of the Borough of Congleton'

Report of the Board of Trustees 2021-22

to be considered at the Annual Meeting to be held on Monday 12th December 2022 at 2.20pm In the Bridestones Suite of Congleton Town Hall

Registered Office
Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1ET.
Tel: 01260 276360
Email: info@congletonmuseum.co.uk
www.congletonmuseum.co.uk

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4. **Museum Development**
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6. **Partnerships and External Organisations**
7. **Volunteers**
8. **Financial Report**



Woven by Berisford's

1. Introduction

Congleton Museum Trust continues to be Registered as a Charity (No 701430) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No 02214293). The museum remains fully accredited (No 262) within the scheme administered by Arts Council, England.

This report covers the activities of the trust for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Throughout 2020-21 year our primary aim had been to keep everyone safe and this continued to be our guiding principle during 2021-22. It was a relief to be able to think about re-opening the museum to the public in May 2021. Government guidance informed us that museums will be able to re-open is Monday 17th of May 2021. Initially we re-opened, on an appointment only basis, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. commencing Thursday 20th May. This was predicated on the fact that as schools and other organizations re-opened infection rates did not increase to such a level as to cause concern. This limited opening allowed the public to begin to access the museum, whilst not overburdening us with the implications of managing the requirements of 'test and trace'.

By October, with the support of a number of our volunteers we were able to return to our normal operating hours, without the need to prior book, on Tuesday, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturday. The pre-booking system remained in operation for the Sundays. On Wednesdays, we admitted any casual visitors who called at the entrance. We were still operating the prebooking system for Sunday afternoons.

During this period, our primary aim was to keep all those associated with the museum, visitors, volunteers and staff safe. This was achieved by only having one volunteer on reception, and managing public access to ensure there were no more than two groups or a maximum of ten visitors on site at any one time.

Pressure on space has increased, during the year, as we have continued to receive items for inclusion in the collections. This has had an adverse impact upon the space available in which to hold activities and where volunteers can work.

It was our hope that colleagues would understand that by maintaining a cautious approach we were working in their best interest. It would have been a great pity if we were to permanently lose their knowledge, expertise and commitment which in the past has allowed us to offer the public and especially the people of Congleton the range of activities and services we have. As we move forward our volunteers will continue to have an important role to play in re-establishing the museum as a first-class visitor experience.

2. Governance and Management

Board of Trustees

The museum continues to be managed by the Board of Trustees, which met remotely via Zoom on a bi-monthly basis.

Trustees holding office between April 2021 and March 2022

Two members of the board were appointed by external organisations:

Cllr Suzie Firkin was re-appointed to represent Congleton Town Council at its 2021 Annual Meeting.

Mrs Linda Hulse continued to represent the Congleton History Society.

The remaining trustees elected at the Annual General Meeting, held on Monday 6th December 2021, were:

Mr Ian Doughty Chair of Trustees

Mrs Anne Gubbins

Mr Peter Lane

Mr Mike Laurence Company Secretary

Cllr K Wesley

In line with its agreed policy of ensuring diversity, inclusion and future sustainability through effective succession planning, the board is continuing to review the skills and expertise of its membership. The recruitment of effective new trustees continues to remain a high priority. Work is continuing on the development of an appropriate strategy not only at board level but also in respect of operational activities and service delivery.

Induction of New Trustees

Newly appointed trustees will receive briefing sessions with the chair and key members of the trust as well as a range of key documents including; -

- a handbook outlining: -
  - their role and responsibilities
  - the trust's objectives
  - the acquisition and disposal policy
  - the services offered by the museum;
- the trust's governing document;
- the last three sets of accounts and annual reports;
- the current business plan;
- minutes of recent trustee meetings;
- a guide to being a trustee;
- role descriptions for trustees and honorary officers to clarify their responsibilities;
- declaration of ability to be a trustee e.g., not disqualified



Seal of Henry de Lacy

Professional Advice and Support

Curatorial Adviser 2021-2022

The accreditation scheme continues to require those museums without professionally qualified curatorial staff to appoint a 'Museum Mentor'. This continues to be offered free of charge by museum professionals employed by larger institutions as part of their ongoing professional development.

Mrs Katherine Lynch, Director of Heritage for the Port Sunlight Village Trust continued as Congleton Museum's mentor for the year 2021-22.

Certifying Accountants 2021-2022

Mr Gordon Porter

TaxAssist Accountants

5 High Street

Congleton

Cheshire

CW12 1BN

The trustees are very grateful to Mr Porter for continuing to prepare and certify the trust's accounts on a 'pro bono' basis.

Banking Arrangements for 2021-2022

National Westminster Bank Plc

46 High Street

Congleton CW12 1BE

Mr John Pemberton continued to act as the trust's treasurer for the 2021-22 financial year. We are grateful to him for continuing in this increasingly crucial role.

General Data Protection Regulations

The trust continues to carefully monitors the management of the personal data it holds to ensure continued compliance in respect of the current General Data Protection Regulations.

Museum Accreditation

There has been no change to the museum's accredited status which continues to remain valid. In response to Government guidance following the outbreak of Covid19 in March 2020 all museums closed their sites and Arts Council England suspended all reviews within the Accreditation Scheme. A phased approach is now being taken to the re-opening of the Accreditation process. Initially all museums had their current award status extended for an additional 12 months, in Congleton's case until December 2021. All museums are invited to submit their returns six months prior to their due date. It is still the intention of Arts Council England to reopen the scheme in the summer of 2023 with the first tranche, of what they now call the interim schedule, receiving their invitations in December 2022, and the second tranche in July 2023 for submission by December 2023. Congleton Museum does not feature in either of these lists and therefore the earliest we can now receive our letter of invitation is January 2024, for a submission date for our return of July 2024. Whilst this may appear to be a long way away, a great deal of preparatory work will need to be undertaken during the intervening 18 months.



In this return the trust will be required to report on progress in respect of the areas for improvement identified in the 2017 award letter.

The issues we will be required to report upon are:

Secure occupancy: provide an update on the negotiations to acquire Bradshaw House from Cheshire East Council.

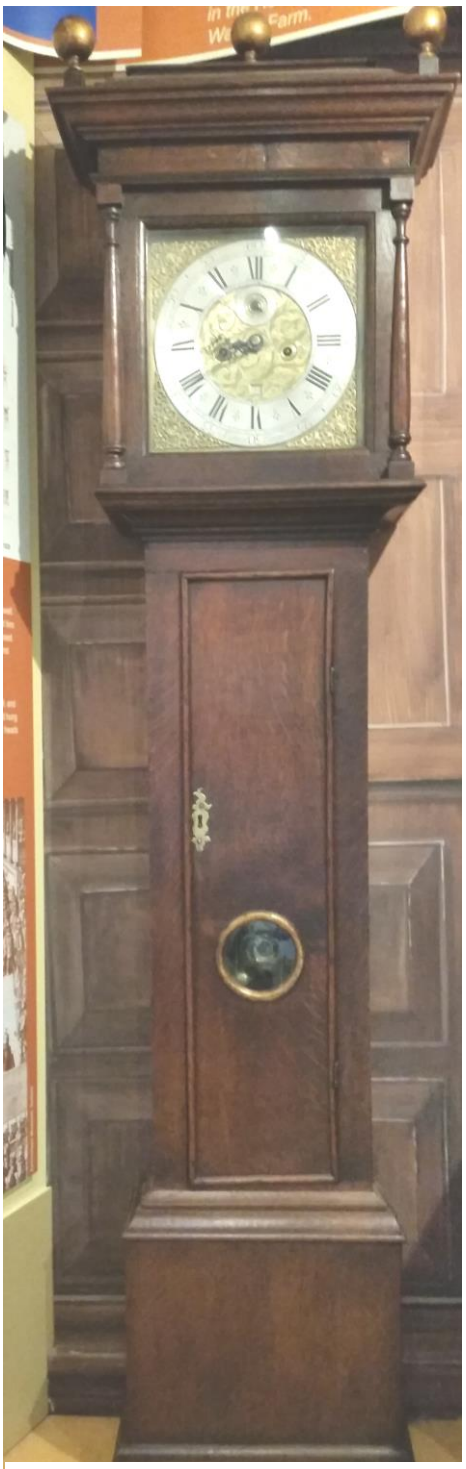
As Bradshaw House is no longer a possibility, we have commenced negotiations with the town Council to extend the lease on our current premises.

Collections development policy (Archival holding): consider adopting the Archives Service Accreditation Standard.

The implication of seeking Archive Service Accreditation is still under consideration.

