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## Chairperson's Report

Caithness RDA AGM - Thursday 6th November 2025, Ulbster Arms Hotel, Halkirk

My report is like a box of chocolates - sweet, surprising and best enjoyed with a smile! So hopefully you'll all enjoy the annual roundup and not fall asleep after another super lunch by the team here at The Ulbster!

A wise man once said "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" Anyone know who it was? And No, it was neither David nor Frank! You all do that every Wednesday by giving your time freely to help all the children to come to us.

Wednesday mornings are always busy and some days seem frantic from start to finish but you put on your smiles, ooze positivity and give each and every child a great experience to take away. What you may not realise, is that it causes a ripple effect that they take back to school and also home at the end of the day, where it shows in their moods, behaviours and personalities. I know this for a fact as teachers and parents have told me on numerous occasion, so well done to you all for the fabulous job you do.

These AGMs come around oh so quickly each year and it's never lost on any of us how much we achieve, with this year being no exception!

We ended last year with another fantastic Christmas presentation day on 11th December, attended by families and invited guests consisting of Geoffrey Minter & his wife Camilla (and her dog, hidden inside her coat like a little hot water bottle!), Audrey MacDonald, Caithness Bikers, Maggie & Ian Swanson, Brian & Janis Scollay and of course the man of the moment, Santa! Willie, performs the role like the pro he is and has a word for each and every child. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many generous people supporting us which allows us to continue our great work here in Halkirk.

It's always a relief to get successful show days done and dusted, none more so than the Christmas one as we look forward to the break over the colder winter months.

If at all possible, we try and fit in a training session before returning after Easter and we managed this in March with Denise Kelly who was accompanied by Charlotte Mountain - County Chair for the North. Always new ideas to come away with and implement in future rides.

We started back after the Easter holidays on 23rd April with Wick and Thurso High Schools and a 3rd ride with Fergus, Rory & Junior. It's always heartening to see children we know, return and develop their skills and have great fun into the bargain. We were truly blessed with great spring weather so spent lots of time out in Maggie's Way and everyone enjoyed being outside in the sunshine.

We also had a visit from Andi Bruce to do Coz's coach assessment which of course she passed and is now fully fledged. Well Done! Megan got thrown into the deep end that day and had her annual review while we had Andi on site - well done on taking it all in your stride as it wasn't actually due until August!

I think you all agree the highlight of the summer term was the successful trip to Cranloch for Kayden, Rory & Dylan. The coaches, Mary, Steph & Coz, in their wisdom, didn't think taking 3 children was enough of a challenge so Whisky & Poppy went too. The boys did us proud with fantastic results and lots of rosettes, including National Championship qualifications

and even some of our schools arts & crafts also went off to the National Championships. Huge thanks also to Katrina who went down to sidewalk with Rory and also went to Scone Palace Horse Trials to volunteer at the RDA stand there. Don't forget to take the correct road home and not the scenic route through Perth the next time Katrina :-))

It seemed like no time at all until our summer presentation day. It was of course well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by families and supporters including the girls from Wick HS YPI challenge who won £500 for us, Maggie Swanson, Donald Henderson ( tack room doors) and Liz Alexander who very generously donated 3 tonnes of rubber chip for Maggie's Way. Danny picked it up from Lyth under the watchful guidance of Jean and Thanks to Martin Munro for his part in taking it to Maggie's way.

As always, we heave a sigh of relief when we wrap up another successful term and sign off for the summer, but the weeks soon fly by and we came back in august with our first groups of primary school children - we've had Reay, Pennyland, Newton Park, Mount Pleasant and of course Fergus & Rory making up a 4th ride.

It hasn't been the easiest of terms as volunteer numbers have been low but of course, everyone pulls together as a team to make it work and for that, I can't thank you all enough.

As always, our last presentation morning before the October break was a lovely morning for the children to ride in front of family and friends and we were delighted to have some of the gang from Team Tender to present trophies and rosettes. Neil Buchan wasn't available to take photos but Mel Rogers generously stepped in and thoroughly enjoyed her morning. Of course she was ably helped all morning by David " Lord Lichfield" Munro who stepped in to give her a hand :-))

During the October break we organised a training day with Denise and her sister Heather who, rather fortuitously were in Golspie, and just nipped up to Halkirk to spend a couple of hours with us. Denise is a constant mine of information on all things RDA and provided lots of take-aways for future use.

We were also absolutely delighted at the training day to have not 1 but 3 new volunteers, so the aim will be to get them disclosure checked ASAP so they can boost volunteer numbers. I must really give a huge thanks just now to Jean who has had to slog through the quagmire that is the disclosure system! It's been no easy task and I admire her resilience in sticking with it where others would have given up. I know Malcolm has also helped trudging through all the information with you but the system itself is lengthy & cumbersome and would hardly encourage anyone to start a volunteering journey when an application can take 6 months or more to come to fruition!! Thank you so much Jean. Also for stepping into the breach when Liz or I haven't been able to be here as much last term.

\* So we've come almost full circle and are in the run up to Christmas yet again but the work still continues and none more so for a couple of ladies who've been very busy peddling away like mad changing Caithness RDA to Caithness RDA SCIO. I think I'm correct in saying that we are the last group in Highland Region to become a SCIO and I'm sure a couple of our ladies here will heave a HUGE sigh of relief when its all done and dusted. The change has not been without its challenges but Liz & Anne have been frantically working away in the background completing all the necessary paperwork and opening a new bank account. Our "Messenger" apps have been on fire some nights with info flying back and forth about the various stages of applications and difficulties faced along the way!

