Charity Registration No. 1188637

Northumberland Archives Trust

NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHIVES CHARITABLE TRUST
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHIVES CHARITABLE TRUST
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees:

Stuart Bankier	(Term ends 31 December 2026)
Morag Boyes	(Term ends 31 December 2027)
William Browne-Swinburne	(Term ends 31 December 2027)
Roy Jobson	(Appointed 26 June 2025, resigned 6 July 2026)
Lesley Lee	(Appointed 17 April 2024, term ends 31 December 2027)
Sue Shaw	(Term ends 31 December 2026)
Prof. Annie Tindley	(Term ends 31 December 2026)

Charity Number:
1188637

Principal Address:
c/o Northumberland Archives
QEII Country Park
Ashington
Northumberland
NE63 9YF

Independent Examiner:
Andrew Ayre

Bankers:
Unity Trust Bank
PO Box 7193
Planetary Road
Willenhall
WV1 9DG

NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHIVES CHARITABLE TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

For the Year ended 31 March 2026

This is our sixth annual report since the Trust was registered on 19th March 2020. 2025-26 saw the Trust progress its core public interest aims of raising funds to extend the work of Northumberland's Archive Service, and making the archives in its care more widely known and more accessible to more people. We were a little disappointed that our annual turnover fell to just under £50,000 (just over £80,000 in 2024-25). There were two reasons for this. First, the funding climate has tightened and several applications made, including some that had looked very promising, were unsuccessful. Second, internal staff capacity has reduced the Service's capacity to develop new projects for the Trust to fund. For a project to proceed, funding and staffing availability need to coincide.

That said, with the benefit of funds raised by the Trust, including substantial donations which matched most of the £30,000 funding generously committed by the Sir James Knott Trust in 2024-25, the Archive Service was able to recruit and appoint an additional member of staff on a short-term contract to undertake cataloguing work. This was real progress.

The funds raised have also enabled the Service to pursue other projects, as detailed below.

In helping the Service to develop these projects, we continue to pursue our aim of widening access to the archives, particularly for hard-to-reach parts of the community. Some of the projects involve working closely with local schools and community groups, and may result in further material being added to the Service's online catalogue (CALM) or its digital LEARN platform (Learning and Educational Archive Resources from Northumberland), which are available worldwide through the internet.

Our Projects and what they delivered

Several of the projects referred to in our 2025 Report are still ongoing and some new projects are in development.

Projects ongoing

a) The Photocentre Collection – 'Everyday Life in North Northumberland'

This project began in 2021. Subject to funding availability, it is hoped to continue it for several more years, as photographic material from times still within living memory is particularly important to local communities.

The PhotoCentre Collection is the archive of a photojournalism business in Berwick-upon-Tweed containing well over one million photographic negatives documenting life in North Northumberland and the Scottish Borders between 1951 and 2012. With 3 years of funding generously provided by the Lough Fund through the Community Foundation North East, the Service employed a suitably qualified archival assistant to catalogue, preserve and digitise some of its contents, so that they could be made available online and used for exhibition and other outreach work. By May 2025, more than 18,000 entries had been added to the electronic catalogue and over 2000 images had been digitised. A regular blog and other social media output had built an online following of over 2,500 people. Images from the collection have been exhibited in Berwick-upon-Tweed and have been used for outreach events including exhibitions at Heritage Open Days and work with groups including BorderLinks. Some can also be viewed on the project's dedicated website at https://www.photocentreberwick.co.uk

Unfortunately, an application to the Lough Fund in 2025 to continue funding for this work was not successful. A grant from the Barmoor Wind Farm Fund through the Community Foundation North East has enabled it to continue in the short term focusing on material relating to that Fund's catchment area, with a widened remit to look at other photographic collections within the Berwick Archives. The revised project also comprises some community outreach work. Given the size of the collection, this is a long term project if more funding can be sourced.

b) Hospitals in the North

Work on this project, began in 2022, involving volunteers at Woodhorn and Berwick. Together they have recorded 16 oral histories of former patients and staff and researched aspects of maternity care provision in the county prior to the establishment of the NHS. The work has ended at Berwick, but continues at Woodhorn. A County Hall exhibition is planned for Spring 2027.

Seaton Sluice to the Future

This was a re-run in Seaton Sluice of the very successful "Blyth to the Future" and "Ashington to the Future" projects run in 2022-23 and 2023-24, again funded by a generous grant from the Platten Family Fund through the Community Foundation North East. It was completed in March 2026 with an exhibition at the Community Centre in Seaton Sluice.

d) A Major Cataloguing Project

As in 2024-25, this was a major focus of the Trust's fundraising efforts.

