Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Annual Report and Accounts

For the Year Ending

31 December 2025

Charity Number 518657

Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

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Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Trustee information

Registered Name	Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum
Charity Number	518657
Principal address	Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Coalbrookdale Telford Shropshire TF8 7DQ
President	Sir Neil Cossons OBE
Vice President	Wendy Waterson
Honorary Officers	
Chair	Jim Clarke
Treasurer	Susan Tarr
Secretary	Ray Farlow
Committee Members	Glyn Bowen Jenny Edwards Steve Evans John Freeman Ray Hardman Martin James Geraldine King Rachel Waterson
Independent Examiner	Andrew Fairchild
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc 113 The Border Telford Shopping Centre Telford TF3 4AE

Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 and the year ended 31 December 2025. The trustees who served during the year are as shown and will continue until the closure of the charity in 2026.

Going Concern

The charity will close after the AGM, due to the transfer of the Charity to the National Trust on March 2nd, 2026, as the charity will no longer be able to fulfil it's constitutional objects as highlighted below.

Change of Accounting Policy

The accounts present a true and fair view, but the policy to add committed funds to 2025 is felt necessary, due to the closure of the charity in March 2026. The amount of the accounting policy change is shown separately in the statement of financial activities.
There is no need for a prior year adjustment.

Objectives and activities

The Association is established for the exclusively charitable purpose of assisting the charity registered as the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Limited to secure the preservation, restoration, improvement, enhancement and maintenance of features and objects of historical and industrial interest and to that end:

- **i** to promote and organise working parties to undertake or assist with the work of the said Charity;
- **ii** to obtain, collect and receive money and funds by way of contributions donations and subscriptions and any other lawful method and to apply such money and funds for the benefit of the said Charity;
- **iii** to procure and provide information and services for the said Charity;
- **iv** to do all such lawful acts or things as are incidental to the attainment of the primary object of the Association and do not derogate from the charitable nature thereof and so far as may be necessary or desirable to do such acts or things in collaboration with any person, body, institution, authority or otherwise.

Structure, governance and management

Organisational structure

The Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

They are governed by the relevant UK laws and regulations of the Charity Commission.
The Rules of the Constitution.
The management of the charity is vested in a committee who act as trustees.

Related Parties

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum (registered charity number 503717) is considered to be a related charity.

Risk Management

The charity trustees have given consideration to the major risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that systems or procedures are established in order to mitigate these risks.

Achievements and performance

The Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum's principal funding is via membership, and this is used to support the key objectives of the charity as set out in the Chairman's Report for the AGM.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

The committee review our aims, objectives, and activities each year, referring to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.
This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of the previous 12 months and helps to achieve our strategy for increasing our membership.

How our activities deliver public benefit

As shown in our objectives and the Chairman's report all our charitable activities focus on making the public aware of an increase to their understanding of the work done by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and the history of the World Heritage Site, by way of membership to access the museums, history talks and our newsletter.

Who used and benefited from our services?

We ensure that all members of the public can benefit by having various membership categories, incorporating all ages. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in furthering its benefits. The Charity also delivers monthly talks that are also open to non-members.

Financial review

The accounts have been prepared to reflect the transactions for 2025 and that the unspent funds remaining have been accounted for as committed, to leave reserves at zero due to the charity closing down in March 2026.

These funds will be used for the same purposes as before, but for the new entity following the transfer to the National Trust on March 2nd, 2026.

Chairman's Report

The Most Extraordinary District in the World

The concept behind the founding of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum was to tell the story of what is said to be 'the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution'; its guiding principles were to: Inform, Inspire, Involve and Innovate and throughout its time the Friends have worked side by side with the Museum in support of its mission.

2025 has proved to be possibly the most challenging in the Friends 57-year existence; whilst requests for support were ever more demanding, they were against a backdrop of increasing uncertainty about the Museum's future. Adopting the classic 'Keep Calm and Carry On' attitude the Friends determined to continue supporting the Museum through volunteering in all its many aspects and acceding to several requests for financial help to complete projects that would add to the public's experience and enjoyment of the Museum.

In all, over 1,500 hours of volunteer support were provided by the Friends in the form of Guided tours at Coalbrookdale, Coalport and Jackfield as well as for 12 days of tours booked by specialist groups ranging from Universities and Schools to Arts Societies. Support work behind the scenes was in evidence in the Archives and Library where research, digitising photographs and cataloguing archaeological records was undertaken. A valuable service was also provided by many Friends who volunteered as stewards for the 'Strokes of Genius' exhibition which ran throughout the Summer and Autumn, many of them transferring their commitment from the Darby Houses during their shutdown to the exhibition, and also the at Festival of Archaeology in July which was based at the Bedlam Furnaces along with the staffing of Broseley Pipe Works for the Heritage Weekend in September. Such commitments as these and many others are practical examples of the support provided by the Friends to the Museum in its mission to: Inform, Inspire, Involve and Innovate.

