

annual report

Penmaenmawr Historical
Society and Museum



2025-2026

Dennis Roberts

1940 - 1925

It was with great sadness that we had to report the death of Dennis Roberts, founder of Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum, on October 31st 2025.

One of the best words we can use to describe Dennis is inspirational. His passion for history was compelling and throughout his career as an educator he made it his mission to make history engaging for everyone. Not a week goes by in the museum when we don't get a visit from one of Dennis's former pupils who remember him fondly from their time in Ysgol Pencae – how he would lead their class around the town to point out interesting features, or traipse them up the mountain to get their imaginations racing about how people lived there long ago. He would hide objects for pupils to find, making them believe they had made a big archaeological discovery, and he'd spend hours using his vast local knowledge to write exciting stories and lessons that animated the past and enthused them to learn more.

One of the people who inspired Dennis was the local historian Ivor Davies. Ivor was born in the late 1800s and in Dennis he found someone who had as much of an appetite for recording and preserving heritage as he did. Ivor and Dennis established Penmaenmawr Historical Society in 1973. They gave lectures, held re-enactments, designed pop-up exhibitions, wrote booklets and hosted guided walks, generously sharing their research and knowledge. After Ivor's death in 1985, Dennis continued to collect objects, documents and photographs relating to Penmaenmawr's history. He was so determined in this quest, he would even jump into skips outside the quarry and council offices to retrieve discarded ledgers and maps! He saved hundreds of items that give a precious insight into Penmaenmawr's history – information that would have been lost forever if it wasn't for his efforts.

Dennis was the driving force behind establishing a museum in Penmaenmawr. His dream came true in 2006 when the original museum was opened in New York Cottages. But his ambitions were bigger than the space available – he wanted to do more work with schools, more heritage activities with children, and share Penmaenmawr's fascinating history with more people. To achieve this, a bigger space was needed, and after eleven years of operating part-time from that small cottage on the outskirts of town, the museum moved to the old post office in the centre of Penmaenmawr.

We all remember the day we first looked at what was to become the new museum building. Dennis' excitement was palpable, and infectious! He was striding from room-to-room, with all of us trying to keep up, and shooting out ideas for how the spaces could be used to tell Penmaenmawr's stories. That was just eight years ago. Dennis himself would say that the museum has become more than even he, with all his creativity and positivity, could imagine. He loved being there - answering people's questions, meeting old friends and pupils, examining new objects and photographs, and researching and writing prolifically! As he became less mobile, he would often sit in the coffee shop watching the bustle of volunteers and visitors. Every week, he would say to our project manager, "look at all this, kid, it's wonderful isn't it, just wonderful. I love it, you know."

It is, indeed, wonderful. There are not many places the size of Penmaenmawr that can boast a museum. The gallery, the coffee shop, the shop, the exhibitions, the free activities for children, the lectures, the walks, the accredited archive, the education resources for schools, and the preservation and recording of so much of Penmaenmawr's history, are thanks to Dennis. Of course, he had help along the way. He was always the first to acknowledge the shoulders he stood on and the many volunteers and friends who supported him over the years. What Dennis may not have realised is that he received that help because he was so well respected as a historian, and because he was a joy to work with and be around.

We cannot begin to express how much Dennis is missed by all of us at the museum. He's left us, and the community, with a legacy we know he was proud of. It's our job now, as custodians, to nurture that legacy. We will endeavour to do that with as much passion and enthusiasm for local history as Dennis showed throughout his life.

To reflect the words of Huw Tom – Dennis, it was our privilege

chairperson's foreword

This year we mourned the loss of our President and founder, Dennis Roberts, who died in October. Dennis devoted more than fifty years to recording and preserving the history of Penmaenmawr, and without his commitment there would be no museum as we know it today. His knowledge, enthusiasm and friendship are greatly missed, and we are determined that the work he began will continue for future generations. Dennis believed strongly in the importance of preserving Penmaenmawr's heritage and sharing it with others. It is fitting, therefore, that this year has seen that work continue in many ways.

Our exhibition programme began with the opening of Chris Knowles's painstakingly researched and designed exhibition commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Irish Mail crash of 1950. Its animated model railway re-enacted the events leading to the disaster and proved extremely popular with visitors.

During August we hosted the Landscape of Neolithic Axes exhibition, sharing the results of six years of archaeological investigation and volunteering in the landscape around Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan. Later in the year, we worked in partnership with Penmaenmawr Fell Race to develop an exhibition celebrating the race's 50th anniversary.

