# North Highland Cancer Information & Support Centre

## Trustees' Annual Report

Period From 1 July 2025 to Period End 30 June 2026

## Charity contact information

North Highland Cancer Information & Support Centre

Scottish Charity Number: SC048935

5A High Street, Thurso, KW14 8AG

Phone: 01847 890996

Email: support.centre@nhcisc.org

Website: https://www.nhcisc.org/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/cancersupportcaithness

## Charity Trustees

Committee as at 30 June 2026

Mike Murdoch, Chair

Jim Baxter, Vice Chair

Joan Mackay, Secretary

Anne Murdoch, Treasurer

Barbara Cormack, committee member

Sonya Hughes, committee member

Mandy Bartlett, committee member




*Jim Baxter (Vice Chair), Mike Murdoch (Chair), Anne Murdoch (Treasurer) and Lynn Nicolson (Centre Coordinator) raising awareness of the NHCISC at the Come Ashore Cup in June 2026*

## Objectives and activities

The NHCISC was established in 2008 after members of the community came together to solve the problem of a lack of cancer support services in the North Highlands.

We officially opened on Monday 26th May 2008 and have steadily grown over the last 18 years, currently supporting a membership of 116 people. Our main base of operations is in Thurso, the most northernly town in Scotland, and we offer support to all those aged 16+ in the North Highlands affected by cancer, whether that is directly or indirectly. Membership is free; we rely on donations and fundraising to provide our invaluable services and keep the Centre running. In recent years we have been able to expand our service offering to include a dedicated support group in Bettyhill, which was much needed due to the considerable travel required for those in Sutherland to access our Thurso premises. Improving access to cancer support for those based in rural North Highlands communities is a crucial part of our ongoing aims.

Our organisational purposes are to *alleviate the suffering and distress and advance the education of anyone affected by cancer and their relatives and friends*, doing this by:

1. Offering emotional support and information to persons affected by cancer

2. Supporting each other through personal experiences, giving time and space to talk about fear and grief.

3. Listening and responding with sensitivity, respecting confidentiality and not imposing personal preferences and values on others

4. Collecting and disseminating information on all matters relating to cancer

The NHCISC is run by a voluntary committee, along with two part-time staff, and a small but highly dedicated and compassionate team of volunteers. Our service could not function the way it does without these volunteers, who are trained in “listening and responding” and offer our members the kind of emotional support and understanding that can only

come from those who themselves have been directly affected by cancer. Some of our volunteers have been with us since the NHCISC was first established in 2008.

Our premises in Thurso is currently open 3 days a week.

Mondays are our drop-in days, where members will find a warm and welcoming atmosphere in which to socialise, take a break, and focus on their wellbeing. A quiet room is available for anyone who needs one-to-one peer support. The drop-in sessions provide a much-needed escape from the worries that come with diagnosis and treatment or equally can provide an opportunity to discuss feelings and concerns in a safe, confidential environment.

Every other Monday we offer beauty treatments such as facials and manicures to members for a nominal fee, provided by a skilled beautician, and on Thursdays qualified therapists provide complimentary therapy treatments to members, including oncology/Swedish massage, reiki, and reflexology. We have worked with our therapists for many years, and their therapies are tailored to the diagnoses and health considerations of each member. Cancer and grief affect people mentally as well as physically, and these services can provide a real boost to our members during difficult times.

On Tuesdays, we facilitate remote guided mindfulness sessions, ran by Maggies Inverness, and invite guest speakers 1-2 times a month to deliver informative talks to our members on a variety of topics.

We also hold a monthly Men's Group on Wednesdays to support men in the community living with cancer.

In Bettyhill, we offer reiki and massage therapy by appointment, as well as an evening drop-in support group on the last Friday of the month.

As well as our support groups and therapies, we also provide members with access to an onsite wig-fitting service for anyone affected by hair loss due to cancer treatment. Additionally, we can refer members to a qualified counsellor if they need more intensive support. We can provide members with help towards the cost of the sessions, and we currently have grant funding available to provide a fully paid block of 6 counselling

sessions to up to 15 people who have been recently diagnosed or bereaved.

Members can also get in touch at any time via email or phone and someone will get back to them to offer support.

We provide members with access to a wide range of information relating to cancer diagnosis and treatment and promote the awareness of all types of cancer and the importance of early diagnosis.

