

Association of the Friends of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery



Friends of Birmingham
Museums & Art Gallery

2024 AGM Papers
Trustees' Annual Report
Independent Examiner's Report
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

**ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF
BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY**

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ASSOCIATION OF THE FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY



Friends of Birmingham
Museums & Art Gallery

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Charity Reg. No. 528895

92nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday 10th September 2024 at 11am
in the Sir Arthur Sullivan Hall at the Birmingham and Midland Institute,
9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS
AGENDA

1. **Welcome**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes of the previous AGM** – 12 September 2023 – draft minutes, attached, to be approved.
4. **Matters Arising** from the Minutes.
5. **Chair's Report**
6. **Committee Appointments** – Confirmation of new Trustees and renewals.
7. **Trustee's Annual Report** for the year ending 31 March 2024, attached, to be presented.
Resolution: "That the Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2024 be received."
8. **Annual Accounts** – The Chair to present and move the adoption of the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024.
Resolution: "That the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024 be adopted."
9. **Appointment of Examiners** – The Deputy Chair to propose the appointment of the Examiners for the forthcoming year.
Resolution: "That the Committee appoint appropriately qualified Examiners to prepare and certify the Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2024-2025."
10. **Report** – The Director of Development at Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT), Rowena Dean, to present her report.
11. **Any Other Business & Close**

[Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available prior to the meeting from 10.15am.
After the AGM, Henrietta Lockhart will deliver a talk entitled
'Making connections: Curatorial detective stories

**MINUTES OF THE NINETY-FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS & ART GALLERY**

**Held at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS
On Tuesday 12 September 2023, commencing at 11am**

Present

Peter Miles (Chair), Bill Lane, Jane Howell, Jim Wells, Rosalind McCarthy, Peter Baker, Judith Hurst, Pat Leadbeter, Richard Moxon (Trustees)

Melissa Hughes (Friends' Administrator)

Sarah Farnan (Friends' Membership Secretary)

Lynda Perrin (Friends' Bookkeeper)

Nick Burrows (Harwoods Chartered Accountants, the Friends' Independent Examiner)

Toby Watley, Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT)'s Director of Collections

And 40 other Members

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the 91st Annual General Meeting and thanked them for attending and for braving the traffic and the public transport, which had been particularly bad that morning. He welcomed Nick Burrows from Harwoods Chartered Accountants, the Friends' Independent Examiner; Toby Watley, Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT)'s Director of Collections; and David Foster, previous Chair of the Friends.

2. Apologies

Stephen Hartland (Trustee)

3 apologies were given in the room in addition to apologies received before the meeting (included in the number below).

and 9 other members

3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on Tuesday 13 September 2022

These had been circulated to all members as an insert with 'Artefacts' this year, which had saved on postage costs and the time taken to stuff the envelopes. There were no objections.

Proposed: Barbara Fogarty; Seconded: Charley Johnston.

All in favour.

CARRIED

The Minutes were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the Friends had settled in well to their office at Soho House, although unfortunately Matthew Boulton's house itself was not currently open to the public due to a problem with the sewers.

The Chair commented that 'Artefacts', the Friends' quarterly magazine, had gone from strength to strength, and had won the British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM) 2023 Newsletter award. He said that the success of the magazine was primarily down to the efforts of Melissa Hughes and PB&J Publishing. PW Media, the publishing company with whom the Friends had produced 'Artefacts' for many years, entered into voluntary liquidation in December 2022. PB&J Publishing had kept 'Artefacts' up and running and the heavier weight cover which 'Artefacts' used to have had been changed to a 'self-cover' which made the magazine cheaper to produce and easier to recycle. The Chair commented that PB&J Publishing had been expanding the circulation of 'Artefacts', and a number of new Members had been recruited.

David Foster proposed a vote of thanks to Melissa Hughes, PB&J Publishing and the contributors to 'Artefacts'. He felt that they were receiving recognition from BAFM which had been well deserved for a long time.

The Chair reported that a generous Legacy of just under £70,000 had been left to the Friends in 2022 by a Member called Graham Underhill. Some of this Legacy had been put into the Friends' Investment Fund and the remaining £30,000 was going to be used to sponsor two Heritage Engineering Apprenticeships at Thinktank (TT), which seemed particularly appropriate given that Graham Underhill had been a teacher.

The Chair highlighted the growing Friends' Events programme which was being produced by the Events Sub-Committee and he paid tribute to their hard work. An Events programme was currently being lined up for 2024.

The Chair underlined that, particularly in light of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG)'s continued closure and Birmingham City Council (BCC) having effectively declared itself bankrupt, being a Friend was even more important than ever. Being a Member of the Friends demonstrates continued support for BMT at this difficult time. He underlined that the Friends needs its Members.

Charley Johnston commented that, on page 11 of the AGM booklet, there was a reference to BMT's Joint CEOs having appointed Rachel Cockett, BMT's Director of Development to sit on the Friends' Committee on their behalf. Given Rachel Cockett had since left post, the Chair confirmed that he was delighted that Toby Watley, BMT's Director of Collections, had taken on this role.

- 6. Committee Appointments** – Confirmation of new Trustees.
There had been 2 vacancies on the Committee for the coming year, and 2 nominations had been received. Pat Leadbeter and Richard Moxon were confirmed as the new Trustees.

