

Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 October 2024

Charity registration number SC000258

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Trustees' Report

The trustees have pleasure in submitting their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 October 2024.

Reference and administrative details

The Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund was founded by a deed of trust. Its governing instrument is the trust deed and is managed by the Benevolent Fund Committee. The trustees are those individuals holding specific posts at the Law Society of Scotland (LSS) and the Scottish Law Agents Society (SLAS) as set out in the trust deed.

Charity name

Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund

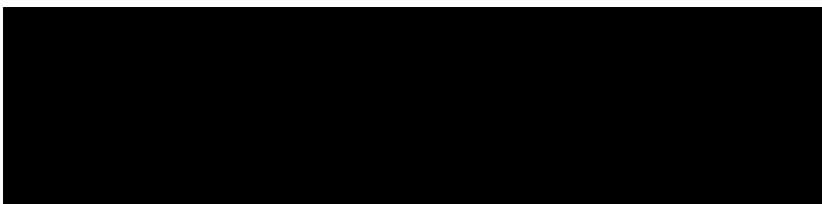
Charity registration number

SC000258

Registered office

89 Glasgow Road
Edinburgh
EH12 8LJ

Trustees



Governing document

The Benevolent Fund is a charitable trust and is governed by its trust deed.

Administration

Members of the Benevolent Fund Committee are appointed to deal with the day to day administration of the fund. The members of that committee shall not be less than seven in number. The president and vice president of the Law Society of Scotland and the president and secretary of the Scottish Law Agents Society shall be ex-officio members of the committee. At least two further members of the committee shall be nominated provided always that the balance of membership between the two societies is maintained. From that number, a convener of the committee shall be nominated to hold office at the pleasure of the committee. For the avoidance of doubt, members of the committee other than the ex-officio members need not be member of the Councils of either society.

The funds and assets shall be administered by the management accountant of the Law Society of Scotland and the secretarial duties will be performed by the secretary of the Scottish Law Agents Society.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Bankers

The Royal Bank of Scotland,
36 St Andrew Square
Edinburgh
EH2 2AD

Independent Examiner

Johnston Smillie Ltd.
5 South Gyle Crescent Lane
Edinburgh, EH12 9EG

Investment Advisors

Investec Wealth & Investment Limited
5 George Square
Glasgow, G2 1DY

Structure, governance and management

The Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund is a charitable trust governed by its trust deed. It has been entered into the Scottish Charity Register and is entitled, in accordance with section 13(1) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, to refer to itself as a charity registered in Scotland.

The Benevolent Fund Committee meets twice a year and makes all of the significant decisions in relation to the charity; day-to-day administration is delegated to the management accountant of the Law Society of Scotland and the secretary of the Scottish Law Agents Society. New trustees are appointed by the Benevolent Fund Committee from individuals of the respective societies possessing the relevant skills. Induction and training of new and existing members is dealt with as required.

Objectives, activities and achievements

The fund is intended to assist solicitors qualified in Scotland, or their dependants, who are in need of financial assistance and whose circumstances meet the criteria set by the trustees for the payment of grants. In light of this overarching objective, the Benevolent Fund Committee does not set annual objectives.

Grants policy

With consideration to the aim of the fund, potential beneficiaries are invited to complete the grant application form and submit to the trustees. This document is then considered in detail, so as to determine the suitability of the individual circumstance. A decision is then made on whether the grant application has been successful, and where appropriate, subsequent level of award.

During the year, 8 grants were distributed to 6 individuals (2023 - 15 grants to 9 individuals) from general funds, and 2 grants were distributed to 2 individuals (2023 - no grant was distributed) from the Tod Endowment restricted fund.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Financial review

The Trust's total income for the year was £41,044 (2023: £26,980). Contributions totalling £7,500 from the Tod Endowment Fund had been received in 2024 (2023: £14,250).

There was a net increase in funds of £54,921 in the year (2023: net decrease £10,629). Total funds at 31 October 2024 stood at £353,669 (2023: £298,748), of which unrestricted funds were £240,400 (2023: £191,197).

