FRIENDS OF YORK WALLS

TRUSTEES REPORT 2025

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025.

1 Structure, Governance and Management

The Friends of York Walls was established in 2010. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation first registered on 20 November 2014, registration number 1159300. The charity was established with objects and powers, and is governed under the terms of its Constitution.

The trustees who served during the year were:

Bill Hill (Chair)
Barry Crump
Rachel Hollingworth
Sam McDermott

The trustees served on the Management Committee.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All the trustees guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

The trustees have assessed the financial risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to them and to other major risks.

2 Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity as expressed in its articles/constitution are:

1 To educate the public in the history, natural history and architecture of the historic defences of York and its city walls.

2 To secure the preservation, protection and improvement of their features.

The Fishergate Postern Tower has been the venue for the regular activities of the charity along with the walls more generally.

The Friends of York Walls have the aims to:

1. Influence the management, care and presentation of York's City Walls and defences for the benefit of local residents and visitors.

2. Organise and undertake practical work and public events in cooperation with the City of York Council and other like-minded groups or individuals.

3. Encourage people generally to utilise the Walls as an amenity.

4. Identify opportunities for potential improvement of the Walls.

5. Establish links with local residents.

6. Monitor and act where appropriate to protect the historical views from and towards the Walls.

7. Act as a pressure group, when necessary, to help secure high standards of maintenance of York's Walls and fortifications.

8. Identify opportunities for possible improved access, both physical and intellectual.

9. Explore the potential of engaging the public in the history of the Walls in new ways.

10. Establish Fishergate Postern Tower as a historical attraction.

11. Explore fundraising avenues such as grants and bequests.

12. Involve schools.

13. Create resource packages, leaflets and other material to help people appreciate the Walls.

14. Arrange walks and talks.

15. Participate in and foster local cultural events.

16. Support other like-minded organisations.

17. Consult with those interested in the Walls.

18. Develop the Friends website, Instagram, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts.

19. Communicate with members via email addresses and newsletters.

20. Raise the public profile of the group by generating local media coverage.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

3 Achievements and Performance in 2025

3.1 Commemoration of the Irish Immigration into York from the Great Famine

For Heritage Open Day, we put on a display of information about the Irish Immigration into York in 1846 to 1850, fleeing the effect of the Great Famine. The people who came here settled in the streets next to the walls, hence they are part of our story and give us a connection with the Irish Community.

The display created good press coverage, and some TV coverage from the Irish in England channel. It attracted over 60 people who had Irish ancestry and who were new to Fishergate Postern Tower, so it was a good initiative to reach out to new audiences for heritage.

The display also paid tribute to the work of the Quakers in helping the Irish to come over to York and in seeing to their welfare once here, including the construction of a temporary fever hospital. This also attracted new audiences from the Quaker Community in York today.

The display was left up and has continued to be a feature of our Open Days since.

3.2 Opening Fishergate Postern Tower to the public

The tower was visited by 6,983 people compared with 6,756 in 2024.

The donations made by visitors to the Tower in 2025 were £3,505 compared with £3,635 in 2024, confirming that the organisation has a steady income to assure its viability. One scheduled Open Day was cancelled because of ice.

3.3 Planting wildflowers on the ramparts

The emphasis of this project took a new direction in 2025, following advice from the Forest of Flowers organisation. They advised that the nutrient level in the soil was too high for all but a few wildflowers to flourish and this had the effect of making the grasses so vigorous that they dominated everything else.

Instead they advised that the nutrient level of the soil be reduced by a five year programme of cutting the grass three times a year and removing the arisings. This programe was initiated in the Summer of 2025.

The aim is to reduce the vigour of the grass so that a wide range of wildflowers can flourish, and to assist this, Yellow Rattle seed was sown in October – this predates on the grass.

The overall aim remains to increase the critical mass of pollinator-friendly wildflowers on the ramparts, thus adding to their visitor interest and through this, adding to visitor engagement with the heritage of the ramparts and walls.