Since 2012 we have held the Macmillan Quality Environment Mark (MQEM), which is used to assess whether cancer care environments meet the standards required by people living with cancer, and we have always performed highly at each reassessment.

## Structure, governance and management

### Type of governing document

The NHCISC is governed by a voluntary committee, led by its Chair and Office Bearers.

Our governing document is our Constitution, which outlines our purposes, organisational structure, and general procedures. A copy of our constitution can be found on our website.

### Trustee recruitment and appointment

We recruit committee members (trustees) from our own member pool, as specified in our Constitution, as we feel it is important for the charity to be run by those who have a good understanding of what it means to be affected by cancer, and therefore the support that is required.

We allow for up to two spaces on the committee to belong to non-members, either on the basis that they have been nominated by a *"body with which the organisation has close contact in the course of its activities"* or on the basis that they have specialist experience and/or skills which could be of assistance to the board. We currently do not have any co-opted members.

Our Constitution allows for up to 10 total committee members, and we must have a minimum of 4.

## Achievements and performance

### *Appointment of Centre Coordinator*

We are delighted to report that we have successfully secured grant funding from Macmillan Cancer Support to employ a part-time Centre Coordinator, working 21.5 hours a week, for a 3-year period. Following the end of our previous grant funding agreement with Macmillan, we were keen to secure new funding to allow us to continue staffing the Centre, so we are pleased that Macmillan is eager to keep supporting us in this way.

Our Centre Coordinator, Lynn, has been in post since April 2026, and has already made a big difference to the NHCISC. Since her appointment we have:

- Started offering guided mindfulness sessions every Tuesday, facilitated remotely by Maggies Inverness
- Started recording statistics on service users and volunteer hours, giving us a clearer picture on how many people we are supporting and allowing us to better monitor our impact
- Started a comprehensive review of volunteer training and competencies, including ongoing 1:1 meetings with volunteers to gather feedback and address any concerns
- Reviewed and updated several NHCISC policies, with policy reviews still ongoing
- Networked with multiple external organisations, including arranging visits by our Centre Coordinator to several other cancer support organisations (Maggies Inverness, Clan Cancer Support)
- Established regular visits to our drop-in sessions by the local Macmillan Support Worker for Caithness, giving members the opportunity to talk to her directly in-person, which has proven to be very beneficial

We feel she has settled into the role well and we are delighted to have her on board.

### *Appointment of Admin & Finance Support Staff Member*

In July 2025, we successfully secured a £20,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to hire a part-time member of staff to help alleviate the burden on the committee. This member of staff, Chloe, has been in place since November 2025 and has worked closely alongside the Treasurer and Chair, assisting with a wide range of administrative, financial, marketing, and fundraising duties, such as preparing financial accounts, preparing promotional materials, and applying for grant funding. Her background in accounting and finance has been a big help in supporting the Treasurer.

In terms of grant funding, so far, she has successfully secured £10,000 from the Halkirk District Benefit Fund (HDBF) to allow her to stay in post following the end of the National Lottery Community Fund grant period (end July 2027), and a further £3,600 from the RWE Camster Wind Farm Community Fund to fund up to 15 recently diagnosed or bereaved members to receive a block of 6 counselling sessions from a qualified counsellor. Further applications to additional funding schemes are ongoing.

### *Tuesday Opening*

On the 28th of April 2026, we held a remote talk from Clan Cancer Support staff based in Orkney. This talk was open to NHCISC volunteers and committee members and provided an excellent opportunity to gain the perspective and insight of a larger, longer running cancer support organisation. Following the success of this talk, we made the decision to open our Thurso premises for a few hours every Tuesday, with the aim to hold one to two Tuesday morning talks a month that our members would find informative and beneficial. So far, we have held talks from the following individuals and groups:

- Befriending Caithness
- Ian Gregory, former Citizens Advice
- Hearing & Sight Care Caithness
- Connecting Carers

To date as at 30 June 2026, we have had a total attendance of nearly 70 members across the different talks and continue to seek guest speakers to populate our calendar to the end of 2026.

As previously mentioned, we have also started facilitating remote guided mindfulness sessions every week on Tuesdays, led by staff at the Inverness Maggies Centre. Attendance numbers at these sessions have been quite low so far, but the members who have attended find the sessions beneficial. We hope to see more uptake as the sessions continue.

