Cwtsh Trustees' Annual Report for 2025

1. Reference and administrative details

- **Charity name:** Cwtsh, Newport
- **Charity registration number:** 1157225
- **Principal address:** 226 Stow Hill, Newport, NP20 4HA
- **Year covered:** 1 January to 31 December 2025.
- **Chairman:** Alan Roderick
- **Secretary:** Malcolm Phillips
- **Treasurer:** David Osmond
- **Trustees**: Alan Roderick, David Osmond, Jim Calvert
- **Other committee members during the year:** John Briggs, Pam Cocchiara, Jennifer Long, Andrew Ball, Sue Beardmore, David Smith and Barbara Hawkins
- **Co-opted in December 2025:** Wendy Jones

2. Summary of the year

2025 was a year of steady activity for the Cwtsh and of solid practical progress on the building. The gallery ran a full programme of exhibitions, First Friday talks and Open Mic evenings continued, and regular hirers returned after the summer. A hearing loop and new spotlights were installed with a Monmouthshire Building Society grant, and a Newport City Council grant was secured for thermal insulating blinds for the lantern windows.

The year also brought pressures. Energy costs remained a concern, some exhibition and event attendances were low, and insurance costs are set to rise sharply in 2026. The committee has responded by pursuing grants, widening the hire programme and reorganising its own meetings.

3. Objectives and activities

The Cwtsh is a community arts and heritage space in Newport. During 2025 the trustees pursued its aims through four strands of activity.

Exhibitions

The gallery is run largely by volunteers. Exhibitions normally last about four weeks, and the Cwtsh takes a 15% commission on sales. The main exhibitions were:

- **Twmps Restoration Project** (Arthur Turner), February to early March. About 30 people attended the launch, and a closing concert was reasonably well attended.
- **Rachel Hughes, collage** (late March to 27 April). The launch went well and about ten pieces were sold, but weekday attendance was low, and a collage workshop drew only one family.
- **River Usk** (open-call exhibition, launched 16 May). About 25 artists and photographers and several writers took part. It was judged very successful, with around £210 of work sold. The trustees noted disappointment that no official visitors attended.

- **Laura Wainwright, *Noctua*** (22 June to 13 July). About 30 oil landscapes, with poetry and live music at a well-received launch.
- **Angus McBean photographs** (7 September to 12 October, extended), from the collection of Will Cross. The Mayor attended the launch, and BBC and social media coverage helped bring about 30 visitors on one weekend. Will Cross donated £70 from book sales, and a further £85 from book sales was recorded.
- **Garrod Roberts and Greta Hart, *Us*** (1 to 30 November). Several works were sold, though weekend visitor numbers were poor.
- **Lorraine Pattimore, *Fresh Air*** (opening in December, with the launch on 12 December).

There was no exhibition over the summer break. Exhibitions are now booked up to June 2026, and the committee has had to turn away further enquiries.

First Fridays and Open Mics

First Friday talks continued through the year, supported in the second half by sponsorship from Heron House Financial Management.

- Dan Llewelyn-Williams on his Houdini play (January)
- Malcolm Phillips on Newport Cathedral (February)
- Will Davies on Newport Castle (March)
- Dr Mark Lewis on Roman Caerleon (April)
- Jon Gower (May)
- Bonnie Hawkins on her *Under Milk Wood* illustrations (June)
- Mark Williams (July)
- Eleanor Williams (September)
- Will Cross on Angus McBean (First Friday Extra, September)
- Marc Jones on the A470 (October)
- Angela Jones on wild swimming (November)
- Catherine Fisher and Daniel Morden on folklore (First Friday Extra, November)
- Gosia Buzzanca (late November)
- Christopher Evans on the Basque refugee children in Caerleon (December)

Door takings at individual talks were typically in the region of £38 to £52. Most talks were well received, though the committee noted mixed views on one and disappointing attendance at another.

Open Mic evenings featured guests including Natalie Ann Holborow, Emily Cotterill, Tracey Rhys and Christina Thatcher, Laura Wainwright and Robert Minhinnick, Helen McSherry, Ric Hool, Jamie Woods and Angela Graham. Turnout varied. Some evenings were low, while others were stronger.