Our community programme continued to grow. Summer activities explored the theme Navigating the Carneddau Landscape, while our new Hiraeth sessions used objects from the museum collection to encourage conversation, reminiscence and socialising. Our Halloween Free the Key trail was one of our most popular family activities, with more than 120 goodie bags given out during the week. During the winter, our Warm Hub once again provided a welcoming place for people to meet, with more than 20 people attending on each day it operated.

The Winter Lecture Programme continued to grow in popularity and enjoyed good attendance throughout the season, reflecting the continuing interest in the history, archaeology and heritage of Penmaenmawr and North Wales.

This was an important year for investment in the museum. We were delighted to secure a Welsh Government Priorities for Culture Capital Grant, enabling us to upgrade our collection room, install a new lift and develop a new exhibition room at the rear of the gallery, recreating a quarry office from the early 1900s. These improvements have strengthened our ability to look after our collections, improve accessibility and develop the experience we offer visitors.

September brought another major development when Cynefin, our museum shop, moved into larger premises at 1 Oxford Hall. The move provided much-needed additional space for the shop to develop while continuing to generate valuable income towards the running of the museum.

None of this could happen without the tremendous contribution of our volunteers. Whether welcoming visitors, looking after collections, running activities and events, helping with exhibitions and lectures, staffing Cynefin or carrying out the many jobs required to keep a small independent museum running, their contribution is invaluable.

I would like to thank our trustees, staff and volunteers, our members and partners, our funders, and everyone who has visited, participated in or contributed to the museum during the year.



Shirley Cox - Chairperson

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annual report

Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum's Trustees are pleased to present our annual report and audited financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026. This annual report focuses on activity from April 2025 to March 2026.

administrative details

Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum
charity number (until Aug 2024): 1148984

charity number (after Aug 2024): 1209431

registered office

Penmaenmawr Museum
The Old Post Office
Hen Ffordd Conwy
Penmaenmawr LL34 6UU

Telephone: 01492 621462

www.penmaenmawrmuseum.co.uk

auditors

Mags Bookkeeping
Birch House Business Centre
Hen Lon Parcwr
Ruthin
LL15 1NA

board of trustees

Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum is an independent accredited museum. This main body of this report was compiled in April 2026, and the trustees governing the organisation are:

Shirley Cox	Chairperson
Christopher Knowles	Treasurer
Susan Ellis	Secretary
Sionyn Foulkes Jones	
Michael Moore	
John Good	
Selwyn Hughes	
Jackie Street	

staff

Up to March 2026, the organisation employs two part-time members of staff in the museum's coffee shop. These roles are funded by the museum's core income.

our history

Penmaenmawr Historical Society was established in 1973. Over twenty years, the society collected a sizeable number of photographs, objects and stories related to Penmaenmawr and the surrounding area. This collection inspired the opening of Penmaenmawr Museum in 2002.

The original museum was based in New York Cottages. It was established as project between Conwy Council and Penmaenmawr Town Council, supported by members of the historical society.

The society took responsibility for the management of the museum in 2006. It didn't take long for the museum to outgrow the small quarryman's cottage, and by 2015 the trustees decided to look for new premises in the centre of town. A feasibility study identified the former post office building as being the most suitable option, and after a period of negotiation with Conwy Council, the 'Old Post Office' became the new home for Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum in 2017.

A grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund helped to pay for the building's renovation, new exhibition displays and the installation of a coffee shop. Since then, further capital grant opportunities and the museum's income from donations, sales and subscriptions have enabled the installation of a first floor gallery space and quiet room.

The organisation has retained its independent museum status, managed and run by a dedicated team of trustees, staff and volunteers. Together we are all part of protecting and promoting Penmaenmawr's story.



our mission & objectives

Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum exists to promote, preserve and celebrate the heritage of Penmaenmawr and its surrounding areas. Working with our local and wider diverse communities, the museum will foster the conditions for wellbeing, education and social engagement through our collections, exhibitions and outreach programmes. The museum will be at the heart of cultural life in Penmaenmawr, inspiring people to discover, learn and engage with our community heritage and understand its place in the history of Wales and the wider world.

- To advance the education of the public of Penmaenmawr and its visitors in the cultural and natural history of the area.
- To establish and maintain a museum in Penmaenmawr for the educational, social, wellbeing and economic benefit of the community.
- To preserve, promote and make accessible a collection of cultural objects and archival material relating to Penmaenmawr.



what we want to achieve

Develop Penmaenmawr Museum as a key heritage attraction for Conwy and North Wales

- ➡ Build the profile of Penmaenmawr Museum on a local, regional and national level by building strategic partnerships and improving our marketing and communications strategy.
- ➡ Build a resilient organisation with the capacity to fulfil its objectives through training, volunteer recruitment, partnership working and effective financial management.

