



GIBRALTAR
HERITAGE
TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

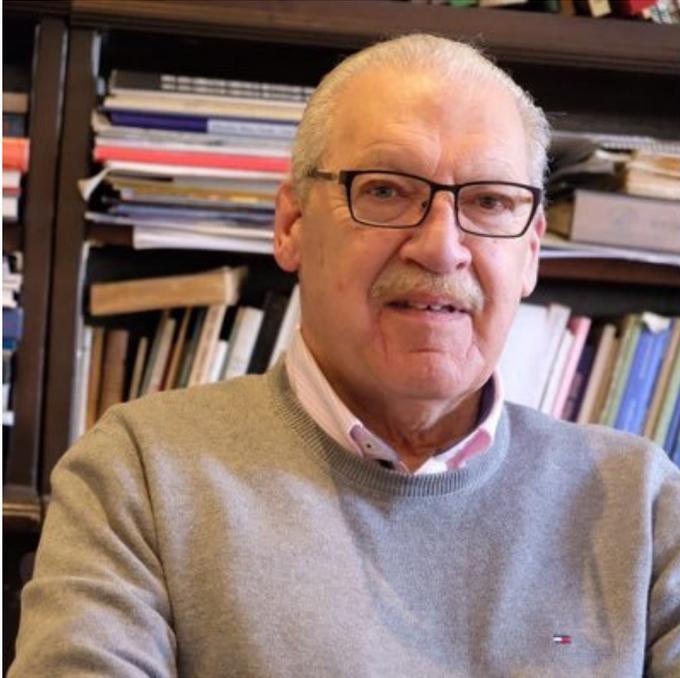


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Chairman's Foreword



Ian Balestrino GA
Chairman

At the Annual General Meeting I will be stepping down as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. I was elected as a Trustee in 2012 and throughout this time I served as Vice Chairman (2014 to 2016) and Chairman (2016 to 2020 and 2022 to 2025).

The Trust participates in many fora that contribute to our overarching aim to conserve and preserve our heritage. Much of the work of the Trust is not in the public eye as we liaise with our colleagues across Government Departments and within the private sector. This work is important as we ensure that heritage considerations are present in decision making. Our liaison with the Ministry for Heritage is an important facet of our activities in this regards. We also have a good working relationship with other NGOs that allows us to discuss matters that are of mutual concern.

Another significant reality is that the demands on the Trust have increased exponentially with the pace of development. We are required to analyse more building applications that come up for approval at the Development and Planning Commission.

These require careful consideration when there are possible heritage implications. We always follow a pragmatic approach when expressing our views. A balance has to be established between what Gibraltar needs and integrating the protection of our heritage within that.

In my time as a Board Member I have seen many improvements in how we operate. We now have an excellent shop that offers a vast array of merchandise and publications. We have grown our reach on social media and our website enables everyone to access the latest news online. The Board and Staff have prepared a Strategic Plan that will focus on providing a clear roadmap for the work of the Trust. This plan will put into action a variety of initiatives, projects and strategies that will interconnect to raise the profile, awareness and perceived value of our heritage.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all past and present Trustees who have voluntarily dedicated their time and effort to the Trust. Also, my sincere gratitude to our Staff - Claire, Germaine, Rebecca, Theresa and Wendy for everything they do day in and day out. I also want to express my appreciation to the volunteers that enable the Trust to work on projects, organise tours and carry out many other events- your support is invaluable. Also thank you to yourselves, our members, who follow and support our work year in and year out.

And finally, I sincerely wish the Gibraltar Heritage Trust all the best for the future. Thank you for everything.

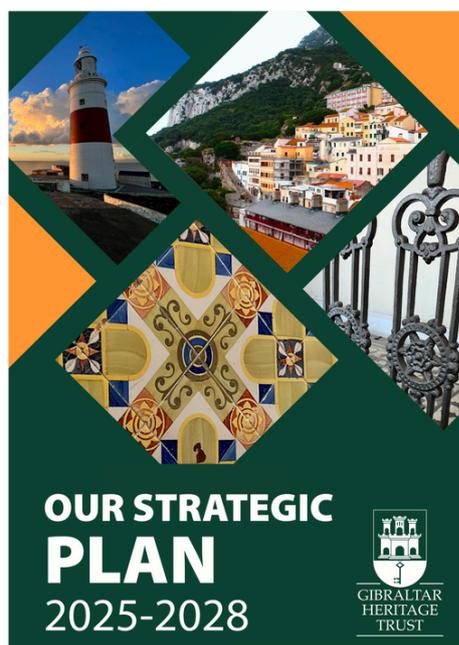


It has been another busy year with the Trust continuing to uphold and pursue its mission of safeguarding Gibraltar's Heritage. Over the last 12 months we have been implementing our Strategic Plan. This document was launched at our AGM in November 2024 and has been the main focus of our activities.