Proposed: Peter Miles; Seconded: Bill Lane.

All in favour.

CARRIED

- 7. Trustee's Annual Report** for the year ending 31 March 2023
The Chair presented the report and asked for any questions. He commented how pleased he was that the Committee had already managed to achieve some of the 'Priorities for the current year'.

Proposed: **That the Annual Report which had been circulated to all Members be accepted.**

Proposed: Richard Moxon; Seconded: Judith Hurst.

All in favour.

CARRIED

- 8. Annual Accounts** for the year ending 31 March 2023

The Chair presented the accounts. He reminded the meeting that Brewin Dolphin managed the Friends' investments, providing expert advice and also allowing use of their offices for Friends' Committee Meetings. He asked that questions about the accounts be addressed to Nick Burrows, the Friends' Independent Examiner. Nick Burrows commented that his role was as an independent financial accountant. He complimented the Friends on maintaining the books so well. The AGM booklet included the full accounts and would be uploaded onto the Charities Commission website.

Proposed: **That the Statement of Account for the year ended 31 March 2023 be adopted.**

Proposed: David Foster; Seconded: Judtih Hurst.

All in favour.

CARRIED

9. Appointment of Examiners

Proposed: **That the Committee appoint appropriately qualified Independent Examiners for the forthcoming Financial Year 2023-2024.**

Proposed: Bill Lane; Seconded: Rosalind McCarthy.

All in favour. **CARRIED**

The Chair commented that, usually at this point in the Friends' AGM, the next item on the agenda would be reporting back on the Friends' financial support for BMT in the last year. Whilst there had been no requests for purchases or financial support in 2022-23, the Graham Underhill Legacy was to be used from 2023-24 to support the two TT Heritage Engineering Apprenticeships.

10. Report from Birmingham Museums Trust

The Chair introduced Toby Watley, who was very familiar with the Friends having been in post for about 22 years, making him one of the longest serving employees at BMT.

2022-2023 had been a mixture of both major achievements and major challenges for BMT. BMAG had partially and temporarily reopened for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. This was a particularly significant achievement as the contractors were onsite completing essential maintenance work until the last minute. During the pop up reopening, BMAG had 410,000 visitors in 6.5 months, due to both the Commonwealth Games and the Birmingham 2022 Festival. School visits had returned to pre-Covid levels, despite Birmingham's Clean Air Zone making school coach trips into the city centre much more costly.

The Cost of Living crisis had resulted in people spending less and, as a result, whilst visitor numbers at TT had been very good, income had reduced as visitors were spending less in the shop and the café. In January 2023 ticket prices had been increased to help generate more income and there had been a hard push on sales, which had resulted in increased ticket income which helped to absorb the pressures from lower secondary spend. Utility costs had increased a lot in last year, which was having a particular impact given the number of historic buildings which BMT manages. In 2023-2024, BMT had a deficit budget, which meant that they may not break even. He underlined the challenging nature of the current environment.

There have been a number of changes to BMT's Senior Management Team. Rachel Cockett, former Director of Development, and Janine Eason, former Director of Engagement, had both left after decades of service and there was a very different senior leadership team in place now. Kingston Myles had been appointed Director of Enterprise & Innovation; Charlotte Holmes and Rachael Minott had a job-share as Assistant Director of Engagement; Rob Lewis was the Assistant Director of Transformation; and Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah were BMT's two Co-CEOs. Toby Watley emphasised that the diversity of SMT was very important.

The 'pop-up' reopening of BMAG 2022 had taken place from 28 April until 13 November 2022. The temporary exhibitions programme had involved working with partners across Birmingham to reflect the city's diversity and global significance. BMT had used the opportunity to pilot new ideas for how to put on displays. It had attracted a younger and more ethnically diverse audience to BMAG. Very little of Birmingham's collections had been on display and, whilst this was intentional, it had not been very well communicated to the public and lots of people had been very frustrated. Toby Watley underlined that, when BMAG does re-open, the displays will draw heavily on the collections.

The exhibition 'Blood & Fire: Our Journey Through Vanley Burke's History', which was part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival, is still on at Soho House.

The Feast of Drums was a major event commissioned by BMT, which took place in Birmingham's city centre on 30 April 2022 to mark the reopening of BMAG. 71 performers and 2,700 people

took part in or attended this celebratory and international event. In future, BMT would be focussing on more mass participation events such as this.

Toby Watley emphasised that, during BMAG's closure, BMT was actively lending artworks and objects around the world. However, it had prioritised lending works to its local and regional partners, including the Barber Institute, Worcester Museum & Art Gallery, Midlands Arts Centre and Herbert Art Gallery Coventry.

'Birmingham: City of Ideas' is a project which sets out a vision for a new international flagship Science Museum. BMT's lease at TT comes to an end in 2029 and the Feasibility Study explores what a new museum of Science and Industry might achieve for the city: focussing on the people of Birmingham and making the most of the extensive collections. BMT is looking at different sites in collaboration with BCC, but the project would require capital funding.

