




THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

A woman with long, straight white hair is shown in profile, focused on painting a dark wooden surface. She is holding a paintbrush with a dark handle and a light-colored bristle tip. The background is softly blurred, showing warm, golden light sources. The overall mood is one of careful craftsmanship and attention to detail.

# IMPACT REPORT 2021-2022

for the year ending 31 March 2022





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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a highly ornate, vaulted ceiling. The ceiling features intricate geometric and floral patterns in shades of blue, gold, and white, set against a light-colored stone or plaster. The perspective is looking upwards, emphasizing the height and grandeur of the architecture.

## About Icon

Icon (the Institute of Conservation) is a **charitable company** working to safeguard cultural heritage. Icon is also the **professional membership body** for the conservation profession.

## Icon's Vision

**Icon's Vision** is to protect, preserve and promote our treasured cultural heritage through cultivating skilled conservation professionals, supporting meaningful collaboration across the cultural heritage sector, and delivering public benefit through engagement and advocacy.

## Icon's mission

**Icon's mission** is to represent and support the practice and profession of conservation by promoting the public value of caring for cultural heritage and upholding high standards and ethics in conservation practice. Icon ensures that the guardians and owners of objects, buildings and collections can access knowledgeable and passionate professionals who will help them safeguard the physical remains of our past for the future.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following strategic priorities for the financial year 2021-2022 were agreed by the Board of Trustees on 24th March 2021:

- **Advocacy** – promoting the value of conservation; and championing the care of collections
- **Excellence** – increasing the visibility, recognition and take-up of Icon accreditation; and leading action on environmental sustainability
- **Engagement** – taking steps to support diversity and inclusion; and encouraging more people to join Icon as supporters
- **Effective and sustainable** – delivering steady membership growth; and rebuilding Icon's reserves to ensure greater resilience



# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



**We might have hoped that the coronavirus would not play such a dominant role in our thinking as we entered the 2021-22 financial year, but the reality was somewhat different.**

Although the restrictions were gradually eased from March onwards, the pandemic continued to have an impact on finances and on organisational planning for many organisations in our sector.

In our case this manifested itself as a form of organisational long COVID, with a general downturn across all our key income streams in the first half of the year. Our prudent response was to pause the re-recruitment of vacant staff roles and to submit a second application to the Government-backed Culture Recovery Fund. The funding bid was successful, allowing us to ensure that core costs were covered.

While these sensible measures ensured that we protected our unrestricted reserves, the cost of reducing staff capacity meant that less project work was undertaken. So, 2021-22 could be characterised as being focused on maintaining a steady course, supporting our members, and engaging in policy and advocacy activities, rather than pressing ahead with new or risky projects. That said, there were still many moments to celebrate this year – and our strong focus on international engagement stands out:

- **Three major international conferences delivered**
- **New Conferences Committee launched**
- **Icon's Annual Lecture reached a global audience**
- **Support for our colleagues in Ukraine**

During the year we also continued to review and strengthen our internal governance.

Firstly, we benefitted from taking part in the National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported Heritage Compass programme - a scheme designed to address operational skills gaps and to build resilience within organisations.

Secondly, we placed new emphasis on financial governance training for trustees and initiated a scoping discussion about the benefits of reviewing the size and composition of Icon's Board of Trustees. The new annual surveys of Board diversity and the diversity of the wider membership were also implemented and the results published on the Icon website.

Finally, recognising that the Board would benefit from a broader range of perspectives, we also created a new seat for an emerging professional and welcomed Louise Davison into the role.

*Sara Crofts, Chief Executive*  
*@sarajcrofts*





”

**There were still many moments to  
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and our strong focus on international  
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“



## International Conferences

Autumn 2021 brought three international Icon conferences, all organised on an entirely voluntary basis by Icon Groups and Networks. The successful delivery of these high-profile virtual conferences was achieved due to the strong leadership and tireless dedication of their voluntary organising committees, comprising active Icon members (and non-members in the case of Pest Odyssey 2021) in a variety of roles. Members, staff and trustees are extremely grateful to the hard-working teams of people who made the conferences possible.

