

FAIR ISLE MARINE RESEARCH ORGANISATION [SCIO]

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

June 2024 – June 2025

SC048485

Charity Contact Information

Scottish Charity Number: SC048485

Address: Stackhoull, Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU

Charity Trustees

Mrs Fiona Mitchell

Mrs Susannah Parnaby

Mr Neil Thomson

Mr Steven Wilson

Objectives and Activities

In October 2016, the Fair Isle community was notified that their proposal to create a marine protected area in the coastal waters surrounding the isle had been accepted, and the Fair Isle Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area officially designated. This was the culmination of over twenty years campaigning by members of the Fair Isle community to gain some form of protection for their immediate marine environment, following substantial and sustained declines in the isle populations of a number of breeding seabird species.

The proposal was unusual in that it was developed by the community, principally the Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative (FIMETI), a non-constituted partnership of isle community members, the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust and the National Trust for Scotland, the latter being the isle landlords. Following designation, the community members responsible for operating FIMETI felt that the time had come to step down. The newly-designated marine protected area was to be governed by a Steering Committee, representing the major stakeholders, including a range of local/national fisheries organisations and conservation bodies. With the dissolution of FIMETI, the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust and National Trust for Scotland were represented on the Steering Committee as independent organisations, but it was recognised that having originated with the Fair Isle community, representation of their views and interests on the committee was vital.

A new, properly constituted body was needed, leading to the establishment of the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (SCIO) in June 2018, with three isle residents as trustees. The hope was that such an organisation could in the first instance act as a representative of the community on the Steering Committee of the Fair Isle Marine Protected Area, enable the employment of a local project officer and in time develop a range of research projects, independently and with other committee partner organisations that would bring socio-economic and environmental benefits to Fair Isle.

Our charitable purposes include:

- the advancement of citizenship or community development
- the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science
- the advancement of environmental protection or improvement

We aim to fulfil these purposes by:

- Working to better understand the marine and coastal habitats of Fair Isle, the biological interactions within these environments and the impact of human activity upon them.
- Representing the view and interests of Fair Isle residents with regards to the protection and use of Fair Isle's marine and coastal natural heritage
- Promoting the value of Fair Isle's coastal and marine natural heritage to the wider public, both independently and through cooperation with other relevant organisations.
- Working to explore the potential for sustainable economic development linked to Fair Isle's natural marine and coastal resources
- Empowering the community to contribute to discussions regarding the use and protection of its natural marine and coastal resources and heritage.

- Carrying out biological research and monitoring work within the boundaries of the Fair Isle Marine Protected Area during this project's lifetime
- Supporting research conducted by other bodies within the boundaries of the Fair Isle Marine Protected Area during this project's lifetime
- Commissioning and/or supporting research projects that may from time to time arise or be deemed necessary to further the aims of better understanding and contributing to the protection of Fair Isle's marine and coastal environment, but that fall out with the scope of the Marine Protected Area project
- Seeking to promote a better knowledge and understanding of scientific research conducted on the isle, both to the local community and visitors to Fair Isle.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document: Constitution of Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation SCIO

Trustee recruitment and appointment: Fair Isle is a small community, with c50 people currently resident on the isle. Much of the work by residents to support and develop the community is achieved by means of committees reporting to a constituted body, the Fair Isle Community Association. To reduce the potential for conflicts of interest, given the small size of the community, the significant number of family relationships and the multiple paid and voluntary roles undertaken by residents it was agreed that a single-tier structure would be adopted by the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation. Since there would be no additional membership beyond that of the trustees under this arrangement, it was further agreed that accountability to the local community would be maintained by voluntary reporting to the Fair Isle Community Association. Three trustees, all individuals who had been involved in the process of obtaining marine protected area status and the subsequent process of applying for SCIO status, were duly appointed.

Achievements and Performance

Trustees attended all Fair Isle Marine Protected Area Steering Committee meetings via Teams and in person. These meetings are generally biannual. One trustee has chaired the majority of meetings. Our Project Officer has provide updates to the Fair Isle Times, Newsletters to the community, and via the FIMRO website <https://www.fair-isle-marine.org.uk>.

Trustees have attended all Fair Isle Committee quarterly meetings in person to report DR MPA updates, with minutes circulated to the community. The community remain both interested and supportive. FIMRO welcomed a new Trustee spring 2025. Steven Wilson is very knowledgeable, and passionate about the DR MPA.