The Strategic Plan was launched following a period of reflection and strategic review, and the Trust is now focusing on turning that introspection into action, consolidating our governance, stepping up efforts in engaging our community, and strengthening our partnerships across Gibraltar's heritage landscape.

Heritage work is never static. It requires balance between continuity and change, protection and progress. As Gibraltar evolves, so too must the Trust adapt to ensure that heritage remains central to our community's identity and development.

Introduction



Our projects this year, from the ongoing restoration at Witham's Cemetery to our new partnerships in visitor engagement, demonstrate how heritage can be both a source of inspiration and a driver of sustainable growth.

I extend my sincere thanks to our Trustees, staff, volunteers, members, and partners for their continuing support. Together, we continue ensure that Gibraltar's story is preserved, celebrated, and shared for generations to come.

Claire Montado
CEO



About the Gibraltar Heritage Trust

The Board of Trustees

HERITAGE: Gibraltar's latent asset

Established in 1987, the Gibraltar Heritage Trust is a charitable organisation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Gibraltar's unique heritage. Operating under the provisions of the Heritage and Antiquities Act 2018, the Trust acts as a statutory consultee in heritage-related planning matters, and delivers public education and outreach programmes.

Objectives

The Trust's objectives are to:

- Encourage appreciation of Gibraltar's heritage and its role in shaping identity.
- Safeguard historic buildings, monuments, and artefacts through advocacy and direct action.
- Support heritage education, research, and community engagement.
- Work collaboratively with Government, NGOs, and private partners to promote sustainable heritage management.

Today, the Trust remains a cornerstone of Gibraltar's cultural landscape – a bridge between the past and future, ensuring that our collective story continues to inspire pride and belonging.

Trustees in post during the span of this report:

Mr Ian Balestrino GA – Chair
Dr Keith Farrell MBE - Vice Chair

Mr Alfred Sacramento
Mr Francis Silva
Mr John Navas
Ms Yvette Zarb
Ms Alice Mascarenhas MBE
Ms Sue Davies OBE
Ms Lyanna Armstrong Emery
Mr Glen Banda
Mr Anthony Pitaluga MBE



Strategic Overview

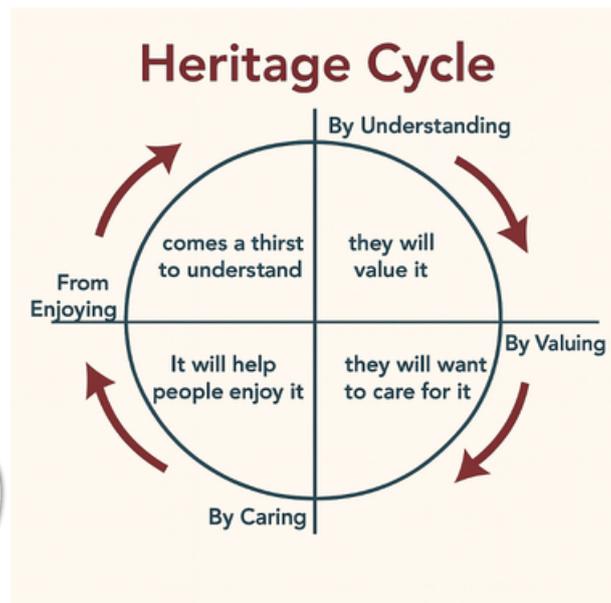
From Reflection to Renewal

Last year's focus on strategic planning provided a strong foundation for progress. This year, the Trust has moved decisively from reflection to renewal.

Building on insights from our strategic planning process, the Trust has undertaken reforms and initiatives that strengthen our ability to deliver on its mission.

