Updated 24/09/23

EDITED TABLE OF OPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH THE FRIENDS OF YORK WALLS

The following lists activities the Friends of York Walls have in progress. Each provides an opportunity for volunteers to become involved, working with an experienced Friend to help and discuss directions:

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|  | Activity | Opportunity for volunteers |
| 1 | Mason’s Marks  We want to do a full survey of the walls of Fishergate Postern Tower, inside and outside, to find as many marks as possible.  Once we have a good coverage, we will then work up an information leaflet about them, posts for the website and social media sites, and ways of drawing visitor’s attention to them in the tower with information about them nearby. | One of the Friends, Simon Mattam, has made a manuscript record of the mason’s marks he could discover in Fishergate Postern Tower, and this is in a ring-file on the ground floor marked ‘Visitor Information Folder: Masons’ Marks’. He found 17.  He has drafted two sides of A4 for the public to read and these appear as laminated sheets in the pockets below the Timeline in floor two.  On 11/10/22 we hosted John David, head of the stonemasons team in York Minster, and were joined by MA students Gatii and Aishwarya. Together we added substantially to the coverage finding many more marks – we are now up to 65!  The next steps are to photograph all the known marks (one of the Friends of York Walls, Alan Fleming, is going to take these photographs) and to make digital drawings of each one of them (Vicky is working on this).  The next steps after that would be write the findings up and prepare interpretation materials for visitors and students. |
| 2 | Maps of the area over time  We want to build up a display of the maps which have been made of the area, showing Fishergate Postern Tower and the area round it. | This would involve finding and bringing together as many maps of the area as we can find, making copies of an excerpt of them showing the tower and the area round it, then arranging them in a display with the help of a designer.  *Laura Patrickson is working on this project and has assembled digital masters of all the maps held in the Explore archives. The next step is to make a display of these in FPT, and create a digital historic map recession sequence for display in the tower and on social media and the website.* |
| 3 | Researching the records of who lived in Fishergate Postern Tower and in the area next to the walls  We want to build up a display showing who has lived in the tower and in the area over time, how they earned their living, whether their descendants can be traced, etc. | This would be in collaboration with the York Family History Association and would involve searching online for names, dates of birth, marriage and death, under their guidance.  We already have five names, including the great grandfather of David Swann, who was born in the tower.  *Stephen Barrett from the York Family History Association has offered to help with this research.*  *Iona Quinn-Mann has worked on this project but has now moved back home to Bedford.*  *Jonathan French from York Oral History Society has offered their resources and expertise to help.* |
| 4 | Action Research on Portcullis  We are planning to have a portcullis made and fitted into the postern gate next to the tower, with a winding mechanism above it so it can be lowered to show the public what it was like with one in place. | This would provide a volunteer with the opportunity to get involved with a new project, helping to design it and implement it, in the process learning a lot about what portcullises were like in medieval times, working with the public, working with experts in heritage and with practical crafts people. |
| 5 | Turret on top of Fishergate Postern Tower  The present red tile roof on Fishergate Postern Tower was put in place after original construction. Prior to its installation, the roof had a lead roof on the level of the present top floor and a battlement round it, and it had a corner turret, the spiral stairs to which are still in place. We are researching how this turret might have looked and how connected to the present walls, with a view in due course to creating a model replica of it. | This would be an opportunity for a volunteer to help in the research to inform a sketch/drawing of what it might have looked like and how joined to the walls.  *Gatii Shah worked on this project in 2022-23, using her skills as a qualified architect to do a drawing of what the tower may have looked like when in place, and also creating a virtual 3D image. She was assisted by Mike Terzza who operates under the company MIALTE Ltd, and who has used his drone mounted camera to take photographs of the external walls of FPT.*  *The next steps in this project are to display the virtual image of the turret in place, accompanied by an information board and leaflets.* |
| 6 | Refurbishment of the roof of Fishergate Postern Tower  We have a proposal to refurbish the roof of the tower. This is a building project which will involve a professional company to come and put up scaffold, take the tiles off, clean them, then put them back, filling in any gaps with new ones, and refurbishing the wooden structure which holds the tiles in place.  We want to make this into an event which involves the public as much as possible, so we would want to publicise it, show people what is happening as it progresses, then let them see the finished results.  We also want to assemble information about the roof so that we can create an interpretation panel about it to go on the top floor of the tower. | This would be an opportunity to follow the work of professionals in the conservation of heritage buildings. Als to help in communicating with the public about what is going on, publicising the activity on social media, speaking to visitors as they pass the tower.  Also learning more about the history of the roof, when it might have been built, the type of construction it uses, the wood and its possible former uses.  *The Council are now taking the lead on this, advised by Tom Bromet of Donald Insall Associates, their appointed architects. The next step is for Donald Insall to undertake their own survey and assessment of the roof and make recommendations on the way forward.*  This would be an opportunity for a volunteer to contribute to bringing together relevant information about the roof structure, how it relates in style and construction to similar structures of the period, and an evaluation of its merit as a piece of heritage. |