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Between SCIO applications, bank account applications and disclosure checks, Liz, Anne and Jean have certainly earned their stripes recently!

So as you can see, it's definitely a case of "Teamwork makes the dream work" so here goes with all the Thanks that are very much due ...

To all of you who turn up week in and week out and give the children a positive experience in a warm and welcoming environment ... Huge thanks

To our coaches Mary, Step, Coz and Megan who work constantly to make lessons interesting and challenging to develop our riders to the best of their abilities. Thank you all.

To each and every one of our pony owners who provide these wonderfully patient equines - Poppy, Whisky, Geordie, Max, Charlie, Byron, Crusty, Jo-Jo, Mary. They all do a fantastic job each week. Sadly Megan lost Annie recently but she was a valued member of the pony team whilst she was still able to be here along with her little side-kick Tarry. Thanks also to Corinne who has taken on the role of providing the much enjoyed carrots and apples each week. We all know how much the treats are enjoyed.

To our "Estates Management" Team consisting of Nettie, Jean, Malcolm, Frank, Robbie Keith and of course David who has taken on the mammoth grass cutting task out on Maggie's way. Of course, if he gives up grass cutting, he can always turn his hand to professional photography and re-invent himself as the modern day Lord Litchfield! In addition, he's also a dab hand at painting and nothing is safe or out of bounds when he wields his paintbrush

To Nettie, who we'd be absolutely lost without, you are a "Jack of all trades" and master of all at the same time. I truly believe everyone should have a "Nettie" in their life!


To Isobel, who keeps not just ourselves fed and watered but also all who enter the tea-hut. Everyone is assured a very warm welcome. It's also a good time to Thank all our fab bakers who keep us well sugared up for the latter rides!

To all our trustees who continue to make decisions for the continuing growth and development of our group. You ALWAYS have its best interests at heart.

Jean, I know I've already given you thanks but just in addition, you are always a wise and measured counsel, know the correct words to use in every situation and of course, you married Malcolm so you are obviously a smart cookie too! Malcolm has been a tremendous help recently with all the health and safety, risk assessments and fire safety protocols, not just for our group but CIRA who have taken on board all of Malcolm's advice regarding the Indoor school. It is now a safer and better environment for it! Please pass on our grateful Thanks.

Anne for keeping the books balanced for another year and persevering with the bank applications whilst we change to a SCIO account. I know it's been a challenging task but I also know you will get the job done!

And to my friend and secretary Liz, you know the job inside out and you are the glue and driving force that ensures everyone is where they should be at any given time, families and guests receive invitations, paperwork is correct and of course you keep me right and feed me info as and when required. We couldn't do anywhere near as good a job without you. Liz, you are SIMPLY THE BEST!

  
ANNE GUNN  
TREASURER

## Income & Expenditure Account Summary For Year Ended 31st August 2025 (SCIO)

### INCOME


|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Donations               | £0.00        |
| Collecting Tins         | £0.00        |
| Christmas Raffle        | £0.00        |
| RDA Grampian & Highland | £0.00        |
| Windfarm Benefit Fund   | £0.00        |
| Miscellaneous Income    | £0.00        |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>£0.00</b> |

### EXPENDITURE

|                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Membership & Insurance           | £0.00        |
| Indoor School Hire               | £0.00        |
| Horse Hire, Transport & Livery   | £0.00        |
| Events                           | £0.00        |
| Equipment/Training               | £0.00        |
| Fuel                             | £0.00        |
| Repairs, Buildings & Groundworks | £0.00        |
| Stationary & Postage             | £0.00        |
| Miscellaneous                    | £0.00        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>£0.00</b> |

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Income                 | £0.00        |
| Expenditure            | £0.00        |
| <b>Surplus/Deficit</b> | <b>£0.00</b> |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Bank Account @ 31st August 2024</b> | <b>£0.00</b> |
| <b>Surplus/Deficit</b>                 | <b>£0.00</b> |
| <b>Bank Account @ 31st August 2025</b> | <b>£0.00</b> |

  
 ANNE GUNN  
 TREASURER

# APPENDIX 3



## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

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|   |   |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |
|---|---|----------------------|-------|------|----|-----|--------------|----------|
| <b>Report to the trustees/members of</b>                        | Charity name  | CAITHNESS RDA (SCIO) |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Registered charity number</b>                                | SC  | 053957               |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>On the accounts of the charity for the period</b>            | Period start date   | Day                  | Month | Year | to | Day | Month        | Year     |
|   |   | 31                   | 08    | 2024 |    | 31  | 01           | SEP 2025 |
| <b>Set out on pages</b>   |   | 4                    |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner</b>     | <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>  |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Basis of independent examiner's statement</b>                | <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>   |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Independent examiner's statement</b>                         | <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"> <li>which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and</li> <li>to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>have not been met, or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.</li> </ol> |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Signed**:</b>  | Carla Waddell   |                      |       |      |    |     | <b>Date:</b> | 13/4/26  |
| <b>Name:</b>  | CARLA WADDELL   |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):</b> | ✓   |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |
| <b>Address:</b>   | ORNUM<br>GEORGE STREET<br>HALKIRK<br>CAITHNESS KW12 6YE   |                      |       |      |    |     |              |          |

\*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.

ANNE GUNN  
 TREASURER

## 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