SAVE OUR HERITAGE

The Gibraltar Heritage Trust, PO Box 455, Wellington Place, GIBRALTAR. Tel No 42944



The shift in tone over the years from the 'Save Our Heritage' to 'Love Our Heritage' strapline better fits the Trust's core principles which remain guided by the Heritage Cycle, where love and care drive protection, understanding, and celebration. This continues to shape our daily work and long-term strategy.

Heritage is not only about what we preserve, but how we engage people to value and care for it. This philosophy underpins all of our work – from the preservation of sites to the development of partnerships and educational opportunities.

The Trust has also defined its Vision and Mission Statements as part of its Strategic Planning document



The Trust envisions a society where Gibraltar's unique heritage is understood, appreciated and celebrated by all. A society where all citizens, irrespective of affiliation or background, work together to value, respect, and sustainably utilize our unique legacy. Collectively driving forward environmental, cultural, economic and social progress.



The Trust's mission is to place Gibraltar's heritage at the centre of human development and sustainable change in Gibraltar, as a driver of that change for the greater public benefit. In doing so, the Trust seeks to ensure that Gibraltar's unique and diverse heritage is safeguarded, celebrated and shared securing its legacy for generations to come.

Strengthening the Foundations

Governance Reform



One of the year’s most significant undertakings has been the review and reform of the Trust’s governance structure. The Heritage and Antiquities Act 2018 provides the legislative framework for our work, but as a modern charitable NGO, the Trust recognised the need to strengthen accountability and efficiency to meet contemporary expectations.

Through focus groups, document reviews, and strategic consultations, the Trust has re-examined its internal structures and refreshed its approach to governance.

The objective was to ensure that the organisation’s framework reflects best practice for modern charities and provides clarity between strategic oversight and operational delivery.

Key outcomes of the review include:

- Introduction of a separation between governance and management functions.
- Reduction in the size of the Board to create a more agile decision-making body.
- Establishment of sub-committees focusing on key operational areas.
- Updated Terms of Reference and role descriptions for Trustees, ensuring clarity of purpose and accountability.



These changes are designed to enhance transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability, positioning the Trust for continued growth and professionalism for the years ahead.



Witham's Cemetery

A Living Legacy

Witham's Cemetery has become a symbol of community collaboration and the transformative power of heritage care. Once a neglected site, it now stands as a place of reflection, biodiversity, and education. This progress has been achieved thanks to the ongoing partnership with the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society and support from the Ministry for the Environment and Heritage.



Left: Heritage Summer Camp in Witham's Cottage, August 2025

Right: South District tour ending at Witham's Cemetery with tea & coffee

Highlights from this year include:

- Continued maintenance of restored headstones and pathways.
- Establishment of a regular horticultural maintenance programme supported by Government.
- Removal of illegal structures adjacent to the site.
- Development of interpretive signage and lighting improvements.
- Hosting of the Trust's 36th annual Open Air Art Competition themed on Witham's Cemetery itself.
- Delivery of a week-long Heritage Summer Camp craft workshop for children aged 5–10.





The transformation of Witham's has not only preserved an important historical site but has also created a new space for community connection, learning, and creativity. We look forward to continuing to bring this historic site back as a place of focus.



Images left to right: 36th Annual Painting Competition, Tours and Heritage Summer Camp



Partnerships & the Wider Heritage Landscape

The Trust continues to play a key role in Gibraltar's wider heritage eco-system. Collaboration remains at the core of the Trust's operations. This year has seen continuous collaborations and partnerships with Government departments, heritage bodies, and private entities to enhance Gibraltar's historic environment.

Highlights from this year include:



Active involvement in the Heritage Festival organised by the Ministry for Tourism with the Trust providing a programme of walking tours and activities which were fully booked.

Liaison with project managers and Government over continued restoration progress at The Mount and Northern Defences.



Growth in retail partnerships, notably at the WWII Tunnels, where the Trust supplies quality heritage merchandise.