The financial help provided by the Friends over 2025 was in response to specific requests identified by the Museum and reported on in the Newsletters during the year, the repair to the Roadman's Waggon at Blists Hill and funding to secure a drone for archaeological work were amongst the most prominent whilst other requests were overtaken by events and postponed for the time being.

The ability of the Friends to respond to a cry for help is nowhere better illustrated than when notification was received about the sale of an early Maw & Co plate which had been decorated by Thomas Cruickshank Fowler, a draughtsman at Coalbrookdale and entered into a national art competition for which he received a prize-winning medal. The date of sale was near but through contacting the seller directly the Friends were able to purchase both the plate and medal for the Museum, they are now on display in the Toll House.

The significance of the plate and medal became even greater when it was discovered that the medal winner was the father of Howard Fowler, also a draughtsman at Coalbrookdale, whose achievements in the same competition are on display in the Museum of Iron; both attended evening classes at the Coalbrookdale School of Art based in the Coalbrookdale Literary and Scientific Institute. The father and grandfather of these two men was an iron moulder at the

Coalbrookdale works and further research by Martin James of the Friends illustrated how the family was integrated into the life of Coalbrookdale being stalwarts of the Wesleyan Chapel, marrying into other families working at the Coalbrookdale works and remaining in the area until living memory. The use of £549 of Friends money has rarely been better spent, serving to illustrate several threads of the story of Coalbrookdale at once.

The popular Talks Programme organised by Geraldine King proved as successful as ever covering a wide range of topics from personalities such as L.T.C. Rolt and I.K. Brunel to the work of the early technology entrepreneurs in the Gorge. The social history of the area was not ignored with talks on the role of the 'Daughters of the Dale' and the culture around the drinking of tea whilst specific topics were covered with talks on the Coalport Ferry Disaster, the Stockton and Darlington Railway, Tile makers of the Gorge, the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum and Church Bells. The monthly talks are not only an opportunity for Friends to hear about the latest research or to consider thought provoking ideas on familiar topics, they are also a social occasion where Friends meet over refreshments after the talks.

As a variation on the Talks Programme a tour behind the scenes at Blists Hill to see the work of the Steam Team gave Friends the chance to hear about the renovation of the Kinlet Engine and see the restoration work on the Trevithick Engine and the Jack Crabtree Workshop. The opportunity to visit areas not available to the general public not only showed how much work is going on to restore exhibits but also how much of it is being done by volunteers passionate about bringing steam back to Blists Hill.

Information about the Friends and the Museum has been regularly supplied through issues of the Friends Newsletter along with the Friends Facebook and Instagram Pages. The work of Glyn Bowen and Martin James in managing our social media deserves special mention, the updates on it attract considerable interest with current membership (1000+) exceeding the current membership of the Friends (541).

As with any organisation it is the work behind the scenes that keeps it going and it is to your committee that I would like to pay tribute. Apart from those already mentioned I would like to acknowledge the work of Sue Tarr who as Treasurer has managed to draw together all the various strands of income to ensure we are solvent and along with Ray Farlow, our secretary, ensured the legal requirements of the Charity Commission are observed. The other members of the committee: Jenny Edwards, Rachel Waterson, John Freeman, Ray Hardman and Wendy Waterson have given generously of their time and advice which deserves to be recognised.

The speculation about the Museum's future was brought to an end in October with the announcement that the Museum was to transfer into the care of the National Trust. The transfer guaranteed the future of the Museum and stipulated that:

1. all the Museum sites were to be taken on as a package,
2. the Collections and Learning resources were to be kept at Coalbrookdale.
3. the Friends were to be a feature of the Museum as it moves into this new phase of its existence.

At meetings with the National Trust the creation of a Friends Supporters Group for Ironbridge was discussed, adopting a framework in line with the National Trust Supporters Groups.

Further work is to be done following a positive initial survey of interest in such a thing whilst advice has been sought with regard to the winding up of the Friends in their present format. Details of what form this new Friends group might take and what it will offer to its members are being worked on but needless to say it will operate in a different way to the present Friends organisation, not least because it will not have the financial support provided through the current membership scheme.

On the matter of the current Friends membership scheme, the December 2025 membership renewals will be the last ones collected as all Direct Debit arrangements will be cancelled and no future demands will be made to those paying by cheque. The National Trust have agreed that from the transfer on 2 March 2026 Friends will be able to continue to enjoy the same benefits as before until the expiry date on their current membership card, after which membership of the National Trust will be required to access the Museum or payment for individual sites made on the day of visit. As for Life Members the current benefits enjoyed will continue until 31 December 2026 to bring them into line with all other Friends.