### *Summer Events*

Throughout the summer, our volunteers, staff, and committee members attended a variety of community events with the aim to increase local awareness of the NHCISC, as well as to do a small amount of fundraising. We are continually trying to reach out to more people who may need our support now or in the future, and we felt that having a presence at community events would be a good way to help with this.

Some of these events took place after our year end, but we planned our attendance during this reporting year.

We attended the following events between June and September 2026:

- Come Ashore Cup, Thurso
- Caithness Pride, Thurso
- NHS Community Pop-up, both Wick and Thurso
- Latheron Show, Lybster
- Caithness Show, alongside the Farming Community Network, Thurso
- Mey Games, John o' Groats
- Highland Women's Hub Wellbeing Festival, Wick

### *NHCISC Outings*

Our annual Christmas lunch was held on the 5th December 2025 at the Park Hotel in Thurso, with over 30 members attending.

On Friday 19th June 2026, members enjoyed a summer outing to Dunnet and John o' Groats, kindly funded by a donation. Members enjoyed a light lunch at the Dunnet Sands Hotel, followed by a trip to John o' Groats to enjoy some shopping and sightseeing.

### *Fundraising*

Our 2025/26 winter raffle proved to be a success, selling all tickets and raising £1,000. Sales of our 2026 calendar were also successful, taking in £935 after deducting printing costs. Smaller, ongoing fundraising efforts such as lucky squares and selling tablet generously made by one of our volunteers have also been successful in raising smaller amounts of money throughout the year.

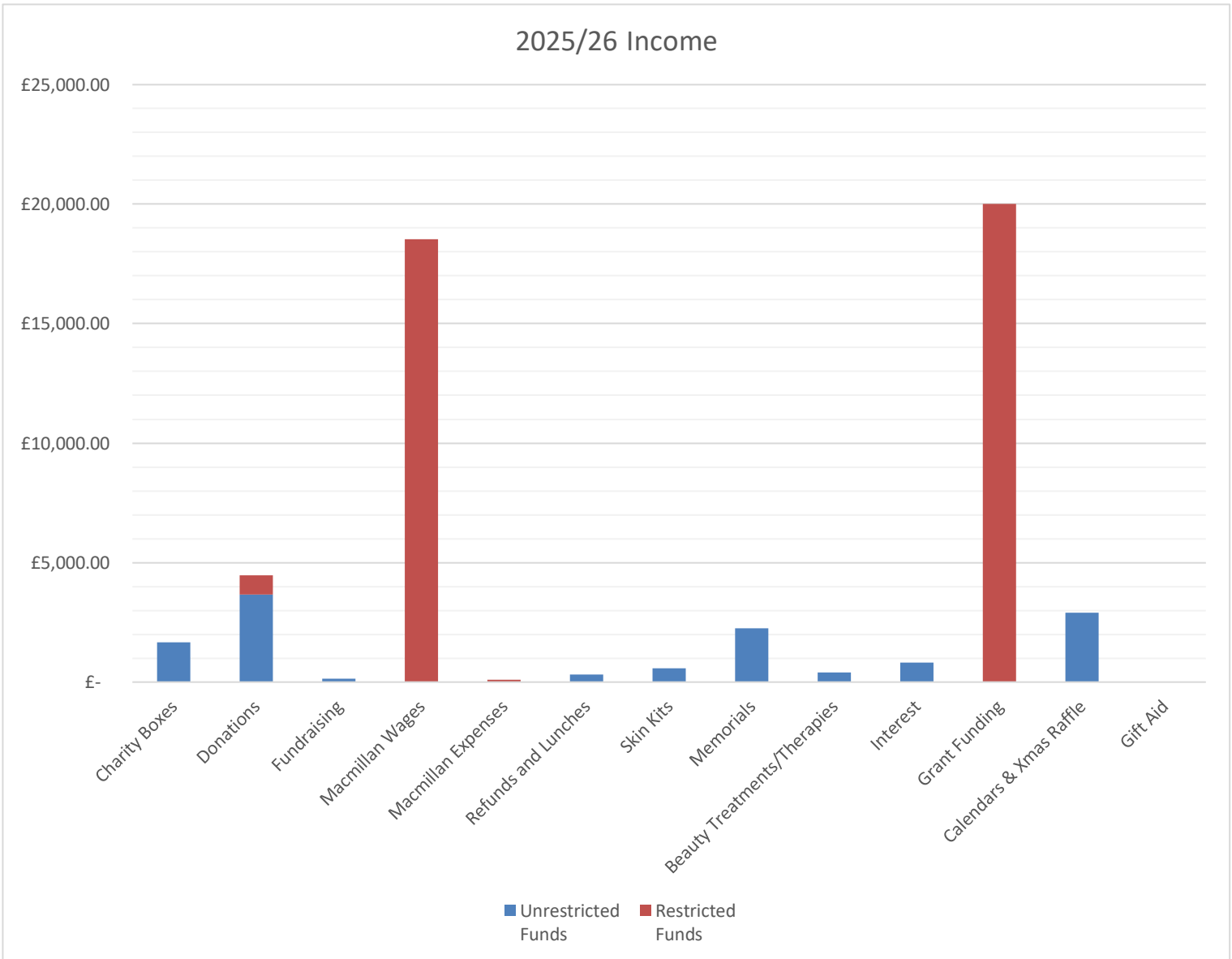
Due to the past 18 months representing a turbulent period with many changes, including committee changeovers and the appointment of new staff, we did not do as much fundraising this financial year as we have in previous years, but we intend to renew our efforts in the year ahead.

