

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
COMMITTEE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2026
SC025431

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Trustees

Dr P Sturrock (nee Wightman)	Chairperson
Mrs J Lythgoe	Treasurer
Mr J Nicol	
Mr F Gordon	
Dr J Cruse-Sawyer	
Mr G Cormack	
Cllr H Smith	
Cllr G Petrie	
Cllr S Payne	(Resigned 03/11/2025)
Cllr M Grant	(Appointed 19/03/2026)

Contact address

Bennachie Visitor Centre, Pitcaple, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5HY.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed by the existing committee of trustees.

Governing document

The governing document was a Trust Deed and charitable status was attained on 1 October 1996. The Trust adopted a SCIO-based Constitution when they became a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) in 2016.

Charitable purposes

The purpose of the Trust is to advance the education of the public by the provision, construction and subsequent management of a centre for the development of environmental education, conservation and preservation of the flora, fauna, geology and history of the area around Bennachie.

Summary of the main activities in relation to these objects

The Trust held 4 formal business meetings during the year; 3 were a blend of in-person and online attendance, facilitated by the Smart board electronic system at the Centre, and one was fully online (via Teams). Several additional meetings were held, for specific issues including: progressing electronics updates regarding wildlife and live-feed hill view cameras and interactive electronic quizzes; development of a map of the whole Bennachie range (2 meetings); potential grants and development of resources for special needs (2 meetings).

Activities and achievements

The Centre opened for the 2025 season on Saturday 29 March. A programme of public events providing opportunities to discover and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage of Bennachie, included a Ceramic Birds workshop (12 adults), an Art and Craft Fair, a 'Doors Open weekend' (254 visitors). The Centre hosted NEOS (North East Open Studios), featuring 3 local artists and their Bennachie-inspired artwork over a week in September, attracting 895 people, including many who would not otherwise have visited. Local artists/makers were supported throughout the season, with the shop selling their Bennachie-related artwork, which also generated income for the Trust.

The Centre provided a venue for a range of educational courses, and supported events run by other bodies, including hill navigation (Hillgoers), wildlife identification skills courses (Field Studies Council), a charity pop-up café on Mither Tap, a hill race and the Bennachie Ultramarathon. One Seed Forward used the Centre as a seed hub, to promote people growing their own food. The Chairperson gave a talk to a group on "Bennachie, the Centre and the Trust", and new pre-ordered lunchboxes from the Family Bakehouse were successfully trialled. A trial pop-up shop for the Family Bakehouse was also held at the Centre.

A fundraising 2026 calendar was produced, in collaboration with local schools and artists, featuring artwork interpreting Bennachie in a range of media. The original artworks were exhibited, and the Trust received a donation from sales. The calendars were sold in the shop, other local outlets, and online. A 2027 calendar is now being developed.

Two projects to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Trust/Centre (2025) are also being progressed: a map of the entire Bennachie hill range (including the Gordon Way) in conjunction with Harveys Maps; and a 'Birds of Bennachie' leaflet, in conjunction with local artist Jane Milloy. Both projects should be completed before the end of summer 2026.

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Activities and achievements (continued)

A promotional leaflet for the Centre was designed and printed, and distributed to other venues. Visitor counters in the Centre indicated over 30,333 visitors over the season, a slight increase on previous years. Visitor counter numbers contribute to data for the Scottish Visitor Attractions Barometer. Visitor comments (logbook and questionnaire) indicate high satisfaction levels. The community room had 27 bookings.

A totaliser banner to stimulate targeted donations towards bird food was produced and displayed. Sale of donated books and items, plus 'recycling for charity' boxes (ink cartridges, unwanted items including foreign currency) provided additional income.

The Garioch Ranger held 4 public events (36 adults, 26 children), led 11 events for groups/ communities (91 adults, 102 children), and provided environmental education for 25 schools (119 adults, 864 children) through activities promoting discovery and appreciation of the natural and cultural history of Bennachie, improving the local environment and biodiversity, responsible access and promoting health benefits of accessing outdoors.

A changing programme of around 20 exhibitions and Discovery Displays (educational interpretive boards focusing on the social, natural or historic elements of Bennachie and its environs, as well as wider relevant subject areas) occurred during the season, including interactive activities. Previously produced educational display boards on conifer identification, and hill safety skills, and a poster on wildlife identification, were displayed with accompanying table-top materials and activities. Further boards on Squirrels and 'Bennachie in Doric' are being developed, the latter in conjunction with Monymusk Primary School and the Doric Board. Displays on butterflies and moths, and on swifts (Huntly Swift Group) were also featured.

