The Friends of
Manx National Heritage

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be writing once again as Chairman of the Friends of Manx National Heritage. The Friends were established for the charitable purpose of the advancement and promotion of the aims and work of the Manx Museum and Manx National Heritage, and the acquisition or contribution towards the acquisition of suitable exhibits and property.

Here are a few examples of how we have helped preserve our unique cultural heritage and support the acquisitions and conservation of the National collection this year:

- With funds provided by Friends of Manx National Heritage, the 'Watcher' sculpture by Bryan Kneale RA was restored off-site by local companies and returned to the museum grounds in February. We are delighted to have helped preserve this artwork for future generations.
- The Friends were also pleased to fund the repair of the kitchen range at Cregneash and to see it re-installed at Church Farm in time for the seasonal site opening in March.
- In May, Calf View was launched, a newly renovated cottage overlooking the Cregneash, the Sound and the Calf of Man. It is the latest addition to Manx National Heritage's portfolio of unique self-catering holiday properties; its refurbishment achieved with funding from the Friends.
- In July, the Friends assisted with the procurement of a new 4WD All-Terrain vehicle for the Calf of Man, to help the Wardens travel across the island and carry equipment for wildlife conservation, visitor services and essential estate management. In the same month, the Friends enabled specialist conservation of Castle Rushen's clock, believed to date from the late 16th century and one of the most significant historic timepieces in the British Isles.
- This summer, the Friends have assisted with the refurbishment of the Seminar Room at the Manx Museum, with upgraded features such as adaptable furniture and flexible lighting, making this much-used facility more accessible to visitors.
- Through Autumn and into next year, the Friends have committed to assisting various projects at the Calf, including solar panels and a bunded fuel bowser, and projects to improve interpretation and undertake vital repair work at various sites including Castle Rushen and Laxey Wheel.

When you attend the AGM, you will hear Connie Lovel, Executive Director of MNH's presentation, giving more details about what has been going on, how support from the Friends continues to assist and where the funds have been spent.

In November 2025, the Friends recruited a new Admin & Development Officer, Hannah Murphy, who continues to run the day-to-day charity administration and is point of contact with our members. Since taking on this role, Hannah has worked hard to promote what we do and develop and expand the membership, introducing a new look to our newsletter, and a wider, community-focused events programme.

Our wonderful Friends volunteers have helped at several MNH events in the past year. Our gardening volunteers at Cregneash, Rushen Abbey and The Grove make an enormous difference with the continued development of the gardens, enhancing the visitor experience. We have provided volunteers for Egg Rolling at Cregneash, Sports Day at The Grove, Shakespeare at Peel Castle, Little People's Picnic at Rushen Abbey and Hop Tu Naa at Cregneash. Thank you to everyone who has helped for their time and commitment. You are all very much appreciated by us and by Manx National Heritage.

Our members have continued to enjoy access to a full programme of events this year arranged by Hannah Murphy, our Admin & Development Officer. These include a talk on the Eighth Earl of Derby by renowned local historian Derek Winterbottom, a visit to the Manx Lavender Farm, an introduction to beekeeping at The Grove and a talk on Early Celtic Saints by Revd. Dr Ian Faulds. Many thanks to all Friends members who have purchased event tickets and made additional donations – your support has been very much appreciated. We also give our thanks to the wonderful charities, local groups and individuals who have partnered with us to deliver these events in support of the work of Manx National Heritage. If you would like to attend any of our forthcoming events, details can be found on the Friends website and in your monthly newsletter. Please contact Hannah for more information.

We are constantly updating our records, and we still have hundreds of members for whom we only have a postal address. If you are one of those, please can you provide us with your email address? As you must be aware, staying in touch by email saves so much on postage and administration. Send an email to info@fmnh.im and we will do the rest.

Lastly, my thanks as ever to Mary Bridson for her incredible work running the Membership and to Harley Shimmin, our Treasurer, for all his hard work and all my fellow Directors for their continued support.

We would not be where we are without you – our members – so a continued huge thank you to you all for your support to our Charity. I hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM on Saturday 7th November.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Michael Crowe

Chairman