Documentation Plan: confirm progress towards the planned completion of retrospective documentation backlogs at stage three (discrepancy checking) and stage four (accession register and security copy making and labelling, location and movement control indexing, and object exit loans in and out).

Whilst some progress had been made on addressing this issue, prior to the Covid 19 crisis, there is still much more to be done. Covid 19 restrictions and the volume of items received during the past the reporting year, including the 6,956 coins of the Peover Hoard has meant that our ability to update historical entries has been considerably reduced.



Longcase Clock by John Whitehurst the Elder of Congleton.

Maintaining our full accredited status is crucial if Congleton Museum is to continue to be recognised as an effective and efficient organisation by its peers. It is also required to access the development funding we will require to fulfil our future aspirations.

Accessing the museum and its services

As we complete the first full year of operation since the disruption brought about by the Covid19 pandemic the promotion of the museum and its services remained a major focus. Social media continued to be an invaluable means by which the museum's profile has been extended. Active use of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and the museum's website has continued. We must pay tribute to our

administrator for ensuring the posting of a constant supply of images for the public enjoyment. Maintaining this presence during 2021-22 will be a challenge without the expertise of our current administrator.

In the 2020-21 report we noted that that there was a need to further develop the museum's virtual presence as a means of reaching reach those members of the public, who by virtue of their location, are unlikely to visit the museum.

This was something we began to explore during the 2021-22 financial year.
(See Section 4 Museum Development)

Year	Visitors/Contacts	Education	Total
2015-16	**2,985**	**776**	**3,761**
2016-17	**5,020**	**896**	**5,916**
2017-18	**3,586**	**961**	**4,547**
2018-19	**2,968**	**1,462**	**4,430**
2019-20	**2,673**	**1,363**	**4,046**
2020-21	**0,047**	**0,000**	**0,047**
2021-22	**1,273(1)**	**85**	**1,358**
2022-23	**1,982(2)**	**21**	**2,002**

(1) Included in the figures for the 2021-22 reporting year are 143 participants in 10 walks and 89 people engaged through the delivery of 3 talks.

(2) The figures quoted for 2022-23 are for the first six months of the year until 30th September 2022. These include 118 participants on 9 walks and 170 people with whom the museum engaged through the delivery of 7 talks.

Whilst the visitor/engagement figures for 2021-21 were encouraging they were well below those for the previous full year of operation 2019-20. This was not surprising as incidences of Covid19 infections were still common and members of the public were undoubtedly feeling nervous about being in relatively confined spaces.

The inclusion of the corresponding figures for the first half of the 2022-23 financial year shows a consistent rise in engagement in all areas except for that with schools. This we attend to address during 2023-24.

As part of its grant funding agreements with Museum Development North West, Congleton Museum is obliged to complete a National Museum Survey. By applying the AIM (Association of Independent Museum's) economic impact framework to the 1,273 visitors we recorded for the year, it is possible to calculate that these visitors could have contributed £33,663 to the local visitor economy.



Museum Staffing 2021-2022

Administrator - **Miss Samantha Vinsun:** continued to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the museum and the delivery of non-educational services. (18 hours per week)

It was with great sadness that we received our administrator's resignation with effect from the 31st March 2022. Sam held the post for seven years during which time she effectively recruited, managed and developed the museum's reception volunteers, maintained contact with museum friends through a highly professional newsletter, developed the museum's website and online shop, and brought the museum into the 21st century through establishing an effective social media presence. We wish her well in her new role.

Evacuee Experience Activity Leader - Mrs Linda Ward: retains responsibility for the promotion, organisation and delivery of the museum's Evacuee Experience. (This is a delivery-only contract).

Cost of Administering the Charity

The only administrative costs continue to be the fees paid in respect of the submission of the annual accounts to Companies House.

Financial Risk

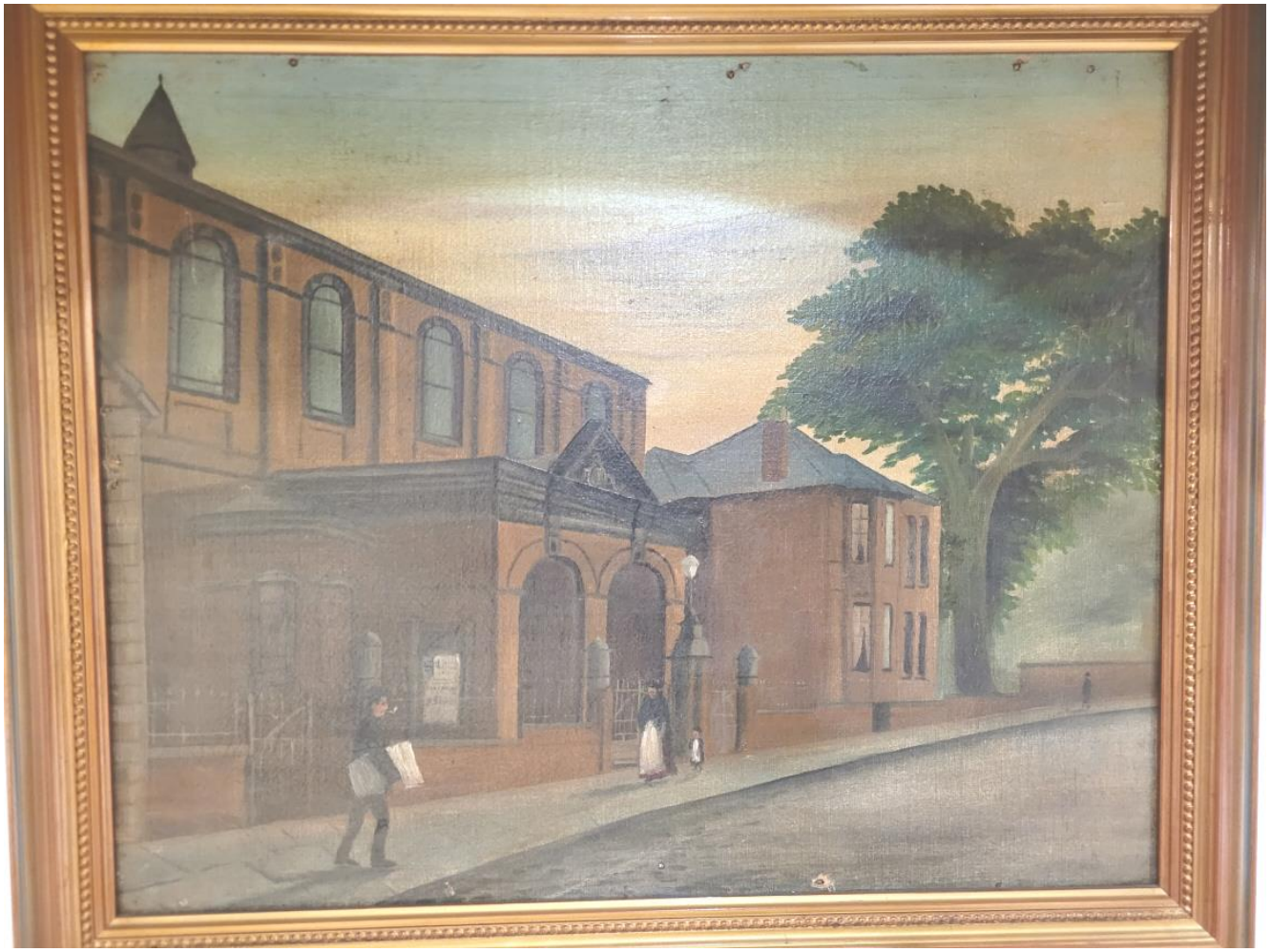
The trustees continue to review those areas of operational and business risk associated with the financial health of the organisation.

Possible changes to the way in which local authorities allocate their funding.

This continues to be regarded as a medium-term risk but could be escalated to high risk in successive financial years. Cheshire East Council has confirmed its intention to place museum funding within the scope of its overarching cultural framework. Its grant of £5,380 is a valuable source of income, and any change in the method of allocation has the potential to have an adverse as well as a positive impact upon the museum's financial position. We have yet to be advised of when this is likely to take place and the outcomes we may be expected to deliver.

It is important to recognise that as local authorities face successive adverse funding settlements, continued grant funding from this source cannot be assured.

The trust acknowledges the support given by Congleton Town Council in providing and maintaining the museum building free of charge. This makes a considerable contribution to the continuing financial viability of the museum. The inclusion of the assessed rental value of £4,500 would have a considerable adverse impact on the museum’s balance sheet.



