

# Annual Report

2022





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## Details

The William Morris Society

Registered address:

Kelmscott House

26 Upper Mall


Hammersmith


London W6 9TA


Tel: 020 8741 3735

Email: [info@williammorrisociety.org](mailto:info@williammorrisociety.org)

[www.williammorrisociety.org](http://www.williammorrisociety.org)

 TheWilliamMorrisSociety

 @WmMorrisSocUK

 williammorrisocietyuk

Registered Charity number 1159382

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## Trustees, staff and volunteers

### PRESIDENT

Lord Sawyer of Darlington

### TRUSTEES

#### Chair:

Stephen Bradley

#### Vice-Chair:

John Stirling, to May 2022

Tara-Jane Sutcliffe, from May 2022

#### Hon. Treasurer:

Andrew Gray

#### Hon. Secretary:

Frances Graupner

#### Board Members:

Rebecca Estrada-Pintel, to May 2022

Sarah Hardy

Theresa Kneppers, co-opted January 2022,  
elected May 2022

Natalia Martynenko-Hunt

Fiona Talbott, to July 2022

Michael Robertson, co-opted January 2022,  
elected May 2022

The Trustee Board operates through the following committees under a written scheme of delegation: Finance & General Purposes with Investment, House & Garden and Nominations subcommittees; Collections, Library & Display; Engagement, Learning & Education; Programming and Projects.

### STAFF

#### Society Manager:

Cathy De'Freitas, to November 2022

#### Finance Manager:

Penny McMahon

#### Curator of Collections & Display:

Mallory Horrill

#### Curator, Research & Development:

Helen Elletson

#### Museum Officer (Learning & Engagement):

Laura Carrington, to September 2022

#### Volunteer & Membership Manager:

Vanessa Manson, from September 2022

### PRINCIPAL VOLUNTEER ROLES

#### Journal Editor:

Owen Holland, to November 2022

Wanne Mendonck, from November 2022

#### Magazine Editor:

Sarah Wilson

#### Journal Proofreader:

Lauren McElroy

The William Morris Society said fond farewells to Cathy De'Freitas, Society Manager, and Owen Holland, Journal Editor in 2022. Both Cathy and Owen had been with the Society for seven years and their immense contributions are gratefully appreciated.

The Society is extremely fortunate to be able to draw on a wide range of expertise and experience from our volunteers, who contribute many hours of their time to help with welcoming visitors to the museum, leading guided tours, delivering education sessions to schools and families, answering enquiries, cataloguing and caring for our collections, office administration and maintaining our garden as well as giving invaluable time to our committee work and special projects.

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# Chair's Annual Review of 2022



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2022 has been a year of very positive changes for The William Morris Society. During the year we saw the end of both Covid-19 restrictions and of the repair works after storm damage in our cellar at Kelmscott House. Since the museum reopened, we have been attracting good visitor numbers and reaching wider audiences by including Sunday afternoon opening.

Thanks are due to our loyal staff and volunteers for great efforts throughout 2022 in our participative activities, exhibitions, publications and communications, both online and face-to-face. We said farewell to Cathy DeFreitas, our Society Manager, who left us near the end of 2022 to manage a local museum much closer to her home and we record special thanks to Mallory Horrell and Vanessa Manson for taking over her workload and to trustee Sarah Hardy for her voluntary interim role of coordinating and overseeing staff work, pending the recruitment of our very experienced and capable new Chief Executive.

Also, after five years of unstinting service as voluntary editor of our special asset, the excellent *Journal of William Morris Studies*, we thank Owen Holland who has recruited and handed over to Wanne Mendonck, based at Cambridge University, whom we warmly welcome as the new *JWMS* editor.

