

## 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:

	Activity	Opportunity for volunteers
1	<p><u>Mason's Marks</u></p> <p>We want to do a full survey of the walls of Fishergate Postern Tower, inside and outside, to find as many marks as possible.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>We have found 70 mason's marks in in Fishergate Postern Tower to date, which makes it a building which is unusually rich with these marks, and makes recording them so scholars and the public can view them online is an important objective.</p> <p>In the Autumn of 2023 a new volunteer, Bill Julian, started work on the Mason's Marks in buildings in the York area. He is currently helping to log the ones in FPT.</p> <p>We also opened the tower to the public to search for mason's marks as part of the 2024 York Festival of Ideas and just under 100 people came to take part.</p> <p>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 Fan is working on this).</p> <p>The next steps after that would be write the findings up and prepare interpretation materials for visitors and students.</p>

2	<p><u>Maps of the area over time</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>This entails finding and bringing together as many historic 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.</p> <p><i>Laura Patrickson is working on this project and has assembled digital masters of all the available 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.</i></p>
3	<p><u>Researching the records of who lived in Fishergate Postern Tower and in the area next to the walls</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>This is in collaboration with the York Family History Association and involves searching online for names, dates of birth, marriage and death, under their guidance.</p> <p>We have a group of volunteers working on this project at the moment and more would be welcome.</p> <p><i>Jack Sumerling, Lucy Elmendorf, Mia Scattergood, Imogen Hall and Portia O'Shaughnessy are working on this project this year.</i></p>
4	<p><u>Action Research on Portcullis</u></p> <p>We are planning to have a portcullis made and fitted into the postern gate next to the tower, with a</p>	<p>This would provide a volunteer with the opportunity to get involved with a new project, helping to design it and</p>

	winding mechanism above it so it can be lowered to show the public what it was like with one in place.	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	<p><u>Turret on top of Fishergate Postern Tower</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>The next steps in this project are to display the virtual image of the turret in place, accompanied by an information board and leaflets.</i></p>
6	<p><u>Refurbishment of the roof of Fishergate Postern Tower</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>This would be an opportunity to follow the work of professionals in the conservation of heritage buildings. Also 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.</p>

	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>The Council are now taking the lead on this, advised by Tom Bromet of Donald Insall Associates, their appointed architects. In the Autumn of 2023 the Council arranged for their inhouse surveyor to produce a measured drawing of the roof using a laser scanner. Donald Insall have now undertaken their own survey, supported by Mason Clark Structural Engineers, and this is to be complemented by advice from a specialist consultancy on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Donald Insall will then make their recommendations on whether, and what form of works on the roof may be advisable.</i></p> <p>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. The end product would be a display board to go in the tower, a supporting leaflet, and web and social media site postings.</p>
7	<p><u>Improving the Time Line display in the tower</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>We have engaged the designer, Dianne Turner, to develop proposals for improving the visual quality of this display. Her</i></p>

		<p><i>initial ideas for the Roman Section of the display are currently on show in the Tower.</i></p> <p><i>The next steps are to decide on which colour way to use, and to apply this to the other sections of the display.</i></p>
8	<p><u>Creating a trail of the Geology of the stone used in the walls</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
9	<p><u>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</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>This would provide an opportunity for a volunteer to help find images about the walls and tower, to help catalogue and display them, and to work with artists on creating new works.</p> <p><i>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</i></p>

	<p>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.</p>	<p><i>their eye.</i></p>
10	<p><u>Creating projects for schools to use based on the tower and walls</u></p> <p>We have several projects under development which school children can use to become involved with the walls and their heritage.</p>	<p>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.</p>
11	<p><u>Increasing the wildflowers on the ramparts which are friendly to bees and other pollinators</u></p> <p>We have a programme of planting wildflowers on the ramparts which are friendly to bees and other pollinating insects.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>This project has been going for a year or two and good progress has been made in establishing wildflowers on the rampart next to Fishergate Postern Tower.</i></p> <p><i>This year a group is meeting each Sunday morning at 10am</i></p>

		<i>for about an hour or an hour and half. We have been planting plugs of a range of plants which flower in April to June and will be adding to them over the next few weeks.</i>
12	<u>Researching the lichens on the walls</u>  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.  <i>Photographs have been taken of a selection of the existing lichens ready for further development of this project.</i>

**Bill Hill, June 2024**

## **Inserted from the FOYW Treasurers Report 2023/24 -**

### **1 Achievements and Performance in 2023**

#### **1.1 Opening Fishergate Postern Tower to the public**

The tower was visited by 6,800 people compared with 6,003 in 2022.

The donations made by visitors to the Tower in 2023 were £3,700 compared with £3,627 in 2022, confirming that the organisation has a steady income to assure its viability.

#### **1.2 Planting wildflowers on the ramparts – Growing Greener Spaces grant**

The aim of this project is to increase the critical mass of pollinator-friendly wildflowers on the ramparts, thus adding to their visitor interest and through this, adding to visitor engagement with the heritage of the ramparts and walls.

It also contributes to implementing the City of York Council's Pollinator Friendly Strategy for York, and to developing the concept of Citizen Scientist in collaboration with St Nicks.

Planting on the ramparts next to Fishergate Postern Tower continued experimenting with which flowers could out-compete the grass.

#### **1.3 Guided Walks**

These were continued, confirming our role of providing well-researched, accurate guided walks, but bespoke tailored to what visitors want.