Wagg Street Chapel c 1890s

Addressing the gap between income and expenditure

It remains the museum management's prime objective to ensure the organisation continues to achieve a trading profit in successive years. In the 2021-22 report we noted the temporary closure of the museum meant a considerable reduction in income, however there was not a corresponding reduction in costs such as salaries and the services required to keep the collections safe. The trading deficit for the current financial year was £13,895; £895 greater than the deficit we projected in the 2020-21 report. This, as we projected last year, has been compensated for though the Covid support grants received during the 2020-21 (£52,705) and 2021-22 (£15,026) financial years.

The 2020-21 annual report recognised that it would take time for visitor confidence to return and for the museum to achieve an operating profit, therefore these grants will continue to be required to provide that necessary cushion for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 financial years and possibly beyond.

Implications of Covid19

Whilst the Covid related grants we were able to access during 2020-2021 and 2021-22 financial years enabled the museum to retain a relatively healthy financial surplus for the 2020-2021, 2021-22 and 2022-2023 financial years, successive years are likely to be equally challenging as the museum continues to recover the various income streams it had previously.


Borough of Congleton

Mayor:
Councillor George Rowell

Aldermen:
F. Barton, D. Charlesworth, F. Dale, R. G. Daniel, H. Hackney, F. Jackson, F. C. Pass

Councillors:
Mrs. J. Burgess, S. P. Burgess, J. H. Duncalf, G. Foster, E. Frost, G. Gleeson, H. M. Green, C. B. Hackney, M. Harper, J. T. Haworth, H. McLeavy, S. Moores, W. Newton, W. F. O'Reilly, Mrs. M. Pass, F. Roberts, C. Sherratt, H. Smith, R. Stubbs, J. H. Walters

At a Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Congleton convened in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1933, and held at the Town Hall, Congleton, on the Second day of August 1944, there being present not less than two-thirds of the Members of the said Council,

It was Resolved that

Alderman Fred Jackson, Justice of the Peace,

be admitted to be an

Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Congleton

in recognition of the long and distinguished service which he has given to the Borough during a period of Forty Years and in particular acknowledgment of his services as Mayor of Congleton in the years 1917-1918 and formerly as Chairman and now as President of the Congleton War Memorial Hospital.

Given under the Common Seal of the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Congleton, this Second day of August 1944 in the presence of:-

Geo Rowell Mayor

Town Clerk

Freedom of Congleton awarded to Fred Jackson in 1945.

Cost of Living Crisis

Whilst not directly applicable to the 2021-22 reporting year, it is important to acknowledge that the current cost of living crisis could have a considerable impact on the museum financial viability for the 2022-23, and subsequent financial years. As Congleton Museum is a free access museum it is possible that we may see our visitor numbers increase, whilst our donation income may proportionately decrease, as the level of disposable income within households reduces.

Coupled with this, we have the continuing rise in energy costs. It is essential for the health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers as well the preservation and conservation of the collections that minimum acceptable temperatures are maintained. The museum's acceptance on to the VAT 33A refund scheme has placed it in a better position to deal with escalating VAT element of these costs. Being able to reclaim any VAT incurred, in respect of energy, will make this element of expenditure cost neutral. Meeting the increasing cost of energy will continue to be a major challenge for this and future years, particularly in a building which is not as energy efficient as it might be.



Swettenham Bronze Age Carps Tongue Sword.

VAT 33A Refund Scheme

As reported last year, the statutory order confirming Congleton Museum's eligibility for this scheme came into effect from 17th November 2020. Since that date we have been reclaiming any VAT paid in respect of costs and services incurred in providing free public access to the museum and its collection. This has proved particularly beneficial in respect of the 20% VAT imposed on our energy costs.

Business Risk

Business continuity and Succession Planning

Business continuity and succession planning remain an issue the trustees need to address. This has been further highlighted by the Covid10 pandemic and the 'Stronger Together' project report which we received in June 2020.

3. Objectives and Activities

Since its inception the primary objective of the trust has been to establish to ‘advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its environs' by:

- promoting and preserving for the benefit of the public a museum;
- acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research;
- presenting exhibits for display;
- providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.

The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:

- presenting aspects of the town’s history through permanent and temporary displays;
- providing learning opportunities for all ages through its education services;
- providing research facilities;
- encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

There have been no changes to these aims and objectives during the year. However, due to the increase in metal detecting and archaeological assessments prior to greenfield site developments Congleton Museum has taken a greater interest in the acquisition of the finds these two activities have tended to generate so that they may not be lost.

Education and Learning

The legacy of Covid19 restrictions, and the death of one of its leaders, Mr W Pegley, has meant it has not been possible to deliver our highly successful ‘Evacuee Experience during the 2021-2022 financial year. We will be working towards recommencing this activity during the 2023-2024 reporting year.

It was possible to re-establish our Sunday Walk programme between 29th August and 7th November 2021. 102 people participated in the 7 walks we were able to offer.

During October and November 2021, three educational activity sessions were delivered to 85 pupils. This was possible due to most the work being conducted outside the museum building.

Fund Raising

No specific fundraising activities took place during the 2021-22 reporting year.

Communication

We have tried to maintain effective communications with both volunteers and museum friends during the year through the periodic updates from the Chair of Trustees. These were aimed at keeping everyone informed of new acquisitions, developments within the museum, and how we were responding to the challenges of the pandemic.



Congleton Hospital Nursing School Badge

4. Museum Development

Planning for the Future

Building upon the recommendations of the 'Stronger Together' report the Trustees, supported by the museum's mentor, held Strategy and Planning Day on 19th July 2021.

During the day the museum's vision and mission statement was reviewed and restated as: -.

Our Vision 'To be recognised as an inspiring and inclusive hub for protecting and interpreting the heritage of the Congleton area'.

Our Mission 'To attract, inspire and engage people by making our heritage accessible, enjoyable and meaningful'.

As a result of a comprehensive SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis and detailed discussion the following key objectives were identified: -

1. Develop and implement a Digital and Digitisation Strategy
2. Attract more volunteers and diversify our volunteer and trustee base
3. Develop engagement with local schools
4. Define the physical reality of the museum
5. Clarify the position in respect of the museum's lease on its current building

Develop and implement a Digital and Digitisation Strategy

During November and December, a selected number of museum consultants were invited to apply to submit proposals to deliver this strategy. In February 2022 following detailed evaluation and competitive interview 'joipolloi' of Sheffield were

selected as the provider. Preparatory work commenced during March with delivery in July 2022

Develop engagement with local schools

An initial meeting was held with representatives from a number local schools during March 2022.

Clarify the position in respect of the museum's lease on its current building

The trust has received an assurance from the Town Council that the museum will be able to continue to occupy its present building when its lease end in 2027.

Building Maintenance

2021 will mark the 21st anniversary of the museum's opening to the public. We have continued the systematic programme of redecoration commenced during the 2018-19 reporting year. Issues relating to the structure of the building continue to be brought to the attention of our landlord.

5. Collection Management

Heritage asset

The declared aims and objectives of the museum continue to be to collect, preserve and interpret the heritage of Congleton and the surrounding district.

The museum's original promoters were keen to ensure that Congleton's unique heritage was preserved so future generations had a clear understanding of how the town developed and the influence it and its inhabitants had on regional and national events and the contribution they made to industrial innovation. The museum's collecting policy continues to be directed to ensuring that all aspects of the town's heritage are represented within the collections. This continues to ensure the development of the town and its inhabitants are placed within a wider context.

The museum's heritage asset continues to grow as both members of the public and organisations transfer items of local and national interest to the collections.

Cheshire Hoards

The three Cheshire Hoards were loaned to the Grosvenor Museum in November 2019 with the expectation that they would return to Congleton in March 2020. It has now been agreed that the three hoards will be returned to Congleton by July 2022.

Peover Hoard

Prior to lockdown we were fortunate to secure £2,543 of grant funding from Museum Development North West to employ a consultant, Matt Ball, to work with volunteers in assessing, identifying and cataloguing the hoard.

The first session took place during the week 6th to 10th December 2021 Matt Ball, our numismatic consultant commenced work with volunteers on the Hoard. With over 6,956 coins needing to be examined, identified, catalogued, described and photographed, this will not be a small task. Matt's initial visit resulted in the creation of a team of six who were each prepared to spend 2-3 hours a week working on the coins from the reign of the emperor Gallienus. This involved building on the work already undertaken by the British Museum, in identifying individual coins, comparing them to the original listing, and assigning a unique identification number. It is anticipated that this work will continue well into the 2022-23 reporting year.