The trustees continue to watch closely our cash management, our financial reserves and the performance of our investments, as reported in more detail below by our Honorary Treasurer. We continue to carefully monitor our ability to sustain our obligations both to our membership and as a charity, through very challenging times. Although we made a loss on normal operations through 2022, the trustees agreed a deficit budget for 2023 in order to invest in staff to develop business and to improve delivery of our charitable objects, as well as to continue to give excellent value service to our members and supporters. However we have to increase ordinary member subscriptions in 2023 to offset increasing costs of servicing the membership as well as running the museum premises, and we are actively seeking Gift Aid mandates from members and supporters. We are also looking closely at what we can offer to and ask from corporate supporters and institutional members with a view to offering new packages from the start of 2024.

Looking ahead to 2023, after five years of exceptional support to the Society and its Chair, our President, Lord Sawyer, will step down in 2023, to be replaced by our new President, Dr. Tristram Hunt – historian, past Member of Parliament, Director of the V&A Museum and, most importantly, a William Morris scholar and enthusiast. We record our gratitude and best wishes to both of them.

I also welcome our very experienced and highly capable new Chief Executive, Claudia Suckling. She started work with us in early 2023 and will

be focusing on income-generating and fundraising initiatives to enable us sustainably to achieve both our membership activities and our charitable activities.

We are developing two capital investment projects for the next couple of years ahead: firstly, to enhance digital delivery of our educational mission about the work of William Morris and his circle, providing improved access to information resources to as wide a set of audiences as possible; and secondly, to improve the interpretation and display in the coach house at Kelmscott House to emphasise its local historical importance and to publicise it as an attractive destination visit. Whilst we will be 'pump priming' these projects, external funding support will be essential. Enabling projects are under way at the time of writing: creating a brief for website developers for a more useable web 'platform' providing an improved portal to our collections catalogue and other information resources and partners; improvement of our physical library as a public resource; and providing better access to the garden and new education and display facilities.

To help us achieve these ambitions we need as much financial support as possible as well as continued voluntary time and energy. The first year of our patrons and supporter scheme, including several trustees as backers, has made a very encouraging contribution to offsetting our normal operating costs. We encourage many more members to join this patron and supporter scheme to get additional benefits including privileged visits to special places with Morris associations. Alternatively, we would like members to assist our charitable activities by adding a discretionary supplement to the annual subscription, enhanced whenever possible with Gift Aid. One-off donations or intentions to leave a legacy, through your will or letter of wishes to executors, will be enormously welcome to fund our projects in association with other funds and foundations.

For further information, please contact Claudia Suckling ([chiefexec@williammorrisociety.org](mailto:chiefexec@williammorrisociety.org)).

To conclude, I remain confidently optimistic that the work of the Society will continue to be relevant, educational and attractive to all our supporters and to the wider public. This is a very important time to communicate the importance and relevance of the work and ideas of William Morris and those whom he has inspired.

I thank all our supporters, our staff, trustees and other volunteers, for their loyalty and unstinting efforts on behalf of the Society.

On behalf of the board of trustees, April 2023

**Stephen Bradley**  
Chair, The William Morris Society

# 2022: highlights of the year

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## Reopening

In June 2021, a period of extreme rainfall resulted in flooding in the Society's cellar. As a consequence the museum had to close for an extended period, while the necessary repair work was carried out. Staff and volunteers rose to the challenge, continuing to run events and exhibitions virtually, until our doors reopened to visitors in May 2022. The collection was unaffected by the flooding and our cellar is now better protected against future instances of extreme weather.

## Conservation

In 2021 we were fortunate to be awarded the Tru Vue® Conservation & Exhibition Grant, administered through the Institute of Conservation, ICON. In April of 2022 we used the grant to have four important Kelmscott Press items on paper conserved and framed. Later in September, we installed the items, as part of our *Ideal Book* exhibition, marking the first time that these works have been on public display. This significant funding has ensured the protection of these items for future generations and enabled their regular display to educate visitors on the legacy of William Morris and the private press movement.