Work to upgrade the Centre electronics, in conjunction with a specialist local firm, includes linking internal screens to external wildlife cameras (existing and new) and the live-feed hill view camera; this has progressed but experienced some delays and is still to be completed. Existing equipment has been assessed and new cables installed. A new interactive family friendly quiz (incorporating natural history, Doric, social history and forestry elements) has been prepared to replace outdated ones on the Forestry Cube.

Social media continues to provide an effective communication tool: the BVC Facebook page now has 4800 followers and 4800 likes. Events were also publicised through the Bennachie Community Council newsletter and Spotlight magazine. The Centre is also listed on Aberdeenshire Council, Visit Scotland and Visit Aberdeenshire websites.

Two battery-operated tools were purchased to aid courtyard maintenance: Trustees weeded and cleared the courtyard on 3 occasions in 2025 and before the 2026 opening. Inverurie Academy pupils assisted with hand-weeding of the courtyard as part of their Duke of Edinburgh activities, and additional courtyard maintenance/weeding was performed by the Community Pay Back Team, who also packed granite dust between cobbles, which reduced weed re-growth.

A cold water tap and sink were installed in the shop to facilitate filling of drink machines and water bottles. A new kitchen and worktop for food storage was fitted, materials were provided through a Howdens community grant, obtained by the joiner, who also repaired picnic benches and other items, and enabled display of school-produced banners in the Community Room. Public toilet access continued to be provided when the Centre was closed over winter; clip frames were installed to provide information on opening times and other relevant items.

The Trust increased the annual contribution to Aberdeenshire Council, for services including rent, electricity, waste, water servicing and contribution towards staffing; it also substantially contributed towards upgrades of the fire alarm system. Fundraising by the 'heart appeal', selling items with the heart logo, continued and effectively funded maintenance costs of the Public Access Defibrillator (PAD), while also improving public awareness.

Significant donations were received from the Bennachie Ultramarathon event organisers, Hillgoers, NEOS artists, Craft Fair stallholders, the charity pop-up café organisers, the Family Bakehouse, and hill race organisers. The Trust is very grateful to all donors for their generous gifts.

The Centre opened for the 2026 season on Saturday 28 March.

Financial review

As a result of the deficit of the year of £1,522 (2025 - surplus of £5,339) and allowing for the movement in resale stock, the committee held unrestricted funds of £103,386 (2025 - £105,737) at the year-end.

Committee remuneration and costs

There were £nil of costs relating to the Centre (2025 - £nil) reimbursed to the Trustees during the year.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 10/6/26 and signed on its behalf by

Dr Patricia Sturrock
Chairperson

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF
BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2026 which are set out on pages 5 and 6.

Respective responsibilities of committee and examiner

The charity's committee is 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 committee considers that the audit requirements 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 Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. 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 committee 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
- 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.



David Minett
CA
Partner
James Milne
5 High Street
Inverurie
AB51 3QA

Date: 16.7.26

**BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026**

	2026 Total £	2025 Total £
Incoming resources		
Donations	3,392	7,422
Heart donation	1,700	1,348
Bank interest received	3,018	2,711
Room hire	425	827
Gallery sales	1,989	1,295
Other income	-	127
Card rebates	5	5
Ticket sales	455	283
Non food sales	7,911	8,416
Food & drink sales	23,202	19,778
Total incoming resources	42,097	42,212
Resources expended		
Goods for resale	18,976	16,461
Insurance	354	347
Independent examiners fee	330	330
Repairs and maintenance	3,811	5,186
Gallery costs	925	766
Telephone costs	232	275
Service charges including rent	11,500	9,500
Equipment for Bennachie Centre	5,573	767
Bird food	437	238
Office consumables	536	1,291
Heart fund	-	1,086
Event costs	375	-
Bank charges	-	17
Credit card machine charges	571	392
Book Trust	-	90
Volunteer gifts	-	127
Total resources expended	(43,620)	(36,873)
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(1,522)	5,339
All funds are unrestricted		

BENNACHIE CENTRE TRUST
STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31 MARCH 2026

	2026 £	2025 £
Stock		
Stock of goods for resale	4,469	5,298
Opening bank and cash balances		
Bank accounts	2,442	2,814
Deposit accounts	97,547	91,836
Cash balance	450	450
	100,439	95,100
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	- 1,522	5,339
Total	98,917	100,439
Closing bank and cash balances		
Bank accounts	302	2,442
Deposit accounts	98,565	97,547
Cash balance	50	450
	98,917	100,439
Closing reserves	103,386	105,737

All funds are unrestricted

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 10/6/26 and signed on its behalf by /



Dr Patricia Sturrock
Chairperson



John Nicol
Trustee