



Discover. Experience. Celebrate.

2024

Impact Report



#MyVictoriaBaths



Who we are

Victoria Baths is Grade II* listed and widely recognised as Britain's finest historic former swimming pool. First opened in 1906 and still owned by Manchester City Council, the Baths has played an important part in the health and wellbeing of local people and is now a very popular heritage, events and community venue.

When the Baths closed in 1993, the local community campaigned vigorously to try to prevent the closure. The Friends of Victoria Baths set up the Victoria Baths Trust, a charity which aims to repair and maintain the building to bring it fully back into public use.

The Victoria Baths Trust operates through a Board of Trustees supported by Special Advisors, a staff team and our much-valued volunteers.

What we do

The Trust's committees set the strategy, provide governance and support our CEO in managing our staff team to look after the buildings, raise funds and deliver our community and events programme

Since the Trust was formed, significant restoration has taken place, and the building now has over 35,000 visitors a year enjoying a wide range of activities including cultural and community events, weddings and events put on by our partners.

There is still a lot of work to be done and the Trust remains determined to bring the amazing building back to its full potential.

All our community activities are funded by our commercial activities and fundraising.

What you can do

You can enjoy a visit to Victoria Baths for free on our Welcome Days. Take time for yourself to **discover** our beautiful buildings.

You can **experience** an event here. We provide many free or low-cost opportunities to enjoy the Baths. Many of our partners provide ticketed events for cultural, educational and recreational events.

You can **celebrate** here! Weddings are the first time many people visit Victoria Baths and make amazing memories.

You can help us preserve the buildings for future generations. Volunteer with us and gain new skills and make new friends. You can also support Victoria Baths by donating, becoming a Friend, making a purchase, or leaving a legacy.

This is #MyVictoriaBaths.

Jump into 2024



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Welcome

by our Chair, Bernard Priest



Victoria Baths has a clear purpose – to improve the lives of local people.

For over 30 years, a dedicated team of volunteers and staff has worked tirelessly to keep these beautiful buildings open as a community-powered cultural and heritage hub.

These pools don't hold water today – instead, they're full of creativity and activity, with the potential for so much more.

In 2024, we expanded and strengthened both our Board and our staff team with the skills required to bring our vision for Victoria Baths to life. Our new CEO Anthony Baker brings energy and experience of civic engagement and transforming heritage spaces to create social impact through capital development.

We've continued with our conservation efforts to protect our buildings whilst opening them up for our community to discover, experience and celebrate.

We had record numbers of heritage visitors in 2024. Our popular programme of civic and community events attracted a wide audience and gave a platform for local choirs and makers.

We continue to provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities for students, employer-supported volunteering and our much-valued group of regular volunteers.

Looking ahead

There is much work still to do and we're working closely with Manchester City Council and other funders to put together the capital development plan which will enable the building to grow its commercial work which in turn funds our civic and community programme.

Victoria Baths has long been a landmark in Manchester. Now we're embedding ourselves into the culture, creative, health and wellbeing fabric of the city.

I am delighted to share this 2024 report with you, highlighting what we've delivered in 2024 and our progress towards our long-term vision.

Thank you for your continued support.

Bernard



Pictured from left to right, Bernard Priest, Chair of the Trust; Anthony Baker, CEO; Suzanne Donovan, Vice Chair of the Trust

In 2024, >35,000 people visited



We welcomed **6,308** heritage visitors on our Welcome Days



16 couples chose us to host their special day



We starred in **8** film and photo shoots



A record **527** school children and young people explored our history



98 volunteers gave us **606** hours of their time



We hosted **27,182** visitors at conferences and other corporate events



Our markets gave an opportunity to **400+** makers



And we served more cups of tea than we could count

Our values



Belonging

To be a friendly and welcoming space that is here for everyone

Cultural creativity

To create positive experiences that make people feel good

Heritage with heart

To take care of the building, share its stories and help to build new memories

Caring for the future

To find creative ways to reduce our impact on the environment and encourage others to do the same

#MyVictoriaBaths



2024 events

Community



Over **1,000** visitors to April's **SpringFest** saw the buildings transformed into a cultural hub with live music, art exhibitions, street food and creative activities including 'She Drew The Gun'. And there was ice cream...