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‘I’m a remarkable woman, always was,  
though none of you seemed to think so.’  
*May Morris, 1936*

captions to come

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## The Collection



In celebration of May Morris’s 160th anniversary we held the exhibition *May Morris: Art & Advocacy* between May-September 2022. The exhibit explored May’s exceptional designs for Morris & Co., her expertise in decorative needlework, her significant position within the public sphere, her pivotal role in co-founding the Women’s Guild of Arts and her great efforts in memorialising her father’s legacy.

In September, while between exhibitions, we hosted a display from the local Pilsudski Institute. The week-long exhibit was titled *Nispa Among the Ainu* and profiled the achievements of Polish ethnographer Bronislaw Pilsudski, who researched the indigenous peoples of Northeast Asia. The exhibition touched on difficult anthropological issues, inviting viewers to consider the problem of the disappearance of cultures and the still repressive treatment of national minorities.

In October, we reinstalled the exhibition *The Ideal Book: William Morris and the Kelmscott Press*. The exhibition explored the history of Morris’s book printing enterprise and showcased a number of rarely seen objects from the Society’s collection, including the *Kelmscott Chaucer*, which was described by Edward Burne-Jones as ‘like a pocket cathedral’.

Also in October, the Society displayed pieces created by the exceedingly talented students at the Macbeth Centre in Hammersmith. The Macbeth Centre is an adult education hub that offers a large range of classes and courses that allow students to develop new skills and interests. The works featured were a diverse range including stained glass, ceramics, jewellery, woodwork and works on paper. The pieces demonstrated the continued importance of creativity and handcraft in our contemporary world.

We were fortunate to accept two groups of items into our archive a handful of letters between members of the Women’s Guild of Arts and a folio containing W.R. Lethaby’s letters and research notes for his book on Philip Webb. We are grateful for these important donations and look forward to sharing them in future displays and with our network.

We were delighted to lend two wallpaper samples and two Morris & Co. sale books from our collection to feature in the exhibition *The Walkers’ Wall: A Study of Morris & Co. Wallpapers* held at our near neighbour, Emery

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‘Thank you for a lovely, relaxing and informative afternoon’  
*Family workshop attendee*

‘Thank you so much for hosting us yesterday – it was a lovely day out for all of us, teachers included!’  
*Teacher following school workshop*

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## Activities, Learning and Outreach

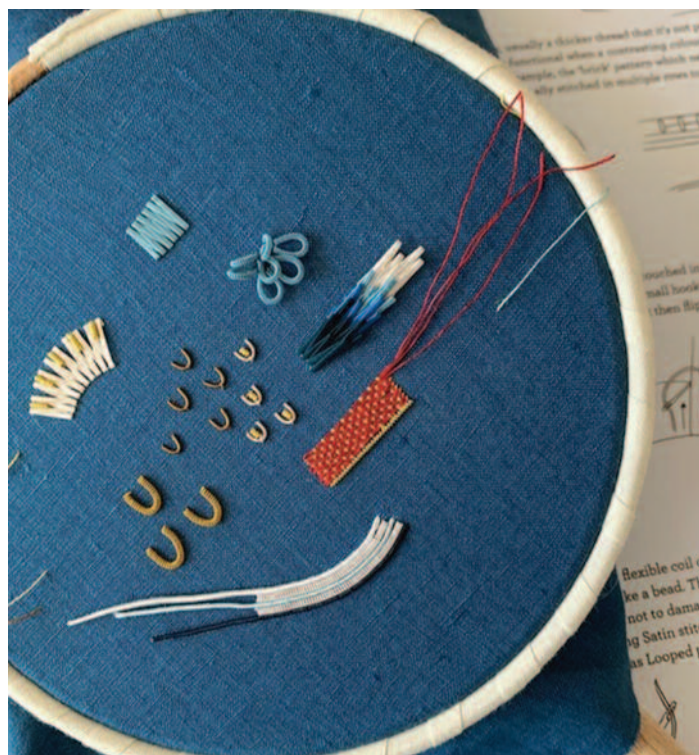
This year we re-started in-person tours, workshops and events following our re-opening. Alongside welcoming members and enthusiasts back into our museum premises, we continued our online delivery of talks and lectures, which have continued to be a great way of engaging with a larger, more international audience.

