

The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO

Scotland · Charity number SC051857

Details

Known as	The Fairies of Dunfermline
Status	Active
Legal form	SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation)
Registered	2022-07-25
Register	View on the OSCR register

Contact

Address	128 East Trinity Road Edinburgh EH5 3PR
Website	https://www.patons-dunfermline.com

Activities

Activities: 'It carries out activities or services itself'

Purposes: 'the advancement of citizenship or community development', 'the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science'

What the charity does: We are a charity dedicating to promoting the art work of 19th century artist Sir Joseph Noël Paton and his family. As part of this we are restoring the woodland garden in Dunfermline which inspired his famous fairy paintings. The woodland, owned by Fife Council, had been left abandoned, derelict and heavily littered - our volunteers have cleared decades of rubbish and scrub so that the area can be used by the community to connect with nature, take exercise, engage in outdoor learning activities and be inspired. We also work with arts organisations and local community groups to create exhibitions, information boards and outdoor walking trails, which help to tell the story of the Patons.

Beneficiaries: 'No specific group, or for the benefit of the community'

Objectives: 1: The advancement of the arts, heritage, and culture through activities which will educate people of all backgrounds about the Patons of Dunfermline and the importance of their role in Scottish culture, art, and history. 2: The advancement of community development through activities involving the local community in bringing a derelict property back into community use, creating learning opportunities about Dunfermline's rich cultural history in relation to the Patons and their influence in art, sculpture and local textile manufacturing.

Geography

- **Main operating location:** Fife
- **Geographical spread:** A specific local point, community or neighbourhood

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-07-31	£3,188	£664	-	0
2024-07-31	£1,600	£350	-	0
2023-07-31	£756	£756	-	0

The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO

Scotland - Charity number SC051857

Accounts

The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO

Scottish Charity No - SC051857

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the Period Ended 31 July 2025

The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO

Structure, governance and management

The Charity is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a SCIO). The Charity was registered on 25 July 2022 as a single tier organisation. A Board of Trustees meets on a quarterly basis to draw up the strategy for the charity, review financial information and assess the short term and long term objectives and progress.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The board may at any time appoint any person to be a charity trustee - by way of a resolution passed by majority vote at a board meeting. At every third AGM, all of the charity trustees must retire from office - but may then be re-elected unless

- (a) he/she advises the Board prior to the conclusion of the AGM that he/she does not wish to be re-appointed as a charity trustee; or
- (b) an election process was held at the AGM and he/she was not among those elected/re-elected through that process.

Trustees may serve a total of 9 years on the board. Trustees must then stand down for a period of at least two years but may then be re-appointed as Trustees subject to the terms of the constitution. Catriona Berry and Diana Noel Paton will retire at the next AGM and will offer themselves for reelection.

Objectives and activities

The objectives of The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO are:

- 1: The advancement of the arts, heritage, and culture through activities which will educate people of all backgrounds about the Patons of Dunfermline and the importance of their role in Scottish culture, art, and history.
- 2: The advancement of community development through activities involving the local community in bringing a derelict property (Wooers' Alley Woodland Garden) back into community use, creating learning opportunities about Dunfermline's rich cultural history in relation to the Patons and their influence in art, sculpture and local textile manufacturing.

No changes have been made to these objectives in the last year.

Achievements and performance during the year

Our greatest highlight this year was the bicentenary exhibition of Sir Joseph Noël Paton at Dunfermline Carnegie Library and Galleries (DCLG). This once in a generation exhibition ran from 14th September 2024 until 9th February 2025 and was a joint project between Fife Cultural Trust and The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO. 18,000 reported visitors came to see the exhibition – well above DCLG's normal number for the Winter period. It was a huge success, receiving 5 stars in the Scotsman! The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO was instrumental in helping to secure loans of previously unseen sketches held by Noël Paton's descendants and Private Collectors, as well as high profile loans from Kelvingrove Museum, the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. As part of the exhibition, we displayed a specially commissioned miniature scale model of Wooers' Alley Cottage, by the artist ██████████s, generously funded by the Pre-Raphaelite Society. The miniature model of the cottage (demolished in 1926) has helped us to further our research and assist in our fundraising of the restoration of Wooers' Alley woodland garden. A particular high point during the exhibition was a private reception organised by DCLG, attended by 100 Paton descendants, who gathered from all over the world to see the work of their forebear.

