

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER: NI008002
CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 104852

Scripture Union (Northern Ireland)
Company Limited by Guarantee
Financial Statements
31 March 2025

Finegan Gibson Ltd
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor
Causeway Tower
9 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 8DN

Scripture Union (Northern Ireland)

Company Limited by Guarantee

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2025

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Scripture Union (Northern Ireland)

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Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Scripture Union (Northern Ireland)

Charity registration number 104852

Company registration number NI008002

Principal office and registered office Beechill Business Park
96 Beechill Road
Belfast
BT8 7QN

The trustees

C Stewart (Treasurer)
A Steele
W Paul
E Paul
A Aicken (Resigned 11 June 2024)
M McKeown
R Craig
H Marshall (Resigned 4 February 2025)
M Mason
B Patterson

Company secretary D Wharton

Auditor Finegan Gibson Ltd
Chartered accountants & statutory auditor
Causeway Tower
9 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 8DN

Bankers Ulster Bank Limited
Arches Retail Park
Belfast
BT5 4AF

Solicitors Hewitt and Gilpin
8 High Street
Holywood
Co. Down
BT18 9AZ

Scripture Union (Northern Ireland)

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Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

Structure, governance and management

- Governing Document

Scripture Union Northern Ireland (herein referred to as "the Company", "the Charity" or "SUNI") is a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 16 January 1970.

- Appointment of Directors

In line with the Articles of Association, the Directors have the power to appoint or co-opt a fit and proper person to serve for a period of time as a Director. Directors serve for three-year terms and are eligible for re-election at the end of their term.

- Trustee induction and training

On appointment, new Directors receive a briefing on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the strategic plan and recent financial performance of the Company. In March 2024, all Trustees received refresher training in relation to the duties and responsibilities of Charity trustees.

- Arrangements for Setting Pay and Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The Directors consider the board of Directors, who are the Charity's trustees, and the senior management team to comprise the Key Management Personnel of the Charity in charge of directing and controlling, running, and operating the Charity. All Directors give their time free, and no Director received remuneration in the year. The Directors set the pay for senior staff at a level they believe reflects the nature of the role and the level of responsibility involved. This is reviewed annually in the light of the current performance, with reference being made to inflation and the cost-of-living index.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

- Organisation structure and how the Charity makes decisions

The Company is governed by its Board of Directors (known as the SU Council) which operates as detailed in the Charity's governing document, the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Board meets nine times a year. A General Director (Damian Wharton who is not a Director under company law) is appointed by the Board to administer the day-to-day operations of the Charity. To facilitate effective operations, the General Director has delegated authority approved by the Directors for operational matters including finance, employment and delivery of the charitable objectives.

- Relationships with related parties

There are no known related parties.

- Risk management

The Directors have a risk management strategy which comprises:

- A regular review of the risks the Charity may face
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the plan, and
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the Charity should those risks materialise.

The strategy has helped identify the major risks to which the Charity is exposed, assessed those risks and put in place systems to mitigate the risks. This has resulted in better emergency procedure and contingency plans and has also given an impetus towards better planning. Particular attention has been focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety of staff and volunteers, safety and security of the premises and safeguarding which is of paramount importance. A key element of the management of financial risks is the setting of reserves policy and its regular review by the Directors.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities

The Aims of Scripture Union (Northern Ireland) are:

Working with the churches. Scripture Union aims:

1. To make God's Good News known to children, young people and families and
2. To encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through Bible and prayer so that they may;
 - come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
 - grow in Christian maturity and
 - become both committed church members and servants of a world in need

To remain connected to our current context we are working within the terms of a Strategy Document for the period to 2030. In summary, this states:

1) Our ***Vision***

- To see all children and young people transformed by God's Good News.

2) Our ***Mission***

That every child and young person in Northern Ireland would have the opportunity to:

- Hear and respond to God's Good News
- Discover and explore the Bible
- Develop and grow in their faith journey

At the core of everything we do with children and young people there is a desire to:

- Communicate with them in ways that are creative, engaging and relevant to their personal circumstances
- Open God's Word with all people, helping them gain greater and deeper understanding of God's big story
- See children, young people and their families progress in their lifelong journey from the here and now to eternity.

3) Our ***Values***

Each of our values, as set out below, helps to bring clarity and focus to every aspect of our ministry. They remind us of the direction in which we are travelling and provide a sense of purpose as we relate to each other and to those we work alongside. In all we say and do, our desire is to honour God.

- Collaboration
- Dignity
- Excellence
- Integrity

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Year ended 31 March 2025

4) Our ***Strategic Priorities and Underpinning Foundations***

We want to be clear and transparent in where we choose to focus our attention throughout this current strategy period. These strategic priorities therefore help to inform all that we do and enable us to achieve our overall vision, and they are as follows:

- Biblical Depth
- People Development
- Transformative Delivery

Strong foundations provide us with confidence to continue to step out into God's plans and purposes. We recognise the importance of each foundation and seek to see each one strengthened and integrated across the SUNI movement. Our underpinning foundations are:

- Spiritual Disciplines
- Excellent Governance
- Financial Stability
- Compelling Communication
- Adept Administration

In pursuance of our vision and mission, each department and subsequently each member of the staff team, uses an action plan to assist them in moving towards seeing our vision become reality. These action plans are reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted accordingly.