Our 2022 Lecture Programme included a fantastic range of Morrisian subjects, of which highlights were: Dr. Lynn Hulse’s presentation on Morris’s involvement with the Royal School of Needlework, Kirsty Hartsiotis’s two-part series on Arts and Crafts churches in the Cotswolds, Andrea Wolk Roger’s examination of Morris and Burne-Jones’s lifelong collaboration and Mary Schoeser’s discussion of Morris & Co. wallpapers.

We were delighted to hold our Kelmscott Lecture in person for the first time since the pandemic and on site at our Coach House in November. Leading Morris-authority, Dr. Jan Marsh, delivered a thought-provoking presentation, titled *Against Hypocrisy and Vicarious Ferocity: William Morris and Resistance to British Imperialism*. For those unable to attend the event, the lecture was published in the Society’s Journal.

Research Curator, Helen Elletson, continued our online ‘Coffee with a Curator’ talks, delivering quarterly sessions, highlighting items in our collection. Subjects of the series in 2022 included the Kelmscott Press edition of *The History of Godefrey of Boloyne*, The Holy Grail Tapestries, Morris & Co. carpets and a spotlight on John Henry Dearle.

Tying in with our May Morris exhibition we held two onsite embroidery workshops one led by Becky Hogg, which focused on Morris’s iconic *Strawberry Thief*, and another run of ‘Handmade in Hammersmith’ by Sally Roberson, who takes inspiration from May Morris’s designs.





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‘Love the talk, such a good presenter, very infectious enthusiasm and very knowledgeable. I learnt new things and brought some knowledge I had together.’

*Attendee, ‘William and Jane Morris at home’*

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## Activities, Learning and Outreach

### SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

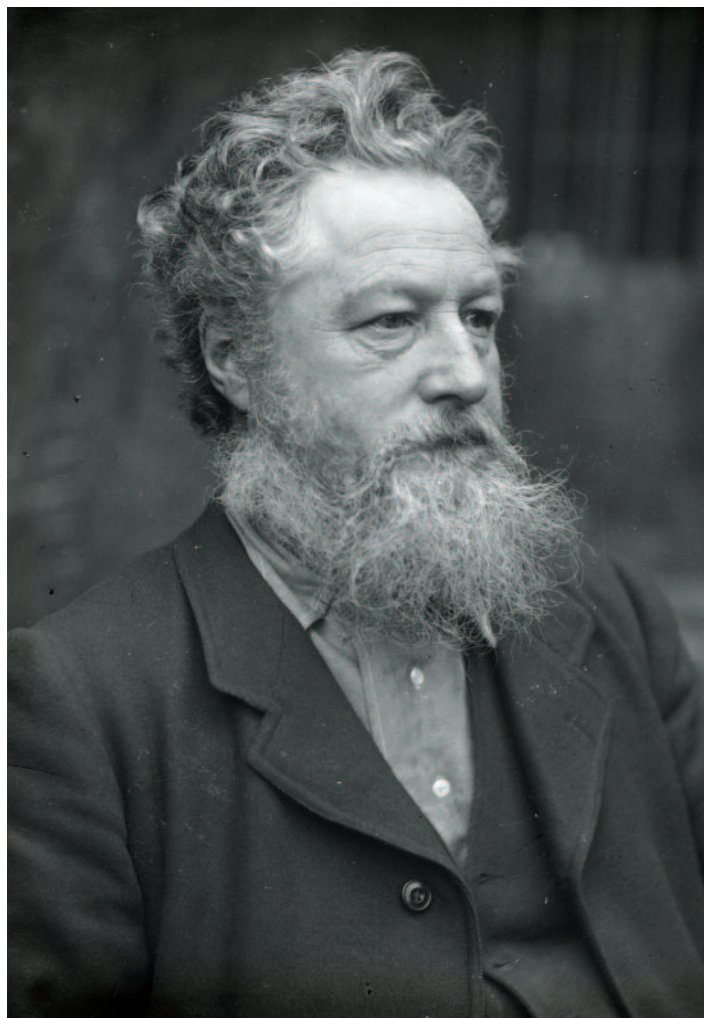
This year we resumed in-person outreach visits to local schools, as well as onsite children’s and family workshops led by our Museum Officer and Learning volunteers. Our family workshops complemented our exhibitions programme, including embroidery, block printing and paper crafts.

