

The Cromwell Association – registered charity no. 1132954

Report of the trustees for the year ended 31st December 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 This is the fifteenth annual report of the trustees (the Council) of The Cromwell Association, which was registered as a charity on 25th November 2009 following the decision of the 2009 annual general meeting (AGM) to proceed with registration.

1.2 This report is for the calendar year 2023, which is consistent with the charity's financial year.

2. Administrative details

2.1 The trustees who served during the year were:

Professor Peter Gaunt	President (reappointed 24.4.21)
Mr John Newland	Minutes Secretary (reappointed 24.4.21)
Mr Geoffrey Bush	Treasurer (reappointed 24.4.21)
Mr John Goldsmith	Chair (reappointed 24.4.21)
Dr Maxine Forshaw	Editor of Journal (reappointed 24.4.21)
Mr Paul Robbins	Membership Secretary (reappointed 24.4.21)
Mr Richard Warren	Secretary (reappointed 23.4.2022)

Ordinary trustees, non-office holding:

Mr John Gibbon	(elected at the 2021 AGM)
Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons	(elected at the 2021 AGM)
Dr Miranda Malins	(elected at the 2021 AGM)
Mrs Serrie Meakins	(elected at the 2022 AGM)
Dr Ismini Pells	(elected at the 2022 AGM)
Dr Charlotte Young	(elected at the 2022 AGM)

Officers and other trustees are three-year appointments.

2.2 For the purposes of charitable registration, the Secretary is also the charity correspondent and his home address is the contact address used by the Charity Commission.

2.3 The governing document is the constitution formally adopted by the Association at the AGM held on 25th April 2009 at Naseby Village Hall.

3 Public benefit statement

The trustees have complied with the guidance of the Charity Commission on public benefit.

4 Objectives and activities

4.1 The object of the charity is to advance the education of the public in both the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), politician, soldier and statesman, and the wider history of the seventeenth century.

4.2 The trust has undertaken to carry out the following activities for the benefit of the public:

To campaign for the preservation and conservation of buildings and sites relevant to Cromwell

To commission, on behalf of the Association or in collaboration with others, plaques, panels and monuments at sites associated with Cromwell.

To support and encourage the Cromwell Museum and Cromwell Collection library in Huntingdon.

To provide, within the competence of the Association, advice to television, radio, press and other media on all matters relating to the period.

To encourage interest in the period in all phases of formal education by the publication of reading lists, information and teachers' guidance.

To publish news and information about the period, including an annual journal and regular newsletters.

To organise an annual memorial service, day schools, conferences, lectures, exhibitions and other educational events.

To provide an Internet resource for researchers in the period including school students, genealogists and interested parties.

To offer, from time to time, grants, awards and prizes to individuals and organisations working towards the objectives stated above.

5. Review of the Year

5.1 Last year it was decided that Council meetings would alternate between hybrid and virtual meetings. The first Council meeting in January was held by Zoom; the second in March a hybrid meeting, with three attending virtually; the third in June by Zoom; the fourth, in October, was planned to be a hybrid meeting but due to industrial action on the railways it was decided that it too had to be held by Zoom.

5.2 The Annual General Meeting was held at the King's Manor in York, courtesy of the University of York, and was attended by 35 members. There were no elections to Council as no term of office had expired. The Chair pointed out that a significant number of terms expired in 2024 and that expressions of interest from members to serve on Council would be welcome.

5.3 Membership numbers held steady, and increased slightly, with 488 members on 22.1.23, and 518 members at the year end. All Life Members were contacted and asked to confirm that they wished to continue to receive mailings, and members outside the UK were asked if they would consider a digital only membership, at the same cost as a UK membership, in an attempt to avoid a further rise in their subscription due to escalating postage costs.

- 5.4 Direct member benefits were provided by our publications, and by the circulation of an emailed update from time to time to those who have provided their email address. Members have received two copies of *The Protector's Pen*, edited by John Goldsmith supported by Mr Simon Blake as Production Editor.
- 5.5 The journal *Cromwelliana* edited by Dr Maxine Forshaw was distributed with the summer mailing and was a larger than usual edition. The core content consisted of the proceedings of the Study Day held in 2022 on the Civil War in Wales. There was also a range of other articles and reviews, as well as the Schools' Essay prize-winning entry from the previous year. The quality of our publications continues to improve year-on-year.
- 5.6 The annual Schools History Conference took place at the National Civil War Centre in Newark on 20th June and was well attended and well received by the audience of A level students and their teachers. The Association is very grateful to the Centre for their support in organising and running the event. All of the debates held on the day are available on our website. The essay competition, generously supported by Frederic L. Borch III, took place and the winning entry will be published in the 2024 edition of *Cromwelliana*.
- 5.7 For a second year Association members were offered the opportunity to visit the excavations at Hursley Park, Hampshire, the site of Richard Cromwell's mansion, and also the parish church with both the Association's plaque for Richard and the rather neglected 18th century Cromwell family memorial. The visit took place on 22nd June, and although it was only a small group it was appreciated by those who attended. There have been discussions with the church about possible restoration of the memorial.
- 5.8 The service of commemoration for Oliver Cromwell was held on 2nd September at St Andrew's Methodist Church, Pump Street, Worcester, as it proved, once more, to be impossible to hold the service on Cromwell Green at Westminster. Sadly, numbers of those attending were very low, possibly explained by the location and a day of industrial action on the railways. A morning visit to the Cathedral Library was fascinating but there were only five members were present. As a consequence of declining attendance over several years, and the costs of holding the event, Council proposes that the possibility of holding the service every other year should be considered.
- 5.9 In contrast the annual Study Day, held in Huntingdon on 14th October, was very well attended. The focus of the day was publication of the new definitive history of the House of Commons 1640-1660, by The History of Parliament Trust. A sell-out audience enjoyed a programme of talks on different aspects of the research undertaken. The Association is grateful to the Trust for their support in organising this event. The Association purchased the nine-volume set and has placed it in the Association's Library, held in Huntingdon Archives, for all to use.
- 5.9 Good relations have been maintained with other organisations. The Association's collaboration with the Battlefield Trust, and other organisations to develop an on-line database of British civil war monuments came to fruition, and it was formally launched on 25th October at the National Civil War Centre in Newark.