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the level of free reserves required by the Fund should be sufficient to generate investment income of at least £10,000 per annum in order to minimise reductions in capital from charitable expenditure. Reserve levels are monitored at each meeting. At 31 October the free reserves, including investments, were £240,400 (2023: £191,197).

Risk policy

The trustees examine the operational and business risks that the charity faces and have established systems to mitigate the significant risks. The principal risk is financial and exposure to stock market fluctuations which in turn impacts on reserves. In the opinion of the Trustees such risk is being monitored adequately with reference to the balance between cash and sums invested, and the risk profile of the investment portfolio.

Investment policy

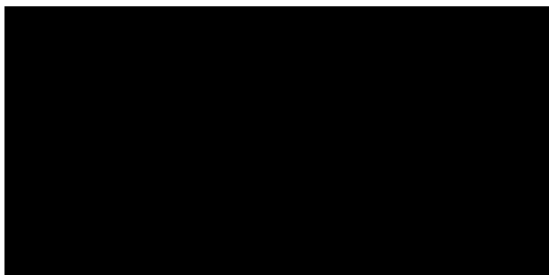
The investments are operated under delegated powers by investment brokers appointed by the trustees. Income is re-invested and the portfolio is considered low risk.

Plans for future periods

The trustees intend to continue to provide support to solicitors qualified in Scotland, or their dependants, who are in need of financial assistance, in accordance with the objectives of the charity.

Disclosure of information to independent examiner

The trustees who held office at the date of approval of this trustees' report, confirm that, so far as they each are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's independent examiner is unaware; and each trustee has taken all the 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 independent examiner is aware of that information.



Date: 10 June 2025

Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charity law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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 Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. 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.

Financial statements are published on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions. The maintenance and integrity of the charity's website is the responsibility of the trustees. The trustees' responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Statement of financial activities (incorporating income and expenditure account)

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 October 2024 which are set out on pages 8 to 16.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner

The charity's Trustees are 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 Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (a) to (c) 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 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.

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 Regulations;
- and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 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



Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Johnston Smillie Ltd

5 South Gyle Crescent Lane

Edinburgh

EH12 9EG

Date: 18 June 2025

Statement of financial activities (incorporating income and expenditure account)

for the year ended 31 October 2024

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Endowment £	2024 £	2023 £
Income:						
Investment income		12,538	-	-	12,538	12,200
Donations		21,006	7,500	-	28,506	14,780
Income	2	33,544	7,500	-	41,044	26,980
Expenditure:						
Raising funds	3	(7,987)	-	-	(7,987)	(14,812)
Charitable activities	3	(8,645)	(1,782)	-	(10,427)	(9,774)
Expenditure		(16,632)	(1,782)	-	(18,414)	(24,586)
(Losses)/gains						
Net realised (loss)/gain on disposal of investments		315	-	-	315	10,557
Net unrealised (loss)/gain on investments	5	31,976	-	-	31,976	(23,580)
Net (losses)/gains		32,291	-	-	32,291	(13,023)
Net movement in funds		49,203	5,718	-	54,921	(10,629)
Balance brought forward at 1st November		191,197	92,551	15,000	298,748	309,377
Balance carried forward at 31st October	6	240,400	98,269	15,000	353,669	298,748

All of the charity's activities are continuing.

The notes on pages 10 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

Balance sheet

as at 31 October 2024

	Note	2024	2023
Fixed Assets			
Investments at market value	5	344,383	298,760
Current Assets			
Debtors and accrued income		22	-
Cash at Bank and on deposit		15,037	20,069
		<u>15,059</u>	<u>20,069</u>
Current Liabilities			
Sundry creditors		<u>(5,773)</u>	<u>(20,081)</u>
Net Current Assets		9,286	(12)
Net Assets	6	<u>353,669</u>	<u>298,748</u>
Represented by:			
Unrestricted Funds	7	240,400	191,197
Restricted funds	7	98,269	92,551
Permanent Endowment Fund	7	<u>15,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Total funds	7	<u>353,669</u>	<u>298,748</u>

The notes on pages 10 to 16 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material to the financial statements.