Toby Watley explained that BMT had not approached the Friends regarding funding acquisitions in 2022-2023 as, whilst over 500 items had been acquired, most of these related to the Commonwealth Games. They included costumes and props which had been used for the Games; figures retained from Hew Locke's 'Foreign Exchange'; and art works commissioned as part of the programme. The majority of these had been gifted to BMT.

'Makers and Machines: Creativity in the Computer Age' is the first exhibition in TT's new Spotlight temporary exhibition space, which has been made possible thanks to funding from Millennium Point Trust. The exhibition looks at coding in all its forms: from computing to textile design and manufacture. It includes work by pioneering female coders from Birmingham and the surrounding region.

BMT has been holding Urban Nature Days at Blakesley Hall, Aston Hall and Sarehole Mill as part of its Climate Action Plan and 'Bio-diversifying our Museums and Green Spaces' project. This has enabled BMT to make more use of the green outdoor spaces around the Historic Properties and to maximise their potential for engaging the public and local community groups with green issues.

Toby Watley ended with a reference to the latest national headlines about BCC: on 5 September 2023, BCC had issued a Section 114 notice, effectively declaring bankruptcy. BMT had known that BCC was in a difficult financial position. This is particularly difficult at the moment given that, due to a number of BMT's sites being closed, BMT is more reliant upon BCC for income. BCC has contributed to some of the upkeep of the sites and Historic Properties, as part of their legal duties as landlords. However, some major works have been stopped as a result of the Section 114 notice: the roof repairs at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter had been lined up for autumn but have had to be put on hold; and the contractors who were supposed to have been onsite at Soho House to look into the problem with the blocked sewer pipe were cancelled by BCC at the last minute. Intervention at both sites is critical and BMT is very aware that there are going to be some difficult times ahead.

Toby Watley thanked the Friends for their ongoing support, which is more valuable now than ever before. He suggested that the type of support required from the Friends might change, with more investment being needed in skills development and staff training.

Questions were invited and a Member asked about the reference to the drop in income and the measures which had been taken to address this. Toby Watley explained that the family and adult ticket prices at TT had been increased, and the description of the traditional family unit had been adjusted. Ticket prices at TT had not been reviewed since 2019 and there had been no negative feedback from visitors about these changes.

A Member asked about a letter she had seen in the news, which suggested that BCC might try to sell off the Pre-Raphaelites and other works in the collection to raise funds. Toby Watley explained that the collection is owned by BCC on behalf of the people of Birmingham and that questions about selling off items in the collections to raise funds were not unusual. There are very strict guidelines in place in order for Birmingham to maintain its status as part of the Arts Council England UK Museum Accreditation Scheme. Some Councils have sold items from their Museums' collections, which had very serious ramifications. Losing accreditation status would impact on other funding which could be applied for. In addition, a large amount of the collection was not bought by BCC itself but by funders and donors. Deaccessioning is very complicated and BMT would be discouraging BCC from doing this. In the US, collections are seen more as assets whereas UK Museums are underpinned by a different set of ethics.

John Hatch asked how BCC's current financial problems related to the Equal Pay liability claims. Toby Watley explained that BMT was a separate charity, not part of BCC, and he was unable to answer this question.

A Member asked whether BMT was looking at objects which might have been acquired in the past under dubious moral circumstances. Toby Watley explained that, like many civic collections, items and objects in the collection had been acquired from abroad during the days of colonialism and the British Empire. BMT was in close dialogue with Australian groups about aboriginal objects. BMT is also looking to appoint a Curator of Global Majority Collections who would be tasked with looking at and potentially returning material as part of this role. BMT was aware that there was a need to educate BCC about the importance of this issue.

David Foster said that, when he had been actively involved in volunteering for BMT, he had helped to develop the collections database. In light of the much-publicised difficulties at the British Museum, he asked whether BMT's database was still being maintained and whether there had been unexplained losses here, too. TW explained that there was still an annual audit of Birmingham's collection. If something was missing it was usually due to one of three reasons: its recorded location was incorrect; it had been given 2 accession numbers; or it had been mislabelled. He acknowledged that, with visits to the Museum Collections Centre and objects being on display at the Historic Properties there was always a risk involved in allowing the public close access to the collections. BMT was keen to allow access whilst maintaining the security of the collection.

11. Logo

On behalf of the Friends' Committee Bill Lane, the Deputy Chair, presented the proposed new logo for the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, which has been developed by the Committee and designed by Paul Blyth from PB&J Publishing. The Deputy Chair explained that the Friends' existing logo, which matched in with BMT's 'family' of logos, had been introduced in 2014, when it was felt that the Friends should be seen as part of BMT. At the time, the Friends' Committee had had mixed feelings about the design. The Committee now felt that the Friends' logo should demonstrate the organisation's independence and its role as a supporter of and a 'trusted Friend' to BMT.

The proposed logo presents a stylised version of BMAG, as viewed from Chamberlain Square. David Foster commented that this design focused on BMAG, but did not reference the Historic Properties. He particularly underlined the importance of Thinktank (TT) which was not referenced in the logo. WL said that the Committee had been keen to incorporate references to the Historic Properties, but had found it impossible to do so without the logo looking chaotic and complicated.