At the beginning of 2025, we were delighted to welcome two new trustees, ██████████ and ██████████, replacing our previous trustee ██████████. ██████████ is an academic who has previously worked for the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS); among his many years of

research on the Patons, his paper *Amelia and Joseph Noël Paton: A Sibling Rivalry* published in the Journal of the Scottish Society of Art History has been seminal in our understanding of the relationship between the two artists. [REDACTED] has been one of our head volunteers at Wooers' Alley since April 2023 and in that time has played a significant part in the transformation of the woodland; she brings a wealth of skills in the arts and wildlife, having previously worked in Arts Education at the Rijks Museum and as Chief Operations Manager for Seabuckthorn Scotland CIC. In addition to this, we are hugely grateful to [REDACTED] who continues to assist us with our annual financial report.

We have continued to work with academics and curators around the world, assisting with the research on the Paton's work and legacy. This year we assisted [REDACTED] of Glasgow Life Museums with a paper for the Association for Art History Annual Conference 2025, titled *A Freckled Whelp: Noël Paton's Caliban, Scottish Identity and Enslavement* – addressing the complex issues around Noël Paton's relationship with identity and enslavement, and his efforts to raise awareness of the horrors of slavery. We also assisted the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) in furthering the research on objects from the Wooers' Alley collection. Two items of particular interest were the 15th century 'Rasp Ring' door handle of Wooers' Alley, originally from Stirling Palace, and a 17th century sand glass which appeared in [REDACTED] "Luther at Erfurt", originally from the Royal Chapel, Linlithgow, via the Wooers' Alley Collection. We are also grateful to [REDACTED], Senior Curator of British Art at the NGS, for her assistance in our research on the sculptor [REDACTED], who so far has remained under-researched.

Our volunteers have continued to make vast improvements at Wooers' Alley. In September 2024 we received part-funding from Dunfermline Greenspace SCIO, via the Hugh Fraser Foundation to further improve the footpaths in time for the Noël Paton exhibition, enabling visitors to view Noël Paton's work at DCLG and then walk through his childhood garden at Wooers' Alley. West Fife Woodlands carried out the work, which required the hiring of heavy machinery to scrape back decades of mud to reveal the old gravel paths – making it easier and less slippery underfoot for walkers. The result has been an estimated tenfold increase in footfall by the local community using and enjoying the woodland. We have been heartened by the overwhelming support and gratitude from the local community for our project.

[REDACTED] continues to offer guided walking tours of Wooers' Alley free of charge, to help raise awareness of the project among the local community and our partners. One of our aims is to engage young people, and encourage them to connect with the history and wildlife of Wooers' Alley. This year we collaborated with Fife College first year animation students, who used their skills to create digital animations of what Wooers' Alley Cottage may have looked like, based on historic sketches of the building. These animations are now available to view via QR codes on the Wooers' Alley site. We are also extremely grateful to the furniture students at Fife College, who designed and made us a bench, which has been a great addition to the garden.

Finally, we were delighted to receive £2500 in funding from the Finnis Scott Foundation to reintroduce 50 species of trees and flowers to the Wooers' Alley woodland garden. [REDACTED] has assisted us in searching 19th century records of Wooers' Alley and identifying the plants and flowers in Noël Paton's fairy painting's and [REDACTED] damask designs, to help us reintroduce the (mostly) native species which previously grew in the garden. We aim to start planting in Autumn 2025. Many thanks also to The Woodland Trust who are providing some of the trees needed to make hedges in the new outdoor learning area.

Next Year's Priorities

2025-2026 will be a big year for us in terms of continuing the work to restore Wooers' Alley woodland garden and building on our community engagement, encouraging local people to connect with the history and wildlife.