“ I love the quirky building, it's full of history and character. ”



Community



We ran a craft stall at the **Manchester Mega Mela** in July, in Platt Fields Park where children could make their own 'stained glass' windows. We shared info about Victoria Baths with over **500** people.



Community



August's **Picnic in the Pool** was a great success selling out all **200** tickets, providing an affordable, family-friendly day out.



“My daughters really enjoyed it specially the craft table 😊”



Community



Families crafted and danced the afternoon away at October's **Mini Monster Mash**, enjoying a silent disco within the buildings which had been transformed by staff and volunteers.



“Spooky crafts have been a hit!”



Community



The **Silence of the Baths** made its second and even spookier appearance for Halloween. We brought three iconic nightclubs back from the dead to entertain **450** costumed party-goers in a sold-out silent disco.



Community



Choirs, Christmas gifts, mince pies and mulled wine – December's **Festive Winter Fair** attracted **1,200** visitors, with **5** choirs and **50** hand-picked local makers.



What a fabulous atmosphere ☺



Heritage



Our **Welcome Wednesdays** (now Welcome Tuesdays for 2025) and **Sunny Sundays** provide free access from April to September for the public to explore our building or go on one of our paid tours.

Overall, we welcomed **6,308** heritage visitors including **12** private group tours and **16** education visits.



“ Really enjoyed the tour with my friends. Thanks to the volunteers 🍌🍌🍌 ”

Heritage



“Such a beautiful building 🏡”

Welcome Wednesdays provide a time and space to explore our heritage buildings without any events taking place.

Thanks to the income we raise through our commercial activities, we can provide free access to Victoria Baths for everyone to enjoy a moment of mindfulness with time to sketch, take a photo or write.



Heritage



September's **Heritage Open Days** gave us an opportunity to welcome hundreds of weekend visitors to enjoy our heritage, with free crafts and games, an interactive drawing pool and tours.



“

Amazing building!

”

Wellbeing



Life is Sound by James Mayer became a regular fixture, with events in April, May, July, August and September. Incredible acoustics of our historic setting create the ultimate experience of relaxation & renewal.



Wellbeing



BeePedalReady ran events in February and November including #LightsUp which cycled into the Sports Hall in an event to promote cycling for women.



🐝: @beepedalready

“The epic @victoriabaths for an after party”



Culture



Victoria Baths is proud to display art works by local artists and collectives. **Pool Arts** curated an exhibition in the Pineapple Room over summer 2024. We are now housing the Pool Arts archive.



“@PoolArtsMCR: our collaboration with this iconic Manchester building and the amazing team of staff who work there”



Culture



With amazing acoustics and incredible light, the pools are often booked for choir and musical performances. 2024 heard **SofarSounds** in April and August, the **Rock Choir** in June, and **Sale Sings** in August.



Wow! Looks amazing and bet it sounded even better



@Rock_Choir

@SaleSings

Culture



The ever-popular **Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair** returned in October for its annual flagship event with **150** makers and crafters.

The fair brings over **6,000** visitors into Victoria Baths. The changing cubicles gave space to UK graduates with ideas to heal the planet where they share their creations.



“This venue truly blew my mind!”

Celebrations



16 wedding couples celebrated their special days at Victoria Baths in 2024, with each one creating an event as unique as the couple themselves.



Celebrations



The Gala Pool, Turkish Rest Rooms, Males First Class Entrance – there's no end to the gorgeous settings for weddings and celebrations at Victoria Baths.

We were so excited to see that Becky and Sharean's big day was featured in @rocknrollbridemagazine.



Corporate



Victoria Baths is an increasingly popular venue for corporate events. With multiple large spaces available we can host conferences of 500 and more.

From a formal dinner – such as the **Marketing Manchester** event for an inbound mission of event organisers pictured here – to awards dinners, conferences and product launches our large, beautiful and flexible spaces can be staged for any event.

marketing
Manchester

Corporate



The **LGBT Foundation** held their annual Volunteer Awards in July, celebrating the important work of 200+ volunteers who help the organisation deliver life-affirming services.



