



**Blue
Carbon
Trust**

Blue Carbon Trust

Trustees' Annual Report

April 2025 to March 2026



Charity contact information

Blue Carbon Trust

Scottish Charity Number: SC054095

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Website: www.bluecarbon.org.uk



Charity Trustees



1. Bridget Marshall



2. Peter Raines



3. Catherine Downie

Objectives and activities

The Blue Carbon Trust was established in 2025 to address the urgent need for protecting and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems that serve as vital blue carbon sinks. Our charity's purpose, as outlined in our constitution, is to support the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of blue carbon habitats, such as seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, and saltmarshes, recognising their critical roles in carbon sequestration, biodiversity preservation, and coastal resilience.

Our aims are to mitigate climate change, enhance biodiversity, and protect coastal communities by safeguarding these natural ecosystems that absorb and store carbon dioxide at rates far surpassing terrestrial forests. We do this by fostering partnerships, funding targeted conservation and restoration projects, and promoting innovative, science-based approaches that align practical action with robust research.

Throughout our first year of operation, we have collaborated extensively with NGOs, research institutions, local communities, public bodies, and the private sector to maximise our collective impact. By providing flexible, independent grants, typically up to £20,000, we empower local organisations and community groups in regions such as Scotland and the Caribbean to implement effective blue carbon solutions. We also offer match funding and help applicants access additional resources, amplifying the reach and sustainability of these projects.

Our main activities include:

- Awarding seed funding to grassroots initiatives that protect and restore blue carbon habitats
- Supporting scientific research that informs actionable conservation strategies
- Engaging policymakers to advocate for blue carbon's role in climate and biodiversity frameworks
- Encouraging collaboration and innovation to develop scalable, long-term outcomes

- Acting as a hub to connect stakeholders and enable shared learning.

At the heart of our work is the belief that real impact arises from collective effort. By amplifying existing efforts and unlocking new opportunities, we strive to advance blue carbon as a crucial nature-based solution to climate change, biodiversity loss, and coastal stressors. The trustees take great pride in how the charity has established itself within this emerging field, and remain committed to supporting projects that generate meaningful, lasting benefits for the planet and communities dependent on healthy coastal ecosystems.

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document

The Blue Carbon Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It is governed by its Constitution, which was approved by the Trustees and submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) as SCIO: SC054095.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

The Blue Carbon Trust was established in 2025 and appointed its first three Trustees:

1. Bridget Marshall: Chair
2. Peter Raines: Treasurer and Chief Executive Officer
3. Catherine Downie: Secretary

Registrations

In the current year, the Blue Carbon Trust has registered with OSCR, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and HMRC. These key registrations have enabled us to operate as a charitable body, benefit from voluntary sector good practice, and claim Gift Aid on eligible donations.

We have also registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, to ensure compliance with Data Protection legislation.

Achievements and performance

During the current reporting period, the Blue Carbon Trust has made significant strides in advancing its mission to protect and restore vital blue carbon ecosystems through key projects and collaborative initiatives that deliver tangible environmental and community benefits.

Community-based restoration in the Caribbean

One of our flagship achievements is the co-funding and partnership with the Centre for Livelihoods, Ecosystems, Adaptation and Resilience (CLEAR Caribbean) on a transformative three-year mangrove and seagrass restoration initiative in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We have committed funding of £45,000 over 3 years, providing the project with a long-term commitment.

This project has successfully established two mangrove nurseries, engaged local stakeholders, and trained “coral gardeners” and community divers to undertake habitat monitoring and restoration activities across Union Island, Mayreau, and the Tobago Cays Marine Park. By addressing threats such as anchoring damage, wastewater pollution, and hurricane impacts, this community-driven approach has played a vital role in strengthening coastal resilience, improving biodiversity, including protection for endangered Green Turtles, and enhancing carbon sequestration capacities in the region. This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to empowering local communities while delivering scalable, nature-based climate solutions.