Charley Johnston commented that he approved of the proposed new logo, but wondered whether the Friends' name ought to be reviewed and asked whether the Committee had considered changing the organisation's name to 'Friends of Birmingham Museums', given the name of the Trust. The Deputy Chair pointed out that changing the name of the Charity would be complex, and that, during previous discussions on this topic, there had been strong feelings that the 'Art Gallery' element of the Friends' name ought to be retained. David Foster underlined his awareness of the politics of this suggestion. The Deputy Chair emphasised the importance of using the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery's full title on the logo, given it is registered with the Charity Commission.

A Member commented that the bridge in the proposed logo design leads the eye, suggesting other connections and linking BMAG with BMT's other sites.

John Hatch asked what the cost of changing the Friends' logo would be. The Deputy Chair said that there would be no financial cost to changing the logo, given the lack of printed publicity, etc. Any documentation containing the Friends logo would need to be updated.

Jim Wells explained that, as a Committee member, his first concerns with designing a new Friends' logo had been how to represent the Trust as a whole and to incorporate all the sites into the design. However he felt that, despite the design being a representation of BMAG, this graphic represented the Museums as a whole - including all the nine sites. He also underlined that it was important to demonstrate the Friends' commitment to the Heritage Sites via actions rather than a symbol.

A Member commented that BMAG's clock tower had been funded by Abraham Follett Osler, a pioneer in the measurement of meteorological and chronological data, making its presence in the logo a very appropriate symbol of science and a reference to the collection on display at TT.

It was confirmed that the typeface which had been used in the logo was Baskerville, something a number of the Committee members had felt strongly about given its significance to Birmingham.

Proposed: **'This meeting agrees to adopt this new logo from the conclusion of this meeting.'**

Proposed: Charley Johnston; Seconded: Jane Howell. No objections or abstentions.

All in favour.

CARRIED.

12. Subscription Rate Increase

The Deputy Chair explained that the current Membership Subscription rates had remained unchanged for the last 10 years - since 1 October 2014. He acknowledged that it was a difficult time to raise costs with BMAG's continued closure. However, the Committee needed to ensure that the Friends' Membership subscriptions covered the administrative costs of being a Member of the Friends and the proposed increase would cover the rise in postage rates over the last ten years. The increase to annual subscriptions rates would be delayed until 1 June 2024.

The Deputy Chair said that it was just annual subscriptions rates which were being reviewed in 2023. Life Membership rates would be reviewed next year, with a view to any proposed changes being brought to the 2024 AGM. The Deputy Chair highly recommended that Members consider purchasing a Life Membership before any proposed increase to these rates at the following year's AGM.

The Deputy Chair explained that all the proposed rates had resulted from the current rates being increased by the same percentage. Gill Sockett suggested that the proposed Double Concession (retired) rate should be increased from £32 to £40, as she felt that an increase to £35 was not enough. Charley Johnston suggested that the Friends could invite voluntary donations above the proposed new Membership Subscription rates. The Deputy Chair underlined that Members already could and a few did make additional donations to the Friends.

Gill Sockett proposed that: **'the proposed Double Concession (retired) rate should be increased from £35 to £40.'**

Proposed: Gill Socket; Seconded: Carol Sockett.

Carried.

The Deputy Chair presented the proposed increase to Membership Subscriptions – which included the above increase to the proposed Double Concession (retired) rate.

Proposed: **that the Subscriptions Rates should increase from 1 June 2024 as follows:**

ANNUAL	Proposed Rate	Current Rate
Single	£35	£32
Single Concession (retired)	£23	£21
Single Student	£16	£15
Double (including children under 16)	£52	£48
Double Concession (retired)	£40	£32

Proposed: majority in favour.

CARRIED

13. Any Other Business & Close

a) Thank yous

The Chair thanked the Friends' staff: Melissa Hughes for all her administrative work and producing 'Artefacts'; Lynda Perrin for keeping the books in excellent order; and Sarah Farnan for all her work as Membership Secretary. He also thanked all his fellow Trustees for their hard work, support and commitment.

b) Jane Howell's 80th Birthday

The Chair announced that it was Jane Howell's 80th Birthday today, and he and Toby Watley presented her with cards, a gift and some flowers. JH thanked the Friends for being both friends with a capital 'F', as well as 'with a small 'f'. She praised the Friends for our support for each other as well as for BMT.

c) Feedback following a recent visit to Aston Hall

John Hatch commented that he had found the proximity triggered automated music at Aston Hall very intrusive during his recent visit. He wondered whether it could be changed to something manual, which would enable those who wanted music to have it but also those, like himself, who wanted to 'listen' to the whispers of history to be able to do so.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

There being no further business the Chair declared the Meeting closed at 12.20.

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY

Trustees' Annual Report for the 2024 AGM

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION OF THE CHARITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Trustees

The Trustees held a total of five Committee meetings and the AGM between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. Attendance at these events is shown in brackets.