Linda and Graham Hulse working on the Peover Hoard with Matt Ball.

Acquisitions

The Museum has been actively adding to the collection during the reporting year. In the main we depend upon the generosity of local individuals and organisations for the donation of items to our collections, such as the fine silver salver presented to William Hadfield in 1858. We are continually grateful to those individuals who believe that Congleton Museum is the most appropriate depository for their cherished family and business items thereby enabling them to be accessed and enjoyed by future generations.

There are however, occasions when becomes necessary to purchase key items which illustrate specific aspects of Congleton's heritage. One area we have, until recently, neglected was that of clockmaking. During the year we have been fortunate to be able to purchase three further examples of the Congleton

clockmakers art. All are longcase (grandfather) clocks. The first, which cost £120, is by Thomas Foden who made his clocks between 1755 and 1785. The second is by John Whitehurst the elder who came to Congleton in 1708 and was producing clocks until at least 1754, when his son James may have taken over the business. This was the man who founded the Whitehurst clockmaking dynasty, of which John Whitehurst of Derby is the most renowned. Clocks by John Whitehurst the elder are rare and command a premium so we feel very pleased to have secured a working example which is keeping excellent time for £1,400. It is therefore extremely appropriate that we should have an example of this man's craftsmanship on display in the museum. The third, purchased for £150 is by William Wilkinson a contemporary of Foden and an apprentice of John Whitehurst the elder.

Other purchases include an oil painting executed in the 1890's of the Methodist Chapel in Wagg Street for £50 and a studio pottery charger by Anne Scowcroft commemorating 30 years of twinning between Congleton and Oosterhout.

Archaeological Archive

Congleton Museum continues to be the recognised depository for archaeological archives generated by residential and industrial developments within Congleton and the adjacent towns. It is a member of the Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group, which monitors and receives reports on pre-development archaeological surveys designated as a requirement for the granting of planning permission.



This lunate gold pendant is to be acquired thorough Archaeological Archive.

Participation in these meetings means the museum continues to receive advance warning of any potential archaeological archive it may be asked to accept. Work is still being undertaken to identify the most important items from the 580 finds discovered during the initial investigation on land adjacent to Viking Way, Congleton.

Congleton Museum remains the only institution, within the Cheshire East Council area, identified as being prepared to consider the acceptance of archaeological archives. As the number of applications for new developments across the council's area increases so does the pressure on our limited resources. Sites where we have been notified that work is currently underway or is anticipated in the near future, and which have the potential to develop an extensive archaeological archive include Delamere Street, Crewe; Crewe – North West Package Leighton; Radway Green; Middlewich Eastern Bypass; Barracks Mill, Macclesfield; Gas Works Yard Middlewich and a further tranche of land of Viking Way Congleton.

Given the museum's limited resources, the acceptance of future archaeological archive will be dependent upon the space required to accommodate it, its relevance to the museum's existing collections, and its local, regional, and possible national heritage value.

Exhibitions 2021-2

No new exhibitions have been developed during the 2021-22 reporting year. However, the re-presentation of our highly successful temporary exhibition on 'Congleton's Lost Buildings' continued to be of continued to interest visitors.

Collection Management, Storage and Documentation

Work on implementing the museum's 'Collection Management Plan' was again placed in abeyance for the 2021-22 reporting year. Some progress has been made in reducing the number outstanding un-catalogued items, but this has been exceeded by the number of new items left with the museum.



Silver Salver presented to William Hadfield in 1858.

Last year we reported we were successful in receiving a grant of £5,500 from Museum Development North West for £5,500 to upgrade the museum's computer systems. This work was completed in May 2021 and comprised the installation of a new master computer with 16 terabytes of memory, capable of storing the vastly increased number of images required to support a fully illustrated digital collections catalogue, two new monitors, three new laptops and improved wireless communication within the museum.

Collections Database

Volunteers have now recommenced work on imputing the 'headline data' including, accession number, donor and a brief description of new and outstanding items into COMACS, the museum's digital catalogue. The inclusion of the additional information such as detailed descriptions, locations, condition and supporting images required to ensure that the catalogue entries for all items in the collection are as complete as possible and are 'SPECTRUM' compliant, continues to be an ongoing challenge. We will be required to report our progress in respect of this issue as part of our next accreditation return.

N.B SPECTRUM is the internationally recognised standard for the management of museum collections.

6. Partnerships and External Organisations

Partnerships

The museum's partnership with the Portable Antiquities Service for the North West and National Museums Liverpool remains strong. The quarterly 'Finds Days' resumed during 2021-2022 and have been well attended.

Memberships of External Organisations

Currently the trust is a member of:

- Museum Development North West. (MDNW)
- East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
    - Association of Independent Museums (AIM)
    - Museums of Cheshire (MOC)
    - Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire (CVS CE)
    - Arts Council England (ACE)
    - Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group
    - Association of Cultural Enterprise

Membership of these organisations continues to give the trust access to training, information on future developments and funding opportunities available within the museum and heritage sector. They enable the museum to work more effectively and meet development targets

7. Volunteers

We are pleased to report that a number of our volunteers returned during the 2021-22 reporting year, with others joined them during the current year. It is reassuring to see so many familiar faces and a number of new ones actively participating in the work of the museum. Our volunteers have always had an important role to play in the museum's effectiveness. Its success has been built upon their extensive commitment to providing Congleton with an important and valued visitor attraction.

The work undertaken by our front of house volunteers in making our visitors welcome ensures there is a continual flow of donations to support the museum. The friendly, helpful approach of these volunteers makes sure the visitor experience we offer is even more rewarding and their explanation of the importance of donations to our existence continues to encourage generous gifts. This will be of increasing importance as we face the challenge of ever-increasing costs. The comments in the visitor's book continue to bear witness to their valuable work.

We say this every year in the annual report, but cannot emphasise enough the value of the considerable amount of work undertaken by our volunteers. It would not be possible, within our limited financial resources, for the museum to purchase the breadth and quality of expertise to be found amongst them.



Heartbeat bookmark by Berisford's

Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Hours	9371	9410	8928	8445	1815	3713
Days	1242	1255	1190	1126	242	495
Value	£186,300	188,250	£178.500	£168,900	£36,300	£74,250

The financial equivalent of the contribution made by volunteers (including trustees) continues to be considerable. There was an understandable reduction in volunteer hours to the equivalent of 242 working days during 2020-21; the majority of this time was devoted to online activity and ensuring the collections remained safe and secure during our extended period of closure. During 2021-22 the number of hours

doubled to 3713, the equivalent of 495 working days, which at an average cost of £150 per day made a contribution in kind of £74.250, towards the work of the museum. Although the figure of 2021-22 is well below that of 2019-20, it remains not an inconsiderable sum.

It is also important to re-iterate our acknowledgement of the work undertaken by those volunteers involved in curatorial management, research, exhibition development and activity delivery. The development of new displays and activities contributes considerably to our ability to attract new visitors and encourages return visits. This requires a considerable amount of unseen work by these 'backroom' volunteers who are continuing to develop that detailed knowledge about the artefacts we hold, their condition, where they are located and how they can be used.

Work undertaken by our volunteers continues to include:

- ensuring the museum is a ‘visitor first’ organisation by the way in which customers are welcomed;
- selling items through the shop;
- ensuring a positive visitor experience by providing information about the museum, its exhibits and the stories they tell;
- inputting information into the collections database;
- accessioning items into the collection;
- the preparation and delivery of temporary exhibitions;
- filing newspaper cuttings and articles;
- scanning photographs;
- administrative tasks;
- writing publications;
- working with the Evacuee Activity Leader and Collections Manager to support school visits.

Collectively the work of all our volunteers is crucial to developing and sustaining the museum’s reputation and the trustees are very grateful for their support.

It is with great sadness that we bear testimony to the work of one person who during his time as a volunteer made such valuable contribution to the work of the museum.

Mr. William Pegley



During the year the museum lost one of its most ardent supporters and volunteers with the passing or Mr William (Bill) Pegley in February. A native of London, Bill relocated to Congleton on his retirement and immediately joined our team of museum volunteers. He touched the lives of so many of us, not only museum friends and volunteers but also museum visitors, who he welcomed so enthusiastically, and those hundreds of children he held spell bound with his reminiscences of his London childhood during the blitz, and his family's involvement in the development of Colossus, the first wartime computer. He worked so effectively with Sue Dorman, Karen Stratford, Jean Westbrook and Linda Ward, in developing the museum's evacuee experience in to a widely recognised educational activity. The museum also benefitted from Bill's expertise as a craftsman. When we were running short of display space in reception, it was Bill who designed and constructed the additional display units, and when we were creating the museum store in the basement, it was Bill with Mike Warke who crawled around the floor to bolt together shelving units. We have so much to be grateful to him for. He is sadly missed.