| 7 | Improving the Time Line display in the tower  The visual quality of the Time Line on the second floor needs improving – it needs some new images to be sourced, and a designer engaged to produce a more professional presentation. | This would give a volunteer a chance to help with the content of a display, how best to set it out, working with a designer, then with a printer, then with the public to gather what they think.  *We have engaged the designer, Dianne Turner, to develop proposals for improving the visual quality of this display. Her initial ideas are currently on show in the Tower.* |
| 8 | Creating a trail of the Geology of the stone used in the walls  We are building up information about the geology of the stone used in the walls and tower, leading to an information board and Trail leaflet for the public to use as they go round the walls, also a digital map. | This would provide an opportunity for a volunteer to find out about the geology of the stone used in the walls and tower, to take part in searching for interesting examples of stone to draw to the public’s attention, and to help in designing information for the public to read and look at.  *We have now assembled a good range of information on the geology of the area inside the walls at the Multangular Tower. We would welcome volunteers to trial this information and give us feedback to help pitch it at the right level for different audiences.* |
| 9 | Building up a collection of pictures of the tower and walls, commissioning artists to create new pictures using the tower and walls as their inspiration  We are building up a collection of drawings, paintings and engravings about the tower and the walls, and this will be linked to practical art classes for people to do their own drawings and paintings. We will also be commissioning artists to use the tower and walls as a basis for new work they produce.  One sub-strand within this project is to ask a range of artists to create a watercolour inspired by a stone on the walls or towers which has caught their attention. This will lead to an accumulating display showing the artist’s work alongside a photograph of the stone which inspired them. This series echoes the attention to individual stones in the geology strand of our work, part of a general aim to encourage people to engage with the walls in a different way. | This would provide an opportunity for a volunteer to help find images about the walls and tower, to help catalogue and display them, to work with artists on creating new works, and in organising classes for the public to take part in creating their own drawings, paintings, craft work or three-dimensional reactions, using the tower and walls as inspiration.  *We have begun commissioning local artists to undertake studies of the tower, or to create works inspired by it, and to make individual studies of stones on the walls which catch their eye. The first commission has been to Dianne Turners, and her study has now been delivered and is framed ready for display in the Tower. More commissions are in preparation.*  *We have bought a print of a drawing of the walls by Andres Jaroslavsky which is framed and ready for display in the tower.*  *Local artist Peter Baker made an installation for the top floor of the tower inspired by the spiral staircase. He also used Fishergate Postern Tower to show his work during York Open Studios in 2023.*  *We have commissioned Kate Buckley to make a ceramic relief inspired by the tower.*  *Studies of individual stones have been done by Dianne Turner, Donna Maria Taylor, and Kate Buckley.* |
| 10 | Creating projects for schools to use based on the tower and walls  We have several projects under development which school children can use to become involved with the walls and their heritage. | This would provide an opportunity to think what would be of interest to children and young people, and help design resources for teachers to use with their classes. |
| 11 | Increasing the wildflowers on the ramparts which are friendly to bees and other pollinators  We have a programme of planting wildflowers on the ramparts which are friendly to bees and other pollinating insects. | This would provide an opportunity to get involved in buying the plants in the form of plugs, planting them, and then designing information for the public about what to look for, where, and when in flower.  *An initial planting day was held on 09/10/22 sponsored by Buglife and involving volunteers from local businesses. Plants involved were Pulmonaria, Fritillaria, Wild Primroses, Wood Anemone, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Cowslips, Field Forget-me-nots, and Ox-eye Daisy. The area planted was the rampart outside the wall between FPT and the corner tower (Tower 39).*  *Further plantings have taken place in 2023, and an area of the rampart has been cleared of grass to give the wildflowers a chance to establish themselves. This is now populated with Corncockle, Bladder Campion, Red Campion, Musk Mallow, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Wild primrose, Self-heal, and Pulmonaria. The next steps are to extend this area with late flowering plants for this year, and prepare for next spring’s early flowers – Wood Anemone, Red Deadnettle, Fritillaria, Cowslip, and Bluebells.* |
| 12 | Researching the lichens on the walls  This project involves identifying which lichens we have on the walls, the impact on them of the air pollution from traffic on the Inner Ring Road, and working up information for visitors and students/pupils. | This is an opportunity to learn about a real Cinderella plant, to learn to identify them, help us map their extent on the walls, and then help develop an information leaflet and some photographs to use in Fishergate Postern Tower and on our web and social media sites.  *Photographs have been taken of a selection of the existing lichens ready for further development of this project.* |

Bill Hill, September 2023

1. Mason’s Marks (18)
2. Maps (17)
3. Walmgate Family History (16)
4. Action research on portcullis
5. Turret on top of FPT
6. FPT Roof
7. Improving the Time Line display in the tower

8 Creating a Geology trail

9 Artists works

10 Schools packs

11 Pollinator Friendly Flowers

12 Lichens