Peter Miles	(6/6)	Chair
Bill Lane	(6/6)	Deputy Chair
Jim Wells	(6/6)	
Judith Hurst	(5/6)	
Rosalind McCarthy	(6/6)	
Jane Howell	(5/6)	
Stephen Hartland	(3/6)	
Tim Tolkien	(4/6)	
Peter Baker	(5/6)	
Pat Leadbeter	(5/6)	
Richard Moxon	(4/6)	
Sally Arkley	(2/2)	Elected 28 November 2023
Councillor Kath Hartley	(3/6)	Council nominee
Councillor Darius Sandhu	(3/6)	Council nominee
In attendance		
Birmingham Museums Trust's Representative	(5/6)	
Melissa Hughes	(6/6)	Administrator

Charity registration number

528895

Principal office

Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery
North Lodge
Aston Hall
Trinity Road
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B6 6JD

Independent Examiner

Nick Burrows BA FCA
Harwoods Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors
1 Trinity Place
Midland Drive
Sutton Coldfield
B72 1TX

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024. Reference and administrative information set out on this page forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the charity's Constitution, and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

a. Principal Objective

The principal object of the charity, as declared in its current Constitution, approved in 2022, is *“to support and assist the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery and to promote their use and enjoyment by the public. In furtherance of the above- to provide money, by receipt of subscriptions, gifts, bequests or otherwise and by sale of artistic works or other trading activities such money to be applied either directly or after accumulation or investment.”*

In making its annual review of the aims, objectives and activities, the Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular, the Trustees have considered how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

b. Contributions and Acquisitions to Birmingham Museums Trust

During the year 2023-2024 The Friends made an additional contribution of £4,000 towards the redecoration of the Gas Hall for the exhibition 'Victorian Radicals'. At present we are also contributing £30,000 towards the cost of a Heritage Engineering Apprentice at Thinktank using the generous Legacy of Graham Underhill.

c. Membership

At the end of March 2023, our total number of Members was 555, just 9 fewer than in March 2022 when we had 564 Members – a decrease of 1.6%. This decrease has slowed substantially since the year before when, at the end of March 2023, we had had a 7.8% decline in membership in the twelve months previously.

The number of leavers across the year in 2023-24 was 53, compared with 72 in 2021-2022, a decrease in the amount of leavers of 26.4%. Members from whom we received no response to renewal reminders accounted for 16 leavers (30%).

We have had a huge rise in new Members this year, particularly over the last 4 months. The number of new Members in 2023-24 was 44. In addition to this, 4 members who had previously left us rejoined this year. This gives a total of 48 new members, compared with just 20 in the previous year, more than double.

This is really positive news, which means that we are in a much stronger position going into this year. The rate of new memberships being taken up has increased substantially and the number of leavers slowed. With the much wider distribution of 'Artefacts' and with the gradual reopening of the main museum, we hope that this rise in interest and membership will be sustained over the coming year.

d. Social Events

In the twelve months to 31 March 2024 the Friends' Events Sub-Committee has successfully organised a number of popular talks and visits. In April 2023 the first talk was at St Alban The Martyr Church in Highgate with Dr. Chris Smith and Andy Foster as speakers. (Andy Foster, with Alexandra Wedgwood, has recently updated a new Pevsner 'Buildings of England' volume for Birmingham and the West Midlands). At the December social at Aston Hall, Kate Round from the Stourbridge Glass Museum gave a fascinating talk on 'Cameo Glass' and we hope to invite her for a return visit before long. Meanwhile many local families have some connection with the engineering company GKN and it was at Winterbourne House (the home of the Nettlefold family as in Guest, Keen and Nettlefold) where Henrietta Lockhart gave an engrossing talk to explain the history of the company.

A talk by Dr David Symons on 'Birmingham Volunteers and their Medals' had been arranged but was forced to be cancelled at the last minute due to illness. It is hoped that this can be rearranged sometime in the future. Meanwhile Jane Howell has begun a series of exclusive tours of the 'Victorian Radicals' exhibition for Friends Members which will continue through 2024.

There were also visits arranged to the world-famous Acme Whistle factory in the Jewellery Quarter, the Walsall Leather Museum and the former Municipal Bank, now Birmingham University's Exchange Building. Other BMT sites were not forgotten with tours of Blakesley Hall and Aston Hall and a group went to Thinktank in February for a tour of the exhibition 'Makers and Machines; Creativity in the Modern Age'.

In all, 218 members attended the events from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Increasingly, events are being fully booked. As a result, the income for the year's events was £2,534. Together with generous donations of £731, less the cost of events which totalled £1,260, this gave an overall profit of £2,005.

Future plans: As these talks and tours have been so popular and successful, it is intended to increase the frequency of events. We are aware that a visit to Sarehole Mill is overdue and we will continue to support heritage sites and museums in the West Midlands which are accessible by public transport. Where there are attractions with limited or no public transport available, we will consider the financial viability of coach excursions. We are pleased to note that the Friends are being offered the chance of a European visit next year. The Friends Trustees are indebted to Members who have supported all these events, through membership subscriptions and through extra donations to the BMAG reopening appeal, thereby supporting the arts in these straightened times.

e. Friends Magazine

During 2023-2024, we have enjoyed continuing to work alongside Paul Blyth and Jess Ronan at PB&J Publishing to produce 'Artefacts'.

We were delighted that 'Artefacts' was awarded the British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM) 'Magazine of the Year' Award in 2023. As a prize we received two complimentary tickets to attend the BAFM Conference in Doncaster in September 2023 and Peter Miles, the Chair of the Friends and Melissa Hughes, Friends' Administrator and Editor of 'Artefacts' attended to receive the certificate.