Conference	Dates	Organisers	Attendees
Pest Odyssey 2021 - The Next Generation	20-22 Sep 2021	Icon Pest Odyssey IPM Network / Icon Care of Collections Group / Pest Odyssey UK	373  282
Mod Cons: Modern Conservation. Modern Constraints. Modern Conveniences	4-7 Oct 2021	Icon Book and Paper Group	
Fragmented Stories: Case Studies in Ceramics, Glass and Stained Glass Conservation	16-17 Oct 2021	Icon Ceramics and Glass Group / Icon Stained Glass Group	160

## Conferences Committee

On the recommendation of a Board task and finish group we set up the new Icon Conferences Committee and launched a call for people to join. The response was hugely encouraging, and we were particularly delighted to secure international representation. Ina Hergert, a conservator working in San Paulo in Brazil, will help us ensure that we consider our international membership and colleagues across the globe when we are planning future Icon conferences.

## Icon Annual Lecture

Our third Annual Lecture took us into international waters as we delved into the story of the ethical considerations that went into conserving the complex series of artefacts rescued from the wrecks of the HMS Erebus and the HMS Terror, the doomed ships from Captain Sir John Franklin's famous and tragic 1845 Arctic expedition. The speaker was Canada-based Icon member Flora Davidson, who led the conservation project in her role as Franklin Conservator at Parks Canada.

## Supporting colleagues in Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was one of the major political stories of the year. In common with many other organisations, Icon published a statement of solidarity with the people of Ukraine and condemned the loss of life as well as the damage to cultural property.

Many Icon members also expressed a strong desire to take practical action and so we quickly set up a series of three working groups using the Basecamp platform: sponsoring refugees, material aid and guidance. This provided a way for members and others to collaborate on specific tasks as well as to share information and make contacts. A valuable output from this collaborative activity was the publication of a suite of three emergency guidance notes, written by Icon members.





**Developing our new Icon Strategy was a significant undertaking in 2021.**

We convened a number of workshops and set up various collaborative tools to explore the challenges and opportunities in our sector. We sought feedback and input at every opportunity and then distilled the insights gained from our research into a horizon scanning report, which is available on the Icon website.

Out of the lively discussions a key ambition emerged:

**The need to achieve wider recognition of the value that conservation brings to society and to ensure that the work of conservation professionals is recognised and respected because its relevance to society is understood.**

This ambition forms the basis of our new Strategy, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees and launched in April 2022 on the Icon website.

There are 5 overarching aims in the new Strategy:

- Champion cultural heritage and the value of conservation
- Extend our reach within the UK and internationally
- Maintain high standards in conservation practice
- Develop conservation as an inclusive and rewarding career
- Strengthen our Institute

Each of the aims has a set of actions that we will strive to deliver over the coming years, working in partnership with our members and colleagues.



# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

 **300+** new members

 **42** including 42 new student members

 **46** representing 46 different countries around the globe

## Membership

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 **122** training and skills events delivered

 **31** members achieved Icon Accreditation


**£36K** of funding distributed to support small heritage institutions

## Skills

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 **10000** people visiting the Icon website every day