Achieve excellence in collections management and care

- ➡ Develop our collections and encourage their use for enjoyment, research and learning.
- ➡ Improve the conservation and care of our collections, including the environmental conditions and security of their current storage arrangements.

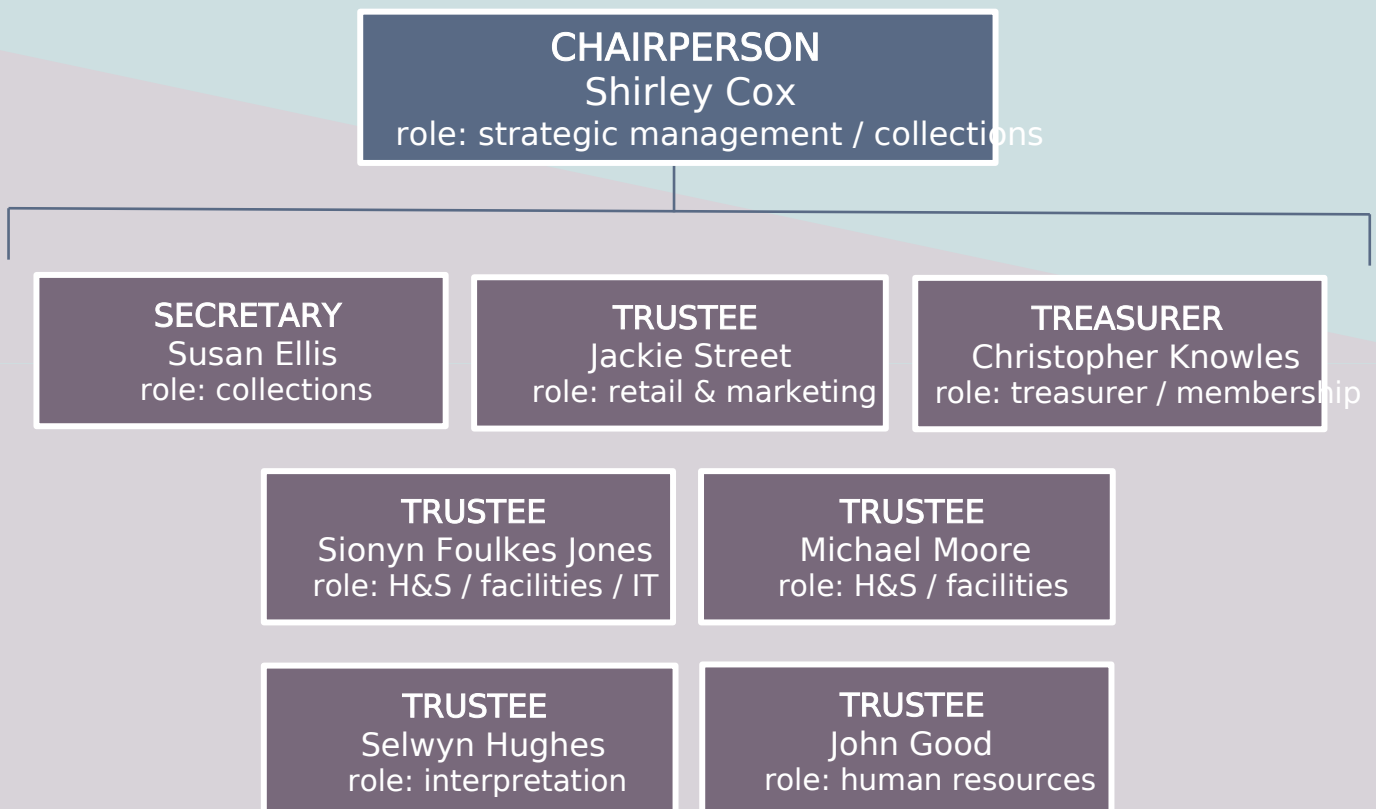
Provide an excellent visitor experience and learning for a diverse and growing audience

- ➡ Explore new methods of interpretation, using different media to appeal to different styles of learning and enjoyment.
- ➡ Improve our learning and enjoyment offer for children and young people.

how we are managed

Managing a historical society and an accredited museum that meets national standards requires a diverse range of skills and knowledge, comprising:

- Academic approaches to local history research / knowledge
- Governance and organisational management
- Strategic and policy management
- Archive and collections care knowledge and skills
- Financial and funding management
- Customer service and sales co-ordination
- People management and support



standards

Penmaenmawr Museum has achieved full accreditation status since 2014. Trustees, staff and volunteers who join the museum team receive training on the national standards we maintain as part of their induction process.