'Artefacts' has continued to receive compliments and we include a large variety of listings and feature articles. Following the retirement of Derek Street as producer of the 'Artefacts' Crossword in Summer 2023, we were delighted that Colin Jones took over this role in Autumn 2023. Thank you to all those who contribute to 'Artefacts', particularly Jim Wells, who produces the 'Changing Birmingham' series and the Quiz. Our thanks also go to Lynda Perrin, who continues to provide her expert and invaluable skills in proofing 'Artefacts' before it goes to print.

Over 4,000 copies are printed, which are distributed to venues across the West Midlands. 'Artefacts' assists us to increase our profile, to increase our Membership, to publicise our events programme and to raise awareness of our work and the work of BMT amongst a wider audience. Melissa Hughes continues to perform the role of Editor.

f. Priorities for the Year 2023-2024 – and how were these achieved?

The Committee acknowledge the challenge of promoting BMT and the Friends whilst BMAG – BMT's flagship site - remains closed. The Committee recognise the importance of developing the Friends' Membership offer, raising awareness of the Friends and enabling the organisation to strengthen and develop. This is a particular challenge during BMAG's closure.

1. Continuing to work with BMT to understand their future plans in order that the Friends can anticipate the support which might be required.

This was particularly pertinent due to the closure of BMAG for essential maintenance works until February 2024. The Committee were delighted to be able to provide financial support to BMT for the reopening of the 'Victorian Radicals' exhibition in the Gas Hall in February 2024. Following Rachel Cockett, BMT's Director of Development's, departure at the end of March 2023, the Friends' Chair and Administrator continued to hold monthly meetings with Toby Watley, BMT's Director of Collections. In December 2023, Rowena

Dean took over as Director of Development and these meetings continued. Both Toby Watley and Rowena Dean presented a regular update at the Committee Meetings. This has enabled the Committee to remain informed about BMT's plans, including the gradual reopening of BMAG.

2. Developing a Friends' Vision and a Strategy to tie in with the Reopening of BMAG.

Whilst not producing a formal document, the Friends' Committee have continued to discuss the Friends' Vision and Strategy, responding to BMT's needs and remaining as flexible as possible in their support at such an uncertain time.

3. Recruiting an Honorary Treasurer.

The position of Honorary Treasurer remains vacant. However, Lynda Perrin is continuing her excellent work as the Friends' Bookkeeper. There are currently no vacancies on the Friends' Committee.

4. Continuing to develop the Friends' online presence in scale and quality.

Melissa Hughes continued to update the Friends' Facebook page on a weekly basis. The Friends E-newsletter continued to keep Members up-to-date and the website was regularly updated with news and articles which had been published in 'Artefacts', as well as news from partner organisations.

5. Seeking new ways to raise awareness of the Friends, reach new audiences and increase the Friends Membership.

Whilst Membership numbers had continued to decline, numbers were stabilising. The Committee recognised the importance of addressing this issue. Following the opening of 'Victorian Radicals' in BMAG's Gas Hall in February 2024 and the free entrance benefit for Members of the Friends, a number of Membership applications had been received. Some of those who had cancelled their Membership during the pandemic had re-joined.

6. Continuing to develop the Friends' Events programme.

The Friends' Events Sub-Committee meets regularly to discuss and develop the Friends' Events programme, with the aim to have one event per month. A number of these events were selling out and all the events were generating income. Extending the Friends' Events offer will potentially encourage new Members to join and lapsed Members to rejoin.

7. Developing volunteer support to provide further support across the organisation.

Volunteers are critical to the running of the Friends and we have a dedicated Events Sub-Committee and a full complement of Trustees. However, more support is always welcome and the Friends Committee is keen to recruit new volunteers.

8. Identify ways to increase revenue to support the running of the Friends.

Towards the end of the 2023-2024 financial year, the Friends' Investment income had increased. The regular events as part of the Friends' Events programme were also generating increasing levels of income.

9. Identify and develop relationships with organisations who might be willing to provide special offers and discounts to the Friends in order to improve the Membership offer.

Melissa Hughes and PB&J Publishing were developing relationships with contributors to and advertisers in 'Artefacts', to generate interesting content for the magazine and to encourage repeat custom. Closer links had been developed with BAFM in 2023-2024 and there was a plan to develop the Friends' relationship with other Birmingham cultural organisations, including Ikon.

g. Priorities for the current Year 2024-2025

The Committee acknowledge the current and forthcoming challenges to funding for BMT given BCC's financial crisis and the pressures which BMT's funding is under. The Friends are determined to work closely alongside BMT, to support them to become increasingly independent as other external financial support becomes increasingly difficult for them to access.

The Committee recognise the importance of developing the Friends' Membership offer, raising awareness of the Friends and enabling the organisation to strengthen and develop.

1. Continuing to work with BMT to support the gradual reopening of BMAG and to understand their future plans in order that the Friends can anticipate the different types of support which might be required.