5.10 The Association also continues to maintain and develop the website www.olivercromwell.org which attracted over 180,000 separate visits over the year. We have a social media presence on X formerly known as Twitter, and other social media platforms, administered by Dr Charlotte Young. The Association has responded to a range of enquiries throughout the year.

6. Financial review 2023

- 6.1 Renewal of subscriptions: these were well up on previous years. More members than hitherto paid their subscriptions on time (ie by the magic date of 3rd September) or shortly thereafter, for which the trustees are grateful. In addition there was a post Christmas rush following reminder emails. Recruitment of new members held up reasonably well.
- 6.2 Donations received: the Association was fortunate to receive a generous donation towards the cost of repairs to the Marston Moor monument; this was from a member who wishes to remain anonymous. The annual schools' essay competition prize continued to be financed by Frederic L Borch III. Besides these were numerous donations from members which make a significant contribution to the operation of the Association and for which Council is most appreciative.
- 6.3 Income from events held in 2023: our Annual General Meeting was held in York and it is pleasing to report that for the first time for several years it paid for itself. Both the Study Day in Huntingdon and the Schools' Conference in Newark were sold out and returned healthy surpluses. Effort was made to reduce the cost of Cromwell Day, this year held in Worcester, but unfortunately attendance was lower than usual, see 5.8 above.
- 6.4 Costs: there was a bumper 212-page edition of *Cromwelliana* this year which somewhat increased the printing and distribution costs. The inexorable rise in the cost of mailing, especially to overseas addresses, have led the trustees to consider offering an electronic version of the publications, see 5.3 above.
- 6.5 The repairs to the base and plinth of the Marston Moor monument cost £4,500 which was some £700 above estimate as more work was required than envisaged. It is to be hoped that further major repairs will not be necessary for at least ten or fifteen years.
- 6.6 Council authorised the following donations during 2023: £500 towards the new database of British Civil Wars memorials; £490 purchase of the relevant volumes of the History of Parliament placed in the Association's Library, part of the Cromwell Collection in Huntingdon; a second £50 to the Winchester Archaeology Rescue Group to aid their Hursley Park dig; and finally £50 to Hursley Church where Richard Cromwell is buried.
- 6.7 The finances of the Association remain healthy despite the exceptional cost of the Marston Moor repairs, with only a minor reduction of the overall bank balance. Therefore there is no proposal to increase subscription rates despite the inflationary pressures.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Renewed subscriptions	8,616	7,561
New members' subscriptions	1,455	1,663
Donations received	2,660	1,423
Gift Aid refund	1,208	1,638
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<i>Total membership income</i>	13,939	12,285
Sales of merchandise	330	331
Miscellaneous receipts	93	96
Bank interest	257	4
<i>Net surplus/loss on events:</i>		
Annual General Meeting	26	-70
Study Day	1,328	-359
Cromwell Day	-293	-610
Schools' conference	715	371
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TOTAL NET RECEIPTS	16,395	12,048
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 PAYMENTS		
Secretarial, room hire	648	604
Cromwelliana and newsletter	8,619	8,158
Website and IT	647	526
Insurance	249	230
Paypal charges	300	243
Sundry	184	184
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<i>Total - members' services</i>	10,647	9,945
Monument repairs	4,500	0
Replacement information panel	130	0
Donations	1,090	800
Essay prize(s)	250	350
Post Graduate Research grant	0	539
Promotion/announcements	120	223
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TOTAL NET PAYMENTS	16,737	11,857
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NET CASH INFLOW/OUTFLOW	-342	191
Bank balances brought forward	23,129	22,938
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BALANCES AT 31ST DECEMBER	22,787	23,129

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REPRESENTED BY:		
Bank deposit account	6,882	6,625
Bank current account	5,879	6,013
Bank term deposit	10,000	10,000
Paypal account	26	491
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TOTAL FUNDS AT 31ST DECEMBER	22,787	23,129
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7. Conclusion

The Association has continued to fulfil its charitable objectives across a wide range of activities. The Trustees are open to suggestions for further development within the inevitable constraints of finance and capacity.

8. Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's trustees:

Signature ***John Goldsmith***

Full name John Goldsmith, Chair

Signature ***Richard Warren***

Full name Richard Warren, Secretary

Date 25th January 2024