8. Financial Statement

Registered number: 02214293

CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

TaxAssist Accountants

Congleton Museum Trust
Unaudited Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

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Congleton Museum Trust
Company Information
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

Directors	I Doughty M Laurence A Gubbins L Hulse A Morrison P Wesley S Firkin P Lane
Company Number	02214293
Registered Office	Market Chambers Market Square Congleton Cheshire CW12 1ET
Accountants	TaxAssist Accountants 5 High Street Congleton Cheshire CW12 1BN

Congleton Museum Trust
Accountant's Report
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 30 September 2013, and in order to assist you to fulfil your duties under the Companies Act 2006, we have compiled the financial statements of the company from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

This report is made to the directors in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken to prepare for approval by the directors the financial statements that we have been engaged to compile, to report to the directors that we have done so, and to state those matters that we have agreed to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's directors for our work or for this report.

You have acknowledged on the balance sheet as at year ended 31 March 2022 your duty to ensure that the company has kept proper accounting records and to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view under the Companies Act 2006. You consider that the company is exempt from the statutory requirement for an audit for the year.

We have not been instructed to carry out an audit of the financial statements. For this reason, we have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

Signed

19/09/2022

TaxAssist Accountants
5 High Street
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 1BN

Congleton Museum Trust
Income and Expenditure Account
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
TURNOVER	42,604	97,770
Other income	2	2
Cost of raw materials and consumables	(13,048)	(41,962)
Staff costs	(8,361)	(5,442)
Depreciation and other amounts written off assets	(318)	(156)
Other charges	(13,451)	(13,895)
NET SURPLUS	7,428	36,317

Congleton Museum Trust
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fixed assets	-	318
Current assets	75,296	72,608
Prepayments and accrued income	548	2,132
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(10,050)	(16,734)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	65,794	58,006
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	65,794	58,324
Accruals and deferred income	(1,763)	(1,721)
NET ASSETS	64,031	56,603
RESERVES	64,031	56,603

Notes

1. **Average Number of Employees**

Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was as follows: 1 (2021: 1)

2. **Company limited by guarantee**

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company, in the event of a winding up, such an amount as may be required not exceeding £1.

3. **General Information**

Congleton Museum Trust is a private company, limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, registered number 02214293. The registered office is Market Chambers, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1ET.

For the year ending 31 March 2022 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions.

On behalf of the board

I Doughty

Director

19/09/2022

Congleton Museum Trust
Detailed Income and Expenditure Account
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
TURNOVER				
Donations	4,949		1,028	
Membership subs	1,189		940	
Other sales	-		45	
Revenue grants	21,705		54,430	
Restricted grants	6,684		39,000	
Shop income	2,540		490	
Gift aid and Vat Reclaim	4,285		906	
Publishing income	590		931	
Education project revenue	258		-	
Walks and Talks	404		-	
		42,604		97,770
OTHER INCOME				
Interest receivable and similar income		2		2
		42,606		97,772
COST OF RAW MATERIALS AND CONSUMABLES				
Opening stock - finished goods	1,265		1,265	
Shop purchases	768		99	
Additions to Collections	2,671		2,863	
Restricted grant expenditure	9,406		39,000	
Collections Expenditure	379		-	
Closing stock - finished goods	(1,441)		(1,265)	
		(13,048)		(41,962)
STAFF COSTS				
Salaries	8,361		5,442	
		(8,361)		(5,442)
DEPRECIATION AND OTHER AMOUNTS WRITTEN OFF ASSETS				
Depreciation	318		156	
		(318)		(156)
OTHER CHARGES				
Premises expenses:				
Utilities Electricity	3,500		3,485	
Utilities water	354		366	
Household and cleaning	2,007		1,298	
Security and safety	1,306		821	
Covid costs	-		2,472	
	7,167		8,442	
General administration costs:				
IT software and hardware	234		194	
Insurance	2,204		2,340	
Publishing and printing	-		344	

...CONTINUED

Congleton Museum Trust
Detailed Income and Expenditure Account (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2022

Utilities telephone and broadband	1,350		1,405	
Outside subscriptions	297		219	
Office consumables	552		313	
Sundry expenses	437		-	
Equipment rental Support and Usage	1,210		638	
	6,284		5,453	
		(13,451)		(13,895)
NET SURPLUS		7,428		36,317



Congleton museum

Preserving the past. Recording the present. Educating the future

Company Registration Number 02214293

Charity Registration Number 701430

Congleton Museum Trust

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Congleton Museum Trust

Company Information

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Directors	I Doughty
	M Laurence
	A Gubbins
	L Hulse
	A Morrison
	P Wesley
	S Firkin
	P Lane
Company Number	02214293
Charity Number	701430
Registered Office	Market Chambers
	Market Square
	Congleton
	Cheshire
	CW12 1BN
Independent Examiner	D Bales
	6 Rowan Close
	Biddulph Moor
	Stoke on Trent

Congleton Museum Trust
Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Prior Year Total Funds £
Income from:				
Donations and Legacies	30,939	-	30,939	95,364
Charitable Activities	1,853	-	1,853	987
Other Trading Activities	3,130	-	3,130	1,421
Investments	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	35,922	-	35,922	97,772
Expenditure on:				
Raising Funds	-	-	-	-
Charitable Activities	28,494	6,684	35,178	61,455
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	28,494	6,684	35,178	61,455
Net Gains/(losses) on Investments	-	-	-	-
Net Income/(Expenditure)	7,428	-6,684	744	36,317
Transfers between Funds	-	-	-	-
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)				
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	-	-	-	-
Deferred income release	-	16,734	16,734	-
Net movement in funds	7,428	10,050	17,478	36,317
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	56,603	-	56,603	20,286
Total funds carried forward	64,031	10,050	74,081	56,603

Notes:

1. Restricted funds summary	Bradshaw House £	Peover Hoard £	UofM IT Grant £	Total £
Balances b/f (released from deferred income)	8,700	2,534	5,500	16,734
Expenditure in year	-	1,184	5,500	6,684
Balances c/f	8,700	1,350	-	10,050

2. Related Party Transactions
There were no transactions during the year involving the directors/trustees or related parties.

Congleton Museum Trust
Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 March 2022

	Total Funds £	Prior Year Funds £
Fixed Assets:		
Intangible assets	-	-
Tangible assets	-	318
Heritage assets	-	-
Investments	-	-
Total fixed assets	-	318
Current assets:		
Stocks	1,441	1,271
Debtors	5,417	2,132
Investments	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	68,986	71,337
Total current assets	75,844	74,740
Liabilities:		
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	1,763	18,455
Net current assets or liabilities	74,081	56,285
Total assets less current liabilities	74,081	56,603
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	-	-
Provisions for liabilities	-	-
Net asset or liabilities excluding pension asset or liability	74,081	56,603
Defined benefit pension scheme asset or liability	-	-
Total net assets or liabilities	74,081	56,603
The Funds of the charity:		
Endowment funds	-	-
Restricted income funds	10,050	-
Unrestricted funds	64,031	56,603
Revaluation reserve	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-
Total unrestricted funds	64,031	56,603
Total charity funds	**74,081**	**56,603**

The above Balance Sheet and attached Statement of Financial Activities were approved by the Trustees on 20 March 2023.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Dated 20/03/2023

Congleton Museum Trust
Year ended 31 March 2022
Notes and Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) General information and basis of preparation

The Congleton Museum Trust is a Charity registered in England (no. 701430). The registered address of the Charity is Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1ET.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The attached Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019. the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below.

(b) Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

(c) Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be measured reliably.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP.

(d) Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

(e) Fixed Assets

Fixed assets are included in the accounts at cost less accumulated depreciation and are depreciated over their expected useful lives.

(f) Stocks

Stocks are included in the accounts at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

(g) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price.

Notes and Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(g) Tax

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

(h) Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

It has been judged that there are no future events or matters which would affect the figures shown in the current financial statements.

(i) **Average number of Employees**

Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was: 1 (2021: 1)

Congleton Museum Trust (No. 701430)

Year ended 31 March 2022

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Congleton Museum Trust (the Company)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair view" which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the Statement of Financial Activities and attached Balance Sheet have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102).

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

Signed: D. Bales

Name: David Bales

Address: 6 Rowan Close, Biddulph Moor, Stoke on Trent.

Date: 21/03/2023

CONGLETON MUSEUM TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 701430

Accounts

Congleton museum



Clock by John Fenton of Congleton.