It also contributes to implementing the City of York Council's Pollinator Friendly Strategy for York, and to developing the concept of Citizen Scientist in collaboration with St Nicks.

3.4 Guided Walks

These were continued, though the take up was small.

3.5 Redesign of Timeline Display in Fishergate Postern Tower

A new designer was enganged in 2025, following the move of the previous designer to a full-time job.

The process of implementing a new design with will continue into 2026.

3.6 Masons' Marks

For a second year the tower was opened for two event days in the University of York's Festival Ideas programme featuring opportunities for the public to hunt for mason marks in Fishergate Postern Tower. This brought in again about 100 local residents.

The project to record the position and appearance of each mason mark continues into 2025.

3.7 Artists' Works

The process continued of designing the hanging system for the 21 commissioned works, including paintings, watercolours, prints and textiles.

3.8 Friends of York Walls main website and 'Sponsor a Stone' scheme

During 2025, the FOYW website was viewed over 127,000 times (compared with 140,000 times in 2024) by a worldwide visitor base of almost 70,000.

The City Walls Trail home page often receives over 200 hits per day, achieving a total of 61,600 hits over the past year, underlining what a substantial piece of work it is and how valuable visitors find it. Its URL is to be found referred to in many places, a symptom of the respect in which it is held by other organisations in the tourism field.

The website continues to host the "Sponsor a Stone" scheme, started in 2012, where anyone can pick a specific stone on the west or north wall of FPT and for a £20.00 minimum donation they get a personalised certificate and listing against their selected stone. In 2025 8 stones (compared with 15 in 2024) were sponsored. Most dedications were of an "In Memoriam" or "special occasion" nature.

3.9 York City Walls Audio Trail

The audio trail of the walls was first created in July 2022, using the Guide.AI platform, and has now had four full years of operation.

During 2025, 730 new people (compared with 750 in 2024) downloaded the app confirming that it is proving continually popular with visitors. Each new user's download provides the Friends with a donation of 80p, and over the year this generated £444.80.

Users down-load the Audio Trail APP and the York City Walls Audio Trail for a one-off fee of £1.99 and for this they get the 27 map points and over 100 minutes of informative audio.

3.10 Annual Leaflet

Our Annual Leaflet, with its map of the walls, had a print run of 12,000 again. This is to meet demand from Visit York (it is one of their most 'in-demand leaflets') and our 'help-yourself' box in Bootham Bar, which we keep stocked for about 20 days a year. We supply the only maps which show the full route of the 'City Walls Trail', the official circular walking trail marked with distinctive brass studs.

3.11 E-Newsletter

Our e-newsletter had 9 issues, reaching 500 plus people each issue. These cumulatively form a valuable record of our activities and past issues are accessible through our website.

4 Financial Review

4.10 The charity continues to be in a financially resilient position with £17,000 in the bank and a reliable income flow of £5,000+ a year.

4.11 The Management Committee has reiterated its commitment to ensuring that unrestricted funds of £10,000 are held as a reserve to ensure a continuing robust financial position, but otherwise envisages the cash in hand should be used to further the objects of the charity as set out in its plans for the future below.

5 Plans for the Future

The plans for the future are to focus on:

a) Continue to improve the quality of the time-line display in Fishergate Postern Tower.

b) Enhancing the quality of displays on the top floor of Fishergate Postern Tower, including information about the roof, the conversion of the space in the early 1600s into a dovecote, the turret, possible use of siege-engine.

c) Making good the portcullis model and providing a robust model of the actual mechanism for visitors to explore interactively.

d) Recruiting more trustees and committee members.

e) Continue with the mainstream work of the charity which is the implementation of 21 Open Days at FPT and promotion of knowledge of the Walls of York and their heritage.

f) Building on the work to plant pollinator friendly flowers on the rampart next to Fishergate Postern Tower, implement the second year of a five-year plan to reduce the level of nutrients in our trial area of ground through mowings three times a year, and removal of arisings.

