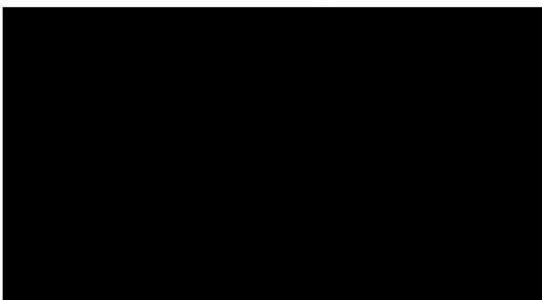


BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
COMMITTEE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2025
SC025431

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.



Contact address

Bennachie Visitor Centre, Pitcaple, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5HY.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed by the existing committee of trustees.

Governing document

The governing document was a Trust Deed and charitable status was attained on 1 October 1996. The Trust adopted a SCIO-based Constitution when they became a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) in 2016.

Charitable purposes

The purpose of the Trust is to advance the education of the public by the provision, construction and subsequent management of a centre for the development of environmental education, conservation and preservation of the flora, fauna, geology and history of the area around Bennachie.

Summary of the main activities in relation to these objects

The Trust held 4 formal business meetings during the year; most have been a blend of in-person and online attendance, facilitated by the Smart board electronic system at the Centre. Several additional meetings were held, for specific issues including: installing a new card payment machine, development of additional educational display board content, planning upgrades to Centre equipment/displays, and updating spreadsheets used for accounts.

Activities and achievements

The Centre opened for the 2024 season on Friday 29 March. Problems occurred with the existing card payment machine for the shop, leaving the Centre unable to take card payments. Following unsuccessful efforts to resolve the situation, a replacement card payment machine was purchased from another company. The new system is cheaper to operate and has worked well over the year.

A 2025 calendar was produced to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Trust and Centre, in collaboration with local schools and artists, featuring artwork interpreting Bennachie in a range of media. The calendars were sold in the shop, other local outlets, and online through the new card payment system, successfully raising funds for the Trust. A 2026 calendar is now being developed.

The Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire visited in May, and Trustees showed him around the Centre and explained the Trust's activities. He was enthusiastic and complimented the Trust on the Centre facilities and educational value. [REDACTED] were subsequently invited, and delighted to represent the Trust at the Royal Garden Party, Holyrood in July.

A programme of public events providing opportunities to discover and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage of Bennachie, included a Creative writing workshop, a Needle-felting workshop, a pond life art class, an Art and Craft Fair (455 visitors), a 'Doors Open weekend' (247 visitors), and the Garioch Ranger held 3 public events (20 adults, 22 children). The Centre hosted NEOS (North East Open Studios) again, featuring 4 local artists and their Bennachie-inspired artwork over a week in September, attracting 1600 visitors.

**BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Activities and achievements (continued)

Social media provided effective communication, with 4.5 k followers on the Bennachie Visitor Centre Facebook page. Events were also publicised through the Bennachie Community Council newsletter and Spotlight magazine. The Centre provided a venue for a range of educational courses, and supported events run by other bodies, including hill navigation (Hillgoers), wildlife identification skills courses, a hill race and the Bennachie Ultramarathon in October.

Educational display boards on conifer identification, hill safety and wildlife identification have been produced and further boards are being developed. A 'Birds of Bennachie' leaflet is currently being developed with a local artist. Work continues on upgrading electronics in the Centre, including linking internal screens to wildlife cameras (existing and new) and re-establishing the live-feed hill view camera, in conjunction with a specialist local firm.

Exhibitions at the Centre included the Homecoming Art Project, butterflies and moths, and artwork from the calendar. Other displays included: Pictish symbols, the Bennachie Air Crash, conifer identification, autumn leaves, and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC), with interactive displays on 'discover the season', animal babies, nature alphabet and 'how many?'. Exhibition space was provided for local schools and organisations, with displays by Huntly Swift Group, Premnay Primary School, Westhill Academy and Inverurie Academy. The Garioch Ranger led 8 group events (76 adults, 112 children) and provided environmental education for 30 schools (104 adults, 843 children) through activities promoting discovery and appreciation of the natural and cultural history of Bennachie, improving the local environment and biodiversity, promoting benefits of accessing outdoors, responsible access and engagement of marginalised people.

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue equipment is now stored at the Centre, since Bennachie is a frequent location for emergency call-outs, and discussions on provision of safety training are underway. The Trust continues to liaise and work with the Bailies of Bennachie in support of shared objectives, providing facilities for public events and noticeboard space in the Centre, and receiving assistance from Bailies work parties when requested for outdoor works. The Community Pay Back Team painted wooden outdoor features and cleared weeds from the courtyard. Trustees also weeded the courtyard through 2024 and before the 2025 opening.