Annual Report 2020-21

Registered Office

Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1ET.

Tel: 01260 276360

Email: info@congletonmuseum.co.uk

www.congletonmuseum.co.uk

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1. Introduction
2. Governance and Management
3. Objectives and Activities
4. Collections Management
5. Bradshaw House
6. Partnerships and External Organisations
7. Volunteers
8. Financial Report



Souvenir jug with Congleton Coat of Arms by W H Goss

1. Introduction

Congleton Museum Trust continues to be a Registered Charity (No 701430) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No 02214293). The museum remains fully accredited (No 262) within the scheme administered by Arts Council, England.

This report covers the activities of the trust for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. For most of the year the museum was closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to increasing concerns, the museum closed voluntarily on 13th March 2020, with the intention of re-opening from 1st May 2020, once the implications of the impending crisis could be more clearly understood.

Subsequently national restrictions made this impossible. The museum therefore remained closed, with the trustees working remotely to establish new working protocols to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and visitors once the museum was able to re-open.

Following careful monitoring of both the national and local situations with regard to vaccinations and case rates, and with the agreement of a small group of our volunteers, the museum re-opened on a pre-booked basis on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 15th October. However, as we closed again very soon because of further national restrictions. The museum remained closed to the public until Thursday 20th May 2021.

In view of these unprecedented circumstances, which have affected the museum's ability to engage physically with its audiences, this report for the financial year 2020-2021 will be far more limited in scope than is usual.

One of our greatest concerns emanating from the Covid 19 crisis is that we have not been able to fully maintain our relationship with our volunteers. Those personal links built up over many years had to be placed on hold. The need to maintain social distancing has limited and continues to limit the number of people we feel it safe to have on site at any one time.

The museum has always been short of space and the situation has got worse during the year, as we have continued to receive items for inclusion in the collections. Storing these has reduced the area available for volunteer work. Our primary aim has been to keep everyone safe and this will continue to be our guiding principle for 2021-22. It has, however, become increasingly clear that returning fully to our pre-Covid modes of operation would not be possible for some time to come.

It is our hope that colleagues understand that we are working in their best interest by not taking unnecessary risks. It would be a great pity if we were to permanently lose the knowledge, expertise and commitment which in the past has allowed us to offer the public and especially the people of Congleton the range of activities and services we have. Our volunteers will continue to have an important role to play in re-establishing the museum as a first-class visitor experience. We hope to welcome more of them back as soon as circumstances allow.



Casket presented to Ald. Fred Jackson on the occasion of him being awarded the Freedom of Congleton.

2. Governance and Management

Board of Trustees

The management framework as described in previous reports was suspended during the 2020-21 financial year. The museum continues to be managed by the Board of Trustees, which met remotely via zoom on a bi-monthly basis.

Trustees holding office between April 2020 and March 2021

Two members of the board are appointed by external organisations:

Cllr Suzie Firkin was re-appointed to represent Congleton Town Council at its 2020 Annual Meeting.

Mrs Linda Hulse continued to represent the Congleton History Society.

Mr Peter Lane was co-opted as a trustee effective from 18th January 2021

The remaining trustees elected at the virtual Annual General Meeting, which took place between 19th November and 11th December 2020, were:

Mr Ian Doughty	Chair of Trustees
Mrs Anne Gubbins	
Mr Mike Laurence	Company Secretary
Mrs Anna Morrison	
Mr Ron Renshaw	Vice-Chair of Trustees
Cllr Kay Wesley	



Medal commemorating Randle Wilbraham's 50 years as High Steward of Congleton.

In line with its agreed policy of ensuring future sustainability through effective succession planning, the board is continuing to review the skills and expertise of its membership. The recruitment of effective new trustees continues to remain a high priority. Work is continuing on the development of an appropriate strategy not only at board level but also in respect of operational activities and service delivery.

Induction of New Trustees

All new trustees continue to receive briefing sessions with the chair and key members of the trust as well as a range of key documents including; -

- a handbook outlining: -
  - their role and responsibilities
  - the trust's objectives
  - the acquisition and disposal policy
  - the services offered by the museum;
- the trust's governing document;
- the last three sets of accounts and annual reports;
- the current business plan;

- minutes of recent trustee meetings
- a guide to being a trustee;
- role descriptions for trustees and honorary officers to clarify their responsibilities;
- declaration of ability to be a trustee, e.g., not disqualified



Ornament from the coach harness of the Shakerley family of Somerford Hall.

Professional Advice and Support

Curatorial Adviser 2020-2021

The accreditation scheme continues to require those museums without professionally qualified curatorial staff to appoint a 'Museum Mentor'. This is a service offered free of charge by museum professionals employed by larger institutions as part of their ongoing professional development.

Mrs Katherine Lynch, Director of Heritage for the Port Sunlight Village Trust continued as Congleton Museum's mentor for the year.

Certifying Accountants 2020-2021

Mr Gordon Porter
TaxAssist Accountants
5 High Street
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 1BN

The trustees are very grateful to Mr Porter for continuing to prepare and certify the trust's accounts on a 'pro bono' basis.

Banking Arrangements for 2020-2021

National Westminster Bank Plc
46 High Street
Congleton CW12 1BE



Museum opening Competition medal 2002

Mr John Pemberton continued to act as the trust's treasurer for the 2020-21 financial year. We are grateful to him for continuing in this crucial role.



Medal for the Coronation of Edward VII 1902

Management Structure

The management structure implemented in 2007 was suspended during the 2021-2020 financial year. In its place a COVID-19 action committee was established. This met remotely between May and September to plan for the museum's eventual re-opening. It undertook appropriate risk assessments, planned the purchase and installation of Covid protection equipment and established appropriate safe working practices. This enabled the museum to re-open, albeit for what was to be a short period, on 15th October 2020.

The chair (Ian Doughty) and vice-chair (Ron Renshaw) continued to have delegated authority to take urgent decisions, as and when required, on behalf of the trust.

General Data Protection Regulations

The trust carefully monitors its management of the personal data it holds to ensure continued compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Museum Accreditation

There has been no change to the museum's accredited status which remains valid until December 2021. This is when we would have been expected to submit our next return. The scheme is not now expected to fully re-open until the summer of 2023 at the earliest. Initial indications are that the first group of museums will receive their invitations to make their returns on 1st July 2022 with a submission date of 31st December 2022. It is possible that Congleton Museum

may be included in this first group. This may, however, be subject to further review.

In this return the trust will be required to report on progress in the areas for improvement identified in the 2017 award letter:

- **Secure occupancy: provide an update on the negotiations to acquire Bradshaw House from Cheshire East Council.**
  As Bradshaw House is no longer a possibility, we have commenced negotiations with the town council to extend the lease on our current premises.
- **Collections development policy (Archival holding): consider adopting the Archives Service Accreditation Standard.**
  The implication of seeking Archive Service Accreditation is still under consideration
- **Documentation Plan: confirm progress towards the planned completion of retrospective documentation backlogs at stage three (discrepancy checking) and stage four (accession register and security copy making and labelling, location and movement control indexing, and object exit loans in and out).** Whilst some progress had been made on addressing this issue, prior to the pandemic, there is still much more to be done. Covid restrictions and the volume of items donated to the museum during the reporting year has meant that our ability to update historical entries has been considerably reduced.

Maintaining our full accredited status is crucial if Congleton Museum is to continue to be recognised as an effective and efficient organisation by its peers. It is also required to access the development funding we will require to fulfil our future aspirations.

Accessing the museum and its services

The promotion of the museum and its services is still a major focus. Social media proved to be an invaluable means by which the museum's profile could be maintained whilst it was closed. Active use has been made of Instagram, Facebook and Twitter as well as the museum's website. The number of followers has steadily increased during the year. We must pay tribute to our administrator for posting a constant supply of images for people to enjoy. This has highlighted the need to further develop the museum's virtual presence as a means of reaching those members of the public who, by virtue of their location, are unlikely to visit the museum.

This is something we are intending to explore during the 2021-22 financial year.

The number of in person visits undertaken during the brief period we were open was 47. Such a small number and the very specific circumstances under which these visits were made makes any year-on-year comparison inappropriate.

Museum Staffing 2020-2021

Administrator - **Miss Samantha Vinsun:** continues to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the museum and the delivery of non-educational services. (18 hours per week)

During the year our administrator was either fully or partially furloughed as circumstances required.