## Financial review

For the year ending 30 June 2026, we received a total income of £52,143.53 and paid out total expenses of £55,614.06, giving us a deficit for the year of £3,470.53.

Our largest expenses once again were the payment of staff wages, and paying our therapists to provide therapies to members. Wages for our two part-time staff members are funded by grants from Macmillan Cancer Support, and the National Lottery Community Fund.

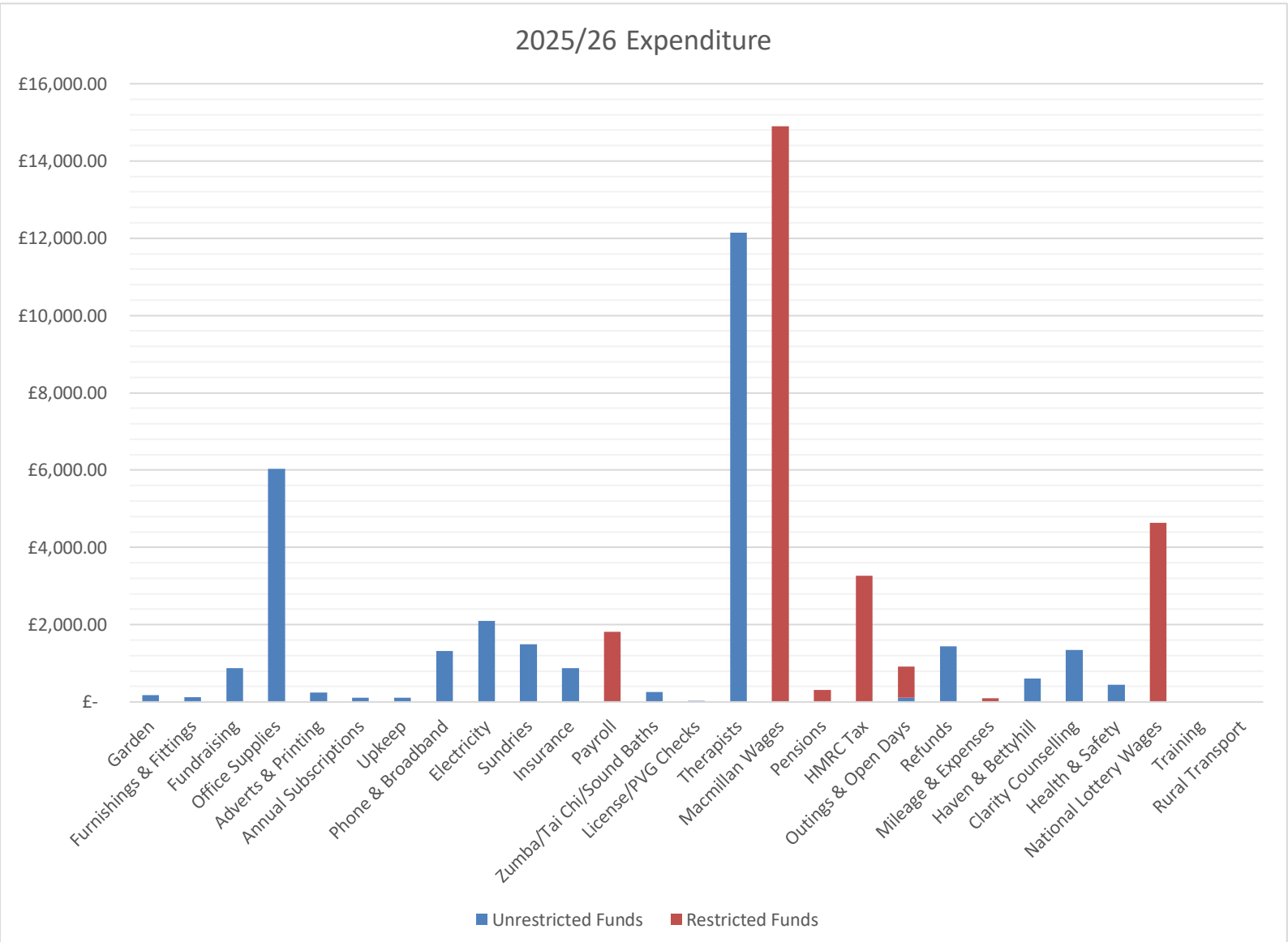
Excluding grant funding from Macmillan and the National Lottery, our main income this financial year came from donations, memorials, charity boxes, and the sale of our calendars and winter raffle tickets.