Discussions about the Friends leaving a permanent reminder of their support for the Museum over their 58-year history raised the issue of what it might look like, several possibilities were considered and discussed with representatives of the National Trust; the outcome is likely to be dedicating a sum of money to be 'ring fenced' for this purpose so that what is done is both visible and of considerable duration. Further information on this initiative will be made available in the Spring 2026 Newsletter.

2025 may well be the last full year in which the Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum exists in its current format but throughout its 58-year history the support provided by the Friends for the Museum has been undoubtedly a factor in helping it maintain the unique quality that is 'Ironbridge'. I do hope that as many of you as possible will join a new Friends group to help steer the Museum through its transfer to the care of the National Trust so that the work of the original Friends group lives on.

The phrase 'a job well done' springs to mind and if it leaves the Museum in a place where, under the stewardship of the National Trust, it can thrive for a future 58 years then as a Friend you can reflect on a real sense of achievement.

Jim Clarke
Chairman 2025

Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to.

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed.

The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the board

Jim Clarke

Jim Clarke
Trustee

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum.

I report on the accounts of Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum for the year ended 31 December 2025 set out on pages 2 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust'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 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 Trust 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.



Andrew Fairchild BA ACMA CGMA

Date:

Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
		£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3	36,225	0	36,225	40,089
Total incoming resources		**36,225**	**0**	**36,225**	**40,089**
Resources Expended					
Costs of charitable activities					
Donations to Ironbridge Gorge Museum	4	35,326	0	35,326	38,519
Magazine Costs		0	0	0	300
Committed Donations		23,986	0	23,986	0
Printing, postage and sundry expenses		103	0	103	1,576
Meetings and other events		232	0	232	1,087
Total resources expended		**59,647**	**0**	**59,647**	**41,482**
Net outgoing resources for the year		(23,422)	0	(23,422)	(1,393)
Total funds brought forward		23,422	0	23,422	24,815
Total funds carried forward		**0**	**0**	**0**	**23,422**

Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum

Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2025 Total funds	2024 Total funds
		£	£	£	£
Current Assets					
Debtors	6	0	0	0	1,478
Bank and Cash		34,986	0	34,986	28,416
		34,986	**0**	**34,986**	**29,894**
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	(34,986)		(34,986)	(6,472)
Net current assets		**0**	**0**	**0**	**23,422**
Net Assets					
Funds					
Restricted funds	8	0	0	0	0
Unrestricted income funds	9	0		0	23,422
		0	**0**	**0**	**23,422**

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity is entitled to exemption from the requirement to obtain an audit under the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 19 January 2026 and signed on its behalf by

Jim Clarke

Jim Clarke
Trustee

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2008 (SORP 2008) and the Charities Act 2011.

1.2. Income Policy

Items of income are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.
Donations, voluntary income, membership subscriptions and interest are recognised when received.

1.3. Resources expended.

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Resources expended are recognised in the year in which they are incurred. Expenses are recognised inclusive of any irrecoverable VAT. Costs of charitable activities are those costs which directly relate to the activities of the charity and include the donations made to the Museum.

1.4 Volunteers

SORP specifically excludes the inclusion of the value of the contributions of the volunteers to the charity on the basis that there is no reliable method of measurement of their activities. As a result, the value of the services provided by volunteers is not included in the financial Statements. The valuable contribution they do make is discussed in more detail in the Chairman's report.

The work of Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum would not be possible without the commitment and passion of our trustees and volunteers.

2. Governance costs

No governance payments were made in 2025 (2024 – nil).

3. Incoming resources from charitable activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Subscriptions	29,527	32,535
Donations	247	242
Gift Aid	5,745	6,228
Bank Interest	222	276
Fund raising Activities	484	808
	36,225	40,089

4. Donations

	2025 £	2024 £
Ironbridge Museum Trust Contribution	17,751	19,869
Specific Funding	17,575	18,650
	35,326	38,519

5. Trustees Emoluments

Neither the trustees nor any persons connected with them received any remuneration.

A total of £176 (202 - £164) was reimbursed to 2 (2025 - 2) trustees in respect of expenses occurred on behalf of the charity.

6. Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Gift Aid	-	1,196
Other Debtors	-	282
	-	1,478

7. Creditors

	2025 £	2024 £
IGMT Cleared Feb 2026	11,000	6,472
Committed Unspent Funds	23,986	0
	0	0
	34,986	6,472

8.

Restricted Funds	**At 1 January 2025 £**	**Incoming Resources £**	**Outgoing Resources £**	**At 31 December 2025 £**
Fund	-	-	-	-

9. Purposes of Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objects. Trustees consider that sufficient funds are held to meet these objects.

Funds	**At 1 January 2025 £**	**Incoming Resources £**	**Outgoing Resources £**	**At 31 December 2025 £**
General Purpose Fund	23,422	36,225	(59,647)	nil