Northumberland Archives holds a nationally important collection of estate records, one of the most comprehensive of any English county. These are the records of landed families and estates, some dating back to the 12th century. They include environmental, economic, cultural and social records, extending to rich material on urban as well as rural life. Before central government took on duties such as welfare and education, estates carried out many of these functions, so their records cover a broad spectrum of society. We believe that some of the collection contents, appropriately used, would help to regenerate pride in local communities and re-energise the North east.

Many of these collections remain uncatalogued, their contents largely unknown, and inaccessible to the public for security reasons. Cataloguing would unlock them for research; for use in creative projects; for educational or outreach work; and for digitisation decisions. However, cataloguing is resource intensive, requiring professional skills including palaeography and sometimes Latin. Any collection not in good order on arrival in the Archives needs substantial reorganisation.

The County Council is not under a duty to fund this work, and there is no prospect of it doing so in the current financial climate.

After the failure of 3 out of 4 applications to large national funders in 2023-24, we decided on a change of tack, initially to apply to some of the larger local funders in the North East. A most generous offer by the Sir James Knott Trust to match other fundraising up to £30,000 helped to generate some substantial donations, mainly from estate-owning families. By the year end we had drawn down £28,000 of the match funding, as mentioned above.

Protecting and Preserving the County's Archives

There have been concerns for some time about the current arrangements for the archives in Berwick. A solution has been found in the redevelopment of the Berwick Barracks – a Grade 1 listed complex mainly built between 1718 and 1721. The existing Mob Store, an early twentieth century building within the Barracks complex, has already been upgraded and fitted out for a transitional period as the Maltings Cinema at the Barracks. After a further fitting out, it will provide safe and secure storage space for the archives, with a public search and reading room located adjacent to it in one of the eighteenth century Barracks buildings.

Real progress is being made in the redevelopment of the Barracks. The Trustees stand ready to offer any help they can in bringing to fruition these important plans.

Our People

Patrons and Supporters

a) The support of local people concerned to preserve their county's heritage is a critical ingredient in the Trust's continued success. We have two levels of membership, patrons donating a minimum of £100 pa to the Trust and supporters donating £10 pa. Numbers are fairly steady.

As can be seen from the attached accounts, the expenses of running the Trust are small and the donations made by these committed supporters are sufficient to ensure that most if not all of the money we receive in grants and donations can be spent on supporting the Archive Service. The Trustees are very grateful to all who support the Trust in this way.

We are working to improve our communications and other interactions with our regular supporters, while being conscious that there is a balance to be struck to avoid information overload. We plan to develop a more regular pattern of contact with supporters in future, including social media, and to update our website regularly.

This will include an 'Adopt a Box' scheme, to be launched in the last quarter of 2026, inviting donors to give a minimum of £50 towards the cost of repackaging and thereby conserving the contents of an archive box. The donor will have the option of having their name permanently linked to that box.

b) Volunteers

We value highly the efforts of those who volunteer to help the Archive Service. There has for many years been an established pattern of volunteers assisting in this way at Berwick Record Office. Volunteering has been less common at Woodhorn, but a small group of volunteers have helped there with *Hospitals in the North.*

We also need volunteers to help with the work of the Trust. During the year we were fortunate to recruit a PhD student to run our website, and we can always use more help with fundraising and communications.

c) Trustees

Those who currently serve as Trustees are listed at the beginning of this Report. They are all volunteers and come from a wide range of professional backgrounds, bringing a wealth of relevant experience to the task. 2025-26 again brought a change to the membership of the Trustee body, with the recruitment of Roy Jobson in June 2025. Unfortunately, Roy has felt obliged to resign because of a substantial and unforeseen increase in another commitment. We are extremely sorry to have lost the benefit of his wise counsel so soon.

Our Funding and Financial Controls

The Trust's Accounts for the year under review are attached to this report. We are most grateful to all those funding organisations, individuals and estate-owning families who have enabled our support for the Archive Service in 2025-26. The

accounts, which have been independently examined, confirm that the Trust continues to be adequately funded to meet its liabilities. The Trust wishes to record its grateful thanks to Andrew Ayre, who has acted as our Independent Examiner during the current year.