g) Preparing and publishing the results of the work on the geology of the walls, creating leaflets, media posts and information boards which enable visitors to engage more deeply with this aspect of the walls.

h) Creating a display in Fishergate Postern Tower of the collection of art works now established, to enrich the visitor experience of the tower and the walls.

i) Completing the record of the masons' marks in Fishergate Postern Tower using photography and digital drawings, thus creating a database for use by the public including the academic community.

j) Taking forward the development of school packs and other ways to engage young people in the heritage of the walls.

k) Continuing the project focusing on the families who have lived next to the walls in the Walmgate area, using this as a means of increasing the engagement of local people in the heritage of the walls and Fishergate Postern Tower.

l) Initiating a project to create a display of all the historical maps of the area round Fishergate Postern Tower, and using this as a means of attracting local people to visit and engage with the heritage of the walls.

m) Recreate a portcullis in the postern gate, supported by explanatory models.

n) Exploring the idea of hosting a placement and/or internship of a student taking the MA programme in Public History at the university of York.

o) Review the brass stud trail and address any gaps and points of potential confusion for users.

Bill Hill
Chair, on behalf of the Management Committee
October 2026

Friends of York Walls CIO FINAL

Treasurer's Report 2025.

Overview

The Friends of York Walls CIO had a good year in 2025. Our core operations made a surplus of £1,733 in 2025 (£2,731 in 2024). This enabled us to continue to implement several projects that broadened the range of our contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the city defenses and to the community of people who have an interest in them.

This report is split into two. The first part covers the core activities of the FoYW and is a good guide to our basic finances. It mainly includes the regular operation of the Fishergate Postern Tower (FPT) and other related activities.

The second part covers our one-off projects, some of which are partially externally funded, and are best looked at separately from the core operations as they can vary a lot from year to year.

The combined finances of both parts together are shown in the summary table below and the attached Profit/Loss account and Balance Sheet. The overall outcome for the year was that we made a small gain of £181 (£3,248 loss in 2024), comprising an operational gain of £1,733, offset by project net spending of £1,553

Our total financial assets, as of Dec 31st 2025, were therefore increased by £181 to £18,993. The Trustees are retaining this for unforeseen problems and future opportunities.

The table below summarises the outcomes. A detailed listing of transactions is available on request. If you have any queries, please contact Richard Hanage at richard@hanage.com

		2025	***2024***	***2023***
Operations	HMRC 'gift aid'	899	831	1,154
	Open day donations	3,550	3,918	3,672
	Other donations	1,038	1,806	1,832
	Other operations income	1,050	956	1,323
	Festival income (net)	-	306	90
	Operations total income	**6,537**	**7,817**	**8,071**
	less operations expenses	4,804	5,086	3,585
	Operations surplus	**1,733**	**2,731**	**4,486**
Projects	*less* projects net spend	1,553	5,979	13,418
	Total surplus	**181**	**- 3,248**	**- 8,932**
Assets	**Cumulative assets**	**18,993**	**18,812**	**22,060**

1.0 Operations

Operations Surplus

The 'Operations surplus', which is a measure of the basic health of the FoYW, fell to £1,733 (down from £2,731) mainly due to reduced donations and partially offset by savings in some other areas and higher interest earned.

Operations income was lower at £6,537 (down from £8,206). In particular, donation income was weak at £5,102 (down from £6,460)

Open day donations were £3,550 (down from £4,178), despite good visitor numbers, and there was a further small shift from coin to contactless. Is there some way visitors can be encouraged to be more generous? Perhaps making contactless easier might help.

Regular supporter annual donations were slightly weaker at £245 (down from £291). This is unfortunate as we need more donations eligible for gift-aid, because the tax we can reclaim on bucket and contactless donations is limited to ten times the gift-aided donations. The reduced level of eligible donations is reflected in the reduced 'Gift Aid' of £899.

Unfortunately, sponsorship of stones dropped back to a more normal £290 after being unusually high in 2024 at £960. Guided Walks donations were, at £70, even lower than the previous year's £100.