2. Continuing to work with BMT to support the Historic Properties and Thinktank, Birmingham's Science Museum.
3. Recruiting an Honorary Treasurer.
4. Continuing to develop the Friends' online presence in scale and quality.
5. Seeking new ways to raise awareness of the Friends, reach new audiences and increase the Friends Membership.
6. Continuing to develop the Friends' Events programme.
7. Developing volunteer support to provide further support across the organisation and within BMAG as it gradually reopens.
8. Identify ways to increase revenue to support the running of the Friends.
9. Identify and develop relationships with organisations who might be willing to provide special offers and discounts to the Friends in order to improve the Membership offer.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

a. Constitution

The principal object of the charity is as declared in the current Constitution of the charity, approved in 2022.

b. Method of Appointment or Election of Committee

The management of the charity is the responsibility of the Committee. Its members are the Trustees of the charity and are approved by the membership under the terms of the Constitution. This also allows for additional members to be co-opted when necessary.

The officers are appointed by the Committee and approved by the meeting of members.

The Constitution of the charity provides for the Museum Director to be a member of the Committee. Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah, BMT's Joint CEOs, have delegated this role to BMT's Director of Development. Following Rachel Cockett's departure from BMT, this role was fulfilled by Toby Watley, BMT's Director of Collections until Rowena Dean was recruited as the new Director of Development. Furthermore, Birmingham City Council is entitled to appoint two Councillors to the Committee. The current Councillors attend our meetings regularly. The Museum's Joint CEOs and the Birmingham City Councillors are non-voting members of the Committee.

There was one vacancy on the Committee and one nomination had been received. All the existing Committee members have participated enthusiastically over the year, and we are very grateful for their contributions. The Committee held five Committee meetings during the year. Individual members have collaborated in specific projects and Sub-Committees outside of the official meetings, enabling the formal meetings to be effective.

The Trustees must be members of the charity. They have no beneficial interest in the charity. All Trustees and volunteers give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity.

c. Organisational Structure and Decision Making

The Association was established in 1931 and is constituted under a Charity Commission Scheme dated 22 May 1969 and is a registered charity, number 528895. It is regulated by its Constitution approved by the Annual General Meeting, 13 September 2022.

d. Risk Management

The Committee has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to its operations and finances. We are satisfied that the procedures for managing our finances are sound.

e. Office and Administration

We are very grateful to Lynda Perrin, our Bookkeeper, for all her dedication and hard work keeping the Friends' accounts in order, as well as her assistance in many other aspects of the Friends. Sarah Farnan, our Membership Secretary, continues to be an asset to the Friends with all her enthusiasm and hard work. Melissa Hughes continues as our Administrator and Editor of the Friends' quarterly magazine, 'Artefacts'. We would like to thank Lynda, Sarah and Melissa for all their hard work and professionalism.

Due to the continued flooding and sewage issues in Soho House's cellar, in January 2024 the Friends' office had to be moved to the North Lodge at Aston Hall. However, due to subsequent problems with Royal Mail not being able to deliver post to Aston Hall's North Lodge, we have had to change the Friends' postal address to the Birmingham and Midland Institute.

f. Trustees' Responsibilities Statement

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report 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 & Wales 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 of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102).
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

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

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Committee confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the charity have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value, and in accordance with applicable United Kingdom accounting standards, the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and reporting by Charities' - SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.


The Reserves were built up in the late 1970s, mainly through the sale of works donated through the Friends and are all Unrestricted Funds, none of these or subsequent donations received being designated or restricted for a particular purpose. The major part of these Reserves has been invested on the Friends' behalf by the Trustees giving discretion to our Investment Manager, Brewin Dolphin, within the overall Investment policy set by the Trustees, which is to limit risk while aiming for long-term growth of capital and income. There is an international spread of our investments both in equities and in fixed interest securities.

The Investment Sub-Committee has met once this year. A comprehensive review was undertaken and it was decided to update the Friends' Investment Policy.

The Trustees annual report has been approved by the Trustees on 25 June 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



.....
Peter Miles, Chair



.....
William Lane, Deputy Chair

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2024 which are set out on pages 17 to 23.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 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 I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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.

Nicholas Burrows FCA

Harwoods, Chartered Accountants
1 Trinity Place
Midland Drive
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B72 1TX

.....

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2024**

	Note	Total funds 2024 (all unrestricted) £	Total funds 2023 (all unrestricted) £
Income			
Donations and legacies	3	2,735	71,233
Income from charitable activities	4	12,742	14,080
Investment income		19,076	17,735
Other income		-	-
Total income		34,553	103,048
Expenditure			
Costs of raising funds	5	5,484	5,733
Expenditure on charitable activities	6	31,736	28,422
Total expenditure		37,220	34,155
Net income/ (expenditure) before net gains/(losses) on investments		(2,667)	68,893
Net gains (losses) on investments		40,685	(41,538)
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year		38,018	27,355
Total funds brought forward		598,242	570,887
Total funds carried forward		636,260	598,242

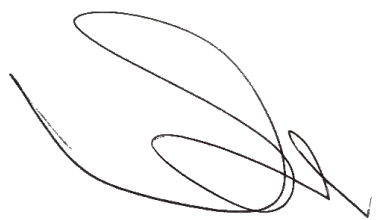
**Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2024**

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets			-		-
Investments	10		608,261		568,969
			608,261		568,969
Total fixed assets					
Current assets					
Debtors	11	2,522		2,459	
Short term deposits		5,071		9,661	
Cash at bank and in hand		29,055		21,442	
			36,648		33,562
Total current assets					
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in less than one year	12	(8,649)		(4,289)	
			27,999		29,273
Net current assets					
			636,260		598,242
Net assets					
			636,260		598,242
Represented by:					
Unrestricted funds			636,260		598,242

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 25 June 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



.....
Peter Miles, Chair



.....
William Lane, Deputy Chair

The notes on pages 18 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Legal Status of the Charity

Friends of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery is a charitable unincorporated organisation in England & Wales, which is regulated by its Constitution approved by the Annual General Meeting, 13 September 2022.