**35** searches on the Conservation Register per day

 **53%** increase in LinkedIn followers since 2021

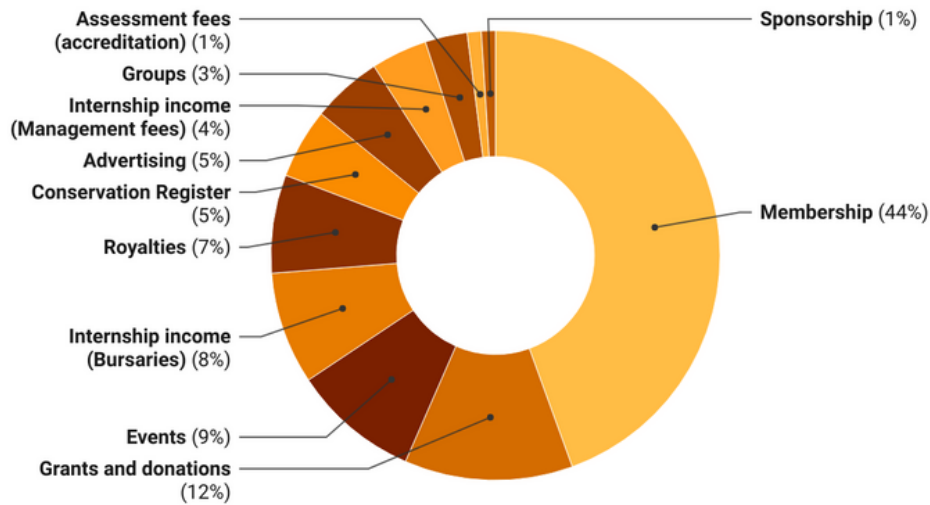
## Communications

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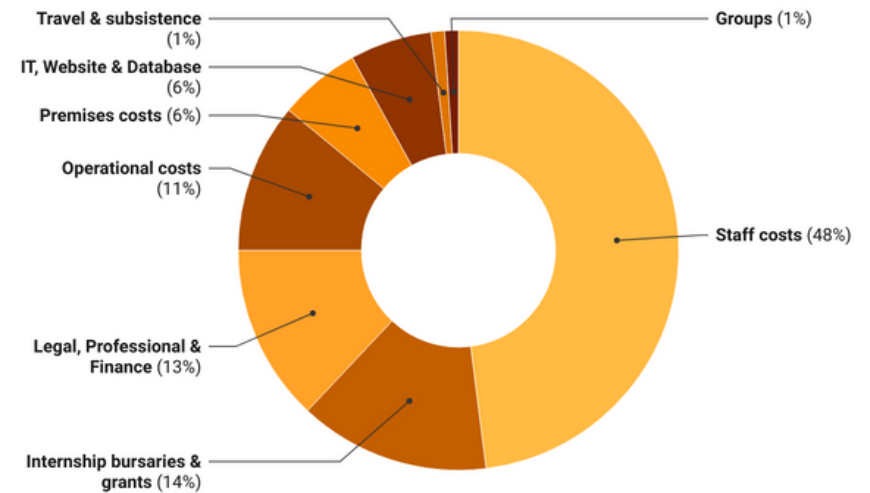


# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

## INCOME



## EXPENDITURE



# SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

## SUPPORTING STUDENT MEMBERS TO SHOWCASE THEIR SKILLS

The Icon Student Gallery provides Icon Student Members with a platform to showcase the skills they have been developing as part of their studies.

We realised that lockdown had reduced opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievements, with no access to studios or the usual degree shows.

However, the move to digital platforms showed us that there might be other ways we could help students to showcase their projects. The result was a new addition to the Icon website, fully accessible to all.

The Icon Student Project Gallery is designed to provide a complete online portfolio that gives Student members the support they need to make the transition from student to employed conservation professional.

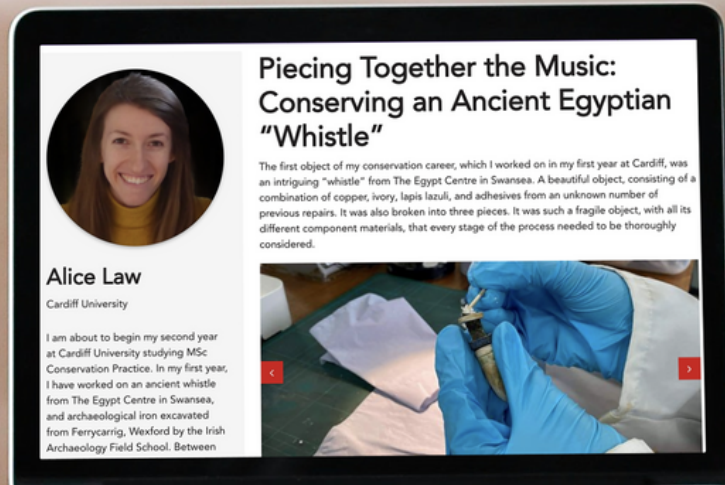
Student members can create profiles with biographies and project listings, and the pre-formatted project templates help Student members structure and display their content effectively.

**This was a brilliant opportunity to share the work I have done in my first steps as a member of the conservation community.**

- Icon Student member Alice Law

As successive years of student projects are added to the gallery, it will also give us the potential to use the platform as an engagement tool to showcase the value of conservation and to attract people into the profession.

**Find out more about [Icon's Student Gallery](#).**





# SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

## SUPPORTING SMALL INSTITUTIONS THROUGH PROJECT GRANTS

In 2021, we ran two grant programmes designed to support small cultural institutions dealing with disruption caused by the pandemic.



The Collections Care Stimulus Fund, generously supported by the Radcliffe Trust and others, was set up to support the care and conservation of collections at a time when budgets for the conservation of collections and objects were challenged. We awarded 16 grants of up to £1,250 to small heritage organisations with under 100,000 visitors a year to support conservation and digitisation activities.

The Tru Vue® Conservation & Exhibition Grant Scheme also supported museums and galleries that needed to make changes to the way their collections are cared for and presented to visitors due to the pandemic. We awarded 8 grants of approximately £2,000 during the first two rounds of applications.

Between the two grant schemes, Icon funded 19 projects, with 5 more being carried over to the new financial year.