Events and partnerships

- **Newport Music Trail (28 to 29 March).** The Cwtsh hosted a harmonica workshop and an evening performance. The Council paid the hire fee, and a £30 invoice was raised. The Cwtsh has agreed to be a venue again for the 2026 Trail (27 to 28 March).
- **Art on the Hill.** The Cwtsh took part again, with the exhibition at the end of November. The trustees agreed a donation. Visitor numbers were low, and the committee noted that the event's focus has shifted to the town centre. It agreed that in future the Cwtsh's participation need only be an exhibition and perhaps a First Friday event, and that the level of donation should be reviewed.
- **Newport Culture Strategy 2025 to 2035.** The Cwtsh's participation was acknowledged in the published strategy. Trustees noted that literature is not specifically mentioned and agreed it would be worth raising this with the Council.
- **Newport Festival of Words.** The Cwtsh did not take part in 2025 but has agreed to participate in March 2026.

Hire programme

Regular hirers during 2025 included French lessons, creative writing, an art class, a literary "reading round", a harmonica group, a photography studio, craft sessions, a residents' group, a family worship group and singing practice. The harmonica group proved particularly popular, with another four-week session started in October. New bookings were also taken during the year, including children's and adult art and craft classes over the summer, a retirement event and a collage class.

Not every activity thrived. One art class was cancelled for the autumn term after only three people attended. One reading and art class attracted no takers. One hirer who offered astrology and tarot sessions did not make regular use of the space. One book club moved to a private home after a clash of bookings. The committee also declined some requests it judged unsuitable.

The hire rate remained £10 an hour. A rise to £12 was raised in December and deferred, with the trustees preferring to build bookings first.

4. Premises, facilities and sustainability

Hearing loop and spotlights. The survey in February recommended a hearing loop and spotlights at a cost of about £2,000. The Monmouthshire Building Society awarded a grant of £2,045, and the installation took place on 24 and 25 July at a cost of £2,043. VAT was charged on the spotlights.

Energy and insulation. Energy costs were a recurring concern. An energy consultant in April recommended better insulation, including double glazing and insulating the lantern windows. Quotes for insulating blinds were obtained, the main one being £4,149. Jim Calvert applied to the Newport City Council Shared Prosperity Fund and reported in December that the grant had been secured. The supplier requires a third of the cost (about £1,400) up front, with work expected to start in January 2026. The committee also kept heating on a timed basis, switching it on before classes and off before they end. A new electricity meter is due on 28 January 2026. The trustees recorded their thanks to the Council and to Jim.

Building maintenance.

- Damp on the interior wall, traced to overflowing guttering next door, improved steadily after Jim cleared the gutter and redirected the downpipe, and was reported as improving by August.

- The flaking porch mandala was repaired, with work reported complete in December and the cost still to be established.
- The CCTV camera was repaired at a cost of £78.
- A professional cleaner was engaged from September for two hours a month.
- Extra glasses were donated and delivered.
- The window-blind pole broke and was replaced by a wooden pole.
- The water heater failed in December, and the committee decided to rely on the kettle for now. A replacement would cost £100 to £150 plus installation.

Website and IT. The website security certificate and access problems were resolved with the web designer, though the certificate needs renewing every three months. The Instagram link was repaired and the website updated. Wi-Fi problems were traced to someone switching it off.

5. Financial review

The figures below come from the committee minutes and are not the examined accounts

The current account balance ranged between roughly £1,400 and £3,000 during the year:

- 28 December 2024: £2,989.38
- Early February: £2,242.89
- Mid-March: about £1,830
- Mid-April: £1,416.92 (with about £500 in cash to pay in)
- 28 May: £1,995
- 28 September: £2,467.91
- 28 October: £2,425
- 28 November: £1,819 (rising to about £2,800 once expected money was banked)

The accounts for 2024 were completed and showed a turnover of about £6,000.

Income came from hire fees, membership subscriptions, door and bar takings, donations, a 15% commission on exhibition sales, the Monmouthshire Building Society grant (£2,045), the Newport Music Trail fee, sponsorship of First Fridays by Heron House Financial Management, and the Newport City Council grant for the blinds. [Add totals from the accounts.]

Expenditure included gas and electricity (for example, gas bills of £448.98 in March, £203 in June and £126 in November, and an electricity bill of £292 in December 2024), the annual premises licence fee of £70, the hearing loop and spotlights (£2,043), the CCTV repair (£78), cleaning, an insurance valuation assessment (£138) and a £100 donation to Art on the Hill.

Reserves and outlook. Cash flow will be tight in early 2026. The insurer has raised its rebuild valuation of the Cwtsh to £300,000, so the annual premium is expected to rise from about £600 to about £1,000. At the same time, the blinds will need roughly £1,400 up front. Paying the insurance monthly was suggested to ease cash flow.

6. Governance and management

The Management Committee met regularly through the year. Minutes supplied for this report cover 19 meetings.