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis in accordance with applicable accounting standards and under the historical cost convention modified to include listed investments at fair value. The charity was founded by trust deed and is a Public Benefit Entity with the registered office as noted on page 3. The financial statements are compliant with the charity's constitution, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) FRS 102 "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (revised 2019), and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102).

The financial statements are prepared in Sterling, rounded to the nearest pound, which is the functional currency of the charity.

Going Concern

The Trustees have examined the amount of free reserves available and determined that there are sufficient funds to comply with the reserves policy. To the Trustees' knowledge there are no material uncertainties which would prevent the charity from operating for 12 months from the date of signing this report.

Investments

Fixed asset investments are initially measured at transaction price excluding transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value at each reporting date. Changes in fair value are recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year. Transaction costs are expensed as incurred

Interest and dividends

Interest and dividends are shown inclusive of any tax credit which may be recoverable by the fund and are brought into account in the year in which they are receivable.

Permanent endowment fund

The principal sum of £15,000, described as the Alexander Stone Foundation Fund, is unavailable for distribution among beneficiaries of the Benevolent Fund. However, any income accrued on this fund is available for distribution.

Restricted fund

Donations which are received subject to conditions imposed by the donor are classified as restricted funds.

Unrestricted funds

These funds are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Accounting policies (continued)

Income

The charity welcomes donations from all sources. The majority of income is derived from donations from members of the Law Society of Scotland and Scottish Law Agents Society. Income is recognised when there is entitlement, probability of receipt and the value can be measured reliably.

Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

The trustees review all applications for grants payable in the furtherance of the charity's objects twice a year. The principal aim is to distribute a significant proportion of annual income to needy beneficiaries. Grants are recognised when approved. All other expenditure is minimal and is categorised as either support costs (advertising and administration costs) or governance costs (independent examination fees). All expenditure includes irrecoverable VAT.

A number of staff employed by the Law Society of Scotland provide general support for the charity's administrative functions. However, the value of donated services in monetary terms cannot be reliably measured and are therefore not included in these financial statements.

Taxation

The fund is recognised by HM Revenue & Customs as a charity for the purposes of section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and is exempt from taxation on its charitable activities.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discounts offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid after taking account of any trade discounts due.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Financial instruments

Other than investments, the charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

2. Income

2024	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Investment Income	12,538	-	12,538
Donations	21,006	7,500	28,506
Total	33,544	7,500	41,044

2023	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Investment Income	12,200	-	12,200
Donations	530	14,250	14,780
Total	12,730	14,250	26,980

A restricted donation of £7,500 (2023: £14,250) was received from the Tod Endowment Fund.

3. Expenditure

Raising Funds 2024	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Support Costs	7,987	-	7,987
Total	7,987	-	7,987

Raising Funds 2023	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Support Costs	14,812	-	14,812
Total	14,812	-	14,812

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

3. Expenditure (continued)

Charitable Activities 2024	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Grants awarded to individuals	8,645	1,782	10,427
Total	8,645	1,782	10,427

Charitable Activities 2023	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Grants awarded to individuals	9,774	-	9,774
Total	9,774	-	9,774

Analysis of Support Costs 2024	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Governance	4,209	-	4,209
Investment management fee	3,328	-	3,328
Independent examination fee	450	-	450
Total	7,987	-	7,987

Analysis of Support Costs 2023	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Governance	10,504	-	10,504
Investment management fee	3,108	-	3,108
Independent examination fee	1,200	-	1,200
Total	14,812	-	14,812

Unrestricted funds

During the year, 8 grants were distributed to 6 individuals totalling £8,645 (2023: 15 grants to 9 individuals totalling £9,774).

Restricted funds

In the current year, 2 grants were distributed to 2 individuals totalling £1,782 (2023: no grants were distributed).

Governance costs

Governance costs include amounts paid to the Scottish Law Agents Society for administering the funds.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

4. Staff costs

The charity has no employees in either the current or previous year. The trustees (who are considered to be key management) received neither emoluments nor reimbursement of expenses in either the current or previous year.