Department of Town Planning and Building Control

HM Government of Gibraltar

- 17th April 2023 Date of 'Outline Planning Application' Submission - O/1846/23
- 29th June 2023 Date of OPC Meeting 7th Meeting of 2023
- 06th September 2023 Date of Outline Planning Approval Permit No. 0705
- 22nd December 2023 Date of 'Full Planning Application Stage 1 - Basement' DEF - F/19030/23
- 28th February 2024 Date of OPC Meeting 3rd Meeting of 2024
- 27th June 2024 Date of Full Planning Approval (Stage 1) Permit No. 0905
- 28th June 2024 Date of 'Full Planning Application Stage 2 - Above Ground' DEF - F/19030/23

Description of Planning History
 The 'Outline Planning Application' was submitted to the Development and Planning Commission on 17th of April 2023, after consultations with all pertinent statutory authorities.
 On the 29th of June 2023 the project proposal was further explained to the Development & Planning Commission granting the Outline Planning Permission in 0705, issued on the 6th of September 2023.
 Following the OPA Approval, the design team further developed the 'Basement' project, managing close consultations with the relevant Authorities at this stage.



Ongoing advocacy and collaboration through our role on the Development and Planning Commission.



These partnerships are supporting the ever-growing interest in Gibraltar's heritage offering whilst reinforcing the importance of heritage within Gibraltar's tourism and urban planning.



New range of bespoke items



Victorian Re-enactment Association performing during Heritage Week



Line Wall Circuit Tour as part of Heritage Week in May



Trustee visit to City Under Siege Exhibition during ongoing restoration

People, Volunteers & Engagement

The Trust's work continues to be powered by the dedication and enthusiasm of its people – Trustees, staff, volunteers, and members. Volunteers remain at the heart of our operations, contributing across a diverse range of roles including site maintenance, research, and event delivery.

Our engagement efforts have focused on expanding accessibility and inclusivity in heritage participation. Social media platforms, educational workshops, and partnerships with schools and NGOs have all helped to connect new audiences with Gibraltar's story. Amongst the network of support for the Trust is that of the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society.



Witham's Cemtery Volunteer



Calendar 2026 produced in collaboration with Gibraltar Botanic Gardens



School Workshops for INSET days explored 'Heritage in the Classroom'



Tours with Fortress of Gibraltar Group

Book Launch of *Me Acuerdo: Memories of Gibraltar's Old Town*



Sketch Safari in the Old Town with Rock Retreat Artists, 2024



Collaborative initiatives such as the 'Me Acuerdo' oral history project with the Rock Retreat, support for the Young Enterprise scheme, and support for community organisations reflect the Trust's commitment to heritage as a living and shared experience.



Left: 'Women of Gibraltar' Posters presented to Schools Centre
Centre: Tour Talk System donated to the Trust by GHITA
Right: Tours with Calypso & MH Bland as part of their 'Doing Good' Initiative

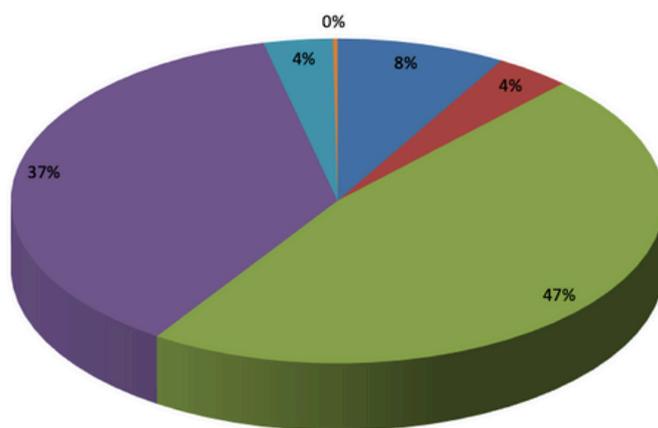


Financial Overview

The Trust's Total Income for the financial year 2024/25 amounted to £300, 213, 47% of which being the grant from the Government of Gibraltar which goes towards staff and administrative costs. Included in our overall income is sales, sponsorship for events and income from memberships and donations. Areas of the Trust's income and expenditure are analysed in the charts below. The Trust's expenditure in 2024/25 totalled £296,580 which resulted in a marginal operating surplus of £3,633. These accounts have been submitted to the Office of the Principle Auditor and are currently awaiting audit along with previous years accounts to date.