In August, we were delighted to participate in a Children’s Fair alongside other small historic houses in London, including Fulham Palace and Benjamin Franklin House. This cross-promotion allows us to engage with a wider audience and develop collaborative relations with our heritage colleagues.

Additionally, we were happy to be able to offer internships to two students from Birkbeck and Kingston Universities as well as offering a work experience placement to students from Latymer Upper School.

### YOUTH FORUM

The William Morris Society Youth Forum, a group of 16-24 year-olds, mounted an exciting project in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the publication of Morris’s *Love is Enough*. The Forum, led by our Museum Officer, Laura Carrington, and Forum Chair, Alice Dodds, explored LGBTQ+ artists in the Arts and Crafts Movement, responding to Morris’s poem through this lens. Their work culminated in a virtual show on our website that featured illustrations created by the forum and thoughtful discussion on the effect of Morris’s poem on them and its relevance to the present day.



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2 exhibitions

Over 4,000 visitors to the museum

18 online lectures and talks with over 1,100 tickets sold

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## Publications

The two issues of the 2022 *Journal of William Morris Studies* marked the conclusion of Owen Holland's five years as editor before passing on to the new editor, Wanne Mendonck, and also the last contribution of Rosie Miles as reviews editor. The Journal articles reflect the breadth of Morrisian interests and studies.

Highlights included a revised version of Jan Marsh's 2022 Kelmscott Lecture 'Hypocrisy and Cant and Vicarious Ferocity: William Morris and Resistance to British Imperialism', 'Robert Lorimer's 1897 Lecture on William Morris,' by Annette Carruthers, 'Beautiful and Useful: Arts and Crafts' Memorials of the Great War' by Carolyn Malone and 'A Fruitful Relationship: William Morris and Ernest Gimson' by Mary Greensted.

The *Magazine*, under Sarah Wilson's editorship, also continued to flourish and covered a wide range of topics including articles about William de Morgan, May Morris and Iceland, the Arts and Crafts Movements in Russia, Stanislaw Wyspianski from Poland, and William Morris at Rounton Grange.

Proposals for future contributions to both publications are always welcomed and should be sent to the editors, whose details may be found on the Society's website.

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## The Library

The Society welcomed a new library volunteer, Camilla Adeane, who is working alongside Collections Curator, Mallory Horrill, on catalogue upkeep and facilitating research visits.

We have continued to assist with public enquiries, both academic and those of a more general nature. We are grateful to our volunteer team for their expertise and support in this area.





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7,900 Twitter followers  
9,500 Facebook followers  
24,700 Instagram followers  
2,000 views for talks on YouTube

The William Morris  
Society's headquarters at  
Kelmscott House

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## Membership

Our membership numbers are stable with over 750 individual and corporate members of the UK Society. There are currently over 80 overseas members in 15 countries without their own societies, such as Germany, Japan and Australia. Our sister societies in the US and Canada have over 320 members and 150 members respectively.

In 2022 we introduced an 'Under 30' Membership level, announced with a campaign across our mailing and social media platforms. This level took the place of our previously offered Student Membership level. This has attracted 25 additional members so far.

Last, but not least, we launched a patron and supporter scheme. This initiative gives exciting, additional benefits starting at just £100 a year, they include invitations to exclusive events and behind-the-scenes guided visits, and free access to all the Society's online lectures.

The loyalty and generosity of our Members and Supporters helps us to further our important work. As a valued member of the Society, we ask you to consider upgrading your membership to enjoy the extra benefits of being a Supporter.