A major part of our local community engagement so far has been to work with Dunfermline Greenspace SCIO, West Fife Woodlands, Golfdrum Residents Association, City of Dunfermline

Heritage Group and other local Dunfermline groups to compile a local heritage walk – The Tower Burn Trail - through Wooers' Alley Woods and beyond. The Tower Burn Trail will link up the under-used green spaces in Dunfermline, raising awareness of the hidden history and encouraging footfall. The trail will start from St Margarets Cave and will follow the Tower Burn through Wooers' Alley woodland, Buffies Brae, Golfdrum and Baldridgeburn. We have worked closely with local history groups to research the hidden history along the trail and Dunfermline Greenspace SCIO have offered to fund two A0 size Trail Maps and eleven A2 size interpretation boards. We are proud of the amount of money we have managed to save on this project. We were quoted around £18-20k by private contractors to carry out the work, but we have managed to reduce the costs considerably by members of the community offering their skills free of charge. [REDACTED] of The Patons of Dunfermline has designed all the maps and signs and they will be installed by [REDACTED] of West Fife Woodlands, assisted by our local community volunteers. The final cost is expected to be less than £3k as a result. The signs will be installed this coming September 2025.

Another huge part of next year's community engagement will be to make further improvements to the east entrances of Wooers' Alley Woodland, to enable less able members of the community to use the woodland. We will then transform of the most derelict area of Wooers' Alley (a disused council compound) into an Outdoor Learning Area for local schools and community groups to use. We have been offered funding from The Mushroom Trust and Dunfermline Greenspace SCIO – and heavy machinery assistance from West Fife Woodlands - to help make this happen. Watch this space (literally)!

With the generous funding from The Finnis Scott Foundation, our volunteers are all set to get planting. With the help of [REDACTED], we have identified over 50 species of plants, trees and flowers which used to grow at Wooers' Alley, and we will be reintroducing them to the woodland garden this coming year. By doing this, we hope to recreate the woodland garden as it was at the time of the Patons, showing how the Patons got their inspiration – and in doing so bring inspiration to local people and visitors.

We will continue to assist curators and PhD students with their research on the Patons, in the hope that more academic papers will be published and in turn more information on the Patons will be in the public domain. We will be working with Fife Cultural Trust on planning the [REDACTED] bicentenary for 2028.

Finally, 2026 will mark the 100th anniversary of the demolition of Wooers' Alley Cottage. Next year will be key to raising awareness and funds to improve the area around the cottage, undertake archaeological excavations and install signage, to create a visitor location.

Risk management

We take our duty of care of the health and safety of our volunteers very seriously. We continue to monitor the safety of our volunteers on the Wooers' Alley site and ensure that each volunteer carries out jobs within their training and ability. We complete regular risk assessments and our public liability insurance is organised through Markel Insurance.

Financial review and Reserves Policy

Our activities this year were generously supported through volunteer time for which we are hugely grateful. We have excluded this from the financial statements as we consider that the monetary value of their contribution cannot be reasonably quantified. We have received restricted funds from a private donor to pay for one year of public liability insurance. We received £2500 in restricted funds from the Finnis Scott Foundation to reintroduce 50 species of plants and flowers to Wooers' Alley.

We do not currently hold any financial reserves but we will look to build one up over the next few years as the charity and its activities grow. We will develop a Reserves Policy accordingly.

The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st July 2025

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Year ended 31st July 2025	Year ended 31st July 2024
Receipts				
Donations	588	100	688	100
Grants		2500	2500	1500
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Total receipts	588	2600	3188	1600
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Payments				
Cost of charitable activities	564	100	664	350
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Total payments	564	100	664	350
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Surplus for the year	24	2500	2524	1250
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Statement of Balances - As at 31st July 2025

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
Opening cash at bank and in hand	100	1,150	1,250	-
Surplus for the year	24	2,500	2,524	1,250
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Closing cash at bank and in hand	124	3,650	3,774	1,250
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Bank and cash balances				
Bank current account	124	3,650	3,774	1,250
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There were no other assets or liabilities

The Patons of Dunfermline SCIO

Notes to the accounts - for the year ended 31 July 2025

1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Charities & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

2 Nature and purpose of funds

Unrestricted funds are those that may be used at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. The trustees maintain a single unrestricted fund for the day-to-day running of the organisation. During the year the charity received donations of:

£588.05 from private donors

Restricted funds may only be used for specific purposes. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for specific purposes. During the year the charity received donations of:

£2,500 from The Finnis Scott Foundation - for the planting of trees and flowers

£100 donated from a Private Donor (Noël Paton descendant) to go towards public liability insurance

3 Related party transactions

No remuneration was paid to the trustees or any connected persons during the year 2025 or for the year ended 31st July 2024

4 Cost of charitable activities

£664.08 spent on path works, printing, public liability insurance, health & safety equipment and spring bulbs for Wooers' Alley.