Trustees have been involved in supporting research undertaken in Fair Isle during the 2024/25 fieldwork season in relation to the DR MPA, in partnership with NatureScot, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust (FIBOT), University of the Highlands & Islands, and community members.

Island wide invasive species monitoring remains in place with regular inspection of monitoring equipment, with islanders and Ranger (based at Fair Isle Bird observatory) undertaking the role. This is particularly aimed at identifying any potential rat activity.

The Fair Isle Bird Observatory was opened in late spring 2025, with an official opening planned for June 2026. Renewed partnership working between the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and FIMRO is important to many aspects of the DR MPA. With more visitors, and numerous cruise ship passengers, there has been an opportunity for FIMRO to engage with the wider public. A banner and leaflets were produced giving information about the DR MPA.

Rock-pooling equipment continued to be made available to islanders to undertake local shore based species recording on events days, and to feed finds and information into the DR MPA. The Fair Isle Marine WhatsApp group for islanders, visitors, researchers and Bird Observatory staff/ranger to share and identify finds remains very popular, with over fifty plus members, and has helped with ongoing species identification. Islanders continue to include fishing activity and catch. This has inspired members of the community to become more engaged with the DR MPA.

To build on this enthusiasm, we worked on the development of an Education Officer Post aimed at promoting island wide community citizen science projects. The post was a pilot project focused on, and facilitating, opportunities to engage in citizen science, including shore watch activities, beach surveys/monitoring, species identification, and planned events over a ten week period (with a degree of flexible working). The post was advertised and we successfully recruited a well-qualified island resident who began work early June 2025. Apart from gathering and sharing information & data towards the DR MPA we hope that participants learn and build on their own knowledge base, and find the experience both enjoyable and sociable. If successful, FIMRO would be keen to further develop the Education Officer role into 2026

The Inshore fisheries survey will be published late 2025. The North Atlantic Fisheries College, through the University of the Highlands & Islands, undertook this work and presented their findings to the DR MPA Steering Committee and the community during the period. If funding allows we would like to see this work continued into 2026. Benthic habitat surveys conducted in the summer of 2024, with research findings published in spring 2025, and a Sandeel research project, again through the North Atlantic Fisheries

College, began in May 2025, with the expectation that further work will be undertaken during 2026. These research projects highlight how we are progressing the research priorities identified. Presentations have been well attended by islanders & visitors. Presentations/events are timetabled to allow our very engaged school age children to participate. Other stakeholders have joined or delivered content via teams. Film footage of Flapper Skate remains very exciting. It is clear that further investigation into skate activity and populations in Fair Isle waters is required.

Other 2025 research included cetacean monitoring, using FPODS for acoustic monitoring and visual observation, for an MSc research project undertaken by Fergus McCormick. Steven Wilson deployed the FPODS for the project, which was very much weather dependent. We look forward to seeing what acoustic data can be retrieved and Fergus's final report/dissertation. Cetacean siting's cause a huge amount of excitement, with orca becoming a regular feature. FIMRO website has some fantastic pictures.

Our Project Officer Katie Cubbon, based in Orkney, continues to be huge asset to FIMFO and the DR MPA. We have benefitted enormously from her skill set and enthusiasm. Much of the Project Officers work in the period was to engage with the DR MPA Steering Committee, FIMRO and the local community to further identify research priorities, move ongoing research projects forward, and in particular identify funding. The project officer post is funded by the Coastal Communities fund and National Trust for Scotland.

Work continues to further develop a communications plan, and maintain the website. Workshops were delivered and FIMRO trustees, with help from the Project Officer, and Peg Shaw (FFI) looked at capacity building, organisational development and resilience. This work was also supported by the advisory group (FIMRO, NatureScot and FFI) and aims to promote DR MPA, look at locally based projects, attract future funding, and deliver on some of the smaller research activities.

Our own monthly FIMRO meetings are well attended. Clear agendas and prompt follow up on actions required keep us all focused especially when investigating funding options.

Financial review - All funding and claims are managed by FIMRO trustees. We are supported by the Project Officer in identifying funding opportunities and application processes associated with all ongoing and new projects planned for 2025/26. FIMRO will consider engaging an accountant to ensure monies are managed effectively and for the purposes of annual reporting to OSCR.

A Receipts and Payments account will be submitted with the annual return for the period.