Evacuee Experience Activity Leader - Mrs Linda Ward: retains responsibility for the promotion, organisation and delivery of the museum's Evacuee Experience. (This is a delivery only contract). It has not been possible to deliver this activity during the 2020-2021 financial year because of Covid, but we hope to continue it in. 2022-2023



Commemorative tea cup Congleton Chamber of Trade 1931.

Cost of Administering the Charity

The only administrative costs continue to be the fees paid for submission of the annual accounts to Companies House.

Financial Risk

The trustees continue to review those areas of operational and business risk associated with the financial health of the organisation.

Local authority funding.

Cheshire East Council has confirmed its intention to place museum funding within the scope of its overarching cultural framework. Its current grant of £5,380 is a valuable source of income and any change in the method of allocation may have either an adverse or a positive impact upon the museum's financial

position. We have yet to be advised of when this is likely to take place and the outcomes we may be expected to deliver.

It is important to recognise that in the current economic circumstances continued local authority grant funding cannot be assured.

The trust also wishes to acknowledge the support in kind given by Congleton Town Council by providing and maintaining the museum building free of charge. This makes a considerable contribution to the continuing financial viability of the museum. The inclusion of the assessed rental value of £4,500 would have a considerable adverse impact on the museum's balance sheet.

Addressing the gap between income and expenditure

As previously reported, prior to 2017-18 the trading deficit between income and expenditure had been met by the application of historic funding. Continual efforts to generate additional income achieved a trading profit in each successive year; it was £441 for 2019-2020. Whilst the temporary closure of the museum meant a considerable reduction in income there was not a corresponding reduction in costs such as salaries and the services required to keep the collections safe. For the current reporting year, the projected deficit would have been in the region of £13,000. Fortunately, the receipt of the grants listed in the next section has compensated for this. We do not expect to be able to make effective year on year comparisons until the next full trading year, which is likely to be 2022-2023.

It is, however, important to recognise that whilst COVID-19 restrictions may have been lifted, it will take some time for visitor confidence to return and for the museum to achieve an operating profit. It is expected these grants will be required to provide a necessary cushion for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 financial years.

Implications of Covid19

As already reported, except for a short period in the autumn of 2020, the museum remained closed for the greater part of the 2020-2021 financial year. In the 2019-2020 report it was stated that 80% of the museum's income was derived from donations, paid activities e.g., walks and talks, services, including education and room hire, as well public fund-raising events.

For this reporting year, in addition to the annual Cheshire East revenue support grant of £5,280, the museum received the following grants: -

- £25,000 based on the rateable value of the museum building.
- £7,000 Arts Council grant to support staffing and running costs,
- £3,655 in support for staffing costs through the furlough scheme,
- £17,050 in Local Restriction Support Grants

Total £52,705

During the 2021-22 financial year the museum will also receive the following;

- £1,026 in support for staff costs through the furlough scheme
- £14,000 reopening grant based on the rateable value of the museum building

Total £15,026.

Whilst this has placed the museum in a good position for the 2020-2021 financial year, it is important to acknowledge that 2021-22 and 2022-2023 are likely to be equally challenging as the museum tries to recover the various income streams it had previously. It is therefore important that we continue to and develop new income streams which are not dependent upon direct visitor interaction. This is likely to be a major challenge for future years.



Congleton High Street at the beginning of the 20th century.

VAT 33A Refund Scheme

As reported last year we had been advised that the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism had agreed we were eligible to reclaim the VAT paid in respect of the approved costs as identified within the VAT 33A refund scheme, and that we were waiting for the enabling order to be published.

The statutory order confirming Congleton Museum's eligibility came into effect on 17th November 2020. We will be now be able to reclaim from that date any VAT paid on costs and services incurred in providing free public access to the museum.

Business Risk

As stated in the 2019-20 report, business continuity and succession planning have been identified as an issue which the trustees need to address. This has been further highlighted by the pandemic. These were areas the Stronger Together' project was asked to report upon. The report was received in June 2020 and will provide a basis for future planning.

3. Objectives and Activities

Objectives

Since its inception the primary objective of the trust has been to ‘advance and develop the education of the public about the town of Congleton and its environs' by:

- promoting and preserving for the benefit of the public a museum;
- acquiring exhibits, carrying out restoration and research;
- presenting exhibits for display;
- providing a range of learning and personal development opportunities.
- The museum has continued to meet these objectives by:
- presenting aspects of the town’s history through permanent and temporary displays;
- providing learning opportunities for all ages through its education services;
- providing research facilities;
- encouraging an interest in the history and topography of the town through talks and guided walks.

There have been no changes to these aims and objectives during the year

Education and Learning

As with so many aspects of the museum’s work it has not been possible to deliver any educational activities in the current reporting year. We can only hope that, as restrictions are lifted, we will be able to recommence our work with schools.

Shop

Physical access to the museum shop was seriously restricted during the reporting year. The listed income for the year of £490, has been primarily from those online sales generated through the museum’s website. We are grateful to

our administrator for developing and managing this asset, which proved to be so valuable during lockdown.

Fund Raising

It was not possible to hold any specific fundraising activities during the 2020-21 financial year, due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Communication

We have tried to maintain effective communications with both volunteers and museum friends during the year. The weekly bulletins and newsletters have been replaced by periodic updates from the Chair or Trustees aimed at keeping everyone informed of acquisitions and developments.

Museum Development

2022 will mark the 20th anniversary of the opening of the museum's opening to the public and, as reported last year, some areas were showing signs of this continual use. The systematic programme of redecoration commenced during the 2018-19 reporting year has continued whilst the museum was closed. Issues relating to the structure of the building continue to be brought to the attention of our landlord.



Congleton Corporation Electricity Department ash tray 1938.

4. Collections Management

Heritage asset

The declared aims and objectives of the museum continue to be to collect, preserve and interpret the heritage of Congleton and the surrounding district.

The museum's original promoters were keen to ensure that Congleton's unique heritage was preserved so future generations had a clear understanding of how the town developed and the influence it and its inhabitants had on regional and national events and the contribution they made to industrial innovation.

The museum's collecting policy continues to be directed to ensuring that all aspects of the town's heritage are represented within the collections. This ensures that the town and its inhabitants are placed within a wider context.

The museum's heritage asset continues to grow as both members of the public and organisations transfer items of local and national interest to the collections.

Cheshire Hoards

In November 2019 the now three Cheshire Hoards from Malpas, Knutsford and Poole, were loaned to the Grosvenor Museum. It was the expectation that they would return to Congleton in March 2020, however COVID-19 restrictions resulted in them being returned to the Museum of Liverpool. Work is now being undertaken to ensure they return to Congleton in 2022, for the museum's 20th anniversary celebration.

Peover Hoard



Coins from the Peover Hoard being excavated from its pot at the British Museum.

We reported in 2020-21 that we had secured £38,000 of grant funding to purchase the Peover Hoard. With the British Museum being closed and with many of its staff working from home, it was not until October 2020 that we were able to arrange for the hoard to be brought to Congleton. It is currently stored in two large plastic cases waiting to be accessioned into the museum collections.
Prior to lockdown we were fortunate to secure a grant of £2,543 from Museum Development North West to employ a consultant, Matt Ball, to work with volunteers in assessing, identifying and cataloguing the coins. It is hoped that whilst this work is being undertaken colleagues will have an opportunity to work out how this unique collection can be most effectively displayed. This work is now planned for 2021.



Westbourne House, Newcastle Road.

Archaeological Archive

Congleton Museum continues to be the recognised depository for archaeological archives generated by residential and industrial developments within Congleton and the adjacent towns. It is a member of the Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group, which monitors and receives reports on pre-development archaeological surveys designated as a requirement for the granting of planning permission.

Participation in these meetings means the museum continues to be advised of any potential archaeological archive it may be asked to receive. During the reporting year we received a detailed list of the metal detecting finds identified following a survey of land adjacent to Viking Way, Congleton. This is currently being examined with a view to identifying which of the 580 items found we would wish to receive into the collection.

Currently Congleton Museum is the only institution within the Cheshire East Council area designated as being prepared to consider the acceptance of

archaeological archives. As the number of applications for new developments across the council's area increases, so does the pressure on our limited resources. In accepting archaeological archives, there will often be occasions where the museum's limited resources, particularly the shortage of space, has to be balanced against the loss of valuable archaeological heritage.

Exhibitions 2020-21

It has not been possible to develop and deliver any new exhibitions during this reporting year



Congleton Athletic Sports Association Medal 19871.

Collection Management, Storage and Documentation

The implementation of the museum's Collection Management Plan has unfortunately had to be placed in abeyance for this reporting year. Little progress has been made in reducing the outstanding number of un-catalogued items. The limited number of accessions we have been able to make have been exceeded by the number of new items left with the museum - a case of one step forward three steps back.