We received £ 4,856.63 in direct donations (including £398.50 in member donations towards therapies and beauty treatments), £1,658.52 from charity boxes, £2,259.88 from memorials, and £2,895 from sales of calendars and raffle tickets. Notably, we received considerably less donations than in 2024/25.

We attribute this year's deficit to a significantly lower receipt of donations this year compared to 2024/25 despite having a broadly comparable level of expenditure when excluding grant-funded wages and associated payroll costs.

Since the 2025/26 year end, we have started the process of applying for further grant funding for our largest expense not currently covered by grants, that being the provision of therapies. If we can successfully



even part-fund this expense via grants, we will be in a significantly more favourable financial position in 2025/26 and beyond.

## Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Reserves are held to ensure the financial stability of the NHCISC and to protect its ongoing operations in the event of unexpected funding shortfalls or emergencies.

As per our current reserves policy, we aim to have in place £70,000 of unrestricted reserves, representing 6 months of core operational costs. This level may be adjusted as necessary, based on the NHCISC's financial position, risk profile, and future plans.

Reserves may be used to:

- Cover temporary shortfalls in income
- Fund essential one-off costs
- Respond to unforeseen emergencies

Any use of reserves must be approved by the committee.

Our current level of reserves, as at 30 June 2026, sits at approximately £57,771.01. Due to this year's shortfall in donations and reduced fundraising capacity, we have had to rely on our reserves to fund our operations and avoid any disruption to our service provision. We hope to replenish the reserves in the 2026/27 period through renewed fundraising efforts and applying for grant funding towards running costs.

As previously mentioned, we are in the process of reviewing and updating our policies, which includes the reserves policy. The benchmark of £70,000 representing 6 months of core operational costs is likely now inaccurate, as this amount was set when we had 3 members of staff in place, representing combined hours of approximately 54.5 per week, so this figure will need to be adjusted. However, we are of the opinion that having unrestricted reserves of around the current benchmark level is of significant benefit to the NHCISC, allowing us to secure our ongoing service provision in the face of an unpredictable landscape in which many individuals are

experiencing difficulties with the cost of living, making it difficult to rely solely on donations.

## Future plans

One of our biggest goals for the immediate future is to re-establish a support group in Wick. We previously ran a Wick support group during the 2024/25 reporting year but ceased to continue this after the end of the 2024/25 period due to poor attendance and high venue costs. We hope this time to approach the Wick support group more thoughtfully, led by the needs and preferences of those affected by cancer in the East Caithness area. Poor attendance resulted partly from the unsuitability of the chosen venue, and so we have been looking carefully at alternative venues that would be more appealing. Our current aim is to establish a once-a-month volunteer-ran drop-in session in Wick, starting small and developing the service over time as we gain ongoing feedback from attendees.