Full accreditation status means that the way Penmaenmawr Museum manages the organisation, the way we care for our collections and how we engage with the public and volunteers have met the quality standards required by MALD (the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division) and Arts Council England. The museum is tested every five years.

Our collection management has to meet the nine primary procedures set out by Spectrum, the UK collection management standard that is used around the world.



our partnerships

Penmaenmawr Museum has strong partnerships with local organisations and the statutory sector. We are also part of a nationwide network of museums, heritage professionals, learning institutions and arts organisations.

The museum is part of the Creu Conwy Culture Strategy partnership. This is a 'hub and spoke' approach to conserving and promoting heritage across Conwy county. Led by Conwy Culture Centre, we work closely with a network of museums and the Creu Conwy team to share expertise and resources. Suryiah Evans is a member of the Creu Conwy strategic board, representing Penmaenmawr Museum.

The museum was part of the Carneddau Landscape Partnership from 2016 until 2026, when the project ended. The museum has now entered a Memorandum of Understanding agreement with Snowdonia National Park, to continue the legacy of the project until 2029.





review highlights

Apr 25 - Mar 26

1. Irish Mail crash exhibition

April 2025 marked the 75th anniversary of the Irish Mail rail disaster at Penmaenmawr. To commemorate the anniversary, the museum opened a special exhibition exploring the events of 27 August 1950 and the history of the railway through Penmaenmawr.

The exhibition was painstakingly designed and developed by museum trustee Chris Knowles. At its centre was an animated model railway which recreated the events leading up to the disaster, accompanied by audio interpretation. The exhibition proved extremely popular with visitors and provided an engaging way to tell the story of an event that remains an important part of Penmaenmawr's history.

We would like to thank Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership for funding this exhibition.

Irish Mail Crash of 1950

75th anniversary commemorative exhibition

an animated model railway demonstration re-enacting the moments leading up to the crash, with model trains and audio descriptions explaining how the accident happened



Re-enactment demonstrations will be held on:
Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays
11am and 2pm

and
Penmaenmawr Museum's 2025 temporary exhibition
the history of the railway in Penmaenmawr up to 1900

group bookings welcome, please email to enquire

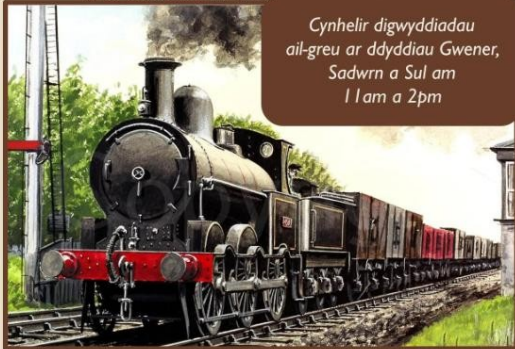


Amgueddfa Penmaenmawr Museum
The Old Post Office, Hen Ffordd Conwy, Penmaenmawr LL34 6UU
Opening days / times: Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 4pm
info@penmaenmawrmuseum.co.uk

Damwain trên Post Gwyddelig yn 1950

Arddangosfa Goffa 75ain Pen-blwydd

arddangosiad gweledol wedi'i animeiddio yn defnyddio modelau o drenau ynghyd â disgrifiadau clywedol yn ail greu ac esbonio sut y digwyddodd y ddamwain



Cynhelir digwyddiadau ail-greu ar ddyddiau Gwener, Sadwrn a Sul am 11am a 2pm

ac Arddangosfa dros dro Amgueddfa Penmaenmawr 2025
hanes y rheilffordd ym Mhenmaenmawr hyd at 1900

croesewir archebion gan grwpiau, e-bostiwch i holi



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2. Summer programme

Our 2025 summer programme explored the theme 'Navigating the Carneddau Landscape', with ten free full-day activities for children and families running from late July throughout August. We also managed a series of seven full-day activities for St Grwst Church in Llanrwst.

Activities encouraged children to explore different aspects of the landscape and its heritage through art, craft, science, archaeology and practical activities. The programme included weaving, printmaking, willow work, music and sound, navigation and compass-making, clay modelling and Neolithic axe-making.