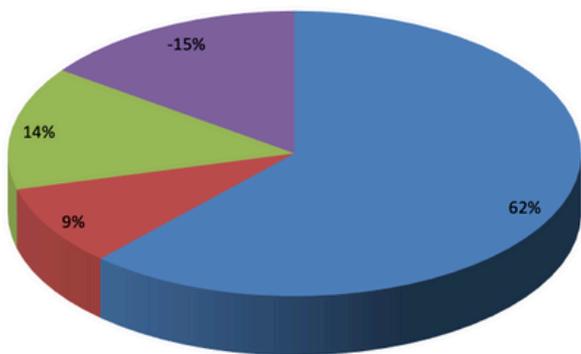
Analysis of Income 2024/25

■ Member Subscriptions ■ Donations ■ Grant from GoG ■ Sales ■ Miscellaneous ■ sponsorships



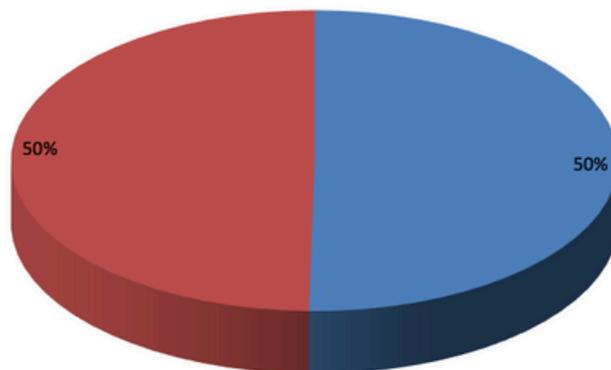
Expenditure of GoG Grant 2024/25

■ Salaries ■ PAYE ■ Main Guard Admin ■ Shortfall