For more information please visit our website at [www.williammorrisociety.org/membership/](http://www.williammorrisociety.org/membership/) or call us at +44 (0)20 8741 3735.

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## Funding and donations

The William Morris Society gratefully acknowledges receipt of funding of £15,000 in 2022 from the 3rd Sector Investment Fund scheme through the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

The Society was also grateful to receive a £1,000 grant from the Paul Mellon Centre, to go towards our Learning & Education initiatives.



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# Financial Report

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## Treasurer's Report

As noted in the Chair's report, 2022 saw many positive changes for the Society – particularly the re-opening of the museum, with extended opening hours compared to pre-Covid. We continue to produce highly valued, high-quality publications, and have spent much time in 2022 planning new initiatives for future enhancements to our charitable offering and our financial sustainability. Notwithstanding this optimistic outlook, we must also acknowledge the reality of our financial performance in 2022, where we show an operating deficit of £26,914 (2021: deficit of £3,440), and an overall reported deficit for the year of £61,050 after taking into consideration investment losses.

Our investments are deployed in a diverse portfolio of ethical investments which is managed by Evelyn Partners, a highly-respected investment manager. Our portfolio is positioned to yield a positive income stream in the medium to long term but, like any investments, will always be subject to short term fluctuations. In recent years, our portfolio has regularly yielded positive returns which have supported our operations, however, 2022 was a poor year for investments across the world and we report a loss of £34,146 (2021: gain of £32,995) on our investment portfolio for the year. I am happy to state that much of that loss had been reversed even by the time of our Trustee Board meeting in February 2023, however global financial markets remain volatile. The Trustees monitor investment returns at each meeting and remain supportive of our current investment policy.

The Society's museum was closed until May 2022, primarily driven by repair work required as a result of damage caused by flooding. Whilst we benefitted from a successful insurance claim to cover some of the costs and lost income as a result of the flooding, there were no further grants from the Government relating to Covid-19 disruption (2021: £25,286).

Given the financial challenges which the Society continues to face, I would like to remind members that, despite increases due in 2023, our subscription rates cover little more than the costs of servicing membership (including costs of our regular publications for members), so there are now a number of opportunities for members also to support the broader charitable efforts of the Society. For example, by joining our excellent supporter scheme, adding a donation to your subscription payments, or via one-off donations on the website. If you are a UK taxpayer, we can also claim gift aid on the whole amount of your subscriptions and donations as long as we have the appropriate Gift Aid declaration from you.

Throughout 2022, the Trustee Board has kept the financial health of the Society at the top of our agenda – from discussions around potential additional revenue and grant opportunities, through to shaping a more successful and financially sustainable future for the Society. Whilst the financial result for 2022 is disappointing, the Trustees remain confident in the long-term viability of the Society's activities based on a range of planned and potential enhancements to our income strategy going forward.

At 31 December 2022 the Society's Funds totalled £750,038 (2021: £811,088). The Society's Reserves policy has been reviewed again in 2022 and we continue to set our minimum reserves requirement at £100k, which represents 6 months' operating costs as well as provision for certain exceptional expenditures. Whilst the balance of reserves at 31 December 2022 sits well above this at £739k (calculated as net assets less tangible fixed assets), we continue to regard the investment of the bulk of the proceeds of the sale of the long lease on the Coach House flat (£500k) as 'long term investments' which will provide ongoing income to support the Society's activities. The Trustees are satisfied this approach remains consistent with the long-term goals of the Society, however, we will continue to keep these matters in focus as the Society moves into what we hope will be more stable and successful years ahead.

Once again, I will close by reiterating the gratitude of the Trustee Board to our Finance Manager, Penny McMahon. Penny's ongoing diligence and reporting on financial matters are highly valued by all Trustees, particularly during these times of internal and external challenges, and I remain highly appreciative on her experience and ongoing support.

