



Our Impact 2026 – 2027

Founded in 1972 to help preserve 2,000 years of York's history, York Archaeology is an independent educational charity.



York Archaeology Strategy 2026-2031

Our Mission

We advance understanding of the past for public benefit through archaeological discovery, research and engagement. We are :

Accessible

We make archaeology open and relevant to all

Authentic

We are rigorous, evidence-led and trusted

Pioneering

We innovate and continually improve what we do

Collaborative

We work with others to create shared value

Chair's introduction for Annual Impact Statement

York Archaeology is celebrating 50 years since its foundation as an archaeological charity. Much has changed since then but the core values of preserving and celebrating our rich archaeological heritage remain close to our hearts.

The last few years have presented significant challenges. We have recovered from the close-down caused by Covid but since then, like our visitors and users, we have been dramatically impacted by rising costs. We work with agencies and commercial partners across the UK to investigate landscapes and preserve archaeological evidence – so the slow-down in construction has affected us as well. We have risen to these challenges by reducing our costs and investing in new initiatives and opportunities.

This document highlights the wide range of our activities across Yorkshire, Nottingham and beyond. It is not just statistics but a celebration of the impact we have on the lives of those we engage with. Jorvik remains a key part of York's visitor offer and DIG continues to inspire schoolchildren and young people from many miles around – but York Archaeology is so much more than this and I hope you enjoy reading about us. As a self-funded charity we appreciate your support.



Roman Festival

This year saw continued emphasis on building partnerships across the city, including working with YMT, York Minster, The Civic Trust and the University of York to help deliver the Eboracum Roman Festival. Behind the scenes we pitched in to help the YMT team with planning and logistics and that hard work paid off during the weekend of May 23–24, when huge crowds turned out for Roman re-enactments, artillery displays, epic family battles and fantastic talks by authors Greg Jenner and Terry Deary.

Our main public-facing contribution to the festival was creating and hosting the “Archaeology Zone.” We wanted to give visitors a real, hands-on peek into what happens after a dig, bringing the past to life through:

- Live Conservation: Showing people how we clean, protect, and care for delicate artefacts.
- Local Finds: Giving the public an up-close look at actual Roman items uncovered right here in York.
- Post-Excavation Work: Explaining the detective work that goes into turning freshly dug objects into history.
- By offering our skills in partnership, we helped to make Eboracum Roman Festival a memorable, hands-on experience for the whole Community.

Uncovering more history of the Yorkshire Wolds

We're thrilled to share that Historic England has awarded a £136,356 grant to York Archaeology and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to help bring local history to life for people who wouldn't normally get involved in heritage projects.

Alongside local volunteer groups, we're tapping into Historic England's massive aerial and ground survey, covering over 170km² of the Yorkshire Wolds stunning chalk landscape packed with archaeology spanning from prehistoric times all the way to WWII.



These photos are of We Dig Derventio in Derby by Chris Seddon

We're helping to make this incredible history accessible to everyone through:

- Free skills sessions and events open to all, using real survey data and photos to show how archaeologists map and understand ancient landscape.
- Bringing people together to explore the unique heritage of Europe's northernmost chalk stream and its thousands of years of human settlement.
- Wrapping up the project by putting our discoveries online, so local communities can easily explore the history right on their doorstep.
- By blending wildlife, landscape, and hands-on archaeology, we're helping more people uncover and celebrate the rich stories hidden in their local environment.

Finding the social value in JORVIK Viking Festival 2026

This year we have committed to begin a more formal process for measuring the social value of the work we do, so it aligns with our new strategy. JORVIK Viking Festival 2026 (JVF26) is the first project we put through this framework, and it scored highly.

Being the biggest of its kind, JVF26 brings Viking history to the streets of York, making it accessible in every sense of the word:

- The encampment on Parliament Street is physically accessible for people.
- The team that works on the encampment and the marquee inside it are experienced in supporting people who may find the environment overwhelming.
- Many events are free to attend.
- Paid-for events are kept as low cost as possible and the main events have a selection of discounted tickets for those on lower incomes, offered on an honesty basis.
- All prices are displayed on the website so people can plan their day and what they will attend, in advance, with no hidden costs.
- History and education are the foundation of every event so people always learn something, even if they don't realise it!

A report developed in collaboration with Visit York estimates JVF26 attracted just under 70,000 people over the week and contributed just under £7m to York's economy.

JVF26 is delivered by a very small team, which is supported by people from across the organisation, volunteers and suppliers who come back year after year, making it a truly collaborative project.