Collections Database

No work has been possible on the inputting of additional information such as detailed descriptions, locations, condition and images to those items already inputted into COMACs; the museum's digital catalogue. We successfully applied to Museum Development North West for £5,500 of grant funding to upgrade the museum's computer systems. This included the purchase of a new master computer with 16 terabytes of memory, capable of storing the vastly increased number of images required to support a fully illustrated digital collections catalogue

5. Bradshaw House

The consultation with donors on the future of the money remaining in the Bradshaw House fund was completed in the final quarter of the 2020-2021 financial year. Donors were informed that 25% of the fund had been spent on pre-acquisition costs leaving 75% not applied for the purpose for which it was originally donated. Each donor was asked to decide what they would like to happen to the remaining 75% of their donation.

The options were that it be: -

1. returned to them
2. ring fenced for the future expansion/relocation of the museum
3. used to purchase artefacts to enhance the visitor experience
4. used to support either options 2 or 3.

It was gratifying to receive an overwhelming response in favour of the museum retaining these funds for options 2 and 3. Seven donors asked that their contributions (total £560.50) be applied specifically to moving the museum to new premises. Three organisations requested that the 75% of their donation (total £3,900) be returned to them.

The trustees would like to thank all those donors who so readily allowed the museum to retain their donation, and everyone for their patience as we worked through the closure process.

6. Partnerships and External Organisations

Partnerships

2020-21 saw the consolidation of existing partnerships. The museum's participation in the Rossendale Centre 'Work Taste' programme was paused due to Covid 19 restrictions. It is anticipated that this will recommence in 2022.

The museum's partnership with the Portable Antiquities Service for the North West and National Museums Liverpool remains strong. It has, however not been possible to hold any of the proposed ‘Finds Days’ during the current reporting year. It is our hope that they will resume during 2021-2022.

Memberships of External Organisations

Currently the trust is a member of:

- Museum Development North West. (MDNW)
- East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
- Association of Independent Museums (AIM)
- Museums of Cheshire (MOC)

- Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire (CVS CE)
- Arts Council England (ACE)
- Cheshire Archaeology Liaison Group.
- Cheshire Connect
- Cheshire East Heritage Consortium
- Association of Cultural Enterprise

Membership of these organisations continues to give the trust access to training, information on future developments and funding opportunities available within the museum and heritage sector. They enable the museum to work more effectively and meet development targets.



Congleton Hospitals Nursing School Badge.

7. Volunteers

We are sorry that we have not been able to meet so many of our volunteers during this difficult time. The museum was a desolate place without you all. You have always had such an important part to play in the museum's effectiveness. Its success has been built upon your extensive commitment to providing Congleton with an important visitor attraction, a role which will become of increasing importance as the town recovers from the limitations of Covid. We do not want to lose that knowledge and expertise you have amassed over the past 20 years.

It is with great sadness that we remember three people who made valuable contributions to the work of the museum.

Mr. David Daniel MBE

David was a museum trustee for over ten years, until he retired in 2004. He made a considerable contribution to establishing the museum in its present location. He led the protracted and frustrating discussions with the legal department of the then Congleton Borough Council over the trust's lease of Market Square Chambers with his usual calm, fortitude and good humour. He was and remained a constant advocate for the museum to all those organisations with which he was associated both in the town and beyond.

Mr. John Hopkins,

John was the trust's first secretary from 1985 until 1988. It was his energy and expertise which piloted the trust through its initial stages, by establishing its status as both a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Charity, foundations upon which we have over the past 35 years continued to build.

Mr. Albert Williams

Albert was a committed supporter and museum volunteer who was always willing to share his vast local historical knowledge and personal research. It was through his generosity that the museum was able to secure one of those iconic pieces of Roman jewellery for which it is now renowned. He was coming to the museum on a weekly basis, until it closed in March 2020, to ensure we were a fit place for the public to visit.

The museum is greatly in their debt for the support they unswervingly gave. It is therefore crucial in these troubling times that we strive to ensure the museum endures as a testament to their work and that of others without which the town and its heritage would be very much the poorer.

8. Financial Statement

Congleton Museum Trust
Company Information
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

Directors	P Wesley L Hulse A Gubbins A Morrison I Doughty S Firkin M Laurence P Lane
Company Number	02214293
Registered Office	Market Chambers Market Square Congleton Cheshire CW12 1ET
Accountants	TaxAssist Accountants 5 High Street Congleton Cheshire CW12 1BN

Congleton Museum Trust
Accountant's Report
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 30 September 2013, and in order to assist you to fulfil your duties under the Companies Act 2006, we have compiled the financial statements of the company from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

This report is made to the directors in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken to prepare for approval by the directors the financial statements that we have been engaged to compile, to report to the directors that we have done so, and to state those matters that we have agreed to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's directors for our work or for this report.

You have acknowledged on the balance sheet as at year ended 31 March 2021 your duty to ensure that the company has kept proper accounting records and to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view under the Companies Act 2006. You consider that the company is exempt from the statutory requirement for an audit for the year.

We have not been instructed to carry out an audit of the financial statements. For this reason, we have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

02/11/2021

TaxAssist Accountants

5 High Street
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 1BN

Congleton Museum Trust
Income and Expenditure Account
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020 as restated
	£	£
TURNOVER	97,770	25,966
Other income	2	6
Cost of raw materials and consumables	(41,962)	(5,441)
Staff costs	(5,442)	(8,064)
Depreciation and other amounts written off assets	(156)	(240)
Other charges	(13,895)	(11,786)
NET SURPLUS	36,317	441

Congleton Museum Trust
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2021

	2021	2020 as restated
	£	£
Fixed assets	318	474
Current assets	72,608	40,814
Prepayments and accrued income	2,132	2,012
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(16,734)	(9,000)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	58,006	33,826
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	58,324	34,300
Accruals and deferred income	(1,721)	(1,414)
NET ASSETS	56,603	32,886
RESERVES	56,603	32,886

Notes

1. **Average Number of Employees**

Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was as follows: 1 (2020: 1)

2. **Company limited by guarantee**

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company, in the event of a winding up, such an amount as may be required not exceeding £1.

3. **General Information**

Congleton Museum Trust is a private company, limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, registered number 02214293. The registered office is Market Chambers, Market Square, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1ET.

For the year ending 31 March 2021 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.
- These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions.

On behalf of the board

I Doughty

Director

02/11/2021

Congleton Museum Trust
Detailed Income and Expenditure Account
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

	2021		2020 as restated	
	£	£	£	£
TURNOVER				
Donations	1,028		4,506	
Membership subs	940		1,660	
Other sales	45		252	
Public visits and groups	-		1,830	
Revenue grants	54,430		5,380	
Fund raising	-		2,029	
Restricted grants	39,000		1,000	
Shop income	490		1,589	
Gift aid and Vat Reclaim	906		1,333	
Publishing income	931		1,145	
Education project revenue	-		2,630	
Room hire	-		2,612	
		97,770		25,966
OTHER INCOME				
Interest receivable and similar income		2		6
		97,772		25,972
COST OF RAW MATERIALS AND CONSUMABLES				
Opening stock - finished goods	1,265		1,393	
Shop purchases	99		662	
Education project	-		1,327	
Collections	2,863		2,309	
Exhibition costs	-		15	
Restricted grant expenditure	39,000		1,000	
Closing stock - finished goods	(1,265)		(1,265)	
		(41,962)		(5,441)
STAFF COSTS				
Salaries	5,442		8,064	
		(5,442)		(8,064)
DEPRECIATION AND OTHER AMOUNTS WRITTEN OFF ASSETS				
Depreciation	156		240	
		(156)		(240)
OTHER CHARGES				
Premises expenses:				
Utilities Electricity	3,485		4,859	
Utilities water	366		366	
Household and cleaning	1,298		-	
Security and safety	821		903	
Covid costs	2,472		-	
	8,442		6,128	

...CONTINUED

Congleton Museum Trust
Detailed Income and Expenditure Account (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

General administration costs:				
IT software and hardware	194		199	
Insurance	2,340		1,949	
Publishing and printing	344		775	
Utilities telephone and broadband	1,405		1,364	
Outside subscriptions	219		157	
Office consumables	313		409	
Sundry expenses	-		167	
Equipment rental and support	638		638	
	5,453		5,658	
		(13,895)		(11,786)
NET SURPLUS		36,317		441

Congleton museum

Preserving the past. Recording the present. Educating the future