Corporate



Kellanova chose Victoria Baths for their end-of-year conference, with their main conference in the Gala Pool and using the 'Pineapple Room' for a breakout session.



“@victoriabaths is such a unique venue!!!”



 : Ripple&Co

Corporate



JD Sports held an immersive event with Nike, for retail managers across the UK and EU. This whole-building takeover had DJs, games and incredible light projections.

“an unforgettable evening at the iconic Victoria Baths! ☀️”



Photography



In 2024 we provided the stage for photography workshops, TV productions, fashion shows, music videos and more.



Photography



We were honoured to host local sixth form **Loreto College's** end of year fashion show.



Photography



Champion Europe shot their "Index & Archives Collection AW24" in the Gala Pool and Males First Class entrance. Their creative direction was inspired by cultural heritage, timeless style, and Champion's legacy.



Photography



Our pools were the perfect stage for **Gola's** shoot in July for their vintage-inspired Medallist style. Rooted in Gola's 1973 archives, this blends old-school simplicity with a contemporary gum-wrapped sole.



Filming



Stockport band **The Blossoms** popped in during August to record an announcement for their Autumn 2024 tour .



Filming



The **English National Opera** chose Victoria Baths as one of their iconic Greater Manchester locations to celebrate their plans for a major new partnership with our city region.



Filming



Talamasca: **The Secret Order** is the third television series set in Anne Rice's Immortal Universe. The series is due to broadcast in October 2025.



Commercial



The **Vintage Home Show** runs three events a year at Victoria Baths in March, June and November, with traders selling pre-loved furniture, art, fabrics and home-wear.



“one of the most iconic buildings in Manchester!”



Commercial



The **Clothes Cycle** brings 100+ stall holders selling pre-loved clothing and accessories, plus a clothes swap. They attracted big crowds of eco-conscious buyers in May and September.

These markets are all about sustainability, affordability, fashion and community.



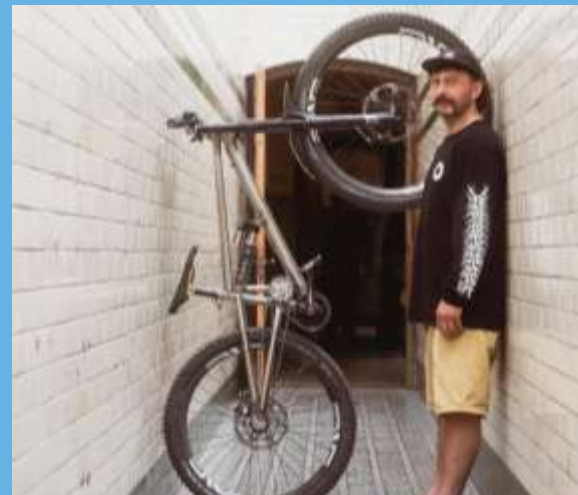
“ .. excited to see this beautiful space of incredible tile work, stained glass windows, historical changing rooms, seating & signage .. ”

Commercial



Bespoked is Europe's largest handmade bike show and made its debut in June at Victoria Baths, in the year that Manchester celebrated being named Europe's first ever City of Cycling.

The event makes use of indoor and outdoor spaces to showcase the best in handmade bicycles, celebrating craftsmanship, community & innovation.



“@bespoked.cc: our new venue @victoriabaths is the perfect backdrop”

Commercial



The Queen is Dead is a Japanese Street Fashion event that came to Victoria Baths in June. Themed-clothing was a must for the visitors who enjoyed fashion shows, shopped at stalls selling clothing and accessories – and took many, many selfies.



Commercial



Wing Fest held its first three-day event with us in September, with 10 different street food traders, BBQ teams and restaurants.

6,000 diners were entertained with DJs, bands, games and axe throwing.



“ This weekend we had the best time at @wingfestuk at Manchester's Victoria Baths which is an iconic venue! ”

@scrانwithkirst



@8raygroup

Commercial



Manchester Tech Festival is an annual festival that has been created by the tech community, for the tech community. It dedicates itself to helping tech people learn, create, thrive. It's returning to Victoria Baths for the third time in 2025.