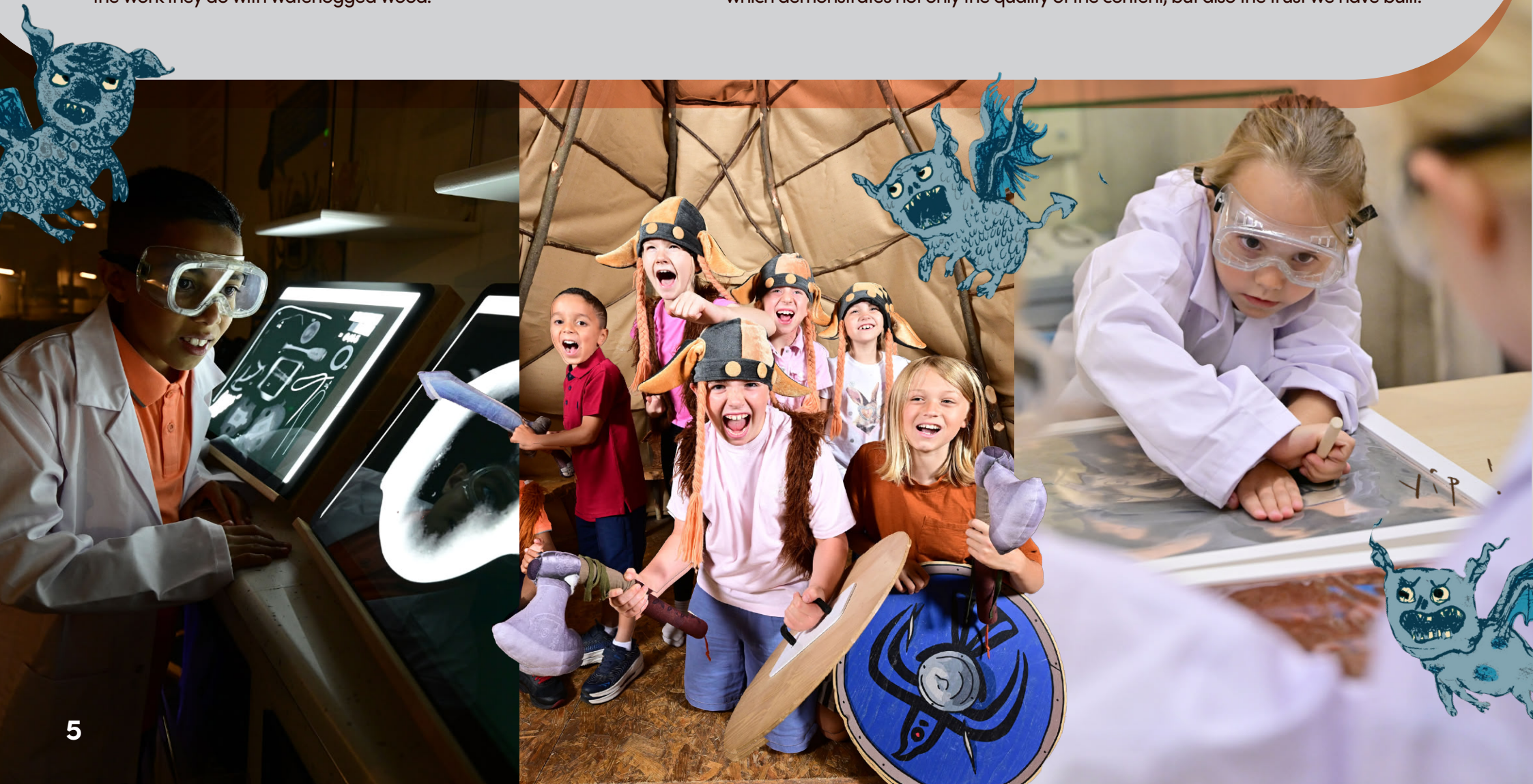
Bringing shipwrecks and more dragons to DIG

The current Cressida Cowell's How to Train Your Dragon School Exhibition has been in place for just over 12 months and the feedback has been consistently positive. However, there has been a consistent request for more hands-on activities.

The release of the next book in the series, in June, gave us the perfect opportunity to rectify this. With one of the main storylines being Hiccup and Co finding a shipwreck, there seemed a natural link to Conservation and the work they do with waterlogged wood.

A few months (and a lot of hard work) later we find ourselves with a child-friendly, dragon-themed conservation lab complete with X-rays, a desalination experiment, a microscope and a concretion activity.

As with the initial project, this was a full cross-departmental project including Collections & Archives, Conservation, Learning & Interpretation, Operations, Technical and Marketing (as well as Finance for letting us have the money!). Hachette Children's Publishing is really pleased with it as well and signed everything off with no changes, which demonstrates not only the quality of the content, but also the trust we have built.



Moving Forward 2027

- York Archaeology & Science Leadership

A key element of York Archaeology's history is its leadership in the development of archaeological science, more specifically, the conservation of waterlogged wood and organic materials. This developed in response to the exceptional waterlogged deposits encountered during excavations in York, in particular, during the Coppergate investigations, which provided the basis of the JORVIK Viking Centre.

2027 will see an exciting new development as we look to strengthen and grow our capacity in science-based specialist services, in particular, we hope to establish a microfossil laboratory. This facility will process microscopic remains (primarily pollen and diatoms), from archaeological sediment, providing evidence of ancient environments and indicators of human activities and impacts.

This is the first step in the repositioning of York Archaeology as a provider of much needed specialist services, giving training and public access opportunities, with the potential to generate new, and fascinating stories, from both our existing, and future collections. As part of this we will also look to invest in our Conservation team with new analytical equipment. There is also a timely opportunity to acquire two important insect reference collections, which could form the basis of another in-house specialist service (archaeoentomology).

After some challenging years, York Archaeology's future looks exciting - the current proposals encapsulate the essence of York Archaeology's historic legacy, a unique blend of discovery and public engagement, reflecting an organisation wide aspiration, to recapture the spark that drove the development of JORVIK and ARC/DIG.





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