The Guide.AI 'Audio Guide to York City Walls' generated £445 of "revenue share" for the year – almost the same as 2024 (£476).

Other donations, mainly specifically for art works, held fairly steady at £503 (£454 in 2024)

Finally, we earned £536 interest on our savings accounts – a useful increase from £219 in 2024.

The continued good FPT Open Day income is a tribute to our volunteers and shows that any time we want to bring in extra income we can do so by opening the FPT more often – weather and volunteers permitting.

The downward drift of income sources suggests that if the committee ever need to raise extra funding, they will be able to do so by focusing efforts on the traditional sources – open days, sponsored stones, regular supporter gift-aided donations, guided walks etc.

Operations expenses remained high at £4,804 (down slightly from £5,086). The biggest item in 2024 was the 'Friends Meeting' (£1,634), which was not repeated in 2025. However, we did spend more on several other categories including displays, electricity, equipment and repairs.

Spending on displays/interpretation was £922 (up from £443) and equipment purchases, repairs, and other miscellaneous items cost £1,101 whereas nothing was recorded in 2024 as there was a delay in claiming some 2024 costs. Electricity costs increased from £70 to £249 as we were forced to move to a less favourable tariff which included a daily charge. We had a good stock of books for distribution but needed to buy more maps (£120).

Overall, the operations expenses were under control and led to an operations surplus of £1,733. This was down from £2,731 in 2024 but still a useful contribution to funding for development projects.

2.0 Development Projects

Any external project funding we receive is entered into the accounts in full in the year that it is received, along with any match funding we are committed to providing. Any unspent funding at the end of each year is carried over to the following year as a restricted asset labelled 'Unspent project income' on the balance sheet. In this way, the projects do not impact on the operational accounts. The projects described below were financially active in 2025. A list of financially inactive projects is also included below.

2.1 Externally Funded Projects

No new external funding or grants were received in 2025.

Unspent funding of £3,939 was carried forward from 2024 to 2025 and a much smaller amount of £1,167 was carried forward from 2025 to 2026 – all from the 'Walmgate Family History' and 'Twins Diary' projects.

Growing Greener Spaces (York CVS: £1,500 and Buglife: £300 plus FoYW matching: £1,500). The project funding was all utilized by 2024 so further expenditure of £1,192 in 2025 was covered by the FoYW.

School Packs/Twins Diary. (Fishergate ward: £1,000)
There has been no spending on the original Twins Diary project, which was combined with the 'School Packs' project in 2024. The whole initial £1,000 funding is therefore carried over to 2026.

Walmgate Family History (Two Ridings Community Dulverton Fund: £2,000 plus FoYW matching: £1,000). This project had a carry-over of £2,939 from 2024 and spending of £2,772 in 2025. As a result, there was a carry-forward of £167 to 2026. The project included the Heritage Open Day**s,** a special event to celebrate the Irish connections with the Walmgate area. The spending on this event was £1,872, which included specially designed displays, live Irish music and historic maps and photographs.

2.2 Self-funded projects

Artworks project. This project purchases art related to the walls for future display. It has no external funding. It is internally funded by ear-marking extra income generated by, for instance, running extra open days. The remainder has been funded from the operations surplus and the cost in 2025 was £158.

Historical Maps project. This project, which is at an early stage, aims to collect and display maps of the area around the Postern Tower and complement the Walmgate Family History project. Only £203 was spent in 2025, but more will be needed in the future to collect and display digital images of the maps.

2.3 Financially inactive projects

The following projects may have been active during 2025 but did not generate any income, expenditure or carry forward: Masons Marks, Walls Geology, Bean and Gone Display, Portcullis Model, School Packs and Walls Lichens.

3.0 Concluding thoughts

The FoYW is in a strong position financially with costs under control, a variety of income sources and healthy assets in reserve. The FPT Open Days continue to be a good steady earner, taking at least £150/day in donations. We need to ensure that we have the volunteers to sustain this.