The programme was delivered with a range of artists and activity providers and continued the museum's commitment to providing free family activities during the school holidays.

3. Hiraeth sessions

During the summer we introduced Hiraeth, a programme of free weekly reminiscence and social sessions running from July to September. Each week, objects and photographs from the museum collection were used to encourage memories, stories and conversation, accompanied by tea and cake. The sessions provided a relaxed opportunity for people to meet and socialise while exploring Penmaenmawr's past. Hiraeth gave us another way of making our collections accessible and demonstrated how the museum can contribute to social engagement and wellbeing within our community.

4. Landscape of Neolithic Axes event

In August, the museum hosted a special Landscape of Neolithic Axes exhibition, presenting the results of six years of archaeological investigation and volunteering across the landscape around Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan.

The exhibition was accompanied by a day of public talks on 16 August, with archaeologists and specialists sharing what had been discovered through the project. 234 people attended the exhibition and event over two days.



The museum has been involved in the Landscape of Neolithic Axes work through its long-standing partnership with the Carneddau Landscape Partnership, providing an important opportunity to connect archaeological research taking place in the surrounding landscape with the local community. The museum's involvement in the project is recorded as part of its established Carneddau partnership work in the previous annual report.

5. Cynefin

September 2025 marked an important milestone for Cynefin, when the museum shop moved into larger premises at 1 Oxford Arcade.

The new shop building provides considerably more room to display stock and develop the shop, while maintaining Cynefin's presence on Penmaenmawr's high street. The shop continues to be run with the help of our dedicated team of volunteers and generates income that contributes towards the running of the museum.

We would like to thank everyone who helped with the move and our Cynefin volunteers for the time and commitment they continue to give to the shop.

6. Free the key event

During October half-term we once again took part in the Welsh Museums Festival, this year with our Free the Key trail. Children followed the trail around the museum solving clues to free the key and receiving a goodie bag on completion. The activity was extremely popular and we gave away more than 120 goodie bags during the week. The success of Free the Key continued the strong response we have seen to our free school-holiday activities and brought many children and families into the museum during the festival week.

7. Fell Race exhibition

From November 2025, the museum hosted an exhibition celebrating 50 years of the Penmaenmawr Fell Race.

Developed in partnership with Penmaenmawr Fell Race organisers, the exhibition explored the history of an event that has brought generations of runners to the town and become an established part of Penmaenmawr's sporting history. The exhibition enabled us to bring together photographs, memories and information about the event and celebrate an important part of the town's more recent heritage.



8. Warm hub

From January to March 2026, the museum once again opened its doors as a Warm Hub, providing a welcoming place for people to meet during the winter months. Free hot drinks and soup were available alongside board games and arts activities with more than 20 people attending on each day the warm hub operated. This facility has become an important part of our winter community programme, providing opportunities to meet other people and socialise during the period when the museum would normally be closed.

9. Winter lecture programme

Our Winter Lecture Programme continued to grow in popularity during 2025–26, with good attendance throughout the season. This year's programme explored a wide range of subjects relating to the history and heritage of Penmaenmawr and North Wales, including the railways of the North Wales quarries, Penmaenmawr's Quarry Boys, the heritage of Eryri, rock art and the history of mountaineering in North Wales.

The continuing popularity of the programme follows the significant increase in attendance recorded during 2025, when we changed the start time to 7pm.

We would like to thank all our speakers and the volunteers who make the programme possible, from setting up equipment and welcoming people to serving refreshments and selling raffle tickets.

Winter Lecture Programme
2025 - 2026

Railways in the North Wales Quarries
15th October 2025
David Gwyn

Penmaenmawr Quarry Boys
19th November 2025
Anne Pedley

Managing the Heritage Assets of Eryri
21st January 2026
Naomi Jones

Rock Art
18th February 2026
Professor George Nash

History of Mountaineering in North Wales
18th March 2026
George Higgins

Vikings in North Wales - new research
15th April 2026
Arwyn Owen

Talks begin at 7.00pm
Penmaenmawr Community Centre
Entry - £4.00
Penmaenmawr Museum Members - free

AMGŴEDDEFA
PENMAENMAWR
MUSEUM

01492 621462
info@penmaenmawrmuseum.co.uk
www.penmaenmawrmuseum.co.uk

10. Priorities for Culture capital grant

This year we were successful in securing a Priorities for Culture Capital Grant from the Welsh Government, enabling us to make a series of important improvements to the museum building, collections storage and exhibitions. The funding enabled us to upgrade our collection room, improving the environment in which we store and manage the museum's collections. A new lift was installed, improving access between floors and making more of the museum accessible to our visitors.