Innovative seagrass restoration trials in Scotland

In the UK, the Blue Carbon Trust has proudly supported Seawilding’s pioneering seagrass transplantation trials near Loch Craignish, which have achieved survival rates exceeding 90% and restored over 70% of natural seagrass density within just 18 months, a considerable technical breakthrough for marine habitat restoration in the UK. Building on this success, preparations are underway for expanding trials to three additional strategically selected sites on Scotland’s west coast, including Ganavan Bay, Loch na Cille, and Port na Carraigh. These trials will test the adaptability of transplanted seagrass in

diverse environmental conditions and examine the effects of donor material origin on restoration outcomes. Importantly, the project embeds extensive community involvement, with volunteers receiving training and participating directly in planting and monitoring efforts, fostering local stewardship and building capacity for long-term conservation. The Blue Carbon Trust's grant of £20,000 has been instrumental in leveraging additional funding and increasing the project's reach and impact.

Impact and outcomes

Together, these projects will contribute measurable ecological improvements such as habitat restoration, increased carbon storage, and enhanced biodiversity. At the same time, the empowerment of local communities through training, participation, and stewardship will ensure these efforts are sustainable and resilient. The collaborative and innovative nature of our approach aligns with Government policy, such as Scotland's [blue carbon action plan](#), and regional conservation strategies related to blue carbon ecosystems.

Volunteers and community achievements

Volunteers have been central to our success this year, though the nature and scale of their involvement has varied across projects. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, "coral gardeners" and local divers have gained new skills and a sense of ownership over restoration activities. In Scotland, early-stage engagement has focused mainly on scoping and planning with Seawilding, and we expect to see further volunteer participation at a later stage of the project. Community members have nonetheless shown strong interest, taking part in initial workshops and field-based activities where appropriate. Their commitment is already helping to build environmental awareness and local stewardship, laying the groundwork for deeper involvement and measurable ecological benefits as the programme develops in future years.

We involved 2 interns this summer; one to help with the governance side of setting up a new charity and one to help develop our strategy

through research and networking. We are grateful for their hard work and pleased that we could give them useful experience.

The trustees are proud of what we have achieved in our first year. We have learnt a lot in our first year as a new Board and remain committed to supporting projects that deliver lasting impact for blue carbon ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Partnerships

We have met with many other charities operating in Scotland. We received a lot of support and encouragement from the Highlands and Islands Environmental Foundation, the Ecology Centre, WWF, Restoration Forth, Rewilding Britain and Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund. We are grateful for all the time that people have given us as we set ourselves up as a new charity this year.

The Blue Carbon Trust is a member of the Environmental Funders Network (EFN) and regularly attends its networking events. This has enabled us to connect with other funders in the sector and learn from good practice. In particular we attended the Scotland Field Trip visiting the inspirational Kilchoan Melfort Trust and Scottish Association for Marine Science. It has been really valuable to enable us to connect with funders big and small and to discuss future collaboration on blue carbon projects.

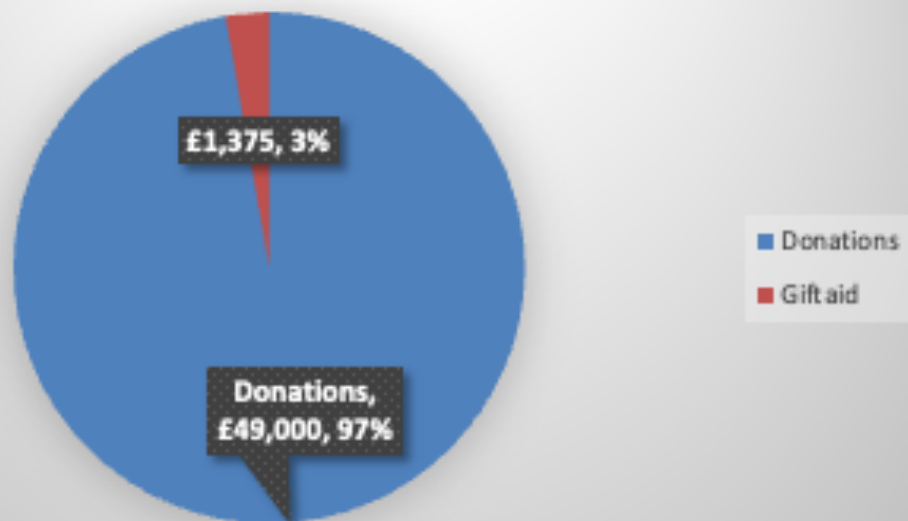
We are a member of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and have access to their resources and events to ensure we are kept up to date on matters relating to good practice in charity governance. We attended the Gathering, which was a great networking event and consolidated our understanding of good governance.