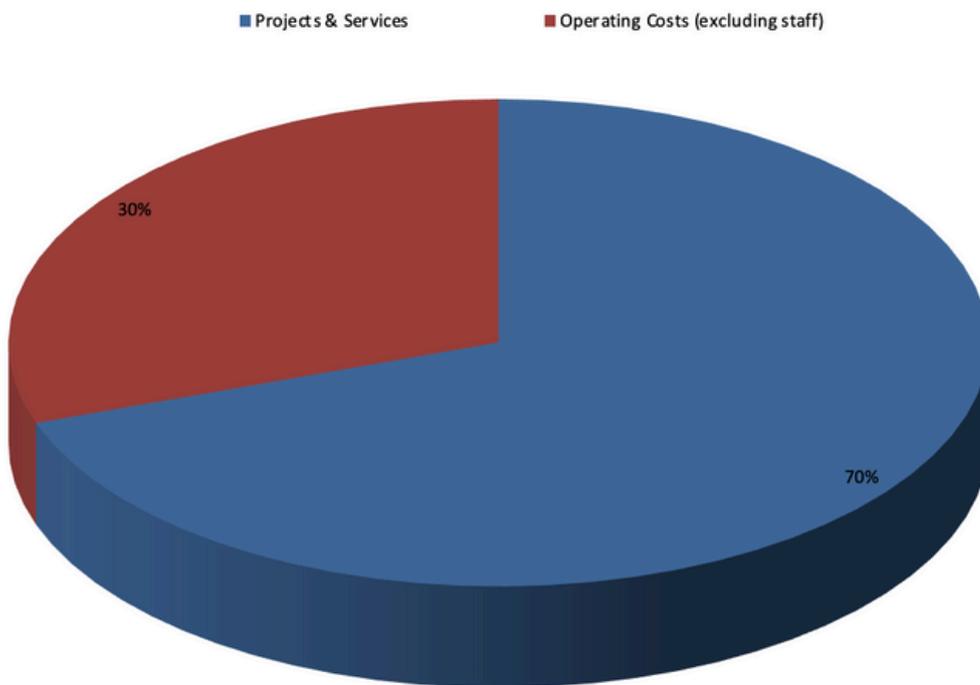


Income v. Expenditure 2024/25

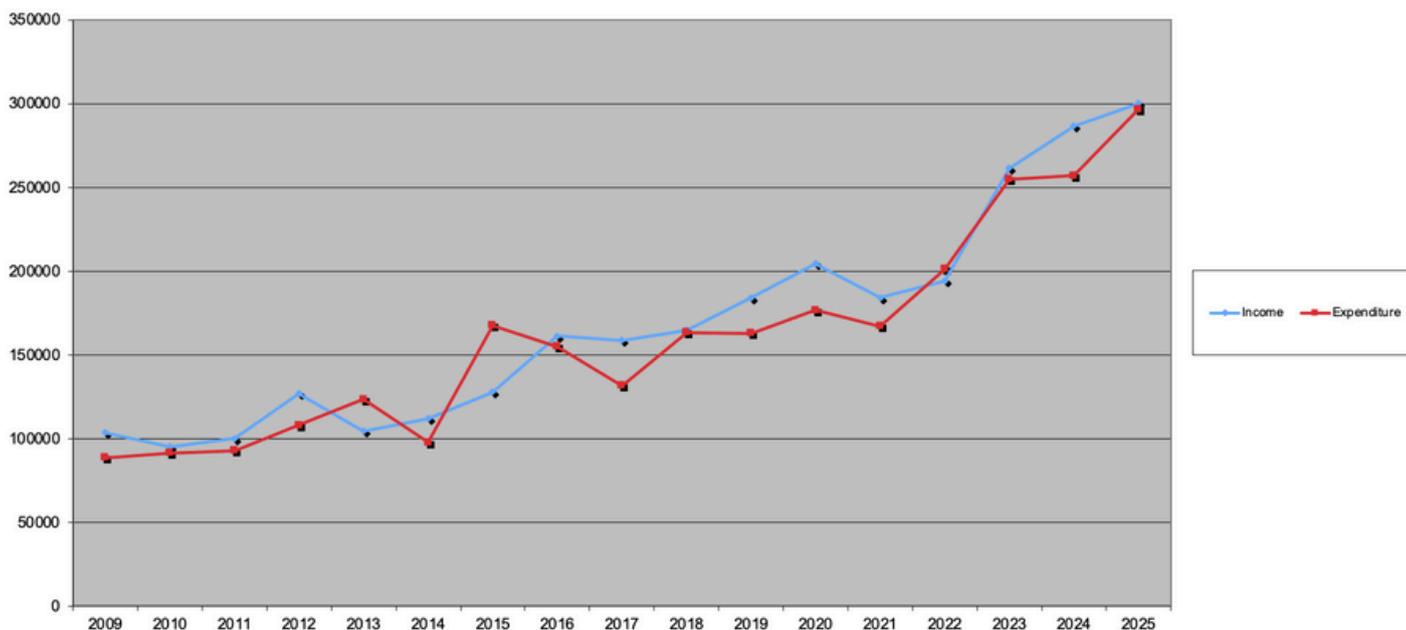
■ Income ■ Expenditure



Analysis of Expenditure 2024/25



Income v. Expenditure



Looking Ahead

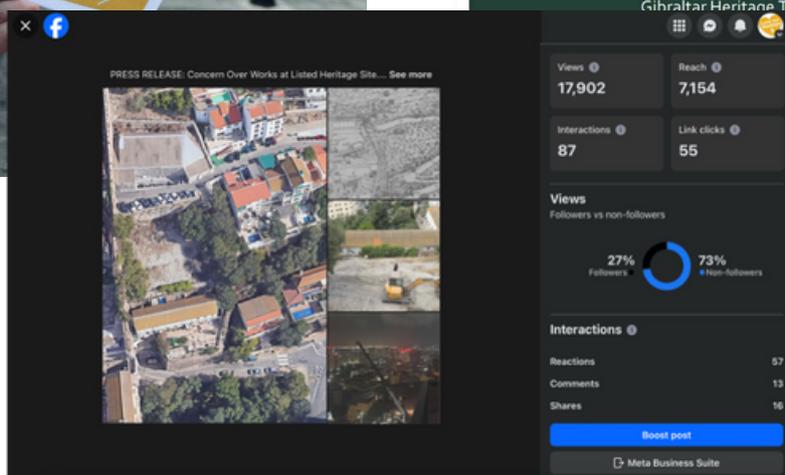
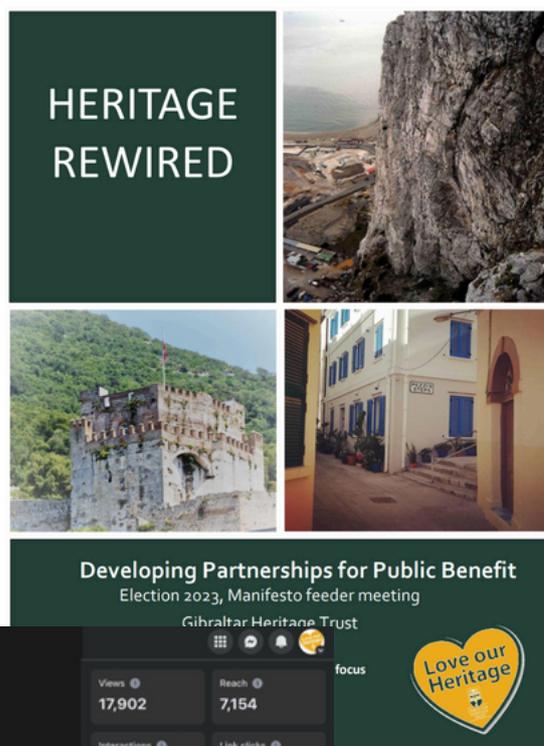
Heritage in Action