Andrew Gray  
Treasurer, The William Morris Society



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	2022 Total (£)	2021 Total (£)
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
From generated funds				
Voluntary income				
Subscriptions	28,724	450	29,174	27,640
Grant from Hammersmith & Fulham Borough Council	15,000		15,000	15,000
Coronavirus Government Grant aid				25,286
Other grants		1,000	1,000	2,320
Guided tours	1,209		1,209	
School visits	660		660	420
Coach House hire	1,210		1,210	
Licensing	14,239		14,239	2,367
Embroidery and Textile Workshops	1,204		1,204	
Sustainer Scheme	5,353		5,353	
Other donations	2,527		2,527	5,147
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>				
Surplus from sale of books, cards etc	6,880		6,880	5,917
Surplus from meetings and events	5,448		5,448	2,936
<b>Investment income</b>				
Deposit account interest	99		99	1
Insurance Claims Settlements	7,751		7,751	11,187
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>90,304</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>91,754</b>	<b>98,221</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
Charitable activities				
Magazine and Journal	18,911		18,911	17,541
Support costs	71,485		71,485	76,796
Kelmscott House upkeep	14,740	250	14,990	14,904
Conservation & Education	1,936	2,410	4,346	2,838
Sustainer Scheme	190		190	
<b>Governance costs</b>				
Trustees expenses	551		551	1,657
Professional fees	6,026		6,026	3,984
Other resources expended		2,230	2,230	1,200
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>113,839</b>	<b>4,890</b>	<b>118,729</b>	<b>118,920</b>
<b>Net incoming resources</b>	<b>(23,535)</b>	<b>(3,440)</b>	<b>(26,975)</b>	<b>(20,699)</b>
<b>Other recognised gains/losses</b>				
(Loss)/Profit on revaluation of investments	(34,136)		(34,136)	32,995
<b>Net movement of funds</b>	<b>(57,671)</b>	<b>(3,440)</b>	<b>(61,111)</b>	<b>12,296</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>				
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2022	788,195	22,893	811,088	798,792
<b>Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2022</b>	<b>730,524</b>	<b>19,453</b>	<b>749,977</b>	<b>811,088</b>

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2022 Total	2021 Total
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Tangible Fixed Assets	10,886		10,886	8,120
Investments	653,448		653,448	212,584
	<b>664,334</b>		<b>664,334</b>	<b>220,704</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Stocks	11,592		11,592	12,122
Debtors	11,950		11,950	5,346
Cash in bank and in hand	47,290	19,453	66,743	577,060
	<b>70,832</b>	<b>19,453</b>	<b>90,285</b>	<b>594,528</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
Amounts falling due within one year	(4,642)		(4,642)	(4,144)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>66,190</b>	<b>19,453</b>	<b>85,643</b>	<b>590,384</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>730,524</b>	<b>19,453</b>	<b>749,977</b>	<b>811,088</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>				
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>				
General Fund	152,050		152,050	209,721
Kelmscott House Reserve	568,058		568,058	568,058
Emberton Fund	1,268		1,268	1,268
John Kay Memorial Fund	1,425		1,425	1,425
Syer Bequest	1,723		1,723	1,723
News from Nowhere	1,000		1,000	1,000
Peter Preston Bequest	5,000		5,000	5,000
<b>Restricted Funds</b>				
Life Members Fund		2,318	2,318	4,098
Restricted Grants		17,135	17,135	18,795
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>730,524</b>	<b>19,453</b>	<b>749,977</b>	<b>811,088</b>

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The William Morris Society exists to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the life and work of one of the greatest men of the Victorian, or any, age.

Designer, craftsman, poet, and social campaigner: his ideas on how we might live better lives, on ecology and conservation, on politics and the place of arts in our lives remain as stimulating now as they were in his lifetime.

In order to enable us to deliver our charitable purpose and reach out to as many audiences as possible, we need wide and ongoing participation and financial contributions. Please consider making a donation or leaving a legacy to The William Morris Society.

For more information, please contact the Society office or visit the Support Us page on our website.

[www.williammorrisociety.org](http://www.williammorrisociety.org)

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