Projects ranged from conserving The Clan Donald Genealogical Chart at Glencoe Museum to protecting an art collection capturing the history of medicine since 1518 at the Royal College of Physicians. Another example was the conservation of a book at the Westminster Diocesan Archives:

**The results are excellent, and we can now proceed with our plans to get the objects digitised and disseminated. Without Icon's help at this time, we simply would not have been able to proceed with the work.**



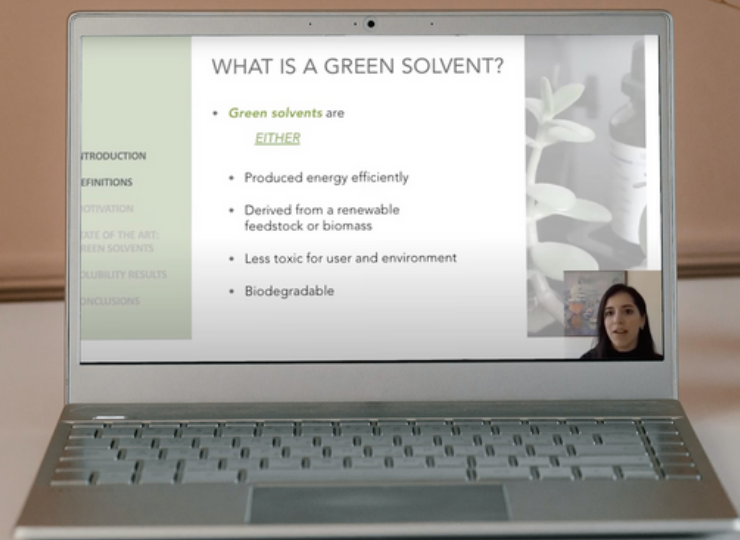
**[Find out more about Icon's Grant programmes.](#)**



# SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

## BRINGING SUSTAINABILITY INTO FOCUS

Icon's Sustainability Network was set up in June 2020 to encourage positive environmental sustainability practices in cultural heritage, to disseminate knowledge, and to champion best practice.



Chaired by Lorraine Finch ACR, the new Icon Sustainability Network (SN) shares knowledge and offers networking opportunities through an active events programme, an online resources hub and social media campaigns.

Icon SN hosted 6 webinars to share information and encourage best practice during the year. Topics ranged from Green Solvents to Sustainable Museum Lighting, and some events were co-hosted with partners such as Icon's Heritage Science Group, the American Institute for Conservation, and Fit for the Future. All events were intended to champion best practice through collaboration. Icon SN events continue to attract a global audience and are all available to watch for free on Icon's YouTube channel.

The Network also organises Sustainability Socials, where people can network and discuss their policies, practices and suppliers with like-minded colleagues.

The 'Resources' section on the Network's webpage has been created to offer advice, and tips and tricks on how to work sustainably in the heritage sector. It features materials produced by Icon SN, and also signposts to guidance and toolkits produced by other organisations.

Icon SN also hosted two Twitter Conferences, gathering a range of presenters to share knowledge on sustainability topics. Over 75k people saw the tweets of the first Twitter Conference.

**[Find out more about the Icon Sustainability Network.](#)**



## SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

### DEVELOPING A NEW PROGRAMME OF SKILLS EVENTS

We developed Icon's programme of training events to support the continuing professional development of our members more effectively.

Having run successful events such as Icon's *Business Skills Foundation programme* and *Health & Safety for Conservators* over the last few years, our goal was to further develop Icon's training programme.

Following member feedback and research into potential training topics, we noted that there was a significant appetite for the development of interactive and hands-on programmes that relate to the nuances of operating as a conservation professional.

We therefore developed new training programmes, including "Write a Business Plan with Andrew Evans", "Writing for Publication led by Dr Hélia Marçal", "Grant Writing with Emma Chaplin", "Job Interview Skills with Martine Croxall", and "Presentation Skills led by Sue Carruthers".