The coming year will focus on consolidating progress and building capacity for the future.

Key priorities include:

- Implementation of the governance reforms across all operational areas.
- Completion of interpretive installations at Witham's Cemetery.
- Development of a new Community Engagement Plan to connect schools, NGOs, and heritage professionals in collaborative projects.
- Expansion of volunteer training opportunities and site stewardship initiatives.
- Continued advocacy for sensitive and sustainable development in Gibraltar's urban environment.

Through these actions, the Trust will continue to promote heritage as a vital part of Gibraltar's identity, economy, and sense of community.



Closing Reflections

Carrying the Torch Forward

As Gibraltar stands at the threshold of new developments in its relationship with the wider region, the importance of heritage as a foundation of identity and belonging has never been clearer. The Trust's mission remains more relevant than ever: to preserve our heritage not only as a record of the past but as a source of inspiration and unity for the future.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have supported the Trust this year – our members, donors, volunteers, and partners. Together, we are carrying the torch forward with pride and purpose, ensuring that Gibraltar's heritage continues to shine brightly for generations to come.



Heritage Awards

The Gibraltar Heritage Trust is making some changes to its Heritage Awards procedure. The Awards, first launched in 1993, will now be held every two years with the nomination period being continuously open to allow submission of projects on a rolling basis.



Left: Shields, Plaques and Trophies awarded at past ceremonies



Over the past 30 years the Awards have established themselves as a prestigious recognition of the care and commitment shown by individuals, groups and organisations towards Gibraltar's unique heritage. We are pleased to say that the quality of refurbishments and conservation work across Gibraltar has steadily risen over the decades. This is due to the ever increasing awareness and valuing of our historic environment, but also to the tightening of the planning processes and improved standards of heritage monitoring. As always, there is still a great deal to keep improving on and the Heritage Awards are a vehicle to encourage this. The Trust is keen to ensure that these awards continue to highlight, reward, and celebrate the broad spectrum of projects that reflect the pride and dedication to heritage within our community.

To support this, from now on the nomination period will remain open on a continual basis, allowing the public to put forward eligible projects at any time. This will encourage and assist submissions to be made in the moment, for example upon completion of a project rather than having to wait months for the window to open. All applications will then be considered in the biennial cycle of awards, with the next presentation taking place in 2026. It is important that nominations are accompanied by supporting material or portfolios, e.g., Before and after photographs, videos, news articles or illustrative materials to assist in the decision making process. The Award Categories remain unchanged. All information and nomination forms are available to collect in our shop or can be downloaded from our website.



Left: Gibraltar National Archive Volunteers, 2024
Right: Recipients of our 2022 Awards

Gibraltar Heritage Journal Seminar

GIBRALTAR HERITAGE JOURNAL

In 2024, the Trust organised a two-evening seminar to celebrate the launch of our 30th edition of the Gibraltar Heritage Journal. This event featured both regular and new contributors to the journal who gave presentations based on their past articles, covering topics such as recording methods and the attraction of writing for the Journal. The Trust aims to hold an annual evening seminar for the launch of proceeding journals, with speakers from each edition.

Images from the 30th Anniversary Seminar





GIBRALTAR HERITAGE TRUST

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