A number of staff employed by the Law Society of Scotland provide general support for the charity's fund raising and administrative functions. However, the value of donated services in monetary terms cannot be reliably measured and are therefore not included in these financial statements.

5. Investments

2024	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Permanent endowment fund	Total
	£	£	£	£
Market value at the beginning of the year	205,459	78,301	15,000	298,760
Additions	33,428	-	-	33,428
Disposals at opening market value	(19,830)	-	-	(19,830)
Unrealised gain/(loss)	32,025	-	-	32,025
Market value at the end of the year	251,082	78,301	15,000	344,383

2023	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Permanent endowment fund	Total
	£	£	£	£
Market value at the beginning of the year	217,311	78,301	15,000	310,612
Additions	36,383	-	-	36,383
Disposals at opening market value	(24,655)	-	-	(24,655)
Unrealised (loss)/gain	(23,580)	-	-	(23,580)
Market value at the end of the year	205,459	78,301	15,000	298,760

The historical cost of the listed investments at 31 October 2024 was £307,377 (2023: £293,736). The listed investments are valued monthly to market value (mid-market closing value).

	2024	2023
	%	%
Equities	61.33	58.91
Fixed Interest	25.30	23.12
Alternative Assets	7.06	9.71
Property	3.76	4.00
Cash	2.55	4.26
	100.00	100.00

At 31 October 2024 there are no holdings representing more than 5% of the total portfolio value.

At 31 October 2023 there are no holdings representing more than 5% of the total portfolio value.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

6. Net Assets

2024	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Permanent endowment fund	Total
	£	£	£	£
Investments	236,832	92,551	15,000	344,383
Cash at bank	9,319	5,718	-	15,037
Debtors	22	-	-	22
Creditors	(5,773)	-	-	(5,773)
	240,400	98,269	15,000	353,669

2023	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Permanent endowment fund	Total
	£	£	£	£
Investments	205,459	78,301	15,000	298,760
Cash at bank	5,819	14,250	-	20,069
Debtors	-	-	-	-
Creditors	(20,081)	-	-	(20,081)
	191,197	92,551	15,000	298,748

7. Funds

	Balance at 1 November 2023	Income	Expenditure	Gains/ (losses)	Funds at 31 October 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds	191,197	33,544	(16,632)	32,291	240,400
Restricted Funds	92,551	7,500	(1,782)	-	98,269
Permanent Endowment Fund	15,000	-	-	-	15,000
Total	298,748	41,044	(18,414)	32,291	353,669

	Balance at 1 November 2022	Income	Expenditure	Gains/ (losses)	Funds at 31 October 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds	216,076	12,730	(24,586)	(13,023)	191,197
Restricted Funds	78,301	14,250	-	-	92,551
Permanent Endowment Fund	15,000	-	-	-	15,000
Total	309,377	26,980	(24,586)	(13,023)	298,748

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

7. Funds (continued)

Restricted funds comprise funds received from the Tod Endowment Fund, a charity registered in Scotland. The fund is available for distribution among necessitous Scottish solicitors for the provision of holiday relief to be taken within Scotland. Charges for advertisements and administrative costs can be applied to the fund. The income derived from funds held is recognised in unrestricted funds.

The permanent endowment fund represents the Alexander Stone Foundation Fund. The income derived from this endowment is recognised in unrestricted funds.

8. Related party transactions

Law Society of Scotland

Two trustees of the Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund are also employees of the Law Society of Scotland and two trustees are members of the Council of the Law Society of Scotland. At the year-end, £0 was due from the Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund to the Law Society of Scotland (2023: £10,058).

Scottish Law Agents Society

Two trustees of the Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund are also office bearers of the Scottish Law Agents Society. During the year, charges for services amounting to £4,000 (2023: £3,500) were made from the Scottish Law Agents Society.

The charity is administered by the Law Society of Scotland and the Scottish Law Agents Society. The costs for administration including the external independent examination of the charity are charged to the Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund. Governance costs include amounts paid to the Scottish Law Agents Society for administering the funds and advertising fees for appealing for donations and applicants. Law Society of Scotland provides administration services to the charity for no consideration.