The Centre maintained its 4-star rating with the Visit Scotland Quality Assurance Scheme in 2024, but the scheme ended in March 2025. Work continued to improve the visitors' experience, featuring the BCT brand and raising the Trust's profile. Visitor numbers to the Centre remained around 30,000 for the season, similar to last year. Visitor comments continued to indicate high satisfaction levels, and the community room had 42 bookings. As part of the strategy to increase visitor numbers and community room use during quiet times, a group visit package featuring a talk/event and refreshments, has been produced and is advertised by poster and on social media.

The Trust increased the annual contribution to Aberdeenshire Council, for services including rent, electricity, waste, water servicing and contribution towards staffing. The Trust also substantially contributed towards upgrading and maintenance costs for the Centre, including the hot water system, plumbing and alarm systems, and funded new taps in the public toilets and courtyard wall repairs, with stones gathered by a Corporate volunteer group. Work is ongoing to improve internal lighting, and to update orientation panel and interactive displays.

Public toilet access continued to be provided when the Centre was closed over winter. Forestry & Land Scotland discontinued their longstanding provision of bird food for the wildlife viewing area, and the Trust is exploring ways to cover the additional costs, including targeted donations. Efforts to increase income from shop sales with an expanded range of goods continued; new items include a range of Field Studies Council laminated identification sheets, BVC-branded giftware, artwork by local artists and a 'Bennachie Brew' rewards scheme to encourage coffee sales. A new shelving unit was purchased, providing better display space, and a new display freezer. Additional ways of improving the retail space are under consideration.

Fundraising by the 'heart appeal' continued, selling items with the heart logo, to cover maintenance costs of the Public Access Defibrillator (PAD) at the Centre. A substantial anonymous donation has funded items to improve the wildlife viewing experience, including live feed cameras, interactives, new feeders, a water feature, storage containers and new educational display boards. The Bennachie Ultramarathon event organisers also donated a significant sum, and other large donations were received from Hillgoers, NEOS artists, Craft Fair stallholders and hill race organisers. The Trust is very grateful to all donors for their generous gifts. The Trust is also participating in schemes providing money for recycling computer ink cartridges, and for old equipment/foreign currency etc. At her retirement presentation, the Trust thanked Lorna for 30 years of excellent cleaning service at the Centre.

The Centre opened for the 2025 season on Saturday 29 March.

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

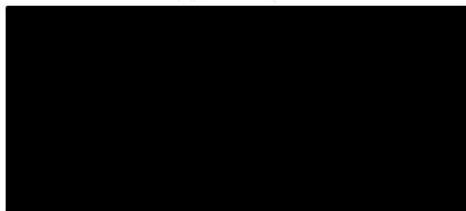
Financial review

As a result of the surplus of the year of £5,339 (2024 - £2,427) and allowing for the movement in resale stock, the committee held unrestricted funds of £105,737 (2024 - £100,052) at the year-end.

Committee remuneration and costs

There were £nil of costs relating to the Centre (2024 - £nil) reimbursed to the Trustees during the year.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 11/6/25 and signed on its behalf by



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF
BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025 which are set out on pages 6 and 7.

Respective responsibilities of committee and examiner

The charity's committee is responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity committee considers that the audit requirements of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
- have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



CA
Partner
James Milne
5 High Street
Inverurie
AB51 3QA

Date: 9.7.25

**BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Incoming resources		
Donations	7,422	3,065
Heart donation	1,348	1,243
Bank interest received	2,711	1,174
Room hire	827	290
Gallery sales	1,295	263
Other income	127	292
Card rebates	5	5
Ticket sales	283	535
Non food sales	8,416	5,868
Food & drink sales	19,778	18,964
Total incoming resources	42,212	31,699
Resources expended		
Goods for resale	16,461	14,549
Insurance	347	295
Independent examiners fee	330	300
Repairs and maintenance	5,186	1,622
Gallery costs	766	44
Telephone costs	275	559
Service charges including rent	9,500	8,500
Equipment for Bennachie Centre	767	545
Bird food	238	-
Office consumables	1,291	990
Heart fund	1,086	239
Ticket payment	-	406
Bank charges	17	20
Credit card machine charges	392	851
Website costs	-	120
Book Trust	90	-
Volunteer gifts	127	58
Visit Scotland membership	-	174
Total resources expended	(36,873)	(29,272)
Surplus for the year	5,339	2,427
All funds are unrestricted		

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Stock		
Stock of goods for resale	5,298	4,952
Opening bank and cash balances		
Bank accounts	2,814	561
Deposit accounts	91,836	91,662
Cash balance	450	450
	95,100	92,673
Surplus for the year	5,339	2,427
Total	100,439	95,100
Closing bank and cash balances		
Bank accounts	2,442	2,814
Deposit accounts	97,547	91,836
Cash balance	450	450
	100,439	95,100
Closing reserves	105,737	100,052
All funds are unrestricted		

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 11/6/25 and signed on its behalf by