“

Location: The stunning
Victoria Baths

”

@rootfiftytwo



Commercial



The Home Upgrade Show is Manchester's largest in-person dedicated retrofit event with a practical focus. The two-day, free-to-attend event in October brought 50+ exhibitors together and offered workshops and panel discussions.

“ .. an absolutely incredible venue – We even had lunch in a swimming pool! ”



@braygroup

Commercial



Worth the Weight filled the building in December. They are a vintage clothing company that travels the UK with kilo sales. Based in Sheffield, Worth The Weight was founded in 2018 as a way of fighting fast fashion.





2024 Trust news

Structure and Governance



The Manchester Victoria Baths Trust is a registered charity (number 1026351) and a company limited by guarantee (number 2841292).

The Trust is governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The governing body is the General Meeting of members of the Trust. Membership of the Trust is open to anyone, and applications are considered by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is the key decision-making body and meets regularly, at least 4 times each year, to consider key issues, including the organisation's financial position.

There are formal sub-committees of the Board, namely:

Board	Sub-committees Chairs
Chair – Bernard Priest	Finance Nigel Gloudon
	Building & Environment Malcolm Knight
	History & Research Gwynneth McManus
	Earned Income & Fundraising Suzanne Donovan
	Creative & Community Gwyneth Brock (acting)

The **Finance Committee** meets to assist the Board through providing oversight and assurance on all financial matters relating to The Victoria Baths Trust and its wholly owned subsidiary Victoria Baths Trading. This includes financial planning and reporting, treasury management and financial risk management (except where these are expressly within the remit of another sub-committee).

The **Building and Environment Committee** meets to deal with maintenance, repair and restoration.

The **History & Research Committee** deals with the history archive and its future.

The new **Earned Income & Fundraising Committee** replaces the Trading Committee, which will still meet at least once each year. The Committee will support the strategy on creative and community events.

The Engagement Committee has been renamed **Creative & Community Committee** and will focus on all matters community, cultural and creative.

A new **Capital Committee** has been established to oversee all things related to capital development this will interface with the Building and Environment Committee where necessary.



The Board | New Trustees



The Board was expanded in 2024 to bring in new skills and experiences to deliver our vision.



**Hannah
Clapham-Clark**

Hannah is currently Exhibition Project Manager at the Science and Industry Museum and has over 13 years of experience in producing and project management across the arts sector.

She has worked on a variety of large-scale, cross art form projects that engage diverse audiences including key roles at LEEDS 2023 and Manchester International Festival, where she led complex events and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing public engagement and driving organisational sustainability.

Hannah recently served as a Non-Executive Director for East Leeds Project, where she focused on strategic advice, particularly around access, equalities, and income generation.



**Emma
Retig**

Emma has 20 years HR experience across the entire HR lifecycle including recruitment, employee engagement, learning and development and employee relations. She has worked within a variety of companies from boutique businesses to international organisations.

She has held voluntary roles as a Chair of Governors for a local nursery school and as a Trustee for an arts charity.

Emma was married at Victoria Baths.



**Esther
Routledge**

Esther is a member of the Inclusive Heritage team at Historic England. Her career started out in industrial heritage tourism in her home city of Stoke-on-Trent, and her previous roles included being Creative Europe Culture Coordinator for British Council.

Esther has been part of a local co-operative choir for women and non-binary people for 12+ years and has sung at many events at Victoria Baths.

Esther is also a Trustee at Women Asylum Seekers Together, a Manchester-based charity.

The Board | New Trustees



**Lee
Simpson**

Lee has over 15 years of experience in the media and public relations.

Lee has worked in both London and Beijing in roles spanning TV presenting and production, teaching English, acting, content writing and PR.

Lee was a speaker at Manchester Tech Festival in 2023, hosted by Victoria Baths.



**Ellie
Whalley**

Ellie works at Arts Council England as Relationship Manager for Libraries in the North. This role involves working with library services across the region on their artistic and cultural offer.

Her work with these organisations is centred on providing meaningful and high-quality experiences in a way that is accessible and delivers long term benefits for the local community.