The Trust's protocol for the authorisation of expenditure includes the following statement:

All expenditure must be authorised by two Trustees, at least one of whom must be either the Chairman or the Treasurer. Similarly, all bank payments must be authorised by two Trustees at least one of whom must be either the Chairman or the Treasurer. At each Trustees' meeting the Treasurer must circulate a detailed statement of income and expenditure for the current year and details of current reserves. At the end of each financial year, an Independent Examiner will be appointed, who will review the financial statements prepared by the Charity to ensure that they are a true reflection of the financial position of the Charity.

Regarding reserves, the Trustees review them on an annual basis taking into consideration the inherent risk associated with running a small charity. The Trustees always consider the wider economic environment and the potential impact that this can have on the results for the year. The balance of funds is reviewed having regard to the operational and financial plans for the year to ensure that the Trust has sufficient funding to meet its objectives on an on-going basis. We are satisfied that this remains the case.

Finally under this heading, the total value of smaller donations, including casual cash donations by those using the Offices at Berwick and Woodhorn, has increased significantly. In 2025-26, they totalled £3,263 (£1,700 in 2024-25).

Our Governance

The Trust continues to review its Safeguarding Policy annually at its December. Other policies are reviewed biennially through the year, or more often if needed in response to regulatory or other changes.

Both continuing and newly appointed Trustees are encouraged to undertake relevant training (e.g. on fundraising and safeguarding) whenever this is necessary and/or appropriate.

Conclusion

The Trust has enjoyed a sixth successful year and we have continued to develop an understanding of how funders operate. We are ambitious to grow our support for the Northumberland Archive Service and to promote and increase the accessibility of the County's impressive archival heritage. In so doing we aim to bring its wider heritage

(economic, political, industrial, cultural, social and environmental) vividly to life, to regenerate pride in local communities and to re-energise the North East.

Approved by the Trustees at their meeting on 5th October 2026 and signed on their behalf by:



Sue Shaw (Chair)



Stuart Bankier (Treasurer)

Date: 5th October 2026

Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust

Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026		31/03/2026		31/03/2025
Income				
Sir James Knott Trust		21,000.00		6,000.00
The Riddell Family		15,000.00		0.00
Carr-Ellison Family Trust		5,800.00		0.00
Community Foundation		1,000.00		20,090.00
NCC		0.00		4,777.00
Platten Trust		0.00		11,124.00
Strathmartine Trust		0.00		5,000.00
Foyle Trust		0.00		30,000.00
Patrons		1,608.00		1,405.00
Donations General		3,263.56		1,700.00
Memberships		135.00		95.00
Gift Aid Claim from HMRC		150.00		0.00
Gift Aid claimed through Stewardship		412.66		25.00
Total Income		**48,369.22**		**80,216.00**
Less Expenditure to date				
Website charges 25/26	(245.25)		(278.00)	
Information Commissioner annual registration	(52.00)		(40.00)	
Insurance	(287.67)		(278.00)	
Fund Raiser	(1,771.06)		0.00	
Strategy Day	0.00		(759.00)	
Meeting Expenses	(42.70)		0.00	
Member Mojo annual subscription	(50.00)		(50.00)	
Bank Charges	(73.00)		(71.00)	
VONNE Membership	(85.00)		(160.00)	
NACT Contribution to BRO Salaries	(1,000.00)		0.00	
NCC Various	0.00		(76,991.00)	
NCC re Sir James Knott Trust	(21,000.00)		0.00	
NCC re Riddell	(15,000.00)		0.00	
NCC re Carr Ellison Family Trust	(5,800.00)		0.00	
NCC re Dickson Archer and Thorp	(1,000.00)	(46,406.68)	0.00	(78,627.00)
Excess of Expenditure over Income year to date		**1,962.54**		**1,589.00**
Balance Sheet				
Balance per bank		15,884.09		32,199.00
Debtors				
HMRC re Gift Aid		150.00		0.00
Less Creditors				
NCC	0.00		(17,919.00)	
Kreative Technology	0.00	0.00	(208.00)	(18,127.00)
Net Assets at 31/03/2026		**16,034.09**		**14,072.00**
Represented by:				
Reserves brought forward from prior years		14,071.55		12,483.00
Current year surplus to date		1,962.54		1,589.00
Total Reserves at 31/03/2026		**16,034.09**		**14,072.00**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 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 in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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: Andrew Ayre

Name: ANDREW AYRE

Address: MILL FARM
TWEEDMOUTH
BERWICK-UPON-TWEED