At the rear of the first-floor gallery, we developed a new exhibition room recreating a quarry office from the early 1900s. The new space will help us tell more of the story of Penmaenmawr's quarrying heritage and provide another opportunity to display and interpret material from our collections.

The capital works were completed in 2026. These improvements represent an important investment in the museum, helping us to look after Penmaenmawr's heritage while improving the experience we can offer our visitors.



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PENMAENMAWR
MUSEUM

annual accounts

1. Restricted and unrestricted funds

Restricted funds are funds that the museum has been awarded, usually from a trust or large funder, after making an application for specific purposes or items. Restricted funds HAVE to be spent on the items or projects that we have requested the money for. Unrestricted funds refers to money that the museum has raised through donations, memberships and sales, that can be spent on utilities, exhibitions or services that help us fulfil our objectives.

At the close of our accounting period to March 2026, Penmaenmawr Historical Society had £24,689 in restricted funds. This funding is restricted to use on items that we had approved quotations for, including a temporary exhibition on the Irish Mail crash and marketing activities.

Unrestricted funds at the close of our accounting period to March 2026 stood at £30,000. Due to the cost-of-living crisis and rising utility bills, the only spend planned from the unrestricted reserves is for core costs of running the museum and ensuring the archive is maintained to meet accreditation standards.

2. Expenditure

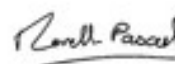
The main expenditure 2025-2026 has been on maintenance of the displays, upgrading the building including the collection room fit-out, a new lift and a new gallery room, engagement activities, staffing and rising utility bills.

Penmaenmawr Museum Charity 1148984
Profit and Loss as at 31st March 2026

<u>Income</u>	2026
Trading Museum Shop	£22,092.00
Trading - Coffee Shop	£16,706.00
Sales	£14,840.00
Museum services	£18,823.00
Membership	£2,199.00
Donations	£3,174.00
Online sales	£253.00
Grant Welsh Government	£189,077.00
Grant Income	£5,488.00
Talks entry fee	£661.00
Raffle	£354.00
Interest received	£587.00
Quarry Tickets	£1,550.00
TOTAL INCOME	£275,804.00
Cost of sales	
Core Shop Consumables	£16,599.00
Coffee shop consumable	£8,361.00
Staff cost	£30,890.00
Commision paid	£141.00
	£55,991.00
Net profit	£219,813.00
<u>Expenditure</u>	
CORE Volunteer expenses	£361.00
CORE Museum consumables	£654.00
CORE Contracts services	£3,544.00
CORE Museum equipment	£1,252.00
CORE Activities	£395.00
CORE Museum resources	£298.00
CORE Building maintenance	£4,363.00
Interpretation	
FED	£1,406.00
Conwy SOF	£234.00
ARW	£19,320.00
MALD	£780.00
Carneddau	£21,846.00
WGC	£21,966.00
Postage	-£87.00
Activities	
FED	£1,553.00
SOF	£316.00
Conwy	£1,047.00
WGC Building maintenance	£41,993.00
WGC Equipment and materials	£53,048.00
Marketing	£205.00
Insurance	£2,255.00
Subscriptions	£300.00
Training SPF	£30.00
Utilities & rent	£12,901.00
bank fee	£1.00
Office	£3,820.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£193,801.00
Profit & Loss	£26,012.00

We confirm that the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2026 have been prepared from the accounting records of the Association and they are in accordance with those records. Magall Lovell-Pascal of Phil Lovell Associates LTD T/A Mags Bookkeeping

Signature:



our funding

Penmaenmawr Museum is a registered charity. We raise money through membership subscriptions, donations, the sale of products online and in the museum's gift shop, coffee shop sales and by applying for grants from external funders.

We apply for grants for specific projects. If we are successful in our application, the funding is usually paid in arrears after we have produced evidence of spend. Grant funding has to be used for exactly what we have asked for in our application. All grant applications have to be thoroughly costed in advance of applying, with three quotations for each item or service over £5000.

From 2025-2026, Penmaenmawr Museum was committed to spending external funding grant monies that we were awarded from the following organisations:

- Welsh Government – Priorities for Culture
- Welsh Museums Federation
- Conwy Valley and Coast Rail Partnership
- Carneddau Landscape Partnership Scheme (NLHF)



We would like to thank all the members of
Penmaenmawr Historical Society and Museum
for their continuing support