#### **1.4 Redesign of Timeline Display in Fishergate Postern Tower**

As part of our strategy of gradual improvement of the standard of visual displays in the Tower, work continued with the designer Dianne Turner to revise the Timeline Display on the second floor. The main developments were to create two colour ways of the Roman panel then consult on them with visitors and volunteers. This work will continue into 2025.

#### 1.5 Geology of the Stone used in the Walls

We secured a grant from the Geologists Association Curry Fund towards researching the geology of the stone used in the walls. This enabled us to work with a group of specialists including Dr Liam Herringshaw, geologist and paleontologist who runs Hidden Horizons, Dr Dav Smith from the University of York (Building Archaeologist), and Professor Mike Rogerson from the University of Northumberland (Specialist in Carbonates) from the University of Northumberland. We also had inputs from the Head Stonemason at York Minster, John David, and from the Council's Bar Walls Manager and Council's stonemason team.

#### 1.6 Masons' Marks

The work on the geology of the stones of the tower brought renewed attention to the masons' marks in the building, triggered by our experts finding several we hadn't spotted in the past. A thorough survey was instigated and we now have 65 marks identified, covering 7 different shapes.

Our aim is to form a comprehensive database of the marks, which is then made available to the public and academic community on our website, and is then donated to York Explore Archives so that it has a long-term and secure home.

#### 1.7 Artists' Works

We continued this project, which is to commission local artists to create a work with some aspect of the City Walls as their subject matter. This has included works from the past, and also the commissioning of local artists to generate new works. The results will be put on display in Fishergate Postern Tower to enrich the visitor experience.

#### 1.8 Interactive Virtual Tour of Fishergate Postern Tower

This was created at no financial cost to us and is available free on our website. Users choose to move to places around and inside the tower. In each place they can look all around them, zooming in on details and choosing to call onto screen short description of each place along with extra information about the special features they can see.

#### 1.9 Friends of York Walls main website and 'Sponsor a Stone' scheme

The FOYW website was initially produced in 2010 and continues to provide a useful information resource on York's City walls and the activities of the Friends of York Walls. During 2023 the website was viewed over 130,000 times by a worldwide visitor base of almost 72,000

Work is continually needed to update the website's detailed guide to the City Walls Trail, a guide that City of York Council direct visitors to at the start of their own web pages on the walls. In 2023 all the text was checked and revised.

The York City Walls Trail sections of the website received some 90,000 hits in 2023, more than 250 a day, underlining what a substantial piece of work it is and how valuable visitors find it.

The website continues to host the "Sponsor a Stone" scheme, started in 2012, where anyone can pick a specific stone on the west or north wall of FPT and in return for a £20 minimum donation they get a personalised certificate and listing against their selected stone. In 2023 17 stones were sponsored with an income of £400. Most dedications were of an "In Memoriam" or "special occasion" nature.

#### 1.10 York City Walls Audio Trail

The audio trail of the walls, which was first created in July 2022, had its first full year of operation in 2023.

Users down-load the Audio Trail for a one-off fee of £1.99 and for this they get the 27 map points and over 100 minutes of informative audio. Each new user's download provides the Friends with an income of 80p.

During 2023 766 people downloaded the trail, establishing that it is proving popular with visitors. These downloads generated an income £443.20.

#### 1.11 Annual Leaflet

Our Annual Leaflet with its map of the walls had an increased print run to 12,000 mainly to meet demand from Visit York (it is one of their most 'in-demand leaflets') and the demands of our 'help-yourself' box in Bootham Bar which we keep stocked for about 60 days a year. We supply the only maps which show the full route of the 'City Walls Trail', the official circular walking trail marked with distinctive brass studs.

#### 1.12 E-Newsletter

Our e-newsletter had 9 issues, reaching 500 plus people each issue. These cumulatively form a valuable record of our activities and past issues are accessible through our website.

#### 1.13 Twilight Walks

Two twilight walks were held in the Autumn attended by 40 members of the public. They covered the section of the walls between Bootham Bar and Monk Bar, and have attracted wide praise for the charm of being able to experience the walls and views of the Minster at night.

#### 1.14 Links with York University

Links with the university have been strengthened through the initiative from the Deputy College Manager of the Graduate College/Associate Lecturer to include a visit to Fishergate Postern Tower as part of postgraduate orientation in September. Arising directly from this visit, two students became volunteers contributing to our projects on the Time Line and Turret.

The Deputy College Manager also delivered a 15 minute introductory talk about the walls as part of the International Student Welcome event for all new international students at the University (these typically have hundreds of attendees) as well as Walls Talk and Tour for new postgraduate students.

#### 3.15 Electrical Installation at Fishergate Postern Tower

During 2023 the electrical installation at Fishergate Postern Tower was finalised and approved by all the relevant authorities, including City of York Council and Historic England.

The installation was professionally carried out in November 2023 and included permanent supplies to all floors, emergency lighting and additional lighting installations.

The major outlay was just over £11k, which was funded from reserves of the Friends, but it has produced significant improvements to the lighting in the tower, increase visitor safety, reduced fire risk, and is all-round a good investment for the future.

### 3.16 Tower 39 Opened as part of York Unlocked

Tower 39, the corner tower 200 meters south of Fishergate Postern Tower, was opened as part of York Unlocked, and visitors were able to see details of the construction of this 14<sup>th</sup> century building. It has surviving stonemason marks too, which were highlighted for visitors and a proper record made for future research.