We have a large surplus of £18,993 (up from £18,812) some of which could probably be (wisely) spent, as a smaller reserve is probably sufficient unless we anticipate having to provide funding for a major project.

Unspent project income is much lower at £1,167 (down from £3,939) but perhaps still reflects a shortage of people resources to implement projects.

Oliver Harrison (Hon. Treasurer) and Richard Hanage (Volunteer)

31 May 2026

Approved by the committee 7 July 2026

Friends of York Walls
UK Balance Sheet - Standard
As of 31 December 2025

	31 Dec 25	31 Dec 24
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Other Current Assets		
Expected Income	1,908.90	1,030.40
Total Other Current Assets	1,908.90	1,030.40
Cash at bank and in hand		
Cash	0.00	101.41
Charity Bank	10,451.00	10,000.00
HSBC Current	2,043.72	3,020.83
HSBC Save	4,800.41	7,715.84
PAYPAL New	956.19	883.09
Total Cash at bank and in hand	18,251.32	21,721.17
Total Current Assets	20,160.22	22,751.57
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
Unspent project income	1,167.13	3,939.28
Total Other Current Liabilities	1,167.13	3,939.28
Total Current Liabilities	1,167.13	3,939.28
NET CURRENT ASSETS	18,993.09	18,812.29
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	18,993.09	18,812.29
NET ASSETS	**18,993.09**	**18,812.29**
Capital and Reserves		
Additional Net Assets	6,970.69	10,218.87
Initial Assets	11,841.60	11,841.60
Profit for the Year	180.80	-3,248.18
Shareholder funds	**18,993.09**	**18,812.29**

Friends of York Walls
Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison
January through December 2025

	Jan - Dec 25	Jan - Dec 24
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
OPERATIONS INCOME		
Donations		
Donations - Audio Guide Share	444.80	476.00
Donations - Buckets	2,189.70	2,936.02
Donations - Contactless	1,359.87	1,242.43
Donations - Other	502.93	453.86
Donations - Stones	290.00	960.00
Donations - Supporters	245.00	291.41
Donations - Walks & Talks	70.00	100.00
Total Donations	5,102.30	6,459.72
Festival Income	0.00	696.60
HMRC Gifts Aid Income	899.30	831.09
Interest Earned	535.57	219.03
Total OPERATIONS INCOME	6,537.17	8,206.44
PROJECT INCOME		
2020 Growing Greener Spaces	0.00	300.00
Total PROJECT INCOME	0.00	300.00
Total Income	6,537.17	8,506.44
Expense		
Festival Expenses	0.00	390.61
OPERATIONS EXPENSES		
Books/Maps/Images	140.74	130.00
Display/interpretation	921.82	443.14
Electricity	248.62	70.10
Equipment	483.40	0.00
Friends Meeting	0.00	1,633.77
Health & Safety	38.25	36.00
HSBC Fees	40.00	61.20
Insurance Expense	195.15	96.00
Membership fees	15.00	0.00
Miscellaneous Expense	353.70	0.00
Office Expense	0.00	11.70
Paypal Fees	1.90	17.39
Product Purchase	120.00	499.50
Publicity & Marketing	1,284.63	1,370.00
Rent and Rates	259.48	230.54
Repairs and Maintenance	263.53	0.00
Technology	437.36	486.62
Total OPERATIONS EXPENSES	4,803.58	5,085.96
PROJECT EXPENSES		
2020 School Packs	0.00	0.00
2021 Growing Greener Spaces	1,191.90	1,554.35
2022 Art Collection	157.73	4,603.70
2023 Walmgate Family History		
2025 Heritage Open Day	1,871.93	0.00
2023 Walmgate Family History - Oth...	-1,871.93	0.00
Total 2023 Walmgate Family History	0.00	0.00
2024 Historical Maps	203.16	120.00
Total PROJECT EXPENSES	1,552.79	6,278.05
Total Expense	6,356.37	11,754.62
Net Ordinary Income	180.80	-3,248.18
Profit for the Year	**180.80**	**-3,248.18**