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Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

Achievements and performance

Each of our Schools' Workers, and the volunteer teams who work alongside them, have had a variety of invitations to deliver curriculum-based content, lead assemblies and facilitate SU Groups in a wide range of schools across Northern Ireland. Our increasing number of Camps and Missions are popular, with thousands of children and young people attending our summer activities. Our Ministry Development Team continues to facilitate greater collaboration across all that we do, inspiring, supporting and developing good practice in our children, youth, special needs and chaplaincy work. We have seen growth across both our schools' work and our camps and missions alongside an improving infrastructure. Together we are interacting with around 66,000 children and young people and this year we mobilised almost 1,900 volunteers.

The three core areas of our work are:

Schools Work

Since April 2024, SUNI staff (from both the Schools Team and the Ministry Development Team) have engaged with approximately 60,000 pupils in over 280 schools. As was the case last year, we have engaged with some of these pupils on multiple occasions throughout the year.

Of the approximately 1,000 separate engagements we fulfilled in the last year (such as assemblies, one-off lessons, series of lessons, SU Groups), 21% involved volunteers accompanying staff to assist with the delivery of these engagements. Many of these accompanied engagements were for 3-week or 5-week lesson series, and it's been encouraging to see a growth in volunteers, with 244 individuals serving with us in schools this year. On top of this, a further 73 individuals make up our District Support Teams - groups which exist in each schools' work district and which are dedicated to supporting the Schools Worker based there. Additionally, our registered school SU Groups are run by more than 550 individuals (a mixture of school staff members and church volunteers), bringing the total of individuals supporting SUNI's schools ministry to 867 this year.

The majority of our school engagements are in the Controlled sector, but in the past year we have had opportunities in more than 20 integrated schools and 3 Catholic Maintained schools (which is an increase on last year). 31% of our engagements are with Post Primary pupils and 7.5% of our engagements are in Special Schools.

SUNI staff delivered 'It's Your Move' lessons in 123 schools, with volunteer 'Church Teams' delivering the lessons in an additional 16 schools (without an SU staff member). We understand that volunteers in other areas, beyond our Schools' Work districts, are also using these SU materials to support local schools and we encourage these materials to be widely used.

SUNI staff made around 300 separate visits to SU Groups, with an average attendance of around 30 pupils in each group. Since January 2025 it has been hugely encouraging to see 11 new SU Groups begin for the first time or restart after a period of hiatus. Altogether, 184 SU Groups have reregistered with us over the last academic year following a concerted effort to get up to date information on all SU Groups.

Connection is at the heart of SU's Schools Ministry, so it was great to host 10 Cluster Groups (where we gather together teachers in a particular area to refresh, resource and relate to one another) this year. It has been particularly encouraging to see Unite SU events (where we gather together pupils from different schools) happening in every district this year, and to see the attendance at these events grow. Staff have continued to deliver training to church leaders and teachers, and it has been exciting to deliver training on the teaching of RE in a number of areas.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

The Ballymena district celebrated its 15th anniversary this year and the North Down & Newtownards district celebrated 10 years since the original Bangor district was expanded. We have also begun to develop new areas to expand the project into, with new connections and partnerships being established in the Ards Peninsula and along the A1 (Dromore to Newry).

Ministry Development

The Ministry Development Team exists to inspire, support and develop good practice, within specialist areas, across the organisation. It seeks to journey alongside staff, volunteers and churches - supporting the development of both new and existing strategic projects, people and partnerships. The team is made up of coordinators for children's, youth, SEN and chaplaincy support ministry and is headed up by the Ministry Development Director.

Some of the highlights of the past year have included:

- A new 'Youth Team' - 10 young leaders (aged 18-19) have been speaking into the work of SUNI through specific projects since September, as well as benefitting from investment in their own leadership development.
- We had around 150 pupils at our annual 'Making Your Mark' event in October - aimed at inspiring and equipping Post-Primary pupils who are involved with their school SU groups. Training for pupil committees has been produced by way of follow-up.
- Around 40-50 Primary Schools are now using our 'Kids Quest' RE curriculum overview resource and over 100 Primary School teachers have benefitted from training on the use of the material and the importance of RE in the classroom.
- We have commissioned Stranmillis University College to undertake some research on our behalf, exploring how churches and Christian organisations are engaging with schools across Northern Ireland. We are keen to learn from the outcomes of this research and hope that it will speak into our present and future practice.
- We ran 3 Schools Ministry Roadshows across Northern Ireland, gathering together Christians (from schools, churches and organisations) who work or serve in schools to further consider how we are 'present' in local school communities.
- We continue to see a hunger for training in various aspects of ministry - particularly in the area of supporting those with special educational needs in churches.
- Our intern programme is led by the children's and youth ministry coordinators who have supported 2 SUNI interns throughout the past academic year, as well as being involved in wider intern training gatherings through the 'Interns Together' network.