We are also members of the Scottish Seagrass Collaborative.

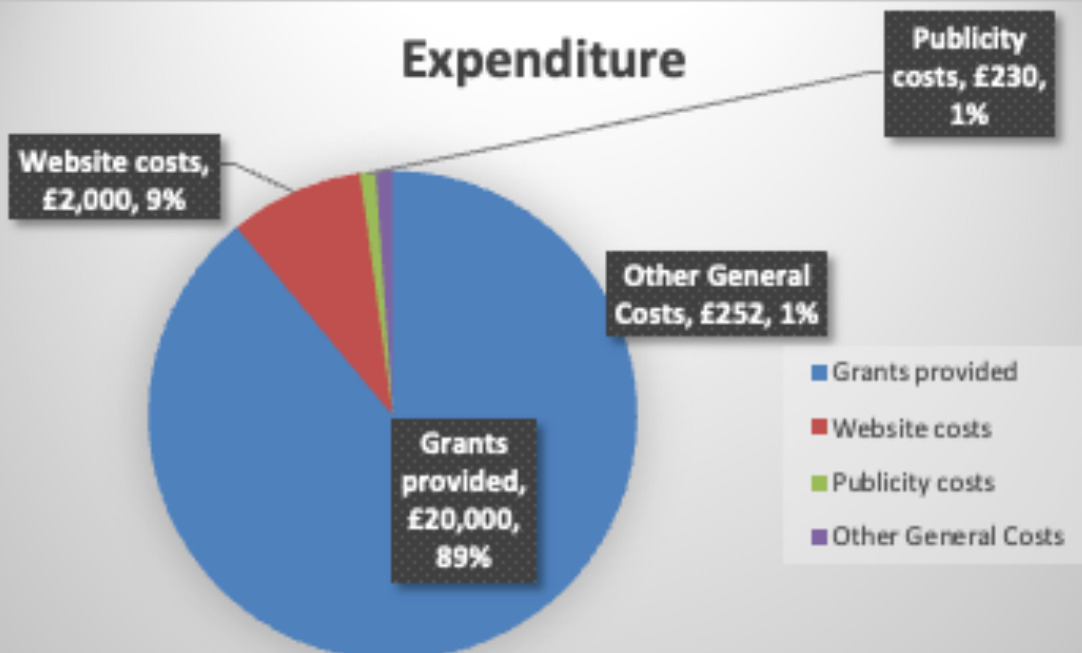
Financial review

Receipts and Payments account for 1 April 2025- 31 March 2026		
Receipts		2025 26
	Grants	£0.00
	Donations	£49,000.00
	Giftaid	£1,375.00
	Total Receipts	£50,375.00
Payments		
	Grants provided	£20,000.00
	Website costs	£2,000.00
	Publicity costs	£230.00
	Other General Costs	£252.00
	Total Payments	£22,482.00
	Surplus (Deficit) for the Period	£27,893.00
Statements of balances		
	Opening Balances	
	Bank (main account)	
	Savings	£0.00
	Surplus (Deficit)	£27,893.00
	Closing Balances	£27,893.00
	Bank rec	
	Bank (main account)	23,893.00
	Bank (savings account)	£4,000.00
	Add uncleared receipts	
	Less uncleared cheques/BACS	
	Reconciled balance	£27,893.00
	Check	£0.00

Income received



Expenditure



Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Trust aims to hold reserves of £2,000. This is more than adequate to cover ongoing expenditure such as website costs. There is no requirement to hold reserves for grant payments, as no commitment will be made to provide a grant until the funds have been secured.

Details of any deficit or surplus

There have been no deficits in the current year, and a surplus of £27,893 is held, most of which is earmarked for CLEAR Caribbean described above, and another pending project yet to be announced.

Future plans

Funds have been earmarked for a saltmarsh restoration project, which is yet to be announced. The Trust is in discussions with a number of other projects which will be announced over the coming year.

We are aiming to expand our donor base, which will enable us to fund further projects.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to the following:

Alison Downie: Financial auditor

Holly Greenwood: Conservation and social media intern.

Fraser Peel: Business management intern.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

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Print name

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Designation

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Date

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