

# Report of the Board of Trustees 2023-24

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

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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 pre-dominantly 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 administering 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

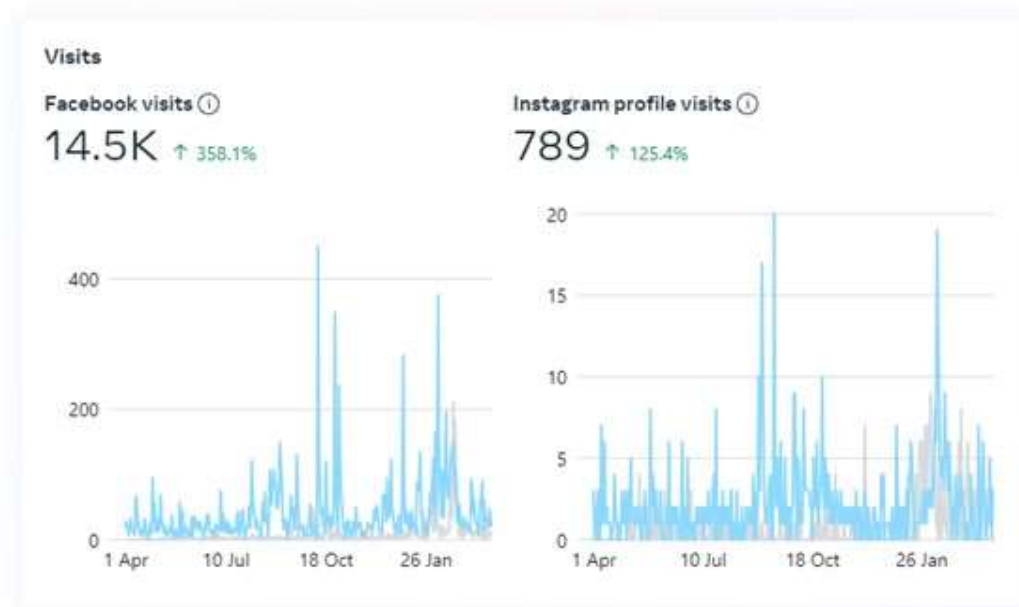
## Social media engagement

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 town's 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: *17<sup>th</sup> January 2025*

# **Congleton Museum Trust**

## **Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 March 2024**

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



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

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

**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.

# **Congleton Museum Trust**

## **Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)**

### **For the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

#### **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 2024**

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Prior Year
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	Total
	£	£	£	£	Funds
<b>2 Donations and Legacies</b>					
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
	<u>17,796</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>19,300</u>	<u>37,096</u>	<u>20,616</u>
<b>3 Charitable Activities (income)</b>					
	£	£	£	£	£
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
	<u>7,531</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7,531</u>	<u>3,209</u>
<b>4 Other Trading Activities</b>					
	£	£	£	£	£
Shop income	4,212	0	0	4,212	2,945
Publishing income	1,908	0	0	1,908	1,377
	<u>6,120</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,120</u>	<u>4,322</u>
<b>5 Cost of Raising Funds</b>					
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of shop sales	1,746	0	0	1,746	643
	<u>1,746</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,746</u>	<u>643</u>
<b>6 Charitable Activities (expenditure)</b>					
	£	£	£	£	£
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
	<u>46,950</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>20,650</u>	<u>67,600</u>	<u>29,839</u>



**Congleton Museum Trust**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)**  
**For the Year ended 31 March 2024**

<b>7 Restricted funds summary</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Reade Papers</b>	<b>Peover Hoard</b>	<b>Roman Week</b>	<b>Roman Centurions</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
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**

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**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: *17<sup>th</sup> January 2025*