During 2024/25, SUNI has also continued to provide Bible Notes, along with a small quantity of Sunday School Light Material. We have 55 annual subscriptions for Bible Notes (31 individual orders and 24 church orders) generating gross sales of £7,400. There are approximately 375 Bible Notes distributed every quarter. The majority of these are posted out and around 20 orders are collected from the office. There continues to be very encouraging feedback from our customers on the quality of the content of the Bible Notes and of the service they have received from SUNI.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Camps and Missions

Summer 2024 saw 36 programmes taking place - 15 residential camps and 21 missions. Most of our ministries saw a growth in attendance and engagement in Summer 2024 with several teams noting increased interest and participation from teenagers.

After reestablishing in-person training throughout 23-24 we were able to refine and consolidate these opportunities to make them more effective and time efficient, which has in turn increased engagement from both our key volunteers and those who join us for the summer programmes.

Further work has been undertaken in developing and streamlining our operational processes with better infrastructure in place to manage camper bookings, volunteer application processing and communication with those engaging with our programmes. These changes have impacted the workload of staff and volunteers, causing increased work initially. However, the time invested will inevitably establish more automated long-term solutions for areas of administration within the ministry that will decrease workload for the years to come.

During volunteer recruitment throughout February and March 2025 we have seen record post-pandemic numbers of people signing up to volunteer. This has allowed us to plan some new residential camps to allow more children and young people to engage with our ministry. The increased capacity for Summer 2025 includes the addition of a camp for those with special educational needs, another junior & senior camp, and increased capacity across several of our established camps.

Public benefit assessment

For each of the departments within SUNI (being the Schools Department, Camps & Missions Department, and Ministry Development Team), we identify and monitor on a regular basis: 1. Who is engaging with our work as a participant/beneficiary, including both attendees at events we host or in which we participate, and engagement with online resources; 2. Our volunteer base - to include levels of engagement with the wider organisation and attendance at training provided by SUNI; 3. The overall effectiveness of the programmes and engagements which we offer, measured in a number of ways including through attendee numbers, feedback received (both formal and informal) and referrals made; 4. How our activities fulfil our strategic priorities.

Public benefit statement

The public benefit requirement is defined in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and states that the organisation's purposes must be for the public benefit in order to be charitable. The Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland pertaining to section 4(b) of the Charities Act (being the public benefit requirement statutory guidance). The Trustees are of the opinion that the organisation's activities have helped to achieve its charitable purposes and provide a public benefit.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Financial review

Budgets and forecasts for the year ahead are prepared by the Senior Management Team and General Director for the consideration and approval by the Board. At the Board meetings, the Trustees are furnished with the most recent set of management accounts detailing the performance of each income and expenditure stream against budget along with a variance analysis. This ensures Trustees regularly monitor and scrutinise financial performance during the year. The Charity's Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025 and Balance Sheet as at that date are shown in the attached financial statements.

Income for the year to 31 March 2025 was £1,168,879 compared to £1,145,073 on the previous year. Expenditure for the year was £1,122,469 compared to £1,026,164 in the previous year. These figures led to a surplus for the year of £46,410 compared to a surplus of £118,909 in the prior year.

At 31 March 2025, Unrestricted Funds stood at £1,733,658 (of which £374,174 was invested in Fixed Assets and Investments leaving net current assets of £1,359,484) and Restricted Funds were £281,238.

The Directors are committed to ensuring the financial position of the Charity is adequate to support the ongoing work of the organisation in schools, camps, missions and through ministry development across Northern Ireland. The Directors are fully aware of the effect of the current economic climate and the impact that has had on the funds available to SU particularly in relation to voluntary donations and sales of resource material. The raising of funds and potential new sources of income is a regular item on the agenda of the Board while the current financial position is continually under review.

Reserves Policy and Going Concern

The Board of Directors has established a policy whereby the Unrestricted Funds not committed or invested in tangible Fixed Assets ("the free reserves") held by the Charity should be 3-6 months of the expenditure, which equates to between £280,617 and £561,235 in general funds. At this level, the Directors feel that they would be able to continue in the current activities of the Charity in the event of a significant drop in funding when it would obviously be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed. The Directors are committed to raising funds to stay within this target level in future periods.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Plans for future periods

We are continuing to deliver on the strategic priorities identified in our 2030 Strategy Document as we work in the key areas of:

- Schools
- Camps & Missions
- Ministry Development

The appointment of an Operations Manager during this financial year has significantly streamlined and strengthened the administrative foundations which support our front facing work. We look forward to seeing our planned transition to a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) further improve the efficiency and capacity of the organisation in the year ahead. A Fundraising Action Plan is in place, and the Trustees are monitoring and reviewing progress against this on a regular basis. Discussions are ongoing with respect to developing a more comprehensive Fundraising Strategy in the near future.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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Year ended 31 March 2025

Auditor

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 18 November 2025 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



R Craig
Trustee