Malmesbury History Society Trustee Annual Report 2025 (January - December)

Registered Charity Number - 1193228

Address of Society
39 Gastons Road Malmesbury
SN16 0BD

Names of the trustees who manage the charity
Christina Staff
Maria Marsh
Anne Goodyer
Robin Holley
Barry Dent
Deborah Shipp
Kim Power
Robert Miller

Structure and Governance
CIO – Charitable Incorporated Company
All trustees are elected according to the constitution by the members at the yearly AGM.

Objectives and Activities

Main Purpose of the Society
To advance education in the history of Malmesbury and the surrounding area, by holding meetings to disseminate and promote the history of the local area in a wider historical context to the local community and the general public of all ages and to publish local history information and liaise with other local groups who have a similar aim.

Public Benefit
The society exists for the public benefit. All the trustees have been made aware of and reviewed the guidance on what the Charity Commission means by public benefit and believes that this has been achieved through our activities.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees
New trustees are vetted by the current trustees and are put forward for election by the members at the AGM. A committee member may be co-opted during the year for a trial period. All new trustees are given a copy of the essential guidance on being a trustee from the government.

Activities Related to our Objective and Purposes
The Society continues to work with and support other heritage groups to promote and engage with their work. Bi-monthly talks are arranged for members and visitors. The society continues to undertake research in the history of the area. We work along side other groups on town wide events and work with other local groups such as Athelstan Museum, Malmesbury Civic Trust and the Town Team.

Chair's annual report 2025
I am pleased to report on another varied, interesting and exciting year for MHS. Our first meeting in January saw our committee member Kim Power give a talk on *Malmesbury behind the doors,* an insight into some of the houses in Malmesbury and the family stories behind them. That month we organised a visit to Malmesbury Library and were shown the excellent resources available to us to aid research projects. This was followed by an oversight of the resources available at the Athelstan Museum.

At our AGM in March our guest speaker Lucy Whitfield spoke about *Two Women of Malmesbury*, sharing her research into two very different Malmesbury women Gertrude Luce and Amelia Green a wool worker. This meeting also saw our long-standing Chair Christina Staff stand down, to be replaced by Rob Miller.
In May another guest speaker Carole Britton alongside her partner gave a dramatic presentation about part time hermit Hilary Peters, the inspiration behind the Athelstan Pilgrim Way. Later in June 15 of our members were treated to a guided tour of the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, where we saw the reading rooms, archives and conservation areas. The archivists had prepared a fascinating array of documents relating to Malmesbury and area for us to view.
July was an important month for our Society as we celebrated our 10th anniversary. Our meeting that month was something of a celebration. We listened to Anne Goodyer taking us through the highlights of the previous 10 years followed by our founding Chair Tony McAleavy giving a presentation into his extensive research at the Bodleian, on the Anglo Saxon Charters of Malmesbury Abbey, where we learned, amongst many other things, that King Alfred definitely visited Malmesbury!
This meeting also saw a welcome return to the Rausing building and a change of meeting date from Thursdays to Wednesdays.
Anne was back presenting at our meeting in September when she shared her excellent research into renowned local architect Harold Brakspear and his work in Malmesbury Abbey. Also in September, 19 of us visited Bowood house for a guided tour of the Marquis of Landsdowne's 18th century home and magnificent walled garden. It was another lovely day at the end of our long hot summer.
The weather was less kind for our November meeting, but we were cheered by David Witt telling us about how AI can be used in historical research. This was followed by a lovely piece of collaborative research between 3 of our members Kim, Barry and Stephen and Malmesbury Abbey where they uncovered the history of the writing desk that the Abbey had recently been gifted.

Membership Report

At the end of the year the Society had 78 members, a decrease of 4 members over the previous year. Of
these 78, 11 were life members. Renewals remain due on April 1st since the membership year runs from April
to March for everyone. Membership remains at £10.

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Looking forward

The stated purpose of this Society is "To advance education in the history of Malmesbury and the surrounding area, to disseminate and promote the history of the local area, to publish local history information and to liaise with other local groups who have a similar aim"

To this end we will be collaborating with Malmesbury's Magical History tour in July. We are working on a project with the Warden & Freemen of

Malmesbury and a group are currently actively researching into St Pauls

and have already made some remarkable finds. We also aim to revive our plans for a possible excavation of the Cloister gardens which we hope will take place in 2027.

At this point may I thank Jess Branton who very kindly donated to us a print of the Birds eye view of Malmesbury from her late husband's estate. We are also grateful to Dr Ryan Wallis who successfully bid for it in a silent auction. Those funds will be used to aid the above projects.

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I would like to thank our committee Christina, Maria, Anne, Kim & Barry for the outstanding work they do in promoting our aims and to our additional Trustees Debbie and Robin.

Most importantly may I thank you our members for attending and contributing to our meetings and events and for your support throughout the year.

Rob Miller – March 2026