The address of the charity's principal place of business can be found on the reference and administration page.

2. Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at fair value.

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis and in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The financial statements are presented in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted income funds comprise those funds, which the trustees are free to use for any purpose in furtherance of the charitable objects. Unrestricted funds include designated funds where the trustees, at their discretion, have created a fund for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds are funds, which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donor. During the reporting period and in the previous year the charity had no restricted or designated funds.

Income

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably. Subscriptions including Gift Aid are recognised when received.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. Legacy gifts are recognised on a case-by-case basis following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor of the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 (cont'd)

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets consist of collection boxes, which are treated as non-depreciable. Computer equipment is depreciated on a 3-year straight line basis.

Fixed Asset Investments

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluation and disposals throughout the year.

Current Asset Investments

Current asset investments are short-term highly liquid investments and are held at fair value. These include cash on deposit and cash equivalents with a maturity of less than one year.

Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

The trust only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

Realised Gains and Losses

All gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities as they arise. Realised gains and losses on investments are calculated as the difference between sales proceeds and their opening carrying value or their purchase value if acquired during the financial year. Unrealised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between the fair value at the year-end and their carrying value. Realised and unrealised investment gains and losses are combined in the Statement of Financial Activities.

	Total Funds 2024 (unrestricted) £	Total Funds 2023 (unrestricted) £
3. Income from Donations and Legacies		
Donations	1,435	1,268
Legacy	1,300	69,965
	<u>2,735</u>	<u>71,233</u>
4. Income from Charitable Activities		
Members Subscriptions	10,481	11,909
Members Events	2,261	2,171
	<u>12,742</u>	<u>14,080</u>
5. Costs of Raising Funds		
Investment Management Costs	5,484	5,733
	<u>5,484</u>	<u>5,733</u>
6. Expenditure on Charitable Activities		
Contributions	4,000	1,000
Events Expenditure	1,353	2,340
Governance and Support Costs (see Note 7)	26,383	25,082
	<u>31,736</u>	<u>28,422</u>
7. Analysis of governance and support costs		
Staff costs – salaries	17,884	16,878
Payroll administration	260	219
Office costs	280	485
Independent examiner	1,890	1,890
AGM expenses	533	781
Printing and postage	4,389	3,549
Bank charges	167	265
Insurance	930	949
Other costs	50	66
	<u>26,383</u>	<u>25,082</u>

The average number of staff employed during the year was 2 (2023: 2).

No employee received employee benefits in the year in excess of £60,000 (2023: nil)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 (cont'd)

8. Related party transactions and trustees' remuneration and expenses

No trustee or any person connected with them received any remuneration or benefits in kind during the year (2023: £nil).

No trustee received reimbursement of travel expenses during the year (2023: £nil.)

There are no related party transactions during the period (2023: £ nil).

9. Fixed Assets

	Collection Boxes	Computer Equipment	Total
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	4,978	883	5,861
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	<u>4,978</u>	<u>883</u>	<u>5,861</u>
Net Book Value			
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

10. Investments

	2024 £	2023 £
Market Value at 1 April	568,969	538,979
Invested	-	70,000
Investment Management Fees	(5,484)	(5,672)
Change in Cash	4,091	7,200
Gains (losses) in year	40,685	(41,538)
Market Value at 31 March	<u>608,261</u>	<u>568,969</u>
Investments at fair value comprise:		
Equities	389,230	342,855
Other Investments/securities	219,031	226,114
	<u>608,261</u>	<u>568,969</u>

11. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Prepayments and accrued income	834	626
Gift Aid	1,688	1,833
	<u>2,522</u>	<u>2,459</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 (cont'd)

12. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals and deferred income	4,228	3,948
Repainting Gas Hall	4,000	
Other creditors: PAYE	421	341
	<u>8,649</u>	<u>4,289</u>

13. Summary of movement in funds – all unrestricted

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 April	598,242	570,887
Income	34,553	103,048
Expenditure	(37,220)	(34,155)
Losses/Gains on Investments	40,685	(41,538)
At 31 March	<u>636,260</u>	<u>598,242</u>

14. Analysis of Net Assets between Funds – all unrestricted

	2024 £	2023 £
Tangible Assets	-	-
Fixed Asset Investments	608,261	568,969
Cash at bank and in hand	29,055	21,442
Other current assets	7,593	12,120
Current liabilities	(8,649)	(4,289)
Total	<u>636,260</u>	<u>598,242</u>