Future plans

As trustees of the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation we have gained in experience and capacity, attending and facilitating meetings, understanding our partner organisations, and supporting each other. We want to build on the increasing community engagement with more events and activities and further develop the website to promote wider engagement in the DR MPA.

Building on FIMRO's achievements to date and especially as we begin to plan for the next five years we hope that other community members may consider becoming trustees.

In 2026, with advisory group help, we are keen to re-engage with fishers. Both the Shetland Fishermen's Association and Scottish Fisherman's Federation are part of the DR MPA steering committee. We value their contribution and would like to enhance the relationship.

FIMRO continues to present any revised research priorities and activities planned to the community, and consult with residents to ensure we are clear about their priorities and aspirations for the DR MPA. It remains our desire to ensure the community remain at the heart of the Fair Isle Marine Protected Area.



APPENDIX 1

Other optional information

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) OSCR will accept digital or typed signatures		
Full name(s)	SUSANNAH PARRIABY	FIONA C MITCHELL
Position (e.g. Chair)	TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE
Date	22.03.2026	22/3/2026

APPENDIX 3



		Independent examiner's report on the accounts						v2
Report to the trustees/members of	Charity name	FAIR ISLE MARINE RESEARCH ORGANISATION						
	Registered charity number	SC 048485						
	On the accounts of the charity for the period	Period start date				Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year	to	Day	Month	Year	
	30	06	2024		30	06	2025	
Set out on pages								(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	<p>The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement 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.</p>							
Basis of independent examiner's statement	<p>My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. 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 trustees 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.</p>							
Independent examiner's statement	<p>In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention [other than that disclosed on the attached page*]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations <p>have not been met, or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached. 							
Signed**:	MRS. P.A. THOMSON				Date: 22/3/26			
Name:	PATRICIA THOMSON							
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	Chairperson of the Fair Isle Community Hall							
Address:	LOWER STONEY BREK FAIR ISLE SHETLAND, ZE2 9JU							

*Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply. If the words do apply, set out those matters which have come to your attention on the following page.

**OSCR will accept digital or typed signatures.

APPENDIX 3

Disclosure section

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of
any items that the
examiner wishes to
disclose

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date			to	Period end date		
	day	month	year		day	month	year
	30	06	2024		30	06	2025

Section A Statement of receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Expendable endowment funds to nearest £	Permanent endowment funds to nearest £	Total funds current period to nearest £	Total funds last period to nearest £
A1 Receipts						
Donations					-	9733
Legacies					-	
Grants	28568				28568	-
Receipts from fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading receipts					-	
Income from investments other than land and buildings					-	
Rents from land & buildings					-	
Gross receipts from other charitable activities	37212				37212	420
					-	
A1 Sub total	65780 -	-	-	-	65780 -	10153 -
A2 Receipts from asset & investment sales						
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets					-	
Proceeds from sale of investments					-	
A2 Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-
A3 Payments						
Expenses for fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading payments					-	
Investment management costs					-	
Payments relating directly to charitable activities	25497				25497	4998
Grants and donations					-	
Governance costs:					-	
Audit / independent examination					-	
Preparation of annual accounts					-	
Legal costs					-	
Other					-	
					-	
A3 Sub total	25497 -	-	-	-	25497 -	4998 -
A4 Payments relating to asset and investment movements						
Purchases of fixed assets					-	
Purchase of investments					-	
A4 Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net receipts / (payments)	-	-	-	-	-	-
A5 Transfers to / (from) funds					-	
Surplus / (deficit) for year	-	-	-	-	-	-

Section B Statement of balances

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Expendable endowment funds to nearest £	Permanent endowment funds to nearest £	Total current period to nearest £	Total last period to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash and bank balances at start of year	10153				10153-	3738
	Surplus / (deficit) shown on receipts and payments account	40294				40294-	5155
						-	
						-	
	Cash and bank balances at end of year	50447 -	-	-	-	50447-	10153-
(Agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))							

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Market valuation to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B2 Investments				
		Total	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (if available) to nearest £	Current value (if available) to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B3 Other assets					
		Total	-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B4 Liabilities				
		Total	-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (estimate) to nearest £	Last year to nearest £
B5 Contingent liabilities				
		Total	-	-

Signed by one or two trustees
on behalf of all the trustees

Signature*

Print Name

Date of
approval

* Please note - OSCR will accept digital or typed signatures

Section C Notes to the Accounts

C1 Nature and purpose of funds (may be stated on analysis of funds worksheets)