- **Constitution and charity register.** Changes to the governing document were completed and the charity's aims on the register were brought into line. The trustees' meeting minutes were sent to the Charity Commission in July, completing the process.
- **AGM.** The AGM was held on 27 October, followed by a talk. The committee agreed that future AGMs will be combined with the November First Friday. One trustee was due to step down at the AGM.
- **Co-option.** Wendy Jones, a marketing specialist and hirer, was co-opted in December until the next AGM and will present marketing ideas to the committee.
- **Meeting times.** To make room for a regular Monday-evening booking from the Ultra Running Club, committee meetings move to Monday mornings at 11am from January 2026.
- **Licensing.** The annual premises licence fee of £70 was paid.
- **Insurance.** An insurance valuation assessment was commissioned.
- **Membership.** An analysis in February of about 80 members showed an even split between men and women, with the majority born before 1960 and about 60% living in the NP20 postcode area. It was suggested that the Cwtsh should be listed on the local bus website.
- **Volunteers.** The bar, door and invigilation are staffed by volunteers. The committee thanked individuals for their work on exhibitions, events, the building and the website.

7. Risks and challenges

- **Finances.** Rising energy and insurance costs, with limited reserves, create cash-flow risk in early 2026.
- **Attendance.** Weekday exhibition visits and some talks and Open Mics were poorly attended, and publicity, particularly beyond existing contacts, needs to be more targeted.
- **Volunteer capacity.** There is reliance on a small group of volunteers, and several trustees were frequently unable to attend. Illness affected some trustees and hirers during the year.
- **Payment methods.** Card payments are not currently practical, so events are advertised as cash only.
- **Programme reliance.** Several regular hirers cancelled or paused, and the timetable has become more irregular, making heating harder to schedule.

8. Plans for 2026

- Installing the thermal blinds and paying the up-front share once cash flow allows.
- Welcoming the Ultra Running Club's Monday evening bookings and growing hire income.
- A full exhibition programme: James Wilkinson (January to February), CAVC Students photography (March to April), the Vision Art Group "Fakes" exhibition (April to May), South Wales Watercolour Society (May to June), and a photographic exhibition of poet portraits in July with Peter Finch.

- The Newport Music Trail (27 to 28 March) and the Festival of Words in March, including a poetry event on 20 March.
- Marketing work led by Wendy Jones.
- Reviewing the hire rate, the Art on the Hill donation and the timing of the AGM.
- Fixing the loop wiring and replacing or repairing the water heater.
- Pursuing further grants, and making cards or digital payments possible if practical.

9. Thanks

The trustees thank everyone who gave their time and support in 2025: the exhibitors and speakers, the volunteers who ran the bar, door and gallery, the hirers, and the sponsors and funders. These include Heron House Financial Management, the Monmouthshire Building Society and Newport City Council.

10. Approval

This report was approved by the trustees on 14th October 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

Jim Calvert

Trustee

Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre Accounts 2025 (Charity number 1157225)

Introductory notes

These accounts cover the period from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

'Restricted' income must be spent on the specified items for which it has been donated or provided.

Unrestricted income can be spent on anything that supports Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre's objectives.

Income

Income source	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Murenger Open Mics		437.50	
First Fridays etc		392.50	
Heron House First Friday sponsorship		200.00	
Cwtsh room rental		3,399.00	
Gallery income		824.50	
Coffee money		45.00	
Donations		74.50	
Membership		540.00	
Maindee Festival appearance (AR)		50.00	
Mon. Building Society grant (hearing loop)	2,043.00		
N.C.C. grant (blinds)	4,478.00		
Total	**6,521.00**	**5,963.00**	**12,484.00**

Expenditure

Rent (Newport City Council)	1,375.00
Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru	222.00
Virgin (WiFi Rental)	551.80
Electricity (British Gas)	2,141.60
Insurance	1,008.43
Webber Design (website hosting)	180.00
Annual Premises Licence Fee	70.00
Posters, printer ink	605.92
Contribution to Art on the Hill	100.00
Purchase of painting for Members Raffle	75.00
Cleaning	190.00
Bank charges	71.56
Miscellaneous (keys, maintenance materials, camera maintenance etc.)	162.00
Hearing loop and spotlights	2,381.60
First two of three payments for new blinds in roof	2,766.00
Total	**11,900.91**

Bank Reconciliation

Opening balance		**2,989.38**
Add income	12,484.00	15,473.38
Subtract expenditure	11,900.91	
Closing Bank Balance		**3,572.47**

All restricted funds have been used for the benefit of Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre.

These accounts are a true and accurate record.

David Osmond (Treasurer, Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre) June 10th 2024.