We are continually looking at expanding our service provision with the aim to offer a wide range of benefits to our members. We have been considering the possibility of offering classes such as chair Zumba, chair yoga, or Tripudio. As with all aspects of our organisation, we want to develop our service offering in a member-led manner, so we will be seeking feedback from our membership to inform the direction of any new offerings in future.

One of our ongoing aims is to grow our pool of volunteers. We are incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated group of volunteers who are so generous with their time and have given so much to the NHCISC throughout the years, but they are a small team who already gives as much of their time as they are able, and we are keenly aware that we cannot expand our service offering further without seeking additional support from new volunteers.

Another one of our key goals is to secure grant funding to cover a percentage of our essential running costs, alleviating the burden on our committee and volunteers to constantly fundraise and seek donations, as well as allowing us to ideally end the financial year on a surplus and

ensure our reserves are at an adequate level to meet any unforeseen difficulties.

## Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:



Print name ANNE MURDOCH

Designation TREASURER

Date 12/11/2028

**APPENDIX 3**

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

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**Report to the trustees/members of**

Charity name
NORTH HIGHLAND CANCER INFORMATION & SUPPORT CENTRE

**Registered charity number**

**SC048935**

**On the accounts of the charity for the period**

| Period start date | | | | Period end date | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Day | Month | Year | | Day | Month | Year |
| 01 | JULY | 2025 | **to** | 30 | JUNE | 2026 |

**Set out on pages**

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**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) 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.

**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 [other than that disclosed on the attached page*]

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 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.

**Signed**:** [signature] **Date:** 31/8/26

**Name:** MIKE MUIR

**Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):** MCIPS, MNUCC

**Address:** 1A BISHOPS DRIVE
THURSO
CAITHNESS
KW14 7UD

*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**

NONE

**North Highland Cancer Information & Support Centre**
**Receipts & Payment Account for Year Ended 30 June 2026**
**Charity No SC039687/SC048935**

| **2025-26** **Represented By :** | £ | **2024-25** **Represented By :** | £ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash in Hand 1 Jul 2025 | 0.00 | Cash in Hand 1 Jul 2024 | 0.00 |
| Current Account at 1 Jul 2025 | 6,362.70 | Current Account at 1 Jul 2024 | 72,224.78 |
| Treasurer's Account at 1 Jul 2025 | 159.39 | | |
| Business Reserve Account at 1 Jul 2025 | 70,088.63 | | |
| | 76,610.72 | | 72,224.78 |
| Excess/(Deficit) | (3,470.53) | Excess/(Deficit) | 3,877.21 |
| Balance at 30 June 2026 | 73,140.19 | Balance at 30 June 2025 | 76,101.99 |
| Cash in Hand 30 June 2026 | 0.00 | Cash in Hand 30 June 2026 | 0.00 |
| Current Account at 30 June 2026 | 1,990.47 | Current Account at 30 June 2025 | 76,610.72 |
| Treasurer's Account at 30 June 2026 | 15,311.62 | | |
| Business Reserve Account at 30 June 2026 | 55,838.10 | | |
| Cheque outstanding | 0.00 | Cheque outstanding | 0.00 |
| Balance at 30 June 2026 | 73,140.19 | Balance at 30 June 2025 | 76,610.72 |

I have examined the records of the above organisation and herby certify that, to the best of my information and belief, the above is a true record of income and expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2026

Signed - Auditor .....

Date .....

Signed - Treasurer .....

Date .....

Signed - Chairperson .....

Date .....

**North Highland Cancer Information & Support Centre**
**Receipts & Payment Account for Year Ended 30 June 2026**
**Charity No SC048935**