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C2 Grants

Type of activity or project supported	Individual / institution	Number of grants made	£
Total			

C3a Trustee remuneration

If no remuneration was paid during the period to any charity trustee or person connected to a trustee cross this box (otherwise complete section 3b)	
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Authority under which paid

C3b Trustee remuneration - details

	£

C4a Trustee expenses

If no expenses were paid to any charity trustee during the period then cross this box (otherwise complete section 4b)	X
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C4b Trustee expenses - details

	Number of trustees	£

C5 Transactions with trustees and connected persons

Nature of relationship	Nature of transaction	Transaction amount (£)	Balance outstanding at period end (£)

C6 Other information

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Additional analysis (1)

Analysis of receipts and payments

1 Donations

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Expendable endowment funds to nearest £	Permanent endowment funds to nearest £	Total current period to nearest £	Total last period to nearest £
					-	
					-	
					-	
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-

2 Grants

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Total current period to nearest £	Total last period to nearest £
SIC Coastal Communities	28568		-	0
			-	
			-	
Total	28568 -	-	-	0 -

3 Gross receipts from other charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Expendable endowment funds to nearest £	Permanent endowment funds to nearest £	Total current period to nearest £	Total last period to nearest £
NatureScot	13417				13417 -	420
FIME IT (booklet)	102				102 -	
Amenity Trust (booklet)	10				10 -	
Project Officer (booklet)	35				35 -	
NTS	21153				21153 -	
FEI	2495				2495 -	
					-	
Total	37212 -	-	-	-	37212 -	420 -

4 Payments relating directly to charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Expendable endowment funds to nearest £	Permanent endowment funds to nearest £	Total current period to nearest £	Total last period to nearest £
NatureScot	24545				24545 -	4998
FIMRO	939				-	
					-	
					-	
					-	
					-	
					-	
					-	
Total	25487 -	-	-	-	25487 -	4998 -

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Additional analysis (2)

5 Breakdown of unrestricted funds

	Unrestricted fund 1: enter name of fund below	Unrestricted fund 2: enter name of fund below	Unrestricted fund 3: enter name of fund below	Unrestricted fund 4: enter name of fund below	Total unrestricted funds	Total unrestricted funds last period
Receipts						
Donations					-	9722
Legacies					-	
Grants	28588				28588	
Receipts from fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading receipts					-	
buildings					-	
Rents from land & buildings					-	
Gross receipts from other charitable activities	37212				37212	420
Sub total	65780	-	-	-	65780	10153
Receipts from asset & investment sales						
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets					-	
Proceeds from sale of investments					-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payments						
Expenses for fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading payments					-	
Investment management costs					-	
Payments relating directly to charitable activities	25487				25487	4889
Grants and donations					-	
Governance costs:					-	
Audit / independent examination					-	
Preparation of annual accounts					-	
Legal costs					-	
Sub total	25487	-	-	-	25487	4996
Payments relating to asset and investment movements						
Purchases of fixed assets					-	
Purchase of investments					-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net receipts / (payments)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers to / (from) funds					-	
Surplus / (deficit) for year	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nature and purpose of funds						

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Additional analysis (3)

6 Breakdown of restricted funds

	Restricted fund 1 - enter name of fund below	Restricted fund 2 - enter name of fund below	Restricted fund 3 - enter name of fund below	Restricted fund 4 - enter name of fund below	Total restricted funds	Total restricted funds last period
Receipts						
Donations					-	
Legacies					-	
Grants					-	
Receipts from fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading receipts					-	
Income from investments other than land and buildings					-	
Rents from land & buildings					-	
Gross receipts from other charitable activities					-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receipts from asset & investment sales						
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets					-	
Proceeds from sale of investments					-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payments						
Expenses for fundraising activities					-	
Gross trading payments					-	
Investment management costs					-	
Payments relating directly to charitable activities					-	
Grants and donations					-	
Governance costs:					-	
Audit / independent examination					-	
Preparation of annual accounts					-	
Legal costs					-	
					-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payments relating to asset and investment movements						
Purchases of fixed assets					-	
Purchase of investments					-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net receipts / (payments)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers to / (from) funds					-	
Surplus / (deficit) for year	-	-	-	-	-	-

Nature and purpose of funds

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