Ellie previously worked in London for animal welfare and social welfare charities, developing an interest in comms, fundraising and good governance.

Full list of Trustees	Appointed	Re-elected
Bernard Priest	Oct - 19	Jul-23
Janet Slade	Mar-13	Sep-21
Barry Johnson	Dec-14	Sep-21
Malcolm Knight	Mar-16	Jul-22
Nigel Gloudon	Mar-16	Jul-23
Matthew Holden	Apr-17	Jul-22
Suzanne Donovan	Feb-20	Jul-23
Gwyneth Brock	Jul-22	
Gwynneth McManus	Jul-22	
Roxy Stafford	Jul-22	
Shaun Hinds	Jul-23	(resigned 2024)
Hannah Clapham Clark	Sep-24	
Emma Retig	Sep-24	
Esther Routledge	Sep-24	
Lee Simpson	Sep-24	
Ellie Whalley	Sep-24	
Jane Yianni	Sep-24	

Staffing



In September, Anthony Baker joined us as CEO, following Elizabeth (Sibby) Sibbering's decision to retire. The Trust thanks Sibby for all her hard work and dedication to the organisation over many years.

Anthony brings broad experience in the culture sector, most recently as CEO of Barnsley Civic where he successfully led an extensive renovation of the Grade 2 listed building.

Other staff changes in the year included the appointment of Philippa Williamson as Finance Manager and Company Secretary to replace Fran Pattison.

Bel Moody moved into the role of Office Coordinator to replace Archie Kelly-Bush.

Ant Conway joined as Facilities Coordinator.

Ella Walker, the Engagement Manager, left in December. This post will be refocussed and replaced in 2025.

Building maintenance



Significant progress has been made to improve Health and Safety throughout the building.

A new fire system has been fitted throughout the building greatly increasing our coverage of across site.

Emergency lighting has also been fitted throughout the ground floor and basement areas to ensure safe egress in an emergency.

Remedial maintenance to the Females Pool roof gutters has taken place, reducing the risk of leaks and flooding in the Females Pool. We are expecting more repairs to take place, as well as other high level remedial works, such as buddleia and timber removal.

Several plans are in place looking in 2025. This includes restoration of the external entrance doors and restoring windows in the Superintendents Flat.

Friends & Supporters



Victoria Baths has a well-established Friends membership scheme which enables people to support the Trust.

Friends receive a monthly newsletter, priority access to events and free tours. In addition, **Supporters** have access to exclusive events. In 2024, they were invited to the preview evening for the Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair with a drinks reception hosted by Anthony Baker.

The number of paid supporters in 2024 was 378. The scheme will be refreshed and relaunched in 2025.

Be our Friend!

Fundraising from Trusts and Foundations for specific events, activities, staff posts etc. was in hiatus for the second half of the year, whilst the organisation recruited a new CEO and consolidated its future vision. We expect this to recommence in 2025.

Volunteering



Victoria Baths wins The Ark (Heritage) Sporting Heritage Volunteers Award 2024

We were thrilled to receive this award recognising the impact of our volunteers. Victoria Baths simply wouldn't be here without them. They saved decades of sporting history and community memories from being demolished.

We would like to thank them for their commitment and continued support to bringing the Baths back to life but also for their generosity with their time, their good humour and their friendship.



Volunteering



In 2024 we launched a new campaign to attract corporate and student volunteers. We had a fantastic response with 98 new volunteers including GM Business Growth Hub, University of Manchester and Santander.



The VB Shop



“ @TheSculpts: Cool down, dive in and immerse in the detail of our 'V' Victoria Baths design. It's rare that we have more than one design for a letter, but this iconic building had to be featured. ”

The Victoria Baths volunteer-run shop brings in income for the Trust but, as importantly, it offers visitors an opportunity to buy a memento of their visit. We stock hand-made items by the Victoria Baths Stained Glass Group and other local artists.



The Tea Room



The Tea Room is led by our wonderful volunteers and provides the best-value* cream tea in Manchester (*probably).

It's also a space for a chat or just to have a moment to yourself.



“A gorgeous little treat for when you visit this stunning building.”

#MyVictoriaBaths



Discover. Experience. Celebrate.