| **Receipts** | £ 2025/26 Unrestricted Funds | £ 2025/26 Restricted Funds | £ 2025/26 Total Funds | £ 2024/25 Total Funds |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charity Boxes | £ 1,658.52 | £ - | **£ 1,658.52** | **£ 374.00** |
| Donations | £ 3,658.13 | £ 800.00 | **£ 4,458.13** | **£ 17,362.94** |
| Fundraising | £ 138.10 | £ - | **£ 138.10** | **£ 1,993.00** |
| Macmillan Wages | £ - | £ 18,525.01 | **£ 18,525.01** | **£ 48,361.77** |
| Macmillan Expenses | £ - | £ 96.00 | **£ 96.00** | **£ 9,817.70** |
| Refunds and Lunches | £ 321.49 | £ - | **£ 321.49** | **£ 1,664.99** |
| Skin Kits | £ 575.00 | £ - | **£ 575.00** | |
| Memorials | £ 2,259.88 | £ - | **£ 2,259.88** | **£ 2,324.15** |
| Beauty Treatments/Therapies | £ 398.50 | £ - | **£ 398.50** | **£ 412.50** |
| Interest | £ 805.40 | £ - | **£ 805.40** | **£ 685.23** |
| Grant Funding | £ 12.50 | £ 20,000.00 | **£ 20,012.50** | |
| Calendars & Xmas Raffle | £ 2,895.00 | £ - | **£ 2,895.00** | **£ 852.00** |
| Gift Aid | £ - | £ - | **£ -** | **£ 222.51** |
| **Total Receipts** | **£ 12,722.52** | **£ 39,421.01** | **£ 52,143.53** | **£ 84,070.79** |

**Payments for Charitable Activities**

| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | Total Funds | Total Funds |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garden | £ 175.00 | £ - | **£ 175.00** | **£ 226.70** |
| Furnishings & Fittings | £ 121.94 | £ - | **£ 121.94** | **£ 1,217.24** |
| Fundraising | £ 876.94 | £ - | **£ 876.94** | **£ -** |
| Office Supplies | £ 6,035.61 | £ - | **£ 6,035.61** | **£ 1,844.20** |
| Adverts & Printing | £ 239.50 | £ - | **£ 239.50** | **£ 1,405.74** |
| Annual Subscriptions | £ 114.00 | £ - | **£ 114.00** | **£ -** |
| Upkeep | £ 110.00 | £ - | **£ 110.00** | **£ 314.00** |
| Phone & Broadband | £ 1,315.35 | £ - | **£ 1,315.35** | **£ 680.19** |
| Electricity | £ 2,095.75 | £ - | **£ 2,095.75** | **£ 1,178.11** |
| Sundries | £ 1,492.14 | £ - | **£ 1,492.14** | **£ 1,974.55** |
| Insurance | £ 869.87 | £ - | **£ 869.87** | **£ 859.45** |
| Payroll | £ - | £ 1,812.00 | **£ 1,812.00** | **£ -** |
| Zumba/Tai Chi/Sound Baths | £ 260.00 | £ - | **£ 260.00** | **£ 709.36** |
| License/PVG Checks | £ 25.00 | £ - | **£ 25.00** | **£ 254.00** |
| Therapists | £ 12,143.01 | £ - | **£ 12,143.01** | **£ 9,460.25** |
| Macmillan Wages | £ - | £ 14,894.47 | **£ 14,894.47** | **£ 46,264.35** |
| Pensions | £ - | £ 313.31 | **£ 313.31** | **£ 3,069.45** |
| HMRC Tax | £ - | £ 3,268.38 | **£ 3,268.38** | **£ 4,436.38** |
| Outings & Open Days | £ 110.00 | £ 800.00 | **£ 910.00** | **£ 312.79** |
| Refunds | £ 1,434.18 | £ - | **£ 1,434.18** | **£ -** |
| Mileage & Expenses | £ - | £ 92.54 | **£ 92.54** | **£ 10,516.75** |
| Haven & Bettyhill | £ 600.00 | £ - | **£ 600.00** | **£ 600.00** |
| Clarity Counselling | £ 1,340.00 | £ - | **£ 1,340.00** | **£ 1,720.00** |
| Health & Safety | £ 444.25 | £ - | **£ 444.25** | **£ 492.70** |
| National Lottery Wages | £ - | £ 4,630.82 | **£ 4,630.82** | **£ -** |
| Training | £ - | £ - | **£ -** | **£ 312.79** |
| Rural Transport | £ - | £ - | **£ -** | **£ 99.00** |
| **Total Payments** | **£ 29,802.54** | **£ 25,811.52** | **£ 55,614.06** | **£ 87,948.00** |
| **Surplus/(Deficit) for the year** | **-£ 17,080.02** | **£ 13,609.49** | **-£ 3,470.53** | **-£ 3,877.21** |