

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

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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 Claims:** £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			Social Media	
London	1,135	23.31%	Biddulph	5.6%.
Congleton	712	14.62%	Macclesfield	4.7%.
Manchester	185	3.8%	Stoke-on-Trent	3.4%.
Stoke on Trent	143	2.94%	Crewe	2.9%.
Liverpool	116	2.38%	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.

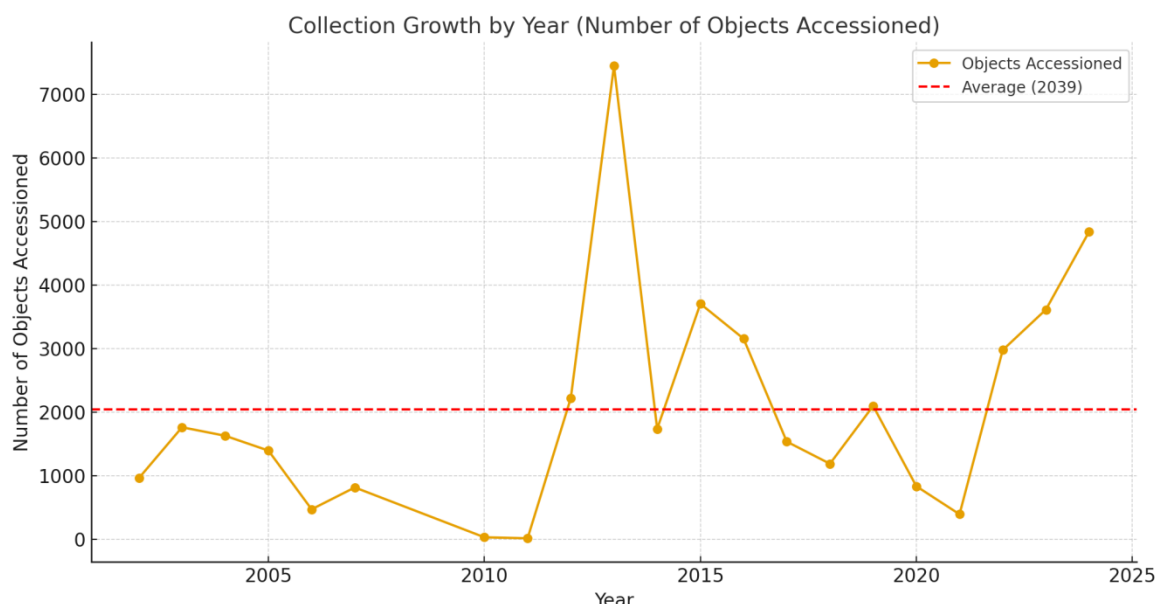
Mobile-First Audience: With 65.3% of users on mobile, all future digital content and "What's On" information must be optimised for small screens.

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.



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:

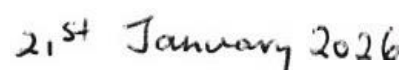
1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the relevant accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the 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: 

Name: David Bales

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



Congleton Museum Trust

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 March 2025

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

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.



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.

Congleton Museum Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
2 Donations and Legacies					
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
	<u>12,841</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,321</u>	<u>17,162</u>	<u>37,096</u>
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
	<u>6,197</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,197</u>	<u>7,531</u>
4 Other Trading Activities					
	£	£	£	£	£
Shop income	4,908	0	0	4,908	4,212
Publishing income	1,357	0	0	1,357	1,908
	<u>6,265</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,265</u>	<u>6,120</u>
5 Cost of Raising Funds					
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of shop sales	1,571	0	0	1,571	1,746
	<u>1,571</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,571</u>	<u>1,746</u>
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
	<u>32,120</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>32,120</u>	<u>67,600</u>

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

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*