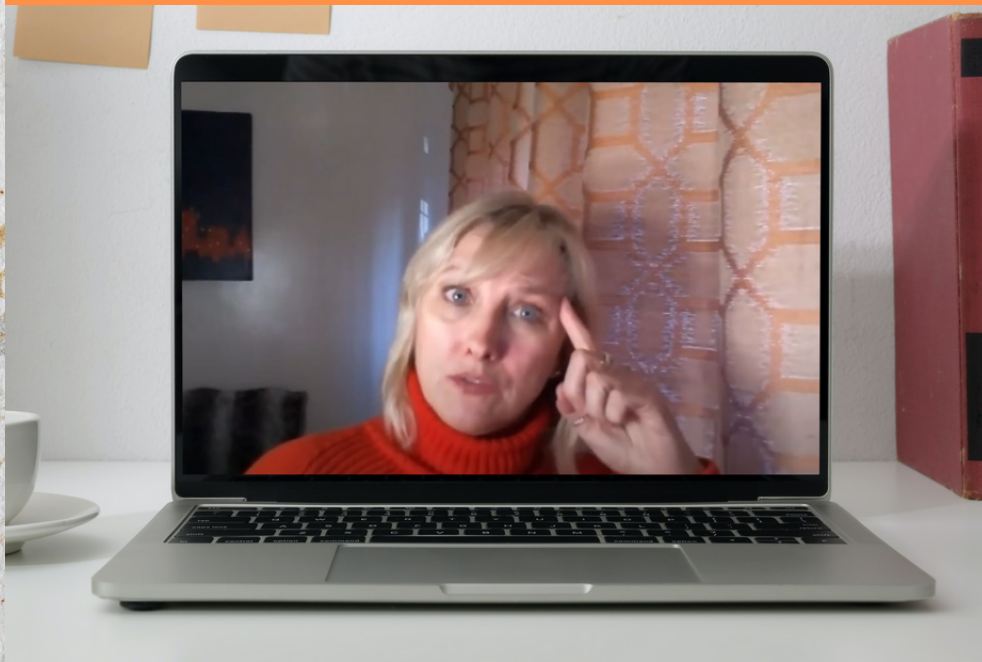
Over 300 members took part in the events programme over the course of the year.

**The range of presentations was great - and the speakers were so knowledgeable and inspiring. I also particularly liked the fact that no question was too basic or silly!**



- member attending the Business Foundation course

**Find out more about [Icon's Training Events](#).**





# SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

## RUNNING A SUSTAINABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CONFERENCE ONLINE

The Icon Book & Paper group experimented with a new online format for their triennial conference 'ModCons: Modern Conservation. Modern Constraints. Modern Conveniences'.

The Icon Book and Paper Group (BPG) 2021 Triennial Conference was the group's first all-online event as, at the time, COVID-19 meant that there were lockdowns in the UK and abroad. However, BPG harnessed the benefits of online events, having already experimented with making events more sustainable and accessible by recording events and live streaming speakers.

The online conference allowed the committee to create a full and diverse programme that met their goals of choosing sustainable options and reaching new audiences.

The committee worked hard to find a platform that encouraged networking opportunities between attendees and enabled them to engage with speakers. This was a priority given how isolating COVID-19 restrictions had been to many.

To improve accessibility and diversity, recorded videos were captioned, and non-committee members were invited to sit on the selection panel.

**The most dynamic online conference I've attended.**

- Conference attendee

Organisers volunteered 2,700 hours in total. The conference registered a 25% attendance increase from 2018, and tickets were sold in 30 different countries despite the time difference.

**[Find out more about organising the BPG Conference.](#)**







SPOTLIGHT  
ON IMPACT

READ ALL  
OUR IMPACT STORIES  
ONLINE

- [Broadening Access to Icon Accreditation for built heritage and craft-based practitioners](#)
- [Icon and COP26](#)
- [Optimising the Conservation Register to increase recognition and take-up of Accreditation](#)
- [Offering Advice on caring for collections in lockdown from the Care of Collections Group \(CCG\)](#)
- [Icon's year of digital transformation](#)
- [Building a presence for conservation on Instagram](#)



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Icon is grateful for the contributions of all those who worked tirelessly on the projects mentioned in this report.

A very special thanks goes to the members and colleagues who formed the organising committees for the three major Icon conferences held in the Autumn. The successful delivery of these conferences would not have been possible without the strong leadership, boundless energy and deep commitment of the individuals involved.

We would also like to acknowledge the many other members who choose to contribute their time to their professional body, including Group and Network committee members, participants in Icon's various working groups, trustees, event speakers, and critical friends.

We are also grateful to all our members who support the Icon Accreditation process including Accreditation Committee members, assessors, mentors and CPD readers.

We estimate that our members contribute more than £0.5m of in-kind support each year, calculated at a professional day-rate.

Lastly, we wish to express our appreciation to all those who donated funds in memory of the late Nigel Williams and the late Frederick Bearman, as well as those who made donations in support of our broader work.

**WE THANK